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a Dream

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That Kill

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Volume 8 | Issue 79 | April 2009

PUBLISHER | Andrew Sherburne
Publisher@LittleVillageMag.com

MANAGING EDITOR | Melody Dworak
Editor@LittleVillageMag.com

FEATURES EDITOR | Paul Sorenson
Features@LittleVillageMag.com

ARTS EDITOR | Kent Williams
Arts@LittleVillageMag.com

LAYOUT & DESIGN | Andrew Sherburne

EDITORIAL INTERN | Kelly Ostrem

ADVERTISING | Kelsey Fritz
Ads@LittleVillageMag.com

CONTRIBUTORS | Cecil Adams, Matt Butler, Thomas Dean, Melody Dworak, Craig Eley, Kurt Michael Friese, Brittany Hogendorn, Todd Kimm, Kembrew McLeod, Kelly Ostrem, Jason Phelps, Scott Samuelson, Andrew Sherburne, Paul Sorenson, Warren Sprouse, Dr. Star, Roland Sweet, Tom Tomorrow, Kent Williams

PHOTOS | Marry Allen, Matt Butler, Einar Falur, Benjamin Franzen, Bob Goodfellow, David Ritter, Andrew Sherburne, Seth Walters

CONTACT | P.O. Box 736
Iowa City | Iowa | 52240
www.LittleVillageMag.com
Calendar@LittleVillageMag.com

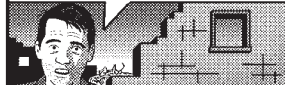
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by TOM TOMORROW

dystopian post-apocalyptic MOVIES — VS — dystopian post-apocalyptic REALITY

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I CAN HOLD ON UNTIL MY SUPPLIES RUN OUT--BUT WHAT THEN?



REALITY: MILLIONS OF LOAN SURVIVORS EKE OUT A MARGINAL EXISTENCE IN THE RUINS OF EMPTY SUBURBS.
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REALITY: ZOMBIE BANKS DOMINATE A NIGHTMARE LANDSCAPE!
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MOVIES: MUCH OF HUMANITY IS WIPED OUT.

YOU MANIACS! YOU BLEW IT UP!



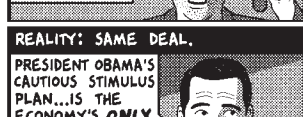
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On the Run

I have lived in Iowa City for three years now. Each end of April brings the River Run 5K. This is the third year that I have sworn that I would do it. But unlike those other two years, this year I'm actually doing it. I have goals, a plan, and this is the year that I will run (and finish!) my first 5K.

Running is definitely not my favorite way to get in shape, but it's cheap, requires minimal equipment and gets a good workout in fast. Since I'm such a novice runner, I asked someone who's got a few miles under her belt (a few marathons, even) to help me out.

Becky Busanich, a doctoral student who runs in her free time, has helped me form a training program to get me going from start to finish line. She stresses three basic principles for training for a race, but these tools could be used to train for any mode of fitness.

1) SET GOALS

Goal-setting can be difficult for some people, including me. But it can help make starting a running program—and keeping it up—much easier. Set short-term goals and long-term goals when making your training program.

My long-term goal is to complete the River Run 5K at the end of April. I'm not looking to run the race in a certain time or at a specific pace, but simply to finish. I gave myself enough time, six weeks, to train so that I can reach this goal. Each week leading up to it, I'm setting a smaller goal: go on three runs per week.

The key to goal-setting is being realistic. Creating goals that are too hard to achieve will discourage you from sticking to your program and reaching your final, long-term goal. My three runs a week goal allows me to put my runs on the days that work best with my schedule. Short-term goals are ways of evaluating how you are doing as you go. If you are having trouble, you can re-evaluate your long-term goal or change up your short-term goals.

2) BUILD UP TO YOUR GOAL

If I could go out and run a 5K today, training would kind of lose its purpose and meaning. However, I cannot just bang out my goal right now, but instead, I'm working toward it slowly. Progression is important in a training program. It's the idea of slowly building up to your goals.

I recently ran a mile-long race, so I started my training program with what I can do now. During the first week I ran a mile on each of the three training days. The second week I increased my mileage and ran a mile-and-a-half on each training day. The next increase will have me running two miles at each run. A 5K is 3.1 miles, so I will continue this progression until I can comfortably run three miles.

The most important part of this element of a training program is listening to your body. If increasing miles is too hard, stay at the current level until you are comfortable moving on. For non-runners like myself, working up to the goal distance bit by bit will help make the goal attainable. Also, if the body is tired, give it rest! Overworking and overtraining the body will hurt your training.

3) ENJOY IT

It's easier to reach your goals and complete your race if you make training more enjoyable. If a treadmill drives you out of your mind, hit the asphalt and trails of Iowa City. If you don't want weather or outside forces disturbing your focus, stay on that treadmill. Just keep it interesting and mix it up: change routes, alternate between treadmill and trails. A training program should fit into your schedule and easily become part of your life. If it's too hard to fit in, you won't stick with it.

Find something that keeps you going. Motivation is the essential ingredient that gets you from Day 1 of training to race day. One way to keep up with your pavement pounding program is to partner up. A friend can help keep you coming back to the workouts. If flying solo is your thing, get a good playlist on your iPod. Hitting that power song can help you push through that final mile.

Busanich also has a few other tips to help

APRIL RACES NEAR IOWA CITY

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April 11, **Mt. Pleasant**
Mt. Pleasant Fun Run / 3.4 Mile Walk

April 18, **Marion**
Go the Distance for Crime Victims 5K

April 18, **Muscatine**
Hayes Hustle Run/Walk/Relay

April 18, **Washington**
Demon Dash for Cash 5K/1 Mile Run/Walk

April 19, **Bettendorf**
Gilda's Run for Laughs 5K

April 19, **Iowa City**
Rehab Run 5K/Run/Walk/Wheelchair

April 26, **Iowa City**
30th Annual River Run 10K/5K

training. To monitor my progress toward the 5k finish line, I'm going to be keeping a running journal. Busanich recommends writing in it after each run and noting specific details like how far you went and how you feel afterwards. It's a good place to write down and stay accountable to those short-term goals. Reviewing the journal can help motivate you more by seeing what you've accomplished so far.

Another tip she has to share is to cross-train. If you're training to run, don't feel like you have to run every day. My program has me running three days a week. That gives me extra days to walk, go for a bike ride, or try Pilates. I even have a whole day of rest built into my schedule, with room for more if my body needs it.

So this year, instead of wishing I had tried a 5K, I'm going to do it. Maybe this running thing will really take off for me. After all, Busanich said, "Get a good pair of running shoes and you can go anywhere." **lv**

Kelly Ostrem is going to chase the dream in her blue Little Village t-shirt at River Run on April 26. Come join her or cheer her on!

HOAGIES & GRINDERS

Lunch-Lady-Land cafeterias in the U.S. public school system conjure dreams of Early Cuisine Education.

It's early in the morning the day after a very busy Valentine's weekend in the restaurant. I'm grumpy and sore and cleaning out the walk-in refrigerator while feeding a nasty NPR jones I've been contending with for a couple decades—just gotta have my Morning Edition alongside my shade-grown fair-trade organic ultra-correct mug of joe (see: StuffWhitePeopleLike.com). The streaming audio is louder than most people would tolerate so that I can hear it over the compressors and exhaust hoods that are the everyday background hum of a restaurant.

Sometimes Renee Montagne and Steve Inskeep blend into that background as well—they become a comforting ambience that I hear but don't always listen to. On this particular day though, in a segment they call "Reporter's Notebook," Eleanor Beardsley grabbed my attention with a four-minute piece called "In Paris, Culinary Education Starts In Day Care."

As a group, Americans detest being told that any other country does any little thing better than we do here in the good ol' U. S. of A. Not surprisingly, it is that very attitude that sometimes keeps us from being able to follow a good example, let alone set one. Beardsley's segment detailed the quality of the food in the public daycare facilities in Paris, where she is stationed. It may come as no surprise, but it is considerably better in every respect than the food served in American schools.

Here is what you would never hear someone say when describing the kitchen in an American school: "A giant pot of apples and

clementines simmers away on the stovetop, and cauliflower au gratin bakes in the oven. While [chef] Morel cuts up garlic and onions to season the braised lamb in fresh rosemary, [chef] Belot peels tomato skins to fashion decorative roses for the pasta salad appetizer."



Not least among the reasons you won't hear that description is that most of our public schools don't have kitchens. Food is heated (as opposed to cooked) in central commissaries and trucked to the various satellite schools in each district, sometimes spending as much as four hours languishing in insulated hotboxes. Meanwhile in Paris, food is cooked from scratch in the kitchens inside each and every one of their 270 public daycare facilities. The

ingredients, Beardsley tells us, "are more often fresh than frozen, and the chefs try to use organic products when they can."

When he signed the School Lunch Act in 1946, President Harry Truman said, "In the long view, no nation is healthier than its children, or more prosperous than its farmers." This statement is no doubt true, but it lent a false air to the act, which purported to be a nutrition program for the coming baby boom but instead became a boondoggle that helped to create the agro-industrial complex. The sys-

"No nation is healthier than its children, more prosperous than its farmers."

—President Harry Truman

tem became the dumpster in which large companies could dispose of their lowest quality and excess commodities.

There are two ways to solve this problem here. On an individual level we can simply brown-bag it as I did for my children from K-12. It can be time consuming, but not as much as you'd think. Granted I can cook, and today many parents can't, but that too is a result of the same failed food system where children no longer learn to cook at their parents' and grandparents' apron strings. However lunch for my two children rarely if ever took me

LUNCH CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 >>

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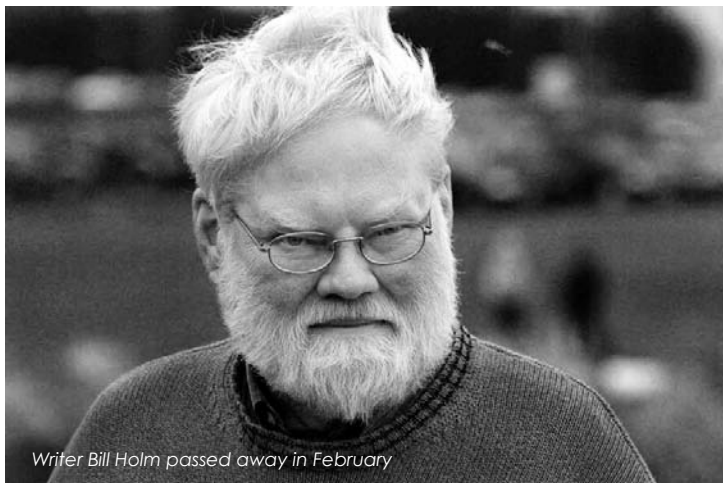
On February 25, Bill Holm passed away at age 65.

Bill Holm was one of our great writers of the Midwest and of place. He was literally a giant of a man—closer to seven feet than six, enormous Viking build, beard and hair—first reddish and then, over time, a magnificent white—that flew out of his face riotously. His eyes sparkled maniacally, piercing in their crystal blueness.

You would expect him to have wielded a mace and worn a giant elk-fur vest, a horned helmet, laced leather boots—a combination of Viking berserker and wild cave man. But despite his imposing appearance, Bill Holm was one of the most generous, gentlest, funniest men you would ever meet.

Bill Holm, of Icelandic descent, was born and grew up on the stark prairies of southwestern Minnesota. As he tells it, he itched to get away and experience the wide world. He did so as a child (and throughout his life) as a voracious reader—ransacking both the public library of his small hometown of Minneota, Minnesota, and the bookshelves of his “little-educated” immigrant neighbors, who read and discussed Plato in the evening. As an adult, he did go away and live in other places, and he traveled the world. But he returned to Minneota in his thirties to live out his days, to read and write and live in community, and to teach at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall.

He also bought a small house on a northern Icelandic fjord where he lived during the summers, conducting writing workshops from that remote but starkly gorgeous rock of a country near the Arctic Circle. Aside from the written word, music was Holm's passion. His dilapi-



Writer Bill Holm passed away in February

Photo by Einar Falur, courtesy McKnight Foundation

amorphous boundary between greatness and failure—equally grand—in *The Music of Failure*. He demonstrated that he indeed was a man of the world in *Coming Home Crazy: An Alphabet of China Essays*, written after a teaching exchange in China. His book *Eccentric Islands* shows just how kaleidoscopic his thinking was—islands being Molokai, Hawaii, or a piano, or human pain. His last book, *The Windows of Brimnes*, is a meditation on America (mostly dark) viewed from his Icelandic perch.

The first time I saw Bill Holm was over 15 years ago at a read-

ing in a packed auditorium during a Marshall Festival at Southwest State (then without the “Minnesota” in its name). He lumbered out onto the stage, leaned his giant arms on the podium, and boomed, “If you have anything to do with American literature, your grandma is Emily Dickinson and your grandpa is Walt Whitman!” Yes, sir! The following day, as my wife and I walked down the main street of Marshall toward the town's only Chinese restaurant for dinner, Bill Holm drove by, his hair flying out the window of a monstrous old beat-up clunker of a car.

My favorite Bill Holm book is *The Heart Can Be Filled Anywhere on Earth: Minneota, Minnesota*. Not exactly an autobiography, it is one of the best books on living in place I know—and one of the most brutally honest. Failure, death, and narrowness live side by side with love, warmth, community and natural beauty. The book truly brings home how Holm was rooted in a small place but lived a life as broad as the whole world. I taught the book in a class on Midwestern literature while teaching at Moorhead State University (now Minnesota State University Moorhead). I had my students write letters to Bill Holm about their experience with his writing. He wrote back, thanked us all for reading his book, and said the students were much too polite.

After we lost another of those great Minnesota sages, Paul Gruchow, I could not

“Prairies, like
mountains, stagger
the imagination most
not in detail, but size.

As a mountain is
high, a prairie is wide;
horizontal grandeur,
not vertical.”

- Bill Holm
“Horizontal Gradeur”

I said Bill Holm was a gentle man. He was—but he was fierce. He had the Scandinavian socialist running through him with fire and vinegar, and he was not shy about calling out and eviscerating dunderheads and morons—especially those with puny social consciences and those who would destroy the natural world.

Holm wrote numerous books and many essays and poems. His first book, *Boxelder Bug Variations*, a mixture of poetry and meditations, is still widely known. He showed us the

imagine the book of tribute essays that I edited (*The Grace of Grass and Water: Writing in Honor of Paul Gruchow*, Ice Cube Press, 2007) without Bill Holm. I got to talk with him a few times over the phone, always enjoying that exuberant Minnesota-inflected voice on the other end, and we exchanged a few emails—in between his sojourns to Iceland. We wanted him to come to Iowa City for a reading from the book (along with Carol Bly, who sadly passed away herself in December 2007). He was game for it, but was in his last semester of teaching before retirement, so it would have to wait for some other time. Some other time never came. Just a few weeks ago, Bill Holm collapsed in the Sioux Falls, South Dakota airport, returning with his wife Marcy from a trip to Arizona. He died shortly after of complications from pneumonia. He had been writing daily—in the first stages of his retirement, enjoying the fruits of a 2008 McKnight Foundation Distinguished Artist of the Year Award, the culmination of many other notable honors.

Bill Holm wrote the greatest essay on the beauty of the prairie ever, “Horizontal Grandeur,” first published in *The Music of Failure*. Holm says, “Prairies, like mountains, stagger the imagination most not in detail, but size. As a mountain is high, a prairie is wide;

I said Bill Holm was a gentle man. He was—but he was fierce.

horizontal grandeur, not vertical.” But Holm says that prairie is about delicacy as well as magnitude. The prairie lover “looks at a square foot and sees a universe; ten or twenty flowers and grasses, heights, heads, colors, shades, configurations, bearded, rough, smooth, simple, elegant. When a cloud passes over the sun, colors shift, like a child’s kaleidoscope.”

I loved seeing the prairie, America, Iceland, China, music and the beauties and foibles of humanity through Bill Holm’s kaleidoscope. And I will continue to do so through his writing, the essays and poems that are full of angels of death, specters of failure, dark requiems and fugues, delicate sonatas, shining ideals, Jovian laughter, prairie flowers and grasses for miles and miles and miles—all wrapped in a Scandinavian wool sweater.

Bill, give my regards to Emily, Walt, Odin and Freya. **lv**

Thomas Dean firmly believes that the heart can be filled anywhere on Earth, thanks to Bill Holm.

>> LUNCH FROM PAGE 5

more than 15 minutes in the morning. That’s a quarter-hour that’s easy to come by simply by retiring and awakening that much earlier, or by Tivo-ing or blowing off that episode of *The Colbert Report*.

The better way though would be for us to acknowledge that while these are tough times, and we are constantly busy, and we juggle a thousand different priorities, there can be nothing more important than our children. I defy anyone, even those without kids, to name

In U.S. school cafeterias, food is heated instead of cooked.

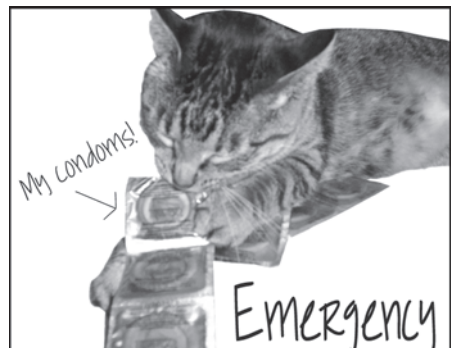
one thing that is more important. Yet our current food system, dictated to us every five years by the Food & Farm Bill, forces them through a food service system that is more like a meat grinder than dining room. Two things you don’t want people to know how you make them: laws and sausages.

To solve the problem, a good first step would be to remove the school lunch program from the maintenance side of a school’s daily operation and into the curriculum side, so that we are not hypocritically teaching the kids one thing in health class and quite another in the cafeteria. We don’t have cigarette vending machines in our schools, why do we have soda machines?

Another simple step, spend more on the food. This goes back to my priorities point—what do you have to spend money on that is more important than your children? That cup of coffee I had while listening to Ms. Beardsley cost more than the average American public school lunch. And the price of the delicious-sounding meal at her toddler’s Paris daycare? About two bucks. The cost argument is a red herring.

President Obama and Congress could move swiftly and easily on this by simply removing the program from the auspices of the U.S.D.A., which simply uses it as a dumping ground for excess commodities, and making it a joint program of the Department of Education and Health and Human Services. Thus our schools could use lunchtime as the teachable moment it truly is, and our healthier kids will learn better in the bargain. **lv**



It’s About the Food is a monthly feature of Little Village. Chef Kurt Michael Friese is co-owner, with his wife Kim, of the Iowa City restaurant Devotay and serves on the Slow Food USA Board of Directors. Comments may be directed to devotay@mchsi.com.



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HIP HOP

GZA performs April 1 at
the Englert Theatre as
part of the Mission Creek
Midwest Festival

By the time many of you read this, GZA/Genius will likely have performed *Liquid Swords* in its entirety at the Englert Theatre, April 1. What is a hip hop audience like in a state that's 94 percent white with a population density of 52 people per square mile (as opposed to the 74-percent white New York—the birthplace of hip hop—with a population density nearly eight times as large as Iowa's)? In Iowa City

many forms, lyrically, physically and spiritually. The man versus man references to samurai, chess and street life intertwine to create the narrative conflict necessary for any great story. It is no more alienating to Iowans than another work that samples *Shogun Assassin*, Quentin Tarantino's ultra-violent *Kill Bill: Volume 2*.

The dubious indictment of hip hop culture by Iowa City police Sgt. Mike Brotherton in the January 3, 2009, *Iowa City Press-Citizen* article, "Bar Survives Turbulent Start," exposes the persistent misconception that continues to linger around hip hop and one that seemingly stems from those who do not appreciate the art form. "We have problems with hip hop," Brotherton said. "It's a cultural thing across the country. Hip hop has always been associated with violence."

Of course correlation does not imply causation. Listening to hip hop doesn't necessarily make a person violent, and violent people do not necessarily listen to hip hop. The suggestion from our local authority figure that hip hop breeds violence is certainly not a great advertisement for the scene. Brotherton was talking about Los Cocos, the new bar on the southeast side that regularly plays hip hop. Rumors flew that gunshots were fired in the parking lot of this club in November—rumors that were never confirmed.

Most fans of the genre are able to see through the simplistic world-view that hip hop begets violence. The majority of local emcees are not crafting rhymes about thug life anyway. They're writing lyrics about their life here in

Iowa, just like the writers from the polar opposite end of the local popularity spectrum, the folk/alt-country musicians.

One would think that as a native of Southeastern Iowa, growing up along the Mighty Miss', Greg Brown's "Mississippi Serenade" would be more immediate to my experience than GZA's "Killah Hills 10304." But the imagery conjured in lines such as:

*From the cool kiss, the kiss of the air.
Gonna cry like a fish, talk like a bush,
When the breeze blows,
I'll follow it somewhere.*

Sounds equally native and foreign to me as:

*Like this ex-worker, tried to smuggle
a half a key
In his left leg, even underwent surgery
They say his pirate limp gave him away*

GZA evokes images even more distant to us Iowans than his 10304 zip code, those from Medieval Japan. Romanticism rules our aesthetic whims. A one-time event of going down to the fishin' hole or rumored gunshots in a bar's parking lot get monumentalized by our imaginations.

I think more people in this town enjoy hip hop music than actually show up at the hip hop shows. Whether they feel like poseurs or think a gun might get pulled on them, I don't know. I know we're allowed to enjoy beats as well as banjos here, being situated in a small city that is culturally more akin to Chicago than anywhere else in Iowa.

Hopefully, the inclusion of such a legendary act as part of the Mission Creek festival, alongside the area's more traditional bands, will be a catalyst for IC hip hop—proving, once and for all, that we have a crowd for this. **lv**

Matt Butler is Three One Nine.

Even if the Wu-Tang Clan is a peripheral blip on your music radar, you probably at least have a vague notion that they're nothing to fuck with, especially if you've seen more than a couple episodes of Chappelle's Show. Their 1993 debut, *Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)*, became the prototype for over a decade of hip hop style. The large, extended family of rappers, the slang, the mafia themes, the Cristal, the hardcoreness of it all that came to dominate nineties rap music can be traced back to ideas germinated in the so-called Shaolin Land. Of course "Wu-Tang" the term and corporation now represents an extensive honeycomb of killa beez, side projects, solo albums, video games, clothing, etc. The first wave of solo albums in 1995 produced the very best examples of Wu-Tang products and remains relevant almost 15 years later. Both Raekwon's *Only Built 4 Cuban Linx...* and GZA's *Liquid Swords* are considered by fans and critics as the pinnacle of Wu-Tang achievement and deserving of spots on any best-of list, hip hop or otherwise.

specifically, many of us migrated here from smaller towns, bringing rural experiences to a city with urban amenities.

The easy, naive answer to this question is that we're a bunch of peaceful honkies who can't relate to the stark depictions of violence supposedly glorified in such albums as *Liquid Swords*. The album is a gritty, criminological exposition of urban life which draws thematic elements from martial arts cinema, particularly the 1980 movie *Shogun Assassin*. But it neither celebrates nor condemns that lifestyle. GZA's expertly crafted allusions present a nuanced and honest portrayal of doing battle in

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Homegrown Beats

Searching for homegrown hip hop in Iowa City anymore is like combing the desert for the Yeti. Now, granted, this is coming from a white girl who doesn't go out much anymore, but Iowa City has seen surges of hip hop elements in these past 20 years that beg us to ask—the month GZA/The Genius graces the Englert Theater's stage—Where has all the homegrown hip hop gone?

"The thing about college kids is they only want to hear what's popular," said Zach Lint, better known as Coolzey and—to townies—as one of the core members of the Sucka MC's. "I just don't think any hip hop person in Iowa City is going to be able to have a big draw on a constant basis unless they make a name for themselves somewhere else."

Ghostface Killahs or Just Ghosts?

The Sucka MC's were actively performing—with 10 solid members and 20 to 30 "satellite" members—from 1999 to 2003, Coolzey said, before most of the members either got married or graduated.

He doesn't think of himself as a hip hop artist really, more of an all-around musician who doesn't like defining himself by genre. As of this printing, he last performed at the Picador in Grism, with Grace Sinclair of Petit Mal and two members of Lipstick Homicide. They had kinda a grunge-punk sound.

It was a far cry from hip hop. The hip hop shows in March at the Picador consisted of local emcee David the Saint (David Santiago Smith) and local producer Clancy Everafter (Clancy Clark) on Wednesday, March 11, and Iowa emigrants the Bad Fathers the following night.

The Bad Fathers—a band that throws rhymes on top of skater spazz-punk—came back to play for a 100-plus crowd that Thursday. It had all the energy of a thumping hip hop show, complete with rafter pull-ups, and left one inebriated female literally jump-

ing up and down screaming for more.

Now, local music-scene history note: emcees Juan Hooks, Austin "Auto" Galante and Justin "Cousin" Cox were the Committee before bringing additional instruments in to form the Bad Fathers, so this history extends to the original incarnation. The band told Little Village by email that it was most active between 2000 and 2006, having left town for a sunnier (and more expensive) Los Angeles in 2007.

"We did really well in Iowa City," Bad Fathers vocalist Justin wrote. "I know some

forced to transform themselves and their environments into something creative, to just stay sane. Perhaps Iowa is too nice a place to live, that hip hop is not needed as an outlet."

Young Youth Rockin' the Gold...

The two surges homegrown Iowa City hip hop can claim happened in the late nineties and between 2002 and 2006. It's impossible to talk about Iowa City's homegrown hip hop without mentioning producer Tack-Fu. Tack (Timothy Tack) started making tapes in the nineties—and formed the 85 Decibel Monks circa 2002—but is one who hasn't moved away since.

"We hit the roof that most bands of any type—in Iowa—eventually hit."
—Jethro, Bad Fathers



Bad Fathers perform in March at the Picador

other bands did too. Iowa City's central location makes it a really great place to tour from."

"The people who were receptive to our music took it and ran with it," added Jeff Rion, a.k.a. Jethro, the band's producer. "But I feel we hit the roof that most bands of any type—in Iowa—eventually hit. There just isn't a large enough market or an industry in place to support musicians full time."

Justin said they moved to L.A. for their careers, the warmth and...because it's not Iowa. The original members had lived here too long to not succumb to the itch to try something different.

"Many of the interesting people who grow up in Iowa City can't wait to leave," said former Iowa Citian and hip hop lover Agon Mizelle via Facebook. "Perhaps [an] urban setting is key [to hip hop's presence]. There is so much stress in the big city, that one is

In the early nineties, United Action for Youth (UAY) supported the hip hop aspirations of then-high schoolers Josiah "Jay" Fields and Agon Mizelle, who weren't originally from Iowa but moved here and lived with it.

"Iowa was a drag," Josiah says. He said he and Agon bonded at Southeast Junior High because they were the only ones around that cared about hip hop. Josiah was from California and Agon from New York, he said, so they felt they knew something about hip hop that Iowans were clueless about.

It wasn't until Josiah—who with Agon was making the *Mighty All-Stars of Shit* tapes—met the Sucka MC's—of the *Cold Stone Shit* tapes—that he saw any sort of scene developing.

"I was buying a lot of underground tapes, went into Record Collector, hunting for tapes," Josiah said. "The only people seriously doing that were Tack-Fu, Coolzey, Sucka MC's, Agon and myself."

He said Coolzey called and said he didn't like Josiah's tape until he got to one song, which was enough to invite him to hang out with the rest of the Sucka MC's.

"Jay was a pretty tireless source in the hip hop scene, threw down so many beats and freestyled all the time," Coolzey said. "Graffiti,

Is Iowa City homegrown hip hop the victim of the town having too much "culture" already?

scratching beats...what it takes to make a community is a bunch of people doing that."

Six-Step to Freedom?

Josiah said that it took a few years after that before other elements of hip hop culture started popping up, namely graffiti and breaking. For a period in 2001, a breakdancing crew would battle Wednesday nights at the Sports Column—one of the b-boys, Andrew Matseshe, worked there as a bouncer.

"I feel like hip hop could thrive in Iowa City, and it has," Agon said. "I remember sneaking through train yards with graf artists on numer-

students, coming and going, taking only an intellectual interest in the anthropology of hip hop, but going no further. Who knows."

Rize Above

Hip hop everywhere seems to be going through either its awkward teenage years or a mid-life crisis—depending on the lifespan the cultural movement will eventually claim. RJD2 decided to find his inner pop/rock, and according to a recent MTV.com article, Kanye West needed T-Pain's help to prevent his new album, *808s & Heartbreak*, from sounding like an adult contemporary one. So why should homegrown hip hop in Iowa City buck the trend—the trend of hip hop not being hip hop?

"Perhaps hip hop does not need to take root in Iowa City either," says Agon. "There is enough culture of its own there."

Justin of the Bad Fathers said, "Living in Iowa City was a blessing for me—all the funk and jazz jams and such. The poetry readings. I learned so much."

Is Iowa City homegrown hip hop the victim of the town having too much "culture" already? Animosity (Derek Thorn) of the Uniphonics is still in town and rhyming, albeit on top of a funk and jazz backdrop.

The band plays April 10 at the Picador, for all those interested in seeing the experiment.

Deejays and producers can take liberties the single-instrumentalists don't have the capacity for, mixing and sampling allowing for much greater flexibility between genres.

"Clancy is one of the most underrated and best Iowa City producers," Josiah said. "I think he's phenomenal." Adding, "If you're not from one of the major entertainment areas, you can just be yourself...Clancy's really got an Iowa sound."

That Iowa sound is not one person's product, however, and word is that a crowd is stirring. The current elusive tendency of this scene makes that word hard to verify—but some rumors must be indulged. Word is there's someone named Tyrell who's talented and still around, looking for the opportunity to again be active, and someone named Mike, who might even be on stage somewhere soon, and maybe—just maybe—Tyrell will meet Mike and Mike will meet Brandon. And they'll spit, and they'll throw down beats, and Iowa City will have its new hip hop heroes. **IV**

Melody Dworak is the editor of Little Village.



David the Saint on the stage at the Picador

ous occasions. I remember freestyling with some pretty serious emcees. I have had more than a few breakdance battles in Gabes, and have seen deejays back-queue records with expert precision."

"Graffiti, scratching beats...what it takes to make a community is a bunch of people doing that."

—Coolzey

The mere presence of these different elements of hip hop culture wasn't enough to create a cohesive scene, however.

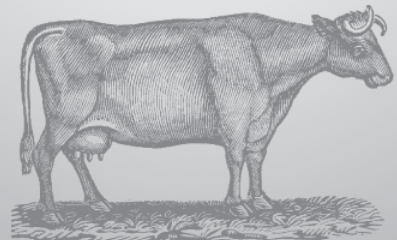
"When you look at the history of Iowa City hip hop, it always had a divide and a slight tinge of bitterness," Josiah said.

The emcees weren't in with the breakers weren't in with the graf artists—it just wasn't a mutually supportive community.

"I remember going to a breakdance competition in West Branch or West Liberty or something like that, there was a strong sense of community—a lot of Mexican immigrants and poor rural whites, who seemed to really take to breakdancing, and stick to the core hip hop," Agon said. "Perhaps the community was tight-knit there, and Iowa City has too many

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Man with a Plan

Here's what hip hop promoter Tanki Nyane wants out of IC: Local hip hop pinned down, weathered posters of emcees competing with indie rockers, people strolling down Clinton Street on their iPods listening to Animosity and his future brethren. Nyane wants to clog the Iowa rhyme drain, build a scene worth cultivating, drop "Iowa" and "hip hop" in the same phrase without this reaction:

"People are like, 'Iowa's lame, man, I don't want to be a hip hop artist in Iowa City, man.' Dude, it's not about that," Nyane said. "If your talent is good enough it doesn't matter where you're from. You can be from Two Buck Pacaloo—but if you have that drive, that skill, it's not going to matter."

For him, the key to such a stake is The Industry, a near year-old establishment sitting at 211 Iowa Avenue at the Q-Bar's old home. Like Nyane himself, The Industry is a local work-in-progress—a venue with drive and dreams that has yet to really make its mark.

"This town has a really solid music core, and if you bring in anything new, there's a little upheaval. It's been a bit rough," said Josh Nelson, an Industry employee since it opened its doors in late April 2008. "The Yacht Club and the Picador has its regulars, its dance parties. They're established. We're a little bit more diverse, unpredictable."

This combined with a problem unique to The Industry: one of space. Unlike other area strongholds that tuck stages away in corners and take only a couple hundred to fill, The Industry echoes with space—Nelson claims a capacity of at least 550—though often it's filled more by deep beats streaming from its top notch sound system than by people. On perhaps a typical Thursday night, a deejay was composing his set from a table held up by cinder blocks, music covering the dozen or so liquidly moving on the sparse dance floor. It's tailor-made for a barn-burner, a giant show that would overflow the Yacht Club two times over.

The only problem is getting people inside. That's what Nyane wants to fix.

Though a bit of a drifter, 24-year-old Nyane is eager to plant his feet in Iowa City and "brand" both a scene and himself—a difficult and somewhat vague task, though one

The Industry is a work-in-progress, a venue with drive and dreams that has yet to really make its mark.

that Nyane's wholly committed to. A native of Lesotho, a country in the southern Africa, Nyane is accustomed to movement—escaping violence there when he was a child, landing in Iowa City in his teenage years. Enter

establish "Nyane Enterprises," his marketing firm—with dreams of making his name promoting local music.

"If I'm in Iowa and no one's rapping consistently in Iowa—and if I can make it big here, people are going to love me like Ashton Kutcher, you know what I'm saying?"

Of course, Nyane doesn't act alone. Sid Mali, otherwise known as "Sid the Kid"—a 2007 University of Iowa grad who recently set off for the West Coast to build his name as a purveyor of hip hop—does the heavy lifting, making East Coast connections and working with Industry booking to schedule the big shows. From South Africa proper, Mali is close enough to Nyane to be considered a "cousin," a business partner and friend committed to the IC scene.

"If you could see this guy work, you would cry," Nyane said. "How does he do it? He's always real [Nyane snaps] on the ball."

Efforts to talk to Mali for this article proved Nyane wasn't lying. Interviews were set and shifted based on his intense amount of business: apparent

Tanki Nyane wants to build a local hip hop scene worthy of a "little Minneapolis."

meetings with the President of Botswana, his own journalistic endeavors for his impressively stacked Amazashow.com, and culminating with a booker's worst nightmare—the cancellation of an act.

The original Industry show, the one Nyane was banking on sparking the renaissance of the IC hip hop scene, had its headliner drop out. DJ Whoo Kid, the "mix-tape king" and deejay for 50 Cent's G-Unit crew, was summoned by Fiddy to perform in Texas—revoking his presence at The Industry on April 18th. Luckily for (and a credit to) Mali, a few meetings and two days later he reported another artist was booked for the slot: Kidz in the Hall, an up-and-coming emcee duo who may even better fill whatever yearning

PLAN CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 >>



"Does Iowa City deserve a hip hop scene? Oh yeah. Oh yeah man," Nyane said.

some "trouble" and direction from his mother to take off and find himself, he traveled the United States, selling cigarettes and cologne out west, working on an Alaskan rig and finally returning to Iowa City less than two years ago to start again, again. He's trying to

© is for Criminal

Benjamin Franzen and Kembrew McLeod have put together a quite entertaining documentary history of the sampling controversy in hip hop music. The film, *Copyright Criminals* will have a free, public screening April 3 at 8pm in 101 Becker Communications Building on the UI Campus. In this film, or at least in the rough cut of it, you will hear the following amazing things: Chuck D admits that you *can* in fact copyright a beat; Jeff Chang, self-proclaimed rap historian, at an actual loss for words in response to the question “why is sampling so controversial” (must not have seen that one coming?); Clyde “the Funky Drummer” Stubblefield maintaining that the only artist ever to thank him in any way for recording perhaps the most sampled drum line in all of hip hop was—that’s right—Melissa Etheridge.

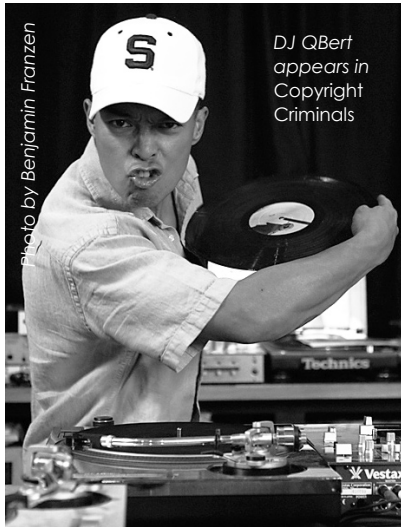
Along the way, you will also get Hank Shocklee admitting that he tried to purposely hide his sources for the layered samples on

right law or the desire to foster new forms of creativity? If we recognize sampling as necessary to the historic development of hip hop, then should it now no longer be tolerated since the musical form is so well established? And finally, what about the race issue? Isn’t it really just that a white-dominated record industry

and copyright law do not adequately foresee and adapt to a new musical form originally developed by non-whites? To their credit, Franzen and McLeod tackle these questions only indirectly and with no definitive answers to any of them. They instead focus on two forces that inscribe all these issues: history and economics.

These points of focus are certainly one of the documentary’s great strengths, both in terms of its describing the artistic development of the form and also in outlining the economic contingencies that shaped its development. The filmmakers essentially argue that sampling is inevitable in the creation of most art, that sampling was necessary given the economic conditions in which hip hop developed as a musical form, and that the economics of sampling and copyright protection has had an immense impact on the shape that sampled music of all forms has taken since at least the early 1990s.

There is some credit paid to the problematic argument that a culture of poverty, especially in New York City’s outer boroughs, was the indispensable bedrock for the development of hip hop during the 1970s—and somehow in the absence of the extreme poverty, social alienation, and governmental irresponsibility of the era, Grandmaster Flash could not possibly have existed (No jobs? Oh well, at least we still have breakdancing). This is mostly context for the more interesting questions that the film wants to ask. The film is framed



DJ Qbert
appears in
*Copyright
Criminals*

Photo by Benjamin Franzen

By largely ignoring the rules, hip hop artists came up with a whole new way of thinking about music.

those Public Enemy records—still held as the gold standard of hip hop production. You will also see some great footage of Grandmaster Flash working a turntable (behind his back) in somebody’s kitchen. Most of all, you will hear how the sampling controversy has developed and changed musical output in recent years.

When discussing sampling in hip hop, many of the same questions tend to arise: What should be more important? The impetus toward protecting creative output with copy-

Disclaimer: So sue us, we love our writers. Kembrew McLeod has been a Little Village contributor for as long as we remember, and we love his work. He’s worth the space.

Yo! Filmmakers Rap

Filmmakers Kembrew McLeod and Benjamin Franzen answer our pressing questions.

Little Village: *Much of the film takes place in the 80s and early 90s, the so called golden age of hip hop. Why make this movie now?*

Kembrew McLeod: Today, most everyone is affected by the same sorts of issues that only a small handful of hip hop artists dealt with twenty years ago. Now it is happening on a much larger scale, and by looking back to the recent past we can gain insight into our present moment—so that we as a society don’t make the same mistakes again.

LV: *How does the sampling controversy relate to similar disputes in other art mediums?*

Benjamin Franzen: Producing *Copyright Criminals* has ironically put us, as documentary filmmakers, in a parallel position to the subject and characters of the film. In order to portray the history of hip hop music sampling, we are inherently working with audio and visual media that has been deemed illegal—we are constantly reminded of copyrights constrains and forced to utilize clever techniques to avoid legal problems.

LV: *Have you cleared the samples for your film?*

KM: *Copyright Criminals* talks about how copyright law forced artists like Public Enemy—who used to sample up to 20-30 song fragments to create one new song—to stop because it was too expensive. It’s simply cheaper and easier to only sample one song, a la Puff Daddy. If we as filmmakers wanted to clear all the rights to PE’s song “Fight the Power,” we not only have to get permission from their record company and song publishing company, we would also have to pay each of the 30 copyright holders whose songs were sampled in “Fight the Power.” At \$10,000 or so per clearance, that’s over a quarter million dollars to clear just one song in our film!

LV: *On a broader scale, why is the sampling battle relevant to the world at large?*

BF: The issues surrounding the hip hop sampling controversy in the early 1980s remain active in our current media culture. Today we all sample. YouTube, MP3s, and file sharing are part of our daily lives and help to define the sampling and remix culture in which we live.

LV: *What is the logical conclusion of these copyright wars? Where will it end? When?*

KM: Well, I think they’ll keep going on and on...way past the break of dawn.

CRIMINALS CONTINUED ON PAGE 29 >>



For those listening to hip hop 20 years ago, Harry Allen's name was well known after the release of Public Enemy's classic "Don't Believe the Hype," from *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*. That 1988 album—with its massive freight train of a title, and rocketing aural attack—established the group as agit-prop provocateurs and that era's top hip hop act.

In "Don't Believe the Hype," a wholesale lyrical attack on print, radio and television news and entertainment media, PE's Chuck D and Flavor Flav set up Allen's classic four-word cameo with a question. "I'm going to my Media Assassin, Harry Allen, I gotta ask him..."—Flav interjects, "Yo, Harry, you're a writer, are we that type?"—to which Allen deadpans, in his deep, resonant voice: "Don't believe the hype."

On Wednesday, April 1, at 7:30pm, Harry Allen will give a talk in the IMU's Second Floor Ballroom titled *Part of the Permanent Record: Photos from the Previous Century*. The discussion will center on a series of photographs he took of Run-DMC, LL Cool J, Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, T La Rock, Public Enemy and other important hip hop figures from the 1980s. Allen's talk also shares its title with his photography exhibit, which debuted in New York City two years ago; *Part of the Permanent Record* will debut in Iowa as part of a UI Museum of Art show planned for Spring 2010.

Harry Allen took this series of photos before he gained notoriety through his connection to Public Enemy, and before he broke new ground in the mid-1980s writing about hip hop for *The Village Voice* and other major print outlets. In the early-1980s, he attended Adelphi University with Chuck D and other members of PE, when many of these photos were shot. They document the emerging hip hop scene as it expanded from its roots in New York City, out into the suburbs, and on its way to becoming a multibillion-dollar lifestyle industry.

One of the many things that set Public Enemy apart from other hip hop groups, then and now, is the fact that they were the first to include a writer in their crew. Not a writer, as in graffiti writer, but a journalist and critic. Allen's moniker, Media Assassin, acknowledged that he and the rest of PE were battling mainstream media on its own turf. "Media Assassin," he tells me, "makes an allusion to the notion of warfare, of weaponry. It naturally fits with a group for whom these ideas were used to make music and statements—the ideas of violence, and language, and history."

Public Enemy prompted dialogues about race and politics, using radio, television and vinyl to launch their provocations to get people talking, and thinking. This was in the middle of Reagan's 1980s, when that administration turned a blind eye to the crack epidem-

ic and other problems that devastated black communities. In popular culture, things were not much better. During the 1990 Academy Awards, Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* lost to the racially regressive *Driving Miss Daisy*, and Bobby McFerrin topped the *Billboard* charts with "Don't Worry Be Happy."

With McFerrin's song, white yuppies got a twofer—they could feel "multicultural" by consuming the work of an African American pop-jazz vocalist and still imbibe in the good-time party that was the go-go '80s, an economy that further marginalized many people of color. ("Don't Worry Be Happy" was a number one jam," Chuck D

said in "Fight the Power," from *Do the Right Thing*, "Damn if I say it you can slap me right here.")

Public Enemy created their own world of sound on records like *It Takes a Nation...* and 1990's *Fear of a Black Planet*. As PE producer Hank Shocklee tells me, "What we wanted to create was kind of like a 'reality record.' You hear it out in the streets, and what you hear in the streets is back in the record again." He adds, "We got so far into sampling, we even sampled ourselves." On *Fear of a Black Planet*, the group recorded radio and television coverage that discussed Public Enemy, inserting these samples into their songs to comment

on the media distortions and misrepresentations of the group.

One such song, "Incident at 66.6 FM," chopped up a talk radio interview with Chuck D, hosted by Alan Combs, best known as the pathetic liberal co-host of *Fox News' Hannity & Combs*. Chuck D recalls, "'Incident at 66.6 FM' was actually a live radio interview that I did at WNBC in New York before a show we did with Run-DMC at Nassau Coliseum. The host of the show was Alan Combs. Alan

us who watched this music (rap, hip hop) grow off the sidewalk will remember that, despite thousands of recordings, concerts and park jams by individuals who were and are far more innovative, creative and black than the Beastie Boys, the first rap crew on *SPIN's* cover was not only white but white-faced. This is the Colonel Tom Parker story of black American music. It's an old, tired story; it's an untrue story; and a magazine of *SPIN's* caliber is capable of much much more.

As a teenaged *SPIN* subscriber, it was the first time I encountered Harry Allen's name, roughly a year before "Don't Believe the Hype" was released. Fifteen years later, in an interview with the magazine, Allen said that his letter was responding to a "very conscious fear and awareness that at that point in hip hop's history it might be eclipsed by white people participating in it. Which is what

happened to earlier forms of black music with the arrival of star-powered white performers." He added, "The race issue in hip hop has been refined—it has not gone away, and it is not better. It's just subtler now."

Harry Allen hasn't stopped—and he surely won't stop—writing about politics, race and culture for the *VIBE*, *The Village Voice*, *The Source* and other national publications. Allen also hosts a weekly radio show, *Nonfiction*, on WBAI-NY, and he publishes the blog *Media Assassin*, at harryallen.info—all of which serve as a forum for his thoughtful, forceful critiques. His rich and diverse career is a testament to the power of words, ideas and creativity. It is also a reminder of the importance of alternative media, and why we need independent voices that can engage in honest dialogues about the important issues of our time. **lv**

Kembrew McLeod is currently rehearsing with the Killer Apps, Iowa City's only all-mobile-phone cover band.



"Run-DMC and Doctor Dre, Outside of WBAU/90.3 FM, in the Adelphi University Center, Garden City NY, July 1983." Copyright © by Harry Allen.

said he tried his best to sue us back then, but NBC, who owned the broadcast felt it would be a waste of time." Even though "Incident at 66.6 FM" was an interstitial piece—a kind of skit—it is one of the album's highlights, showcasing the ingenious ways that Public Enemy remixed mainstream media messages in order to comment on them.

While Public Enemy fired off their critiques through the medium of music, Harry Allen happily tipped a few sacred cows in the world of print journalism. For instance, when *SPIN* magazine put the Beastie Boys on the cover in 1987, he wrote this blistering letter to the editor:

Your decision to put a white crew on the cover of your magazine as *SPIN's* front-page presentation of hip hop [Beastie Boys, March 1987] betrays: 1) the inherent phoniness of your alternative stance; 2) your lack of facility with nascent black musical forms; and 3) your own racism. American musical history is running over with contradictions. One just hopes that those of



Harry Allen

Part of the Permanent Record: Photos from the Previous Century

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Life after Gang Lu

Miya Rodolfo-Sioson was given a second chance at life. She was chosen for a purpose.

Miya was the lucky one. The odds had turned on her in an instant but reversed course just as quickly again.

Your faith tells you which of those statements to believe, but the facts tell you this: Miya Rodolfo-Sioson was the lone survivor of the 1991 University of Iowa shootings. She was a temporary secretary—the victim of a dispute that didn't involve her. By fate, by grace, or by luck she had a second life to live. She used it proudly.

Daniel Julien met Miya in that second life, lived mostly in Berkeley, California where she'd moved to escape Iowa's cold winters and the weight of the Gang Lu shootings. The woman Julien met there, paralyzed from the neck down since that awful November day, intrigued him for more than just the events that had defined her life.

"I didn't know what to expect of a parapalegic doing demanding work," Julien said of the woman he had hired to work at his student exchange program. "But she turned out to be capable of many things which able-bodied people are not."

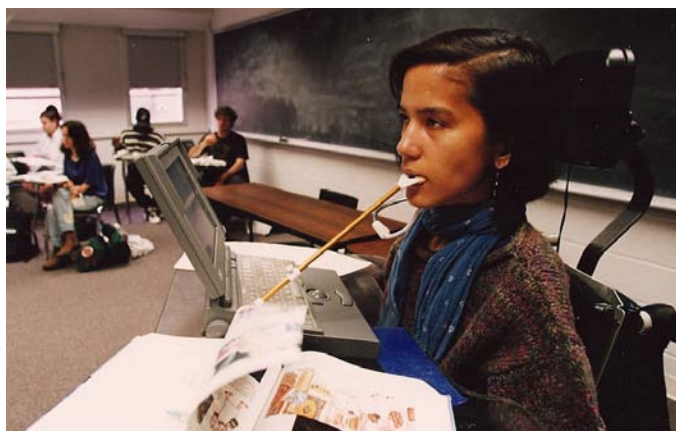
He decided to make a movie about her. Julien's film, *Miya of the Quiet Strength*, has its Iowa premier April 12th at the Pappajohn Business Building on the UI Campus as part of a week commemorating her life. Other activities include a photo exhibit, luncheon and outreach events, all of which are listed on the film's website www.miyafilmm.com.

Miya had been an activist as a young adult, before she was shot. But after landing in California, she became an advocate for the rights of the disabled. She spoke out on important local issues. She was appointed to the San Francisco Disabilities Rights Commission in 1998, where she served for eight years—two of them as chairperson.

"Everyone told her she was an inspiration," said Julien. "She didn't like that word. She

called it the 'i-word.' But it's hard to avoid it when you talk about her story."

It was years after they first met when Julien heard from a mutual friend the truth of what Miya called her "accident."



Miya Rodolfo-Sioson earned her BA from The University of Iowa

"To me this event is like ancient history," Miya told San Francisco's KGO-TV in 2008, "There's so much that's happened since then."

Not all of it was good. Shortly after Julien learned of the shooting, Miya told him she had cancer. That's when he told her he wanted to make a film about her story. She accepted, even though she'd turned down similar offers from professional crews before.

For 13 months, Julien documented Miya's activism, sifted through the media archives of the incident and interviewed her friends and family. He dove into the issues that affected her life like disability rights, gun control and health insurance.

In March 2008, he returned to Iowa City to learn more.

"I discovered so many things about her that she had never talked about," Julien said. "Our culture is so much about bragging about things we've done...or didn't do. She was the opposite of that."

In Iowa City, Miya had organized student activists against the U.S. involvement in El Salvador, was interested in women's rights and, when her rehab was complete, she had returned to finish her degree on the same campus that had been the scene of so much heartache.

When he was wrapping the film, Julien got

a call from Miya. She wanted to do one more interview. She wanted to talk about dying.

"It was difficult to shoot. She was very private, but had opened up during the filming," Julien recalled.

The film was finished in November 2008. Julien held a special screening for Miya, her family and friends in the hospital where she was being treated for stage four breast cancer. Days later, Miya passed away.

In a message on the film's website, her former Iowa City roommate, a woman named Suzanne, laments: "I have always felt that if I had been the victim, I probably would have drown[ed] in bitterness and regret at what I had lost. But Miya refused to fall into that pit. She just got on with the job of living.

I still find it hard to comprehend how, after overcoming such obstacles, she should have to endure [cancer, too]."

The fates. God. Chance. Whatever it was

Photo courtesy of the family of Miya Rodolfo-Sioson

Miya of the Quiet Strength Sun, April 12, 7pm

Pappajohn Business Bldg, UI Campus

Q & A session with director Daniel Julien and others who appear in film to follow.

Additional events during the week-long commemoration listed on www.miyafilmm.com

that dealt Miya Rodolfo-Sioson a cruel hand didn't account for her resilient spirit. *Quiet Strength* documents a life lived beautifully under such trying circumstances.

"Miya never realized the impact she had on other people," recalled Julien. "She underplayed the things she had done even though she had done a lot more than most of us."

Forgive the viewers, Miya, if you're called an inspiration. **lv**

Andrew Sherburne is a documentary filmmaker and publisher of Little Village. He can only watch movies at home now, since he has a baby.

Doc Tales

The Iowa City Documentary Film Festival brings nonfiction gems out of the shadows

Wake up. Make coffee. Out the door by 7:45. Work. Eat lunch. Chat with a co-worker. More work. Traffic. Home. Pet the dog. Dinner. Bed. Reset.

So often, one day is like the rest. We often forget to open our eyes to the world we pass through. Thankfully, there is a global army of cameraphiles intent on bringing the world to us.

Yet, if you want to see their work, you'll have to look beyond the local megaplex. These films live in the art-house theaters, the impromptu screening rooms and free range of the internet.

In April, for the seventh consecutive year, the Iowa City Documentary Film Festival (ICDOCS) brings two dozen short films to town for a three-day celebration of nonfiction storytelling.

The festival is organized by members of the UI's Cinema & Comparative Literature program. It was founded on dual principles of "fostering dialogue on contemporary issues" and "exploring the boundaries" of documentary filmmaking.

"Documentary means a lot of different



Geri de Seve poses as Mame Faye in *Sittin' on a Million*.

things, depending on who you ask," explained festival organizer Alex Petsel. "The work that is screened varies greatly."

"I often think of a quotation by Jean Marie Straub that all films are documentaries," Filmmaker David Kelley (*Flotsam Jetsam*) said. "If you look at fiction and documentary films...sharing the same photographic medium, then they are both realistic and in a discourse with realism."

In fact, some filmmakers see documentary as a dirty word, since audiences traditionally identify the term with the staid and somber educational films of their youth.

"When asked what I do, I often find my-

self saying 'I make documentary films'—and in an instant throwing in 'not for television,'" explains Minou Norouzi (*All Shades of Grey*).

ICDOCS' loose definition of documentary gives the event a fine-art feel, weaving experimental film, motion photography and traditional short stories into a unified experience. If Hollywood has a set formula, these films do all they can to ignore it.

Most of the filmmakers exhibiting their work will never see a royalty check, or even recoup the cost of making their film. In fact, they pay just to be a part of festivals like this. So

why do they do it?

"The artists want to gain exposure for their work, for their cause or simply be a part of an international festival," Petsel said.

"The work usually has its own story to tell, and I feel I am usually just a conduit for that story to be told," said Annmarie Lanesey (*Sittin' on a Million*) of her dedication to the craft.

Her film straddles the traditional lines of documentary to tell the story of an early 1900s small-town madame. It blends a journalistic pursuit of an urban legend with performance art re-enactments. It's the sort of creative storytelling that most of us rarely encounter on our digital cable package.

Much of the thanks for this new generation of video artists is owed to the advent of the digital camera and digital editing software. But this blessing can also be a curse, as the most well-known digital videos are YouTube sing-alongs, not the thoughtfully constructed work of dedicated artists.

Good thing, then, that festivals like ICDOCS persevere, to expose us to the unusual ideas and extraordinary stories that dwell in the seldom visited corners of our world.

If nothing else, it gives us something to talk about over lunch. **lv**

Andrew Sherburne

FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, APRIL 9

5:00pm – Bijou Theatre
Judge's Screening with
Jeanne Liotta

7:00pm – Bijou Theatre
Juried Screening 1:
Young Arabs, Nashi, Snake Skin, Spider House, Naomi & Irving, Anaconda Targets, Terraform Dance Party

9:30pm – The Picador
Opening Night DJ/VJ
Remix Party

FRIDAY, APRIL 10

5:00pm – Bijou Theatre
Juried Screening 2: *Keep the Home Fires Burning, A White Substance, O.W. Houten and Sons INC., O'er the Land, Suite of Summer Evenings*

8:00pm – W151
Pappajohn Bldg
Juried Screening 3:
Versatile, 2 Ambassadors: FAIR TRADE, All Shades of Grey, Dutch Cocaine Factory

SATURDAY, APRIL 11

Noon - Bijou Theatre
Juried Screening 4:
home.movie, Losing Ground, Flotsam Jetsam, Something Right, A Kite Tale

3:00pm - Bijou Theatre
Juried Screening 5:
Speech Memory, I Ain't Leaving, Peggy, Denis and Lauviah, Suffragette Slasher, Sittin' on a Million

6:00pm – W151
Pappajohn Bldg
Judge's Lecture
and Awards with
Dr. Patricia Zimmermann
9:00pm – Bo-James
Closing Party

Chaplin on the Economy

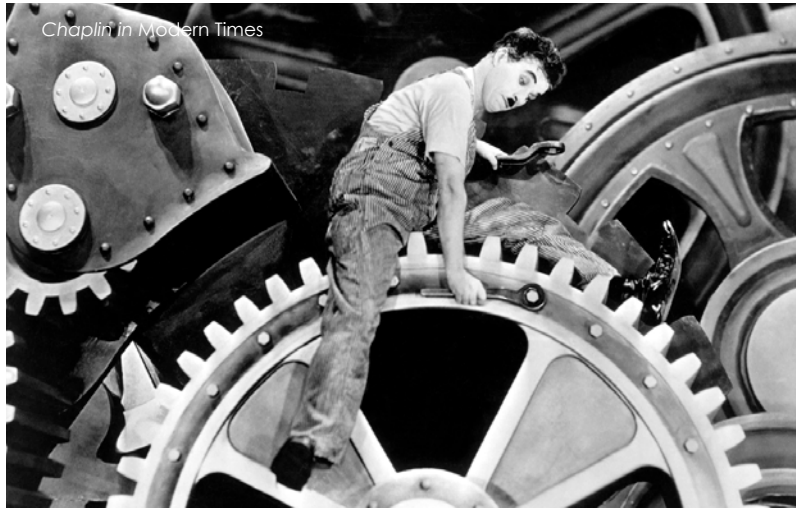
Someone should write an essay called “In Praise of Pretentiousness,”

because in the first years of adulthood—please, those years only!—a little insufferable pretentiousness goes a long way. It was pretentiousness, I admit, that led me into a Charlie Chaplin film festival when I was a freshman at Grinnell: I showed up to appreciate silent films. But that fateful afternoon I didn’t end up appreciating Chaplin’s art; I ended up falling in love with it. If “laughing your ass off” refers to laughing yourself off your seat, then it is no hyperbole, as anyone who has watched the mechanical feeding scene in *Modern Times* can attest.

One more story: I have a friend in Belgium who just took his four-year-old daughter to see a packed screening of *Modern Times*. At the end, as the Little Tramp and his girlfriend walk off into the sun, the entire theater, kids and grownups alike, rose to their feet and gave the ghosts a tearful ovation. I tell these two anecdotes simply to disarm any reservations any of you may harbor about seeing old, black-and-white, silent movies. Charlie Chaplin is popular art: children, highbrows, lowbrows, and all the brows in between love The Tramp.

So, the main reason to watch Charlie’s movies is that they tap into the deepest wellspring of delight. There’s never a time when Charlie Chaplin isn’t timely. But if you still need an excuse to watch his movies, or—if you’re like me—watch them for a twentieth or thirtieth time, then our current economic crisis is as good as any. For his movies speak more clearly about the mythic features of our mess than any others I know.

Chaplin’s films are often associated with The Great Depression: isn’t the plight of that age epitomized by a homeless little guy in undersized jacket, oversized pants and shoes, and tilted bowler, trying to make it in a universe tilted against him? But even *City Lights*



Chaplin in *Modern Times*

(1931), the film most associated with the Depression, was made before the stock-market crash, though it certainly spoke to many people’s condition when it was released. Still, from the birth of The Tramp in 1914 Chaplin always understood, intuitively and later explicitly, some partially conscious, partially unconscious myth we all have of our basic humanity in “modern times.” Nowadays, our cruder imaginations call this figure names like

There’s never a time when Charlie Chaplin isn’t timely. His movies speak more clearly about the mythic features of our current economic mess than any others I know.

Joe Sixpack: he’s the guy, all the most recent advertising campaigns tell us, who is really in need of a bailout. Chaplin refined this character, this myth, in his greatest films—*The Gold Rush* (1925), *The Circus* (1928), *City Lights* (1931), and *Modern Times* (1936)—to elicit maximum pity from us. I don’t use the word myth lightly here. The Tramp is a truly contemporary figure that strikes us as true and commands, at least while he shines on the screen, our full assent, as perhaps Poseidon once did in the midst of a storm.

The Chaplin movie that most directly deals with The Great Depression is *Monsieur*

Verdoux (1947), a movie about a banker who loses his job after the stock market collapse and becomes a strangely adorable bigamist and serial killer: He marries rich women and kills them for their fortunes. Great critics like André Bazin and Robert Warshaw have pointed out that this cruel character is the flipside of the sympathetic Tramp—the yang to his yin—much like the Hitler figure in *The Great Dictator* (1940) is the complement to the Jewish barber. (Chaplin on Hitler: “He stole my mous-

tache!”) As a great myth himself, *Verdoux* is interpretively bottomless, but at least one feasible take on him is that he symbolizes capitalism, which seems to be both fundamentally decent and fundamentally destructive. He kills his wives, partially, to provide for his child and his first ailing wife.

We haven’t exited the structure of Chaplin’s mythology. We still think with the figure of the innocent little guy. Perhaps we should learn from him that this figure is inseparable from the violent socio-pathologies that flow, invisibly except in times of crisis, through our economic system. There have been two major responses to our current economic woes. The first: We should bail out Main Street rather than Wall Street because it’s Wall Street that screwed up. The second: We have to bail out guilty Wall Street and innocent Main Street, because they’re inextricably bound together.

The second response is, in my opinion, closer to the truth of our situation. But do we want to rescue *Verdoux* to save The Tramp? Is there a yet more realistic third response? I myself haven’t heard it. I’m just hoping I’ll never have occasion to write on the relevance of *The Great Dictator*. **IV**

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

Birthing Medusa

When poet and teacher Barbara Lau began writing her first play about the transformation of the American teenager, she analyzed her knowledge of Greek mythology and found the famed goddess whose metamorphosis was one of the most terrifying and heartbreaking: Medusa.

"Just because she has a beauty-and-the-beast transformation, that's not enough. I looked at the condition she was forced to live in," Lau said. "She had looks that could kill [turning everything she looked at to stone]. And they did. She could not see anyone she loved, she couldn't see anyone period. She was totally isolated. I think a lot of the conditions and the powers have some very fascinating parallels between teenagers."

Lau's play, "Raising Medusa," will premiere April 2 at Riverside Theatre in Iowa City. In the meantime, Lau has been visiting area high schools to share her play and gather the thoughts of young people about their own transformations. The play follows the tumultuous relationship and awkward communication between a mother (Waterloo native and Broadway performer Nancy Youngblut) and teen daughter ("Maddie," played by Cornell College sophomore Laura Tatar) while Maddie goes through massive changes physically, emotionally and sociably. Both the mother

"Parents will never stop closing their eyes and having the best images of their children. But for all purposes, that person is gone."

- Barbara Lau on adolescence

and Maddie share their frustrations, wisdom and humor throughout the performance.

"It's a tug-of-war," Lau said, "the more the parent pulls on them to get them in control, get them in line and try to eek out some love, the more that [the children] pull."

The strained relationship between parents and children, Lau said, comes from the inability for parents to accept the "new" child who

walks through the door when they begin the transformation into adulthood.

"If you still loved them as you did when they were two or three, you could not bear to let them go. You need to be in a position that you are really exhausted [from your child]," she said. "The mother realizes she needs to go through a transformation as well...parents has

and I could not stop thinking about that [play]. And it just got under my skin, literally."

Lau's focus for the past three years has been "Raising Medusa," but credits the early roots of the project to a National Endowment for the Arts development grant and the encouragement of Riverside Theater artistic director Jody Hovland. The grant has helped provide

funding for its process and growth, but it was Hovland's enthusiasm for four poems of Lau's prize-winning anthology, "The Long Surprise," which inspired the play.

"When I first read Barbara's poems, they certainly resonated with me as a mother, but also as a theatre artist. They're very vivid emotionally and they employ strong imagery—and both of those qualities invite an adaptation



Barbara Lau looks on as Seanna Fiejo (left) and Raquel Loya perform during a workshop with the United Action for Youth Improv Group.

to do their own kind of growing up—growing up and growing away."

Lau's experience with teenage girls is not new to the mother of two. Her daughters—Grace, 19 and Lily, 15—have gone through changes of their own, and Lau drew on some of those experiences as well as research derived from mothers and psychologists she interviewed.

"['Medusa' highlights] the point we're at in society right now, coping with all of the types of expressions and experimentation that our young people are getting in to," she said. Lau notes that like any dialogue between parents and teens, there is plenty of humor to go around, either between the characters or from the Greek chorus who helps narrate the production.

"Once I made that leap, I got so excited about the idea of attempting to put in on stage. I tried to just stick to the page, the stuff I know, which is poetry," Lau said. "But I became so intrigued with it, it was just really delicious

tion to the stage," Hovland said "As both the artistic director and an actor in the ensemble, it's really exciting to be so deeply involved in the birthing of a brand new play. No one has gone before you with this work, so you have both the responsibility and the joy of creating the characters, the voices for the first time."

Lau currently teaches at Kirkwood Community College. After an early career in journalism, she decided it was time to move into creative writing and soon after, poetry. She received her bachelor's degree at the University of Texas in San Antonio, where she was raised, and later master's degrees from the University of Illinois and Warren Wilson College in North Carolina. She resides in Mt. Vernon with her husband, Donald Chamberlain, the composer of the music and sounds for "Raising Medusa."

MEDUSA CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 >>

Austintatious

South by Southwest (SXSW) is the daddy of all music festivals, four days of musical immersion held each March in Austin, Texas. This year, two Iowa City acts returned for their second dip: The Diplomats of Solid Sound and Caleb Engstrom.

With over 1,400 acts packed into 80 venues (including a church and an old Safeway supermarket), SXSW is well known for being as grueling as it is intoxicating.

Caleb Engstrom

"I feel supercharged," Engstrom said upon his March 23 return. "I think I came away reminded of something really important, validation. Along with that, I think I might have forgotten that there is a really great community of artists/musicians that I belong to."

Engstrom appeared at the Cabana Halle 6 with his new band, We are We. The 24-year-old, whose fragile-voiced melodies have distinguished him in indie circles, confirmed he is officially making the transition from solo artist to band. For one thing, the additional hands, Nate Henricks and Drew Ingersol, allow him more freedom on stage. "I think working as a group takes some pressure off of me," he said, "being able to create more sound live." He also gains a songwriter in Henricks.

Before leaving for Texas, Engstrom said he was hoping to hand out as many copies of the band's upcoming CD as he could burn. While bands have been known to "get discovered" at SXSW by having the "right person" come to their shows, Engstrom didn't have any unrealistic expectations.

"I don't think I'll be getting any 'deals' from this trip," he said. "Just some sun, free drinks, great songs and smiles. I wouldn't say that SXSW is just another gig, but it is almost a vacation for me. I work a full-time job (plus a part-time job) so it will be nice to not have to wake up early and get to spend some time with friends in a warm place surrounded by great live music."

Although they didn't end up being approached by any "industry people," Engstrom

said the SXSW show went "really well." We are We opened the label showcase, "so the crowd wasn't overwhelming, but present." While they only played one show in Austin, on the drive down they stopped in to Oklahoma City for a gig with Ra Ra Riot and Maps and Atlases.

Exemplifying the downside of the SXSW experience, for both band and fan, Caleb said, "Friday night, I waited by myself for almost an hour, at 3 in the morning, trying to catch a taxi. I finally got home around 4 am to our friend's apartment and couldn't find a blanket or pillow. I fell asleep on the living room floor."

Diplomats of Solid Sound

Before heading down for his band's sophomore SXSW appearance, Diplomats of Solid Sound guitarist Doug Roberson said, "We are going to SXSW mainly for the potential exposure and the fact that most of our newer band members have never experienced the full-on SXSW party. I am actually hopeful about the trip. We have a lot more going on for us now than last time we went in 2005."

Last time down, the Diplomats had just released their third full-length instrumental CD, *Destination...Get Down* on Estrus Records, and they played a jazz showcase at Austin's Elephant Room.

"At the time, we could be considered somewhat of a soul-jazz act," Roberson said, "but we weren't a great fit with the rest of the acts playing that night. Four years later we have added two female vocalists and our set is mainly vocal tunes in a soul and funk fashion. It's a lot more user-friendly for the average music fan, and with two front women and two sax players, we just have more energy coming off the stage."

Upon his return to Iowa City, Roberson was happy with the band's two performances in addition to its official showcase at Opal

Divine's Freehouse with a slate of international groups.

"We were first on and as it drew close to 8 pm not many people were there and I started to have my doubts," Roberson explained. "But sure enough, as it got to be 8 pm, all of a sudden the tent was filled with people and we



played the best set we have in quite a while."

They even managed to make an industry connection: "An agent from United Talent checked us out and wants to have some meetings. So that looks promising."

"As much as I hate the term 'networking,' that is how you approach the SXSW opportunity," Roberson explained.

Another highlight was the day party they played for Hammondbeat Records at The Victory Grill. "Great vibe from this place," Roberson said. "It's an old black-owned venue that has been in existence since 1945. Loads of great R-n-B, soul and funk artists have played there over the years. It was a good turnout with lots of people from Iowa City and people who used to live in Iowa City."

Roberson said he especially enjoyed the international bands sharing their showcase. The Diplomats lent their singers and horn section to an Italian group called Paolo. Then there was the Japanese band Futomomo Satisfaction, led by three singer/trombonists clad only in bikinis. "Insane, but a lot of really fun dance music," Roberson said. "It was nutty, but you had to be there to believe it."

Kind of like SXSW in general, really. **lv**

Little Village co-founder and former editor Todd Kimm now works for Legion Arts at CSPS in Cedar Rapids after two years in the Wild West.

Showered in Shows

As we all know, thanks to T.S. Eliot, “April is the cruellest month,” but for music lovers in Iowa City, the pain and suffering that April causes may be in the form of cubicle and classroom hangovers, not an actual musical wasteland. In fact, April showers bring May flowers, and when it rains it pours, etc. etc., so set down your book of poems, open up an umbrella, and head into the rain-soaked world for this month’s musical deluge.

All of you goody two-shoes, volunteer types, dance-freaks, mash-up heads, and, oh, pretty much everybody will be lucky to cram into the IMU Ballroom for this year’s 10,000 Hours Show presented by Scope Productions. Pittsburgh’s Greg Gillis, the laptop artist affectionately known the world over as Girl Talk, will be on campus performing for those of you with volunteer service hours. When he last played Iowa City in August of 2007 along with Dan Deacon, it was the sweatiest, most sold-out and rowdy show I’d ever seen at the Picador. Half of the audience was on the stage by night’s end. Will the university types allow such madness to ensue on campus? Certainly not, so with doors at 7:30 and a dry venue on your hands, make advance preparations.

Mission Creek Midwest Festival

www.missionfreak.com

The biggest event of the month starts with a pre-festival bash on March 31 and keeps right on rollin’ through April 5.

The multi-venue, multi-genre, multi-medium celebration combines touring acts (GZA, Mountain Goats, and No Age to name a few) with local veterans and a few literary readings for a truly unique downtown festival.

If mashed-up glitchtronica isn’t your thing, then there are three critically acclaimed guitar-slinging troubadours coming through town this month. First up is Craig Finn with his band The Hold Steady, playing the Picador on the 7th. Over the course of the band’s three albums they’ve moved from spoken word, moody and poetic pieces to sounding like The E Street Band, and it’s a transition that has only seen

their devoted and sometimes rabid fan base grow. Finn’s characters, his music, and often the man himself are all drunken and fun. I’ll be honest: I don’t get the heaps of praise these guys receive, but I’ll take the advice of their



Girl Talk performs at the IMU on April 13 for 10,000 Hours.

newest record and *Stay Positive*. Expect a near sell-out here, just like their last time through town.

A man whose music I do truly love is Richard Buckner, a Texan who has been crafting great songs since the 1990s, playing The Mill on the 11th. The two albums he did for MCA Records, *Devotion + Doubt* (1997) and *Since* (1998), are “best of genre” material, no matter which genre you happen to place Buckner in: county, alt.country, Americana, folk, etc. He has an incredible voice that conveys Texas-sized doses of emotion, understanding, and longing. Since then he’s been moving away from “country” to more avant-garde stuff, playing with people like Marc Ribot (who plays guitar on many Tom Waits albums) and members of Guided By Voices. Buckner’s song “Ariel Ramirez” is one of my all-time favorites, and like Nick Drake’s “Pink Moon,” is a song so good it isn’t tarnished in any way by its appearance in a Volkswagen commercial. Opening up is a Ed Gray, a local lo-fi songwriter with experimental leanings, which makes it a perfect fit.

Third on our songwriters of the month countdown is Damien Jurado, a man not afraid to make very quiet music. I actually felt bad for him playing over an increasingly large and noisy crowd when he opened for Okkervil

River at the Picador last time through town, so I’m happy he’s returning with a group of people who are worth shutting the hell up and actually listening to. I’m speaking specifically about Laura Gibson, who has quietly released

an incredible album this year with *Beast of Seasons*, out now on Hush Records. It’s lush and highlights Gibson’s unique and expressive voice. This musical pairing is my pick for “date night” show of the month, and goes down on the 8th at The Picador. Actually, if its lovely music you like, Merge recording artist Wye Oak comes to Public Space One with the Pomegranates on the 20th.

In local news, Adam Havlin has a new project called Shark Week, which hopefully lives up to its bloodthirsty name. They’ll make their debut with

Old Panther and Liberty Leg at the Mill on the 7th. Since the 7th is a Tuesday, that means Tuesday Night Social Club, which means the music is free. Other new bands worth catching there this month are Beast Wars (dance-rock) and Valley Tongues (dance-machine madness alongside earnest Bob Dylan covers), who are playing on the 21st. Very new, very interesting, very promising acts.

And, of course, what would April be without a celebration of—cough, cough—4/20! Should you decide to see some music after you stumble through the world in a pleasant haze that day, my pick would be for the party at The Industry, which is hosted by the folks at Iowa Massive (www.iowa-massive.com) a message board for electronic music and DJ culture in the Hawkeye State. This party lives up the website’s outsized name. Featuring no less than 11 (!) Deejays and a set by Dead Larry, there is something for every type of substance abuser out there. **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.



Laura Gibson

Beasts of Seasons

Hush Records

www.myspace.com/lauragibson

Midwesterners need few words to describe the seasonal bitterness laid upon them this time of year. Luckily, locals have a Garden of Eden from which to hand-pick shows this April, making the last blasts of winter somewhat bearable.

Disheartened Iowans hopefully anticipating a lamb this spring may enjoy Laura Gibson's newest flower, aptly entitled *Beasts of Seasons* (Hush Records). And if in the flocking mood on April 8th, one can see Gibson display her talents on the weathered stage of the Picador.

If you haven't heard Gibson, the folk/blues artist out of Portland has a delicate, untouched tone that seems hard to find anymore. The soft, mysterious quality of her voice makes every song thoughtful and inspired by a whimsical, almost child-like inner monologue. Keeping it simple doesn't seem so stupid if it means putting out an album as touching as her February 24th release, *Beasts of Seasons*.

Artists like Caroline Smith and Jolie Holland (circa *Escondida* and *Catalpa*) come to mind in ability to capture an audience with little more than sensual vocal chords and a guitar to back. *Beasts of Seasons* transitions from said simplicity to more heavily orchestrated pieces including bells, banjos, trumpets, pianos and clarinets.

Though many of the songs have a slower tempo, the variance in instrumental sound comes from the numerous collaborators, in-

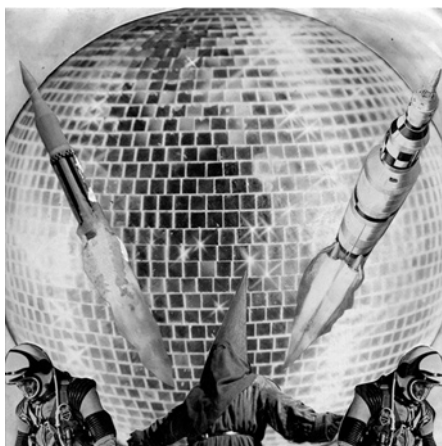
cluding Grammy-nominated producer Tucker Martine, Laura Veirs, Adam Selzer (M. Ward, Norfolk and Western), Rachel Blumberg (M. Ward, Bright Eyes), Nate Query (The Decemberists), Danny Seim (Menomena) and several others. Gibson alone is pleasing, but matching her with such a list surely makes for a conversation catalyst.

Rather than layering several artist's individual takes, most sections were recorded live at one time. The beauty in making a well-produced album with the raw sound attained from a single live recording is that it translates well to the stage.

If the collaboration lineup wasn't indication enough, you won't be hearing this one after M.I.A. at any of the local dance parties. This album will be well-received on a grey day spent in one's head, or a temperate spring afternoon wading through puddles under budding trees on the cozy streets of Iowa City. If that's not in your book of things to do, just go see Gibson at the Picador on Wednesday, April 8, when she opens for Damien Jurado.

Suggested starting track: "Spirited"

Brittany Jade Hogendorn is a lover of music, culture, sarcasm, dirty jokes and political incorrectness. Despite making her opinions public, she understands that they don't really matter. Go ahead and disagree.



N.A.S.A.

Spirit of Apollo

ANTI-

www.myspace.com/nasa

In the late 1990s, a new phenomena proliferated through commercial hip hop. Deejays began releasing albums overloaded with guest vocals and uninspired tunes. If you were a fan

of rap music it was hard to escape this constant barrage of "exclusive" albums. Most were 15 tracks to long and you could tell every emcee was more concerned about the paycheck than their rhymes.

So when I stumbled upon N.A.S.A.'s (North America South America) new disc, *The Spirit of Apollo*, I was skeptical. There seems to be at least two guests on every song. The duo, Squeak E. Clean from the United States and DJ Zegan from Brazil, didn't ring any bells. I wondered if this was to be yet another slapdash disk of high-profile stars and low-profile music.

But "Spirit of Apollo" is not one of those disks. The album's intro mixes precise scratching and laid-back bongos to welcome you to the party. It uses a parade of scratchy voices to explain the mission of the record—to bring the world together through music.

N.A.S.A. succeeds where most compilation albums don't. I was surprised at the cohesion of each track. The songs seamlessly blend together making this a complete record, not just compilation. For all this cohesion, N.A.S.A. has made sure that the sounds aren't stale. Each track could easily stand by itself but you also get the sense that they wouldn't find a home anywhere but here.

Like DJ Shadow and RJD2 before them, N.A.S.A. seem to be true crate diggers. The music on this album comes from everywhere: East Coast rap, dancehall, dusty samples, Brazilian drums, all are melded together in a natural way.

The guest list is just as eclectic as the music. N.A.S.A. took the time to put together surprising collaborations that sound natural. On "Spacious Thoughts," Tom Waits and Kool Keith craft their own version of music's history. George Clinton brings his funk to "There's A Party" as Chali 2na raps. "Way Down" combines a haunting John Frusciante's haunting guitar with RZA's slinking rhymes. As I listened to the music, I found myself wondering what these recording sessions were like.

This might be the album's biggest selling point. Unlike a mash-up artist like Girl Talk, N.A.S.A. isn't sampling copyrighted songs. "Spirit of Apollo" is a studio album. These artists sat down together and generated original content. The result is a party record that the whole world can enjoy.

Jason Phelps has one major weakness. He's a sucker for any animated movie regardless of quality.

>> **MEDUSA** FROM PAGE 19

Though she hopes to return to private creative writing and poetry after the play's run, through April 19, she has enjoyed the process of writing the play and repositioning parts with the help of her actors.

"I feel like I'm nine-and-a-half months pregnant and I'm ready to birth this thing," she said of her play. "And my actors have been my birthing coaches and midwives."

Lau said she was dissatisfied with the ending for some time and with the help of her actors and Riverside team, improvised new lines and created a more solid ending. Now she waits



Nancy Youngblut (center) and Laura Tatar (right) star in *Raising Medusa*. Jaclyn Johnson looks on.

anxiously for the premiere and continues to discuss the issues of teenage metamorphosis with the high schools she visits.

"Parents will never stop closing their eyes and having the best images of their children. But for all purposes, that person is gone," Lau said. "We have death and rebirth, and that's a huge part of any classical literature. So the mother needs to learn to love the new Maddie. And it's hard. You have marriage for better or worse, don't you have children for better or worse, too?" **lv**

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

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LOCAL

ABUJMS



Porno Galactica

MixTape Vol 1

www.myspace.com/pomogalactica

Before Metallica and Napster ever butted heads, people used to venture out and by their music on something called compact discs. Then, came the era of the download. Now, artists like Porno Galactica can spread their music without having to busk out on the pavement. Porno Galactica consists of Don and Phil Rabalais. They have made their first release, *MixTape Vol. 1* directly available to anyone with an internet connection and a computer. The release doesn't sound like anything you'd expect from Fairfield, Iowa.

The record starts out with a Pulp Fiction quote, "Everybody be cool, this is a robbery!" That is an apt description of the record. It moves like you'd imagine a bank heist would. The tempo escalates as the album progresses. The hyper kinetic sound leaves you barely anytime to think about what your listening to.

This is the record's ultimate undoing. Most of the tracks seemed to blend together almost too well. It's true that this would make great background music at a party. As I sat listening in my room, I felt like a thousand people should have been there with me.

I found myself quickly forgetting which track was which. Most were lost in a sea of bleeps and bleeps and revved up chants from rappers. The famous Houston chopped-and-screwed rap sound does not need to be sped up. The pace of the songs exhausted me after one listen.

Most of the songs contained in *MixTape Vol. 1* have the bells and whistles but not the substance. The album lacked cohesiveness and any semblance of a theme. The songs were patched together without much rhyme or reason. Most of the mix-tape mistakes loudness for music. There are moments, however, when Porno Galactica's sound works. "Sail Away"

turns Enya's "Orinoco Flow" from a somber New Age bore into a fast-paced dance romp. Enya's groove and Porno's beats have an amazing symbiotic relationship. "Mason Remale" uses some heavy guitar samples to stick out from the pack. On "I'm Not Shy Mister" the mixtape comes to a resounding conclusion. The duo turns a bunch of Nintendo sounds into a rock and roll opus. Porno Galactica obviously has talent. They have put together an intriguing, if messy, mix-tape debut. We'll have to wait and see what their full-length disk sounds like.

Jason Phelps



Kaspar Hauser

The Son

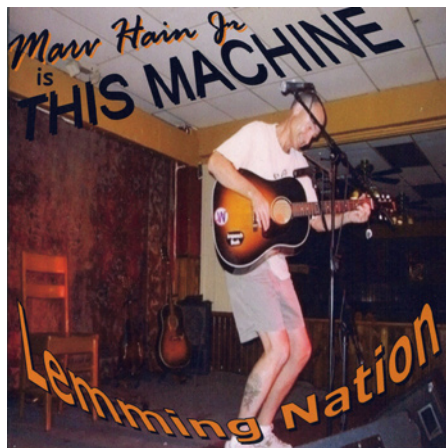
www.kasparhausermusic.net

Kaspar Hauser started in Iowa City and then moved to Chicago, but the band's back once or twice a year for shows at the Mill. They play guitar-based pop music, with no grand pretensions or sonic gimmicks. If you see them live, they look like they just finished a shift at the tire store, so flashy looks aren't a factor either. These are regular guys, playing regular guy rock music, which means that the only thing they have going for them is songwriting, singing and playing. Lucky for us they can write, sing and play.

If you want the whole Kaspar Hauser experience in five minutes, skip forward to "Baby Vampire." This sounds like a Cheap Trick song, but Tom Comerford's baritone drawl gives it a whole different atmosphere. When you get to the falsetto "Ooh Ooh" chorus you're into Pavement territory, but they follow it up with an extended instrumental bridge, which leads to a verse with octave-doubled vocals, anchored by pummeled floor tom drumming. They follow that with an extended guitar outro

that builds, layer on layer into something orchestral, crashing to a close overlaid with the sound of a radio being dialed between stations. That's a lot to put into one working man's rock song, and to top it off, the lyric is funny without being jokey.

The album closer "Time Machine" sounds a lot like Lou Reed, with a laconic two-note verse centered on a constant pedal tone. If you're like me and think the last good thing Lou Reed did was "Metal Machine Music," it's exciting to hear someone take a run at his formula and make music this simple, lucid and tough. The remarkable thing about Kaspar Hauser is that they're not that remarkable, yet they make music that's attractive, interesting and satisfying. Their trick is there's no trick.



This Machine Lemming Nation

www.myspace.com/marvhainjr

You have to admire Marv Hain, for being true to his ideals, and his devotion to a musical form that's been moribund for nearly

50 years, folk protest songs. His stage name "This Machine" is, I assume, an homage to Woody Guthrie, who wrote "This Machine Kills Fascists" on his guitar. Furthermore, he's giving this CD away.

Marv can sing, as well, and is as good a folk guitarist as you're likely to find in these parts. His melodies and simple arrangements are nothing outlandish, but you can hear worse in any random hour on commercial radio. The problem I have with This Machine probably isn't a problem at all as far as Marv's concerned, and that is that my appetite for left-wing polemics is extremely limited, even when, or especially when, I agree with what he's saying. When he sings "There's no W in Peace, there's no Peace in W," and then goes on to castigate Bill O'Reilly and Fox News, I've no doubt he's sincere. But I can as easily imagine this song being performed on Saturday Night Live as a parody of the exact thing the song is intended to be.

George W. Bush-centered polemics at this point seems almost quaint. It's only a few months since Obama's inauguration, and Barack's already losing that New-President smell. I don't know what a generation of rabble rousers are going to do without a proper bête noire. This Machine has become an Ahab with no Whale. I'm sure Marv will adapt, but *Lemming Nation* seems like a time capsule. I'd like to hear Hain channel his righteous anger into protest music more universal and less tied to specific events. And I'd like to hear more crazy shit like "W Is Wrong" which is just Hain's voice drowned in echo and heavily reverberated drum machine. It reminds me of old school Philly rapper Schooly D, and it's a hoot. **lv**

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

>> PLAN FROM PAGE 12

the area has for the genre.

"Does Iowa City deserve a hip hop scene? Oh yeah. Oh yeah man," Nyane said. "It's never going to be a New York City. But it could come close to a little Minneapolis. It's going to take time and it's gonna take work, but I'm 110 percent committed to making it work... when people come to Iowa City, I want them to be like 'yeah, I've heard about that person, I've heard about The Industry—I want to see it.' I think it'd be the best thing. I truly do."

"If I can make it big here, people are going to love me like Ashton Kutcher, you know what I'm saying?"

With the perpetual exodus of artists to the hip hop havens of the coast and a struggle to find to find the secret to scene starting here, the still-local Nyane has much to do. And time will tell if The Industry has the backing to both seduce major acts and convince local ones to stay. But whatever the venue, one gets the sense Nyane isn't going stop his plight any time soon.

"All these extra hours, all this extra work, it's for a reason," Nyane said. "You just have to keep pushing until your knuckles fall off and you can't take it anymore. That's how you know you've made it." **lv**

Paul Sorenson would love to participate in the IC hip hop scene, but only has the skill for journalism—its wordplay never involves rhyming. Contact him at features@littlevillagemag.com with story suggestions or personal criticism.

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ART/EXHIBITS

African American Historical Museum and Cultural Center of Iowa

www.blackiowa.org

Check website for locations

No Roads Lead to Buxton, ongoing

AKAR

257 E. Iowa Ave. Iowa City

www.akardesign.com

2009 Yunomi Invitational, through Apr. 17 • Marty Fielding • Stacy Snyder, Apr. 24-May 15

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

Spring Metro Gallery Tour, Apr. 3 5-8pm • Middle Eastern Day, Apr. 25 • Persian Visions: Contemporary Photography from Iran, through May 10 • American Narratives, through May 31 • Christian Marclay's Telephones, through May 31

The Chait Galleries Downtown

218 E Washington St., Iowa City

www.thegalleriesdowntown.com

Synergy, through Apr. 17 • Out of the Plains: Mary Merkel-Hess, through May 1

CSPS/Legion Arts

1103 Third St SE, Cedar Rapids

www.legionarts.org

Matters Arising, ongoing

Faulconer Gallery/Bucksbaum Center for the Arts

Grinnell College, 1108 Park St., Grinnell

www.grinnell.edu/fulconergallery

Animated Painting, exhibit through April 19

Iowa Artisans Gallery

207 E. Washington, Iowa City

www.iowa-artisans-gallery.com

Anthropological Lens: Norma Wolff, Mar. 26-Apr. 26

Old Capitol Museum

Pentacrest, UI Campus, Iowa City

www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap

Fresh Threads of Connection: Mother Nature and British Women Writers, through May 24

UI Museum of Art

www.uiowa.edu/uima

Check website for more information

A Legacy for Iowa, Figge Art Museum, Davenport, opens Apr. 19

University of Iowa Art

www.art.uiowa.edu

Check website for locations

Cristina Iorga-Printmaking, Mar. 30-Apr. 3 • Art and Catastrophe, Apr. 4, 9am-3pm • Emily Bowser-Sculpture, Apr. 6-10 • Joe Meinecke-Ceramics, Apr. 13-17 • Entrevistas: Aurora De Armendi, Apr. 14-26 • Genevieve Lawrence-Painting, Apr. 20-24 • Ben Speare-Painting, Apr. 27-May 1

MUSIC

CSPS/Legion Arts

1103 Third St SE, Cedar Rapids

www.legionarts.org

The Refugees, Apr. 3 • Marco Benevento, Apr. 12 • Peppino D'Agostino, Apr. 15 • Vienna Teng, Apr. 18 • Savage Aural Hotbed, Apr. 24 & 25, 8pm

Englert Theatre

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.englert.org

MCMW: GZA/Genius, Apr. 1, 8pm • Salute to Benny Goodman, Apr. 3, 7:30pm • Lez Zeppelin, Apr. 8, 8pm • The Gift of Music: A Piano Concert, Apr. 11, 7:30pm • Maia Quartet, Apr. 17, 8pm • Ralph's World, Apr. 18, 4pm

The Industry

211 Iowa Ave., Iowa City

www.myspace.com/theindustryic

All shows at 8pm unless noted

Fat Maw Rooney and The Mayflies, Apr. 2 • Truth Be Told and Mooseknuckle, Apr. 3 • DJ Sid, Apr. 3 • Johnny Reeferseed, the Highrollers and Nifty Mountain Pow Wow, Apr. 4 • Johnny on Point and Five in a Hand, Apr. 9 • Public Property CD Release, Apr. 10 • DISCO vol.1 with John "Break it Down" Simmons, Apr. 17, 9pm • Multi-Media Mind-Melter 2.0: Hunab, Insectoid, Dead Larry, Apr. 20 • The White Tornado Outbreak, Apr. 23 • Daylight Savings Account and Aqua Marine Dream Machine, Apr. 24 • Phi Mu Alpha Battle of the Bands!, Apr. 25

Java Juice

122 E Washington St, Iowa City

Unknown Component, Apr. 11, 8pm

The Mill

120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City

www.icmill.com

Shows at 9pm unless otherwise noted

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

Tuesday Night Social Club, Tuesdays

MCMW: Brighton MA, Fourth of July, Molly Ringwald and Wolves in the Attic, Mar. 31, 8:30pm • MCMW: Bowerbirds, Pieta Brown & Bo Ramsey, Joe Pug and Escape the Floodwater Jug Band, Apr. 1, 8pm • MCMW: These United States, Shame Train,

Cartright, and Macon Greyson Apr. 2 • MCMW: The Mountain Goats & John Vanderslic and Simon Joyner, Apr. 3, 8pm • MCMW: The Gglitch and Dead Larry, Apr. 4 • Shark Week, Old Panther and Liberty Leg, Apr. 7 • Burlington St. Bluegrass Band, Apr. 8, 7pm • Kevin Gordon and BeJae Fleming, Apr. 10 • Richard Buckner and Ed Gray, Apr. 11 • Harlain Muir, Olivia Rose Muzzy and Banjo Kellie, Apr. 14 • Steve Forbert and Dave Zollo, Apr. 17, 8pm • Miracles Of God, Apr. 18 • Paste Magazine and WOXY Present: The Deep Vibration, Roman Candle and Yuppies, Apr. 18, 8pm • Beast Wars and Valley, Apr. 24, 8pm • Damon Dotson Band, Apr. 25 • That One Guy, Apr. 26 • *University of Iowa Jazz, Apr. 28

Old Capitol Museum

Pentacrest, UI Campus, Iowa City

www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap

Piano Sunday, Apr. 5, 1:30pm • Nicole Esposito, piccolo, and Seong-Sil Kim, piano, Apr. 27, 8pm

The Picador

330 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.thepicador.com

All shows at 9pm unless otherwise noted

MCMW: Petit Mal, The Pack A.D., Ill Ease and Lipstick Homicide, Apr. 1 • MCMW: Beach House, Fruit Bats, Headlights, Roommate, Apr. 2 • MCMW: David Zollo and The Parlor Suite • MCMW: NO AGE, Netherfriends, Birth Rites and The Western Front, Apr. 4 • Casey Jones, Hour of the Wolf, Fallen From the Sky, Take Control, Apr. 6, 5:30pm • The Hold Steady and War on Drugs, Apr. 7, 7pm • The Academy Is... and Evan Taubenfeld, Apr. 8, 6pm • Damien Jurado, Laura Gibson, and Small Sur, Apr. 8 • Copeland, This Providence, Paper Route and Brooke Wagoner, Apr. 9 6pm • The Uniphonics, Apr. 10 • The Bronx, Trash Talk and In Defense, Apr. 11 • Skeletonwitch, The Horde and Snow Demon, Apr. 13 • Shiny Toy Guns, Apr. 14, 6pm • Lyrics Born, Apr. 15 • Mannix!, The Inevitable Backlash, The No-No's, The Broken Spokes and Molly Ringwald, Apr. 17, 8pm • The French Kicks, Apr. 23 • MC Chris, Apr. 29, 6pm

Public Space One

115 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.myspace.com/publicspaceone

MCMW: PRUSSIA, Happy Chromosomes, Pacific Proving Ground, Apr. 2, 7pm • MCMW: Tallest Man On Earth, Red Cortez, Golden Birds, Caleb Engstrom, Apr. 4, 8pm • Be Kind To Yr Neighbor, Battlefields, Sleeping in Gethsemane, Mauul, Apr. 5, 9pm • Anni Rossi, Apr. 10, 9pm • Box Elders, Happy Chromosomes, Black Slacks, Ryan Pitts and the Boy Toys, Apr. 11, 8pm • Ten-Speed, Apr. 13, 9pm • Dark Dark Dark, Telescope, Apr. 14, 9pm • Owen Nicolas, Sam Schlesinger, Apr. 16, 9pm • Pomegranates, Wye Oak, Apr. 20, 9pm • Mountains, Apr. 24, 9pm • Azita w. Wrekmeister Harmonies, Apr. 25, 8pm • Point Juncture, WA, Apr. 27 8pm

A-LIST

CALENDAR



Feminists, Freaks and Fairies: stef shuster

April 10, opening 6:30-9pm
Through May 10

UI LGBT Resource Center
125 Grand Ave. Court St., Iowa City

The threshold between private and public is delicate. Photographs that once seemed private suddenly take on a public face; conversations that should become public stay confined to living rooms. "Feminists, Freaks and Fairies" by stef shuster comprise a series of photographic conversations had between folks who identify with both worlds.

At once intensely private and yet routinely public, gender is a topic often misrepresented by artists. The beauty and struggle of genderqueer life can often be overwhelmed by controversy and constant scrutinization. stef shuster presents pictures, portraits and protests full of beauty, life and the full range of self-expression.

Her work is the result of over seven years of travel, dialogue and capturing images—without the trappings of voyeurism.

The UI LGBTRC will host the opening on Friday, April 10 from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Beverages, snacks, fun and conversations should be expected at the opening. The exhibit will be on display through May 10. The LGBTRC is located at 125 Grand Ave Court St. Iowa City, Iowa on the University of Iowa campus. Parking is available directly behind the center.

Red Cedar Chamber Music

www.redcedar.org

Check website for Iowa City locations

Red Cedar Chamber Ensemble, Apr. 28, noon & 7:30pm

Riverside Casino

3184 Highway 22, Riverside

www.riversidecasinoandresort.com

Travis Tritt, Apr. 25, 8pm

University of Iowa Music Events

www.uiowa.edu/artsiowa

Check website for locations

Festival of Contemporary Music: Kia-Hui Tan, violin, Apr. 2, 8pm; Katie Wolfe, violin, and Ketty Nez, piano, Apr. 3, 8pm; University of Minnesota New Music Ensemble, Apr. 4, 8pm; Center for New Music, Apr. 5, 8pm; • Kantorei and University Choir, Apr. 5, 3pm • Karen Moratz, flute, Apr. 6, 8pm • Symphony Band, Apr. 15, 8pm • Iowa Brass Quintet, Apr. 15, 8pm • UI Chamber Orchestra, Apr. 19, 3pm • Bonnie Choi, harpsichord, Apr. 19, 3pm • Alpin Hong, piano, Apr. 24, 7:30pm • Center for New Music, Apr. 25, 8pm • Electronic Music Studios, Apr. 26, 3pm • Philharmonia and All-University String Orchestra, Apr. 26, 3pm* UI Symphony Orchestra, Apr. 29, 8pm

Uptown Bill's Small Mall

401 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City

www.uptownbills.org

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

Patrick Bloom, Apr. 4, 7pm

U.S. Cellular Center

370 1st Ave NE, Cedar Rapids

www.uscellularcenter.com

Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra, Apr. 15, 7:30pm • Rock and Worship Roadshow, Apr. 18, 6pm *

Yacht Club

13 S. Linn St., Iowa City

www.iowacityyachtclub.org

Shows at 9pm unless otherwise noted

MCMW: Yak Ballz, Derill Pounds, MC/VL, Kosha Dillz and Roebus One, Apr. 1, 9:30pm • MCMW: The Hood Internet, Anavan, Porno Galactica and School of Flyentology, Apr. 2 • MCMW: El Paso Hot Button, the Brown Note, Mannix! and Grampall Jookabox, Apr. 3 • MCMW: Dennis McMurrin and Public Property, Apr. 4, 8pm • The Hue and Purple Merkins, Apr. 10 • Lubriphonic and Slip Silo, Apr. 11 • Diplomats of Solid Sound, The Right Now and Electric Junction, Apr. 17 • Euforquestra Two Day Live Recording Show, Apr. 24 & 25, 9pm

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The Mill

120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City

www.icmill.com

Study Hall Game every Sunday at 9pm

MCMW: Edmund White & Charlie D'Ambrosio, Apr. 4, 3pm • Talk Art Cabaret, Apr. 8 & 29, 10pm

Prairie Lights

15 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City

www.prairielightsbooks.com

All shows at 7pm unless otherwise noted

Dobby Gibson, Apr. 1, 7pm • Oni Buchanan and Donna Stonecipher, Apr. 6, 7:30pm • V.V. Ganeshananthan, Apr. 7, 7:30pm • Emily Wilson, Apr. 8, 7pm • Honor Moore, Apr. 9, 7pm • Adina Hoffman, Apr. 13, 7pm • Arda Collins and Jonathan Thirkield, Apr. 14, 7:30pm • Eula Biss, Apr. 15, 7pm • Gerder Lerner, Apr. 21, 7pm • Mark Nowak, Apr. 24, 7pm • American Hybrid, Cole Swensen, Apr. 27, 7pm • Gene Baur, Apr. 28, 7pm

Public Space One

115 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.myspace.com/publicspaceone

MCMW: Forklift, Ohio vs. Anthology Reading Series, Apr. 3, 7pm • Nonfiction Thesis Readings, Apr. 10, 7pm

University of Iowa Arts

www.uiowa.edu/artsiowa

Check website for locations

Harry Allen, Apr. 1, 7:30pm • Why Art? David Houston, Apr. 3, 5pm • Charles D'Ambrosio and Kevin Brockmeier, Apr. 4, 8pm • Richard Guy Wilson, Apr. 16, 5pm • Terri Warpinski, Apr. 16, 7pm • Adam Zagajewski, Apr. 15, 8pm • Margot Livesey, Apr. 22, 8pm • People Powered, Apr. 23, 7:30pm • Word Painter Reading: Cutter Wood and Bonnie Sunstein, Apr. 24, 7:30pm • Robin Hill, Apr. 27, 8pm • Mark Morris, Apr. 29, 8pm

CINEMA

Bijou Theater

Iowa Memorial Union

www.bijoutheater.org

Check website for showtimes

Wendy and Lucy, High and Low, Mar. 27-Apr. 2, ICDOCS Festival, Apr. 9-11

Cedar Rapids International Film Festival

Collins Road Theater

www.crifm.org

Apr. 3, 6-11pm • Apr. 4, 10am-11pm

CSPS/Legion Arts

1103 Third St SE, Cedar Rapids

www.legionarts.org

Lunafest, women's film festival, Apr. 10 & 11, 8pm

Iowa City Public Library

Ped Mall, Iowa City

www.icpl.org

When the World Spoke Arabic series, Apr. 1, 8, 15 & 22, 7pm • Becoming Jane, Apr. 3, 7pm • West Side Story, Apr. 10, 7pm • Blue Gold: World Water Wars, Apr. 19, 3pm

Iowa City Documentary Film Festival

www.icdocs.net

Check website for complete schedule

Judge's Screening, Apr. 9, 5pm • Juried Screening 1, Apr. 9, 7pm • Juried Screening 2, Apr. 10, 5pm • Juried Screening 3, Apr. 10, 8pm • Juried Screening 4, Apr. 11, noon • Juried Screening 5, Apr. 11, 3pm • Awards and Judges' Lecture, Apr. 11, 6pm

THEATER/ DANCE/ PERFORMANCE/

Dreamwell Theatre

10 S Gilbert St, Iowa City

www.dreamwell.com

An Enemy of the People, Apr. 3&4

Englert Theatre

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.englert.org

Alley Cabaret, Apr. 3, 17 & 18, 10pm • Slim Goodbody, Apr. 22, 10am & 11:50am

Eulenspiegel Puppet Theatre

New Strand Theatre, West Liberty

www.puppetspuppets.com

Armadillo's Rancho, Apr. 5, 2 & 5:30pm

Penguin's Comedy Club

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

www.penguinscomedyclub.com

Check website for showtimes

Heywood Banks, Apr. 3-4 • Paul and Storm, Apr. 10-11 • Henry Phillips, Apr. 17-18 • The Midnight Swinger, Apr. 24-25

Riverside Theatre

213 N. Gilbert St., Iowa City

www.riversidetheatre.org

Raising Medusa, Apr. 2-4, 9-11 & 16-18, 7:30pm; Apr. 5, 12, 19, 2:30pm

Summit Restaurant Comedy Night

10 S. Clinton St, Iowa City

www.thesummitrestaurantandbar.com

Shows start at 9:30pm

Kenny Kane & Jim Summers, Apr. 1 • JJ Boyd and Kristi McHugh, Apr. 8 • Ed Voss, Duwayne Clark, Apr. 15 • Johnny O and Sean Brennan, Apr. 22 • Leif Skiving and Gary Myer, Apr. 29

Theatre Cedar Rapids

Lindale Mall, Cedar Rapids

www.theatrecre.org

Revolutions in Song, Apr. 3, 7:30pm & Apr. 4, 2:30 & 7:30pm

The University of Iowa Dance

Space/Place Theatre, North Hall

www.uiowa.edu/artsiowa

Check website for locations

Thesis Concert, Apr. 2-4 & 16-18, 8pm • Undergraduate Dance Concert, Apr. 30, 8pm

The University of Iowa Theatre

www.uiowa.edu/~theatre

Check website for locations

The House of Grateful, Apr. 2-4, 8pm, Apr. 5, 2pm • Intimate Apparel, Apr. 16-18 & 23-25, 8pm, Apr. 26, 2pm

KIDS

African American Historical Museum and Cultural Center of Iowa

www.blackiowa.org

Check website for locations

Learning Safari events at 10:30am

LS: Dr. Carver's Chemistry Lab, Apr. 3 • LS: Spring Planting with George W. Carver, Apr. 8 • LS: Cinderella Revisited, Apr. 9 • The Spider Weaver, May. 1

Barnes & Noble

Coral Ridge Mall

1451 Coral Ridge Ave., Coralville

All Storytimes begin at 10am unless noted

April is Poetry Month!, Apr. 3 • Max's Chocolate Chicken, Apr. 7 • the Bunny Who Found Easter, Apr. 10 • Duck! Rabbit!, Apr. 14 • Wee Little Lamb, Apr. 17 • Special Guests: Darth Vader and Stormtroopers, Apr. 18, 2pm • Earth Day, Apr. 21 • Happy Birthday The Very Hungry Caterpillar!, Apr. 24 • April Showers, Apr. 28

MISC

Brucemore

2160 Linden Drive SE, Cedar Rapids

www.brucemore.com

The View from the Back Stairs tour, Apr. 4, 11, 18

Critical Hit Games

89 Second St, Coralville

www.criticalhitgames.net

Check website for daily gaming events

Curses, Foiled Again

After authorities investigating a store robbery in Chula Vista, CA, identified Romeo Montillano, 40, as their suspect, they learned he was in Las Vegas, unaware he was wanted. They were able to arrest him, the San Diego Union-Tribune reported, because he returned to take an examination to become a police officer. Police official Bernard Gonzales said that as Montillano was being taken into custody, he asked whether he would still be able to take the exam.

Mellow Yellow

A Hindu organization known for its opposition to "corrupting" Western food imports, notably Pepsi and Coca Cola, announced plans to launch a new soft drink made from cow's urine. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) told Reuters the yet-to-be-named drink mixes urine with aloe vera and gooseberry. "Cow urine offers a cure for around 70 to 80 incurable diseases, like diabetes," said Om Prakash, the head of the RSS Cow Protection Department.

Plush Tush

American consumers' preference for soft toilet tissue requires harvesting millions of trees in North America and in Latin American countries, including from rare old-growth forests in Canada, because fluffiness requires the fiber from standing trees. James Malone of Georgia Pacific, maker of Quilted Northern, told the New York Times that customers "demand soft and comfortable. Recycled fiber cannot do it."

Tissue from recycled fibers makes up less than 2 percent of sales for home use among conventional and premium brands of tissue in the United States, according to the Times, which noted that it takes the pulp of one eucalyptus tree, a commonly used species, to make 1,000 rolls of toilet paper. The average American uses 23.6 rolls a year.

Bam!

When four teenagers forced their way into a house in Elyria, OH, and demanded money, homeowner Ellen Basinski, 70, defended herself by using an Emeril Lagasse 5-quart saucepan against one of the intruders. "I picked up the saucepan and smacked him right on the head," Basinski told the Cleveland Plain Dealer. "He looked at me and said, 'Lady, why did you do that?' And I hit him again." The four fled but were quickly arrested. After Emeril Lagasse heard the news about Basinski, the TV chef said he was sending her a whole new set of cookware.

Too Little Too Late

Fire officials blamed a fire that burned down a mobile home in San Luis Obispo, CA, on a smoldering cigarette, which homeowner Bill Lewis, 68, said his mother, Chessie Lewis, 87, left on a table in an enclosed porch when he took her to a smoking-cessation meeting. The San Luis Obispo Tribune reported the loss at \$200,000, plus another \$15,000 in damage to a neighboring home.

Food Fight

The Rhode Island Supreme Court ordered a new trial for competing restaurants at a Providence shopping mall food court to decide whether both can serve white rice. Plaintiff David Chu, 52, owner of Cathay Cathay, which opened at Providence Place in 2001, said his lease lists 19 foods, including white rice, that only he can sell. "We're the most expensive lease," Chu told the Boston Globe. "We don't want competition."

Defendant Yogi Sood opened Gourmet India in 2005 after negotiating a lease that lets him sell basmati rice, which is white rice with yellow food color added. "Without basmati rice, I would not have signed," said Sood, 59. "There's not an Indian restaurant that can survive without rice."

In 2006, Superior Court Judge Stephen J. Fortunato Jr. dismissed the case against Gourmet India, while ruling against Japan Cafe, which Chu also sued for selling white rice. Japan Cafe closed. Chu did not sue Taco Bell, which serves side dishes of Mexican-style white rice.

Costume Justice

- Trahan Pires, 34, was fined \$500 for assaulting a man in a Chuck E. Cheese mouse suit in Dartmouth, MA. Pires told authorities he ripped off the mascot's headpiece because he thought the victim had grabbed his son. The 19-year-old mouse man said he was putting out his arms to get through a crowd of children trying to knock him over.
- Shawn Brim, 38, lost his job as a bus driver in Washington, D.C., after he climbed off a bus and punched a police officer dressed as McGruff the crime dog. Brim told a supervisor he was just trying to be funny.

Avoidupois Justice

When Stephen Turo, 56, was ordered to appear in court in Auburn, N.Y., to answer charges of selling drugs, he couldn't fit into a car because he weighs more than 550 pounds. The Syracuse Post-Standard reported Turo was loaded into the back of a rented U-Haul truck and unloaded onto a loading dock, where Cayuga County Judge Thomas G. Leone conducted the arraignment.

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

>> CRIMINALS FROM PAGE 13

around extended interviews with hip hop historians and current and past musical artists and producers, including giants like Chuck D and George Clinton. These testimonials are used to support the contention that by largely ignoring the rules, hip hop artists came up with a whole new way of thinking about music.

We learn in some depth of the influential controversies in sampling: the newly available cheap technology that made possible the "golden age" of unmitigated borrowing responsible for such masterpieces as Public Enemy's *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* and De La Soul's *Three Feet High and Rising*. And also the subsequent backlash reflected in the labels' reactions to Biz Markie, De La Soul's all but direct theft of the Turtles' "You Showed Me," and perhaps most hilariously, Negativland's remix of a Casey Kasem outtake of commentary on a U2 track. (Negativland goes on to describe themselves in the film as "this band with no hit singles, but we have a hit lawsuit"). We also get an admirably well-balanced view of the controversy surrounding sampling. After all, is it really preferable that James Brown gets the royalties for Clyde Stubblefield's famous "Funky Drummer" beat than any of the various hip hop artists that have used it? Is it fair that Rick James' best selling track is by MC Hammer? If the argument about how sampling has forced modern day listeners to rediscover past music from these samples is true, aren't lawsuits a reasonable and effective tool for these past artists to access both recognition and money?

Copyright Criminals does a good job presenting this side of the argument, perhaps nowhere more persuasively than the scene in which Clyde Stubblefield is shown driving around with his drum compositions playing in the background—and a list of the hip hop artists who have supposedly sampled the "Funky Drummer" track being superimposed on screen. It's a long list for a guy so seemingly under-recognized for his contributions to modern hip hop. The film concludes with observations about how contemporary bands are getting around copyright restrictions on sampling, with a reiteration of the profound effect that both economics and technology have had on this musical form. If all art involves borrowing, Franzen and McLeod articulate how that process has been both artistically different and economically more decisive in sampled music between the 1970s and today. **IV**

Warren Sprouse is a film fan, debate teacher and a resident of Iowa City.

I want to be a blimp pilot. What do I do?

My buddies and I have been considering (while drinking) the idea of becoming "airship pilots." I put this in quotation marks because we cannot find any information on how this (possibly fictitious) profession could be pursued. We have looked into both purchasing an airship and gaining the credentials to pilot one. We cannot find any information beyond stuff about owning amateur hot air balloons. We are frustrated (and possibly drunk) and desperately need to know a few things only you can answer. First, how do you obtain pilot status for an airship? And second, how can we buy our own airship, zeppelin, or dirigible?

—The three "airship captains"

Fictitious? What makes you think airship piloting is fictitious? You think those are monkeys flying the Goodyear blimp? In fact an entire federal department, the Federal Aviation Administration, is charged with making sure airships and other airborne craft are operated by qualified personnel, as opposed to, no offense, a bunch of drunks. If you still want to do this once you sober up, here's how.

For technical consultation I turned to a longtime Straight Dope reader and private pilot who calls herself Broomstick. She pointed out that according to federal regulations you don't need a pilot's license to build or fly an aircraft that (a) is made for one occupant, (b) carries no more than five gallons of fuel, (c) can't go faster than 55 knots in level flight, and (d) has an empty weight of 254 pounds or less. There are a few other restrictions: day operation only, no flights over congested areas or crowds, etc. You don't even need flying lessons, although I'd advise against going aloft with no clue at all.

Without too much prep work, therefore, you could maybe get away with flying a Larry Walters-style lawn-chair-and-weather-balloons rig out in the middle of nowhere. (Southern Los Angeles, in case you're thinking about re-creating Larry's flight path, doesn't qualify as the middle of nowhere.) But that's probably dinkier than what you had in mind.

So we escalate. To pilot a real airship you're

going to need some certification, such as a sport pilot license with a "lighter-than-air category rating with an airship class rating." In addition to basic pilot training (i.e., in flying a plane), this requires about 20 hours of airship flight training, with 3 hours as pilot in command. It's technically possible to get a sport pilot license for airships only, but good luck

looking at 200 hours of total flight time, including 30 as pilot in command, 40 of instrument flight time, and 5 of night visual flight time. Again, it's possible to start with no flying experience and work your way up to hovering over football stadiums strictly by flying airships, but it's unlikely. For one thing, there aren't a lot of schools that teach commercial airship flying, and those outfits that do are free to set high standards for applicants.

Goodyear, which runs its own program, says it's only interested in licensed fixed-wing pilots with commercial instrument and multi-engine ratings. I'll wager this isn't what you wanted to hear, but

Broomstick thinks the easiest route to airship captaincy is getting a fixed-wing pilot's license, then adding airship certification later.

Now: getting hold of an airship to fly. We tried calling Goodyear about blimp rental, but they repeatedly blew us off—too many yo-yos drunk-dialing at 2 AM, probably. However, we found a place called Airship Ventures near San Francisco that will rent you an honest-to-Jesus

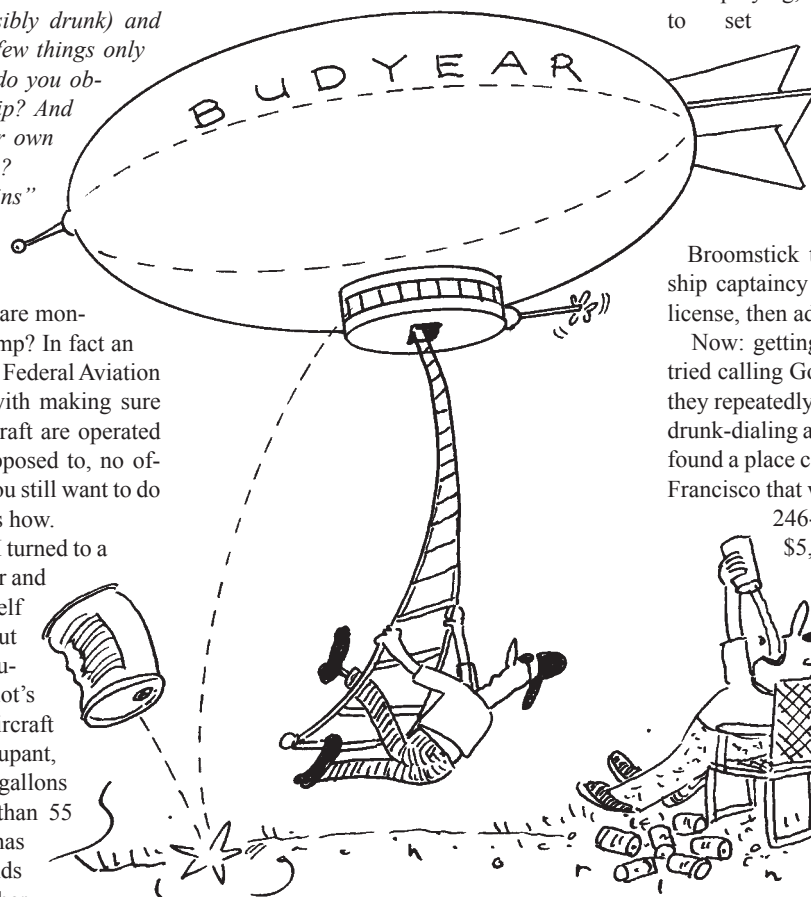
246-foot-long Zeppelin NT for \$5,750 per hour including crew. If

you want to do a little piloting, they offer a day-long program that includes ground school and some stick time starting at \$3,500—but you need your private pilot's license first. Full-on pilot certification for the NT (includes extensive training plus trips to Germany for simulator work and such)

will cost about \$100,000 in fees and expenses. Finally, to buy your own Zeppelin-brand zeppelin and associated ground systems, figure you'll be out about €12 million, or roughly \$15 million. OK, maybe you could get one for a tad less in this economy, but face it, kids—with that money you could buy a lot of beer.

—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.



finding an airship instructor willing to take on someone with no pilot certification and most likely no flight experience. However you swing it, the license lets you fly during the day with one passenger aboard.

Alternatively you could get a private pilot license for airships, which is similar to the sport pilot license but requires more training and skills. You'd need to fulfill the same basic requirements as pilots of fixed-wing aircraft, which include medical certification.

But maybe you won't be happy with anything short of flying the 192-foot Goodyear blimp. Now you need a commercial pilot certificate, and that's going to be a project. I won't list all the necessary qualifications, but you're

ASTROLOGY FORECAST FOR APRIL 2009

FOR EVERYONE—From theory to practice. We have been holding our own as change washed through the world at large. We have lived in anticipation as rumors of impending change swept through our immediate environments. In April, the sense of expectation will peak, and then pass. It will be time to roll up our sleeves. We will need to start the day-to-day work of making changes happen and living with changes that are now going into effect. A lot of things will undecided, but we must now start moving forward anyway, improvising and adjusting as we go, matching ideas to reality one bit at a time. Optimism and confidence will remain the order of the day.



Aries

The bit's between your teeth. You can feel the change. You can feel the stress and strain, and the need, of those around you. But you are insulated from the effects of disruptive events...for now. Many are eager for change. Many are fearful of it. Both groups are depending on you to do something. But they could leave you holding the bag. Be determined but be patient and be careful. You are on new and exciting ground, but it is unfamiliar and there are real risks.



TAURUS

Don't throw your weight around. You are surprisingly well positioned to deal with ongoing chaos. With little effort, you can buffer or block the maneuvers of others. But most of your energy and resources are really only available for private, personal sorts of things. Your roll is primarily that of the healer and the mediator this month. So as empowered as you might be feeling, it would be best not to take the initiative or to try to control the situation. Quietly tend to important and complex professional and financial concerns.



GEMINI

Serious people. The air is crackling with ideas. Controversies abound. You feel the need to move ahead. You know that to avoid worse problems firm decisions are needed now. But too much is up in the air. The uncertainty is affecting your work and home life. Gather sensible people from near and far. Get them closer to the center of events, despite resistance. Nobody wants to get serious yet, but they must, to avoid bigger problems. You sense the meaning and the motives behind what others are saying. Sidestep turmoil.



CANCER

Move forward quietly. Big questions are yet to be answered. Obstacles remain. The issues are complicated. Critics abound. Signs of your success are scarce. Build on the idealism and optimism all around you. But keep moving quietly and steadily toward the big goals. Chip away at the difficult details. Your quiet determination is helping everyone. You can make great progress by strengthening and expanding your support network. Heal existing bonds and build new relationships. Smaller, practical issues will tend to take care of themselves, for now. Fretting will undermine efforts.



LEO

True control through cooperation. Achieving your goals now will require a careful balance: exert your will, but maintain faith in the wisdom and decency of others. Trust is key. Benefits flow from supportive partners and alliances. You want to exert control, and your influence is running high. Also, you have a good sense of what people really want and need. But everyone needs to tend their own garden right now, to sort out their personal situation. Other people need to sort through the fine print of complicated new agreements. Maintain budget discipline.



VIRGO

Tiger by the tail. There are very big changes afoot. Powerful forces are at work. People are maneuvering like crazy to protect their interests. Your efforts at mediation is the glue that can keep things together and on the right course. You know what people want, but you also have a really good sense of what is possible and what is necessary. The realities won't always measure up to expectations. Your job is to prove the wisdom of accepting those realities and building carefully on them as necessity dictates.



LIBRA

Hands on. Friends, family, co-workers all need your help with issues. Many are what-if issues. Choices are complicated. Speculation abounds. Discussions are numerous. But without your special touch, communication could get frantic and intense or even rude. Worse, it could become ineffective. To really be effective, though, you will have to get right down in the trenches of everyday life and talk to people on their level, where they work and live. Concrete, specific, detailed discussions are needed. Play, creativity, friendship and romance are especially healing and generally beneficial now.



SCORPIO

Easy does it. Activity and excitement pervade your environment. It can seem light and cheery but it isn't. Uncertainty and anxiety lie just below the surface. Things you say or do could bring these deeper forces to the surface suddenly and forcefully. Play it safe. Don't probe. Don't express your curiosity about deeper stuff. You could too easily upset someone unintentionally that way. Instead, draw out the optimism and idealism in people. Take interactions in calming and uplifting directions. Being a source of optimism will bolster your financial prospects, too.



SAGITTARIUS

Bring it down to earth. You might feel like a stranger in a strange land. You have a treasure trove of ideas that can help, inspire and heal. You know in your heart that they are good ideas. But they often confuse others, or they are greeted as unrealistic. Or they send the conversation off on a weird tangent. The key is to ground the ideas in the reality of others. Show how they make good, concrete sense for specific people. Local involvements will continue to be personally beneficial for you.



CAPRICORN

Say it as often as necessary. You might find yourself mentally going over the same ground again and again and coming to the same conclusion: Dramatic change is inevitable, but you need to make sure things change in the most sensible and realistic way possible. You might wish you could avoid some of these repetitive discussions, but your point is one that everyone needs to hear until they get it. You need to keep repeating it until they do. Your livelihood and the livelihood of many others depend on it.



AQUARIUS

Ideas and money and people. With everything in flux, and so many exciting things happening, it's hard to keep everything straight. Shortly, the tide of activity will subside and you can return to a more agreeable pace. Then you need to concentrate on the practical side of your ideas. Communication can be very exciting and gratifying, but it takes time to work through the details, to fit ideas into real, work-a-day situations. Time and patience are necessary ingredients. Optimism is justified, especially where your personal projects and finances are concerned.



PISCES

Discipline and personal healing. You have had more happening to you and around you than you can easily process and it's affecting you deeply. A healing influence is also affecting your inner life. It's helping you let go of old psychological burdens. Outwardly, greater discipline is now being required of you. The inward strains of this new discipline are also under healing influence. In a few months, resources will be added to your growing desire for a more fulfilling life. You will soon make great strides toward achieving that new life.



**HOW TO
LIVE
UNITED.
INVEST IN THE
BUILDING BLOCKS
FOR A GOOD LIFE:
EDUCATION,
INCOME
& HEALTH.**

REACH OUT A HAND TO ONE AND INFLUENCE THE CONDITION OF ALL.

LIVE UNITED

**United
Way**



United Way of Johnson County

Want to create opportunities for everyone in Johnson County? United Way is creating lasting changes by focusing on the building blocks of a better life—education, income and health. Pledge today at www.unitedwayjc.org.