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Iowa City's News & Culture Magazine

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August 10



IOWOOD

AREA FILM FESTIVALS HEAT UP AUGUST

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Left to right:

Bryan Drury, *Feast* (detail), 2010. Oil on canvas, 48 x 72 inches. Courtesy of DEAN PROJECT, New York. **Harry Shearer**, *James Carville, The Silent Echo Chamber* (detail), 2008. Video, 14:53 minutes. Courtesy of Susan Inglett Gallery, New York. **Michael Van den Besselaar**, *The Time Machine Mirror #5* (detail), 2008. Oil on canvas, 47 x 63 inches. Courtesy of Black and White Gallery, New York. **Mark Wagner**, *Took for Granted* (detail), 2008. Currency collage, 30 x 25 inches. Private collection. Courtesy of Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York.

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Shrimp from Fabian Seafood

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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

ON PARALLEL EARTH, A CONSERVATIVE MEDIA PROVOCATEUR RELEASES A SHOCKING VIDEO OF THE PARALLEL FIRST LADY!

PARALLEL RIGHT-WING PUNDITS AND BLOGGERS ARE SHOCKED BY THE SHOCKING VIDEO!

THE ADMINISTRATION REACTS SWIFTLY. NOW THAT A CONSERVATIVE MEDIA PROVOCATEUR HAS RELEASED A SHOCKING VIDEO--

BUT WAIT! THE VIDEO WAS MISLEADINGLY EDITED!

THE FAR RIGHT QUICKLY SHIFTS GEARS--

--WHILE THE WHITE HOUSE SCRAMBLES TO RECOVER, THE PRESIDENT HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF HIS IMPENDING DIVORCE! THE CABINET SECRETARY IN CHARGE OF HASTY RESPONSES TO UNVERIFIED SOURCE MATERIAL TAKES FULL RESPONSIBILITY!*

AND BEFORE LONG, THE CONSERVATIVE MEDIA PROVOCATEUR IS BACK WITH A NEW SCANDAL!

***THE PARALLEL STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT IS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT FROM OUR OWN.**

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In With the New

Issue No. 94 marks my last issue as an editor here with *Little Village*. Fall 2010 and beyond falls to the editing and publishing guidance of Matt Steele, who has worked hard to expand the magazine's outreach on the air and online. Matt has tweeted and facebooked his heart out for us, and has supported all of the daily posts under the *Little Village* name. You'll easily find him where the Iowa City action is, hitting up shows, networking with artists, wining and dining at the new-est spots, and being an overall lover of this town.

I am proud to pass the torch to such an active and engaged Iowa Citian. Taking over for Matt on LittleVillageMag.com, Drew Bulman will unleash his own web editing powers, and I'm looking forward to seeing video montages of all the shows I missed having to go to bed early on a school night.

Little Village also is saying goodbye to Features Editor Paul Sorenson and Contributor John Schlotfeld. Both are migrating to other Midwestern cities for new adventures, and I want to personally thank them for the time, energy and talents they've invested in this publication and town. Little rags like ours—not to mention cities—thrive on their generous involvement, and Paul and John have left big shoes to fill. I don't know how we'll find

another reviewer with John's dedication to the Iowa City music scene, but we welcome new reviewers to man up to the challenge. I also must thank Paul for his countless nights of talking me into tasteless pun writing. Those little giggles got me through late nights of missing punctuation hunting. I've given Matt the go-ahead to call me if he's ever in need of a bad pun for page 3, but for your sake, I hope he doesn't.

Little rags like ours—not to mention cities—thrive on generous involvement.

Thanks goes out to the advertisers as well, who have made financial investments in the magazine and thus community. Like I said, we thrive on local efforts, and every time you support your local advertisers, you support *Little Village* and your town. So thanks to you, too, dear readers. We're all in this together.

Melody Dworak has been an LV editor in one capacity or another since 2005. This fall, she is succumbing to the siren song of a UI grad school program at the School of Library and Information Science. Here's hoping she makes it through the two years with her intellectual bowels intact. (And if you don't get that reference, check out the audiobook Tales from Greek Legends, which can be found at overdrive.icpl.org. Libraries are rad.)

Lessons from San Francisco

Having lived in San Francisco for most of the past two decades, which has an even larger and more aggressive panhandling contingency, I have seen panhandling there grow from a passive to aggressive and near assaultive daily grind on the soul. Of course, SF has a much larger population and the fair weather increases the homeless to addict to panhandling ratio exponentially, and it has become as persistent as the fog. That city is also now in the middle of their search for solutions and has proposed an ordinance that would ban sitting or lying on sidewalks citywide from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. (I sure hope the tourists don't get tired walking up the hills and decide to catch their breath by sitting on sidewalk steps.)

In Santa Rosa, California, renegade musicians are taking to the streets to protest a very old ordinance in that city which prohibits the playing of any instrument at anytime in public. And in Spokane, Washington, street musicians have overturned a peddler's license requirement, but still are fighting for the right to set out a tip cup.

So Iowa City is not alone in the struggle to find a balance between freedom of speech versus keeping the ped mall available to all, including families and children. As with all things in a society and community, the search for a compromise will always end up with neither side getting all that they want, but to even get some of what one wants there must be a confrontation of opponents.

I do sincerely hope street musicians, artists and groups seeking public support for good causes regain their ped mall access privileges in full, but I was driven away from San Francisco, a city I love, in no small part by the oppressive and aggressive panhandlers pleading for money to feed their addictions. I see a line between the genuine and the disingenuous ped mall constituents, and with continued pressure on the rule makers, I do trust Iowa City will find that balance.

—Gregory Fischer, South Amana
comment on littlevillagemag.com

Got something to say? Write to us here:
editor@littlevillagemag.com



Keys to the City

Kudos to Mark Ginsberg and Marc Moen for putting pianos out in our public downtown walkways a la the “Play Me, I’m Yours” initiative in New York City and elsewhere. Now, anyone can share their musical talents, big or small, with everyone else. This is the truest definition of public art, and I hope we see much more of it in Iowa City. In the few weeks since these keyboards have graced our sidewalks, I’ve enjoyed seeing and hearing dozens of folks from our community plop down and fill the air with music of all sorts—and that has immeasurably expanded a dimension of our public life here in this city of arts.

The past century-plus has seen the invention of incredible communication formats and devices—mass publishing, movies, radio, TV, records, CDs, iPods, the internet, etc. These devices and venues have revolutionized the accessibility of both great (and low) art and entertainment for masses of people. And because of that accessibility—and the media themselves—some wondrous art and entertainment has been created that would not have existed otherwise. But as with anything, along with the positives come negatives. One of the major downsides of mass media is the commodification and professionalization of art and entertainment.

I could not imagine my life without my recordings of the Berlin Philharmonic under Herbert von Karajan, my DVD collections of *Twin Peaks* and *Lost*, my books by professional authors that are too many to count or enumerate, etc. Every one of these precious items is not only something that was purchased, but contains art and entertainment that was created by someone else at a skill level far beyond my own abilities, and usually in (and about) remote places. Not that there’s anything wrong with that—enjoying the achievements of talented people from around the world and across time is one of the marvels of modern life.

But mass accessibility to these wonders, I think, has also diminished an important part of human life. Not that long ago, without the

professional art and entertainment products so prolifically available today, people created more of their own aesthetic expressions and leisure amusements and shared them directly with their family, friends and community. Nightly conversation laced with personal and family stories, evenings in the parlor singing songs around the piano or pump organ—these



Not even 96 degree heat could keep Daron Rodgers from his daily practice on a public piano. Nor could it stop admirers from taking a break to listen.

are images of a bygone era, certainly, but they are also symbols of loss. When we depend too much on “hiring” professionals to entertain and inspire us and on purchasing access to their performances or artistic products—tickets, recordings, printed matter, cable and internet, etc.—we not only diminish the need and motivation to create art ourselves, but we also lose the family and community bonds that self-generated art creates.

Iowa City is a mecca for public art, and I wouldn’t change that one iota. I’ve written before in this column about my support for the city’s public art program. Our summer festivals and weekly music programs are tremendous assets. Our theaters and music venues are second to none. And while these activities do build community in their own way, they are still mostly about watching professionals provide us with art and entertainment.

So I encourage our city—both public and private sectors—to offer even more venues for everyday folks to share their expression and entertain each other, be they wildly talented or just enthusiastic. We’ve recently enjoyed

another remarkable jazz fest. The stages—main, local, college and youth—present a tremendous array of national and local talent. But how about adding a “jam stage,” where anyone with a horn, guitar, keyboard, etc., can hop on up and play for awhile? How about the Iowa Arts Festival adding a “storytelling stage” where anyone can step up and spin some tales? How about an open mic night for one of the Friday Night Concerts?

How about some of the Washington Street businesses sponsoring a small, permanent,

This is the truest definition of public art, and I hope we see much more of it.

community stage at Black Hawk Mini-Park, where anyone can step up whenever they feel like it and sing a song, recite a poem, play the guitar, juggle or perform a scene from a play? That would

only cost a few bucks in materials—and even though anyone can pretty much perform spontaneously there now (though currently sans open guitar case or empty coffee can for donations), the presence of a simple stage would both encourage and declare this city’s commitment to public art, in truly its purest sense.

As I said, I wouldn’t trade Summer of the Arts, our downtown sculptures and our lively professional music scene for anything. They are crucial to Iowa City’s identity and character. But they’re always quite expensive, and they depend largely on professional—and often outside—talent. Ginsberg and Moen’s pianos have opened up an opportunity to enrich our artistic and community life with something long lost in the 21st century—sharing and bonding through art on a personal and civic level that is barely seen in American culture anymore. I say let’s go for it even more. **IV**

Thomas Dean, as of this writing, has not yet tickled the downtown ivories.

The View From Down Here

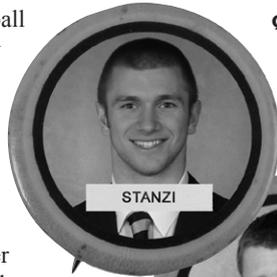
Gearing up for football season in Iowa City is very much like a warrior painting his or her face for battle, gathering supplies and weaponry, readying oneself for the trials and triumphs on the path to glorious victory. The proper accoutrement must be acquired ... the black and gold striped socks or overalls symbolically donned, your favorite gold cardigan unearthed and de-mothed, those awesome Tiger Hawk earrings rocked for the first time since last fall. The proper attitude must also be donned: yeah, so, I like football...so what? Sure, I also read books and sip wine on patios and listen to indie rock or whatever. But cool cred goes out the window when it comes to celebrating my Hawks.

I find myself wearing things during football season that I would not-ever-no-never wear on an average day outside of football season. Despite my absolute dread of winter I can't wait for it to get chilly enough to sport the aforementioned cardigan. Its violent yellow brings out the very best in my extreme Hawkeye spirit.

Every fall, there is a reason for Herkie face decals, shriveled up yellow daisies pinned to ancient black sweaters, vintage stocking hats with puffballs ... and the reason, my friends, is love.

I may not be the most rabid Hawkeye fan in Iowa City, but I'm likely the most starry-eyed. I nearly wept with joy when I met Adrian Clayborn last year over burgers at Short's. I literally could not say a word to my Hawkeye hero and was reduced to a muttering stumble-bumpkin barely able to gasp out, "the Adrian Clayborn?"

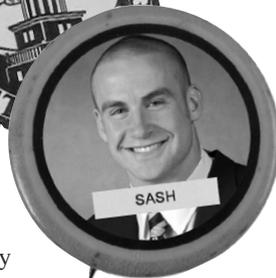
And the band! Aw gawd, I love the band. I bellow the asinine words to our illustrious fight song each and every week. I remember not knowing those words at a Wisconsin/Iowa game years ago and having an elder fan give



STANZI



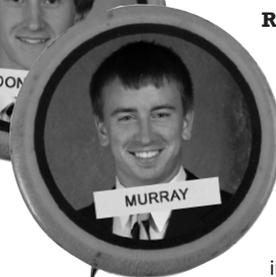
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SASH



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QB DREAM TEAM

Ricky Stanzi, SR
James Vandenberg, SO

Stanzi led the Hawks to their first 8-0 start in school history last year. Keokuk native Vandenberg is itching for another shot at Ohio State.

Tyler Sash, JR
Can you say 11 career interceptions, 6 of them last year for the young safety.

HAWK STARS

Who will Hawkeye fans be watching this year?



Adrian Clayborn, SR
Game changing defensive end. 132 career tackles. Penn State game proved monster kick-blocking capabilities.

EXTRA SPECIAL TEAMS
Daniel Murray, SR
Ryan Donahue, SR

Field goal kicker Murray, is currently number 13 on the Hawks all-time scoring list. Last year, Donahue had 27 of 61 punts downed inside the 20-yard line.

me and my friend a forgiving smile as we simply made up our own. Who doesn't love the crazed inspiration of the band as it comes to the bar the night before every home game. Our ears in the bell of a trombone or a tuba, and all we can hear is the wha wha and the "fight fight fight," but no matter how bad it sounds, it sounds so good.

Looking forward, we welcome back familiar stand-outs Karl Kluuuuuug, the Adrian Clayborn, Derrell Johnson-Koulianos, and Christian Ballard. We anticipate learning who will be the go-to running back this season, and whether the monkey of Northwestern will finally be removed, clawing and screaming, from our backs. Hawks young and old can't wait to cheer on one of the best-named players ever to grace our rosters, Marvin McNutt, as he is sure to pull a miracle catch out of his, um, helmet, at least twenty-seven times this season. You can quote me on that.

I guess since this is a new column I better

introduce myself. My name's Stephanie, I love football, and I adore the Hawks. I never miss a game. I never actually go to a game, but I've got a pre-warmed booth at the Deadwood with my name on it. I eat Sally's chili, or tacos, or loose meat sammies with my friends every

Yeah, so, I like football ...so what?

Saturday and we hoot and wail and strategize. And yes, folks, this girl knows the game, so once the season gets started we'll be talking about more than just cardigans.

I'll offer readers a little piece of the view from down here, where the regular joes shine as red and sweaty-faced as the players, the beer is always cold, and we might even offer a hug to the folks cheering for the other team. But only after we laugh at their little outfits first. **lv**

Stephanie Catlett would like to remind her brother, Patrick, that the Eye of the Hawk is mightier than the Husker of the Corn.

ROOT AWAKENING

The summertime in Iowa City opens a world of free time for children, but how much of that free time is spent outdoors, exploring our own backyards? Across America children are spending more time playing indoors than outdoors. The growing gap between children and nature may actually have negative effects on a child's health.

Since the term was coined by Richard Louv in his 2005 book *Last Child in the Woods*, "Nature Deficit Disorder" (N.D.D.) has been on the minds of parents, teachers, lawmakers, and grass roots organizations nationwide. With the term, Louv explores the psychological and physiological repercussions of children who are alienated from nature, primarily in their early years. Research shows the growing 'electronic detachment' from nature is linked with increased childhood obesity, attention deficit disorders (A.D.D. and A.D.H.D.), impaired social skills, and negative changes in the mental health of children.

Of course, with most children's busy schedules, not everyone has time to spend a day in a park exploring the woods. Even so, Louv and other experts agree that it is not necessarily the distance from town children travel to find outdoor play areas, but the frequency with which they spend time outside, anywhere. In other words, a child can benefit just as much from climbing a tree in their own backyard as walking a hidden path in Hickory Hill Park.

Over a decade of studies show that simple forms of outdoor play, or "nature play", increase all children's cognitive abilities. Unstructured outdoor play is proven to reduce the symptoms of A.D.H.D. and A.D.D. in children, and increase creativity, problem-solving skills, social skills, and self-discipline. Direct exposure to nature has also been shown to improve a child's resistance to negative stresses and depression.

To give Iowa City parents an idea of how much less time we are really spending out in sunshine: according to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, children today spend an average of six hours each day in front of the computer and TV but less than four minutes a day in unstructured outdoor play. These statistics are drastically different from just ten years ago. The American Public Health Association warns

that the effects of "sedentary, indoor lifestyles are already evident in children today." Proof of this lies in increased obesity rates, early onset of diabetes and depression, and the first generation of children who will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.

Alarming, yes, but there is something we can do. The State of Iowa has created two statewide campaigns since the defining of Nature Deficit Disorder: the Iowa Coalition for Re-connecting Children and Nature and



Taproot summer campers dance in the Maquoketa River at Backbone State Park.

the Iowa Outdoor Youth Summit. Both organizations work to present citizens and educators with resources that help to get children outdoors and reconnected with nature at a local level.

In Iowa City we are lucky enough to have many parks to explore, but our opportunity for environmental education does not stop there. Citizens of Iowa are pushing for federal legislation to include environmental education in K-12 schools and seeking out local organizations that help get their kids outside.

Taproot Nature Experience is one of many local resources that this community has on hand to battle the negative health effects of Nature Deficit Disorder. Taproot is a non-profit organization that strives to keep children of all ages in touch with nature, and the benefits that come with it.

With the approaching school year, Iowa City parents may find it hard to find time to take their children outdoors. Luckily, Taproot offers after school programs that are designed to give children the chance to have unstructured outside playtime in natural locations in the Iowa City area. While supervised by Taproot teachers, children experience creek stumping,

animal tracking, prairie walks, hiking, fishing, gardening, and much more.

Children who participate in these after school programs take afternoon trips all over the corridor, but organizers also place an emphasis on learning about the nature that exists in our own backyards and nearby playgrounds—an especially important lesson for those who live in densely developed neighborhoods.

Elementary students in the Iowa City Community School District also embark on a five-day trip to MacBride Nature Recreation Area to participate in the School of the Wild, an accredited envi-

THE GROWING ELECTRONIC DETACHMENT FROM NATURE IS LINKED TO NEGATIVE CHANGES IN CHILDREN.

ronmental school with The University of Iowa. The school offers a week-long day camp experience to expand direct education about the natural world. In this day camp, children explore and learn about various ecosystems and pick up skills like animal tracking and bird identification.

When is the best time to start exploring the outdoors? According to a recent University of Iowa study, the sooner the better.

The study found that active lifestyles among kids five years old and younger can help them stay healthier as they age, even if they don't remain as active later in childhood.

Iowa City is fortunate to have so many resources that benefit the physical and psychological health of its children but, even if we don't have time to make the most of all of them, the solution to keeping our children healthy might be as simple as taking a step outside. **IV**

Kara Bennett is a University of Iowa student currently working towards a degree in Journalism and Mass Communication with a focus on sustainability and environmental journalism. In her free time she enjoys spending time outdoors exploring the world around her and traveling west for vacations.

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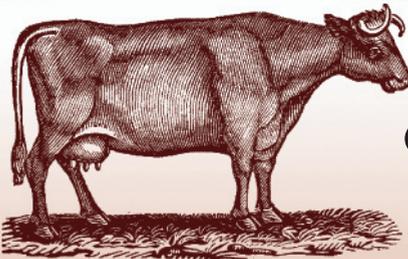


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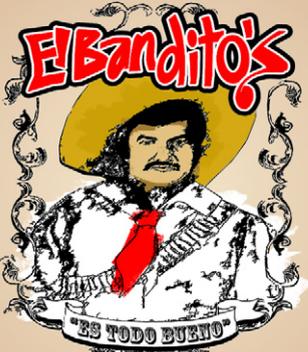
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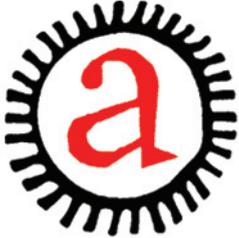
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We Built This City

A departing Iowa City lover reflects upon why he fell for this town.

I'm leaving Iowa City.

For the vast lot of you who don't know me, this means little. But after the most important six years of my life—and as an active community member in whatever journalistic and cultural outlets I could tap into—it's kind of a big deal. Cue the nostalgic montage music.

I love our town, a feeling many of you who've invested more than me share—and one the revolving-door newcomers may soon develop. This isn't special; travel anywhere and you'll find the same sort of local love spun with whatever native grass can be grabbed. I could spend this farewell arguing for Iowa City's dominance, whether it comes with our density of creativity or superior college-and-townie blend. There are reasons why IC is often high up on "Best Cities" lists—but those don't interest me.

What's important is figuring out why Iowa City inspires such love and how, especially in this period of change, to maintain the vital mix that has kept so many of us here and will lure so many back. This isn't a numbers game, nor is it grounded in emotional revisionism. Affection for this town, like its romantic kin, is a delicate balance of ideas and ideals, always informed by how the place treats its people and how its people contribute to a sense of place.

Perhaps it's best if I explain it like this. Over the past few months, I watched the first season of HBO's *Treme* with friends (and *Little Village* contributors) who also share my connection to Iowa City—and who are also leaving town. *Treme* shows how residents of New Orleans try to reassemble their lives after Hurricane Katrina and presents the spirit of New Orleans not as something that is imposed from above, but rather as the collective efforts of individuals who love where they live, love what they do, and love the people around them. We see time and again how the city's deep and varied musical, culinary and ethnic heritage enables residents, as well as outsiders, to fall for it.

It's easy to find our own counterparts. Our Writers' Workshop, the first and likely the best, is a constant source of pride—even when we complain about its insularity. Watch how quickly William Elliot Whitmore shows

are sold out (we'll claim him as our own) or how restaurants as varied as Shorts and The Motley Cow gain respect by using as many local ingredients as possible. No one falls in love with impotent chains like Best Buy or Border's—but insult our Real Records or Haunted Bookshop, and we'll fight 'til you back down.

My point is this: Iowa City has so many unique spots, fueled by so many unique people, that listing all would be exhausting. We know what's good, and we've got it.

We haven't seen anything like a hurricane, but certainly the 2006 tornado and the 2008 flood were destructive enough to spur a collective re-evaluation and coagulation. People came together, sandbagged and put up homeless neighbors. They helped however they could to make sure Iowa City remained the place we had all grown so fond of.

The small actions by individuals built these critical and large victories. Perhaps we're most connected to New Orleans by frustrations with FEMA's response to unforeseen destruction, but I'd argue—especially in the past couple of years—that we share another key question and conflict: Who do we let define our city?

In New Orleans, the goals for re-building the city were largely defined not by the poorer majority who had lost their livelihoods in the storm, but by city and national officials who looked at problems from a distance and tried to re-build a city that they only had a small stake in defining. Don't like the poverty? Then close public housing that wasn't touched by the storm and force thousands out of their homes. Want the city to remain a tourist hub? Then spend your cash rebuilding the outsider-trod areas and leave residents on the waiting list. This has, perhaps, cold economic logic, but power to enforce that logic wasn't granted. And so the people who made up the city suffered for an abstract idea of what they "could be"—ignoring the multifaceted, critical culture of who they already were.

Iowa City is also changing. We've advertised for years that we're a fantastic town for education—from preschool to post-grad—

as we well should. For our size, we have far more culture and general "things to do" than the twice-as-big Cedar Rapids (my hometown) and, I'll argue with stubborn pride, the thrice-as-big Des Moines. We can be great soil for small business; we're in day-trip distance from a handful of other great Midwestern cities. There are myriad reasons to come here, and we've been talking.

And growing. Not only has it attracted middle class, college-educated folks like myself, but also a large number of people from

We only deserve to keep our reputation and to grow in stature if the promise of a good life here is open to everyone.

poorer, largely black urban areas that—though we often don't acknowledge it—came here for the exact same reasons. These Iowa Citians started families in a place where they could feel safe and hold jobs that simply don't exist where they grew up. This is something that we should welcome with open arms—and is a critical test for our town. We only deserve to keep our reputation and to grow in stature if the promise of a good life here is open to everyone.

That welcoming is a group effort—no single mouthpiece can be the "voice" of Iowa City, even though some want to claim that responsibility. The City Council has been elected to keep the public sector in working order, but they're not able to create or mold Iowa City's identity by themselves, however positive their intentions. In my mind, the negative public response to recent city council decisions—the 21-ordinance, the anti-panhandling ordinance—isn't due to whether or not these changes will affect our city for the better. But by not having a public vote, and with enacting such drastic change when many are out-of-town, these laws don't feel like *our* change, one that's decided upon by the people that love this town. It feels like the city council's.

Places like Iowa City are built by the diverse passions of its residents, not by planning committee. The above council decisions are the talk of the town, sure, but any such at-

LEAVING CONTINUED ON PAGE 13 >>

GOING MEDIEVAL

Ten men attack each other in an open field of Noelridge Park in Cedar Rapids. Lips curl in battle cries. Bright tunics flap in the wind and rain.

Swords glance off shields.

The wounded crawl across the battlefield, swords still held high.

Swords clash with swords. The sounds stretch across the park:

Thud. Thud. Thud.

These swords aren't made of steel. They are bamboo or some other sturdy material wrapped in foam pool noodles or camping foam.

Technically, they are not swords at all. They are called boffers.

And the wielders of these boffers are more a militia than an army. Off the battlefield, they are engineers, carpenters, laborers, students and "unemployed bums."

On Sunday afternoons, however, they are men of war.

"If I can hit someone with something," the squire says, "why *wouldn't* I want to do that?"

Medieval Combat in Iowa City

This is live action role play (LARP), akin to games like Dungeons & Dragons, World of Craft, and other alternate reality games. The difference is that larpers wear their avatar in flesh and blood.

LARP got its start overseas in the 1960s and came to the States a decade later, but official groups didn't pop up in Iowa City until six years ago. The specific version of LARP played in Iowa City is called Amtgard.

Jeremie Collins, 31, a Kirkwood student and Aegon employee, describes it as "football and D&D."

Amtgard is played across the country, and has a hierarchical structure similar to medieval Europe. At its core are the "parks"—groups of players in the same area.

The Iowa City/Cedar Rapids park calls itself Olympus, and boasts more than 30 members. They play on Sundays at 1 p.m., alternating locations between Noelridge Park in Cedar

Rapids and City Park in Iowa City. This week, they are sparring between a side street and the Ionian Sea—er, an aquatic center in Noelridge Park.

The part where they hit each other

One of the biggest attractions to Amtgard is the boffer. It isn't hard enough to break bones, but it isn't so soft that a hard hit won't bruise, either. Collins, who considers Dungeons & Dragons the gateway drug that got him into Amtgard 17 years ago, says he was drawn to the physical aspects of the game.

"If I can hit someone with something," the squire says, "why wouldn't I want to do that?"



Collins' love for hitting things with the boffer is clear: Even while standing on the sidelines he periodically gives his friend Josh Wasta a good thump in the gut.

If they were actually playing, the hit would kill Wasta.

In order to make the game more realistic, Amtgard has rules that make the boffer act like a real sword. Hits on the arm mean that arm is out of play. It must be held behind the back. A hit on a leg means the player is reduced to moving only on his or her knees, a hit to the torso means death. Extra protection, such as chain mail or leather, adds to the number of hits it takes to lose a limb or life.

Clothes, bros and alter egos

In Amtgard, a player's outfit is more than just a costume. It is a part of their character, an indication of who they are, and a source of extra protection. But sometimes that extra protection from injury doesn't match the players' medieval garb. For example, Ben Williams, 29, wears UFC gloves and a catcher's shin guards with his purple tunic bearing the Olympus logo. Despite the clash of time periods, the look is intimidating—a combination of Yogi Berra and King Henry VIII.

The color of a warrior's clothing is just as important as its functionality. Belt colors indicate socioeconomic class. For example, only knights are allowed to wear white belts. Only squires wear red belts. Tunic color is also important. It's like a medieval jersey, showing which team each player is on. This is especially important when there are more than two fighting companies in a park. And in Olympus, there are three.

Clothing also helps transform a modern-day engineer into an old-school warrior.

When Collins steps out of his Ford Focus in Noelridge Park, he doesn't appear dressed for battle. Wearing a backwards Dodgers cap, gray Nike t-shirt, black sweat pants and no shoes, he looks more like a friendly neighbor hosting a barbecue. But then he slips on his green woven sash and red and white tunic with an eagle sewn onto the front, and becomes Thorp, his LARP alter ego.

The process is the same for each player. Once they are transformed, they shed their real lives, their real worries, and their real identities.

"Sometimes I won't know their real names for years," Collins said. Even outside of Olympus, they call each other by their LARP

name, and it becomes a nickname.

To some players, their LARP name is more than a nickname. It's an alter ego, a more utopian version of themselves.

"Owen is Ben without the stress," Williams said of his character. LARP is his catharsis.

More than just swinging stick

Amtgard is more than hitting other alter egos with sticks. Alternate world arts and crafts add another dimension to the game. Take Sue Hohbien, 43, one of the best artisans in Olympus. She said she joined Olympus for the crafts aspect, and hosted a Rock Band party after today's battle where she also taught fellow Olympians how to sew a loop neckline.

"I fight, but I'm not good at it," she said. "However, I can out-sew them all."

She has won several Amtgard crafting competitions.

Every six months, Olympus holds a crafts competition with 21 categories that vary from writing and cooking to sewing and armor-making. The entries are judged on a scale of one to five, five being the highest score. The arts and crafts aspect of Amtgard is so valued that anyone running for the position of duke or reagent must first score at least a three in seven different crafting categories.

In addition to the best seamstress of the group, Hohbein is also the park's self-described Mom. She is the oldest member of Olympus, and routinely brings its youngest member, too—her nine-year-old son.

"He doesn't like to play sports," she said, "but he loves to come out and play barbarian."

This is an activity that gets him outside, Hohbein said, and lets him exercise. "He can have a good time and not get hurt," she said. Other Olympus members are careful to hit him less forcefully than they might hit an adult player.

Usually, Amtgard members have to be 16 in order to participate—14 with a parent's permission—but Hohbein's children have received special permission because she is always present. She is thankful they have the opportunity to play.

The warriors are restless

Olympians huddle under the trees as the rain picks up. Restless, they smack each other with their boffers, waiting.

Wind picks up and blows rain clouds south.

As the rain subsides, the sun breaks through. Collins, the burly 17-year veteran, points his boffer towards the field.

"Let's go swing some stick." **lv**

Nicole Zylastra is a student at The University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

>> LEAVING FROM PAGE 10

tempt to change or define IC by the Chamber of Commerce or the university fall similarly flat if they don't grasp what makes our town and what makes us love it.

This is understandably hard to define, but let me try.

In *Treme's* New Orleans, the most important victories aren't top-down, bureaucratic successes. As anyone who follows the disaster cleanup knows, these are (still) frustrating and incomplete. Rather, we're presented with the focused, passionate, personal triumphs of people who love their city and are fighting for their livelihoods. *Treme* argues that the Marti Gras Indian Chief, who rebuilds tattered costumes and gathers his crew from the post-

This cluster of people is Iowa City.

Katrina diaspora for a small but critical street performance, wins a more crucial victory than anything the mayor's office accomplishes—and his is more central to the rebuilding of the town. Same for the restaurant owner who struggles to make rent or the trombone player who picks up any gig he can find. The "official" city business—the housing authority, the police—are important, but only as a part of the whole. And as far as defining the city is concerned, they're not a big part.

In my short time in Iowa City, I've known music festival organizers and local food gurus, literary loudmouths and academia haters, burnouts with mustaches and student presidents, mayors and their spouses, burlesque dancers and former pastors, poets with cartoonish hats and exhausted journalists—the list can go on and on, colored with names and detail, with odd webs connecting us all. This cluster of people is Iowa City. Some are great friends, others have forgotten who I am, but all hold and inspire affection for this place we call home.

As long as our town hopes to prosper, it must let steep that odd Iowa City mush. We should be welcoming, but most of all we should abstain from pushing people way. Like New Orleans or New York or any other great city, our residence isn't a comprehensive plan stuck to geography. It's a collection of people, whom I will forever miss. **lv**

Paul Sorenson (sorensonpaul@gmail.com) is leaving Little Village and Iowa City for the complicated metropolis of St. Louis. He'll try to make it work, but will have a hard time finding a similar, singular mix of great folk. Keep in touch.

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Civic Duty

As much as we enjoy our beloved town, Iowa City's not exactly at the top of the list of "must see" locations for visiting foreign dignitaries and officials. After all, Iowa City is just one of the many thousands of small metropolitan communities that—from coast to coast—dot our nation's landscape. What exactly makes our town so "remarkable"?

As executive director of the Council for International Visitors to Iowa Cities (CIVIC), one of 97 organizations nationwide that coordinate foreign visitors on behalf of the United States government, it was Sharon Benzoni's job to answer that question. As part of this educational and cultural exchange program, Benzoni, a 2007 graduate of The University of Iowa Environmental Sciences Program, played host to diplomats, community leaders, public officials and

"They tend to love it in Iowa. It's a slower pace than they get in the cities."

—SHARON BENZONI, CIVIC

any number of foreign figures visiting Iowa City. She met with women's rights advocates from across Africa, men who've lived amongst Algerian Bedouin tribes and countless other figures from all corners of the world. Through CIVIC and its many volunteers, Benzoni showed these figures why we choose to call this Iowa City our home.

"Very rarely would someone ask to come to Iowa," Benzoni says. "Many have never even heard of Iowa."

In a sense, CIVIC introduces our rural Midwestern state to these visitors, putting a human face on what was once, to them, little more than a speck on the global map.

Visitors' itineraries are highly personalized to facilitate connections with local scholars, city officials or organizations working in guests' areas of interest. It wouldn't be accurate to present IC as all work and no play, however,

so Benzoni encourages guests to explore Iowa City's entertainment offerings as well.

"We always recommend the Friday Night Concert Series," Benzoni says. "We keep [guests] in the Sheraton so they can walk around downtown, and I love just letting them loose to explore. They tend to love it in Iowa. It's a slower pace than they get in the cities, and we're much more hands on with the visitors."

Benzoni added that, elsewhere, it's not unheard of for State Department guests to be given a program, a taxi, and little context.

One of Benzoni's favorite places to take



CIVIC recently took visitors to the Scattergood School in West Branch.

guests is the Islamic Center of Cedar Rapids, and West Liberty, Iowa, which boasts one of the oldest dual-language educational programs in the country.

It's not uncommon for CIVIC to host visitors from countries that suffer from repressive regimes or limited resources, including recent guests from Kenya, Botswana and Mauritania. What has consistently impressed Benzoni, however, is the lack of bitterness such guests harbor toward Americans. Benzoni anticipated such bitterness not because of the resources and freedoms we enjoy, but because of the extent to which we take them for granted.

To CIVIC, there is a clear need for such grassroots public diplomacy.

"We need people within [foreign] countries who feel invested in having a positive relationship with the American people," Benzoni says.

Fancy yourself a citizen diplomat? To find out about volunteer opportunities with CIVIC, email civic@uiowa.edu

According to her, international networking through citizen diplomacy is part of what allows successful high level state-to-state diplomacy to occur.

"One of the things that got me interested and involved in these organizations was the importance that these one on one dialogues have," Benzoni says. "What we try to do as public diplomats is get people to drop their ideology, or at least set it aside long enough to engage with the human being in front of them. Then they can start to talk about where their ideology comes from and why it's important as opposed to, 'This is my ideology and if you disagree with me, we cannot talk.'"

This personable one-on-one contact paints an image of the United States that's more complete and nuanced than what's portrayed through exported Hollywood culture. By taking Muslim visitors to the Cedar Rapids Muslim community, for example, Benzoni gives these guests an opportunity to experience firsthand what it means to be Muslim in the Midwest.

"I think it's a real interesting contrast to the narrative that's portrayed in the media about the Muslim experience in America," Benzoni says.

Though it may seem a paradox, by interacting with such a diverse pool of visitors throughout her time as CIVIC executive director, Benzoni feels less confident in her understanding of the outside world.

"The thing I've learned most is how little I know," she laughs.

For Benzoni, a necessary first step toward understanding global issues is recognizing how complex they truly are. She's stepping down from her post this fall in order to do some traveling of her own, hoping, albeit facetiously, that she doesn't end up a permanent nomad.

"Although," she says, "I am open to the possibility." **lv**

Drew Bulman is a recent graduate of The University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication. He has probably had far too much coffee today.

TO NEW BEGINNINGS

August is harvest season, and I don't mean corn: It's the annual time of year when we welcome the bountiful student population back to our small city. Whether or not you've been away, it's worth noting that summer vacation has brought a few changes in the music landscape. The so-called "21-ordinance" is the most obvious, but behind the scenes a duo of significant booking/management changes promises to shake-up Iowa City music for the better.

The first, which I think I've mentioned in this column before, is Andre Perry being named executive director of the Englert Theatre. Most of his contributions there won't start showing up until next month, so I'll wait until then to discuss them. An even more recent move involves the booking team from the Majestic Theatre in Madison, Wisconsin, who will be increasingly responsible for putting some bodies back inside Gabe's. It should be a welcome shot in the arm for what is still one of the best-sounding rooms in town, and add even more depth to an already deep and vibrant music scene. So, if you are new to town or a lifer, please: Get out there and enjoy it.

Enjoyment is actually a theme this month, as there are some significant and really fun trends that mark the music calendar. The first is burlesque, which is finally taking the Midwest by storm after a resurgence in larger markets earlier in the decade. Here it started with our own local dancing ladies (and their circus pals) selling out a variety of rooms all over town, and since then we've been graced by touring regional troupes as well. This month is Super Happy Funtime Burlesque, playing the Blue Moose on the 6th. Their tour has been funded by Kickstarter, a cool website that raises cash for all sorts of creative initiatives, which recently lured literary guru and Mission Creek alum Ted Thompson to the Big Apple.

While I'm at it, two other music movers-and-shakers are taking off for NYC as well: Mission Freak blog mastermind and PS1-workhorse Todd Olmstead is headed for journalism school at NYU, and one of the founding trendsetters and booty-shakers of Thursday night dance parties, Rebecca McCray, is going east as well. We'll miss you, dear friends of

the Iowa City live music scene.

Buy hey! Back to enjoyment, right? The second fun musical trend that we'll see in August involves covers. It seems like everyone these days has a covers record (or two),



and cover shows have set the Mill on fire before (see: the last two Halloween shows, the avant-karaoke of Rock Art, etc.). This month it's Tom Petty covers, provided by some of the best folk/country/rockers in town: Sad Iron Music, Shame Stevens (both featuring mem-

A band hoping to throwback just a few years is Minneapolis rockers Tapes N' Tapes, ex-blog-darlings who are hoping to recapture some of the magic.

bers of the legendary Shame Train) and potentially some more folks. If you like TP & the HBs (and you do), then this one should be a blast. It goes down at the Mill on the 26th.

A third batch of pure joy happens as no less than four shows this month turn on the "throwback," but to very different times and places. A band hoping to throwback just a few years is Minneapolis rockers Tapes N' Tapes, ex-blog-darlings who are hoping to recapture some of the magic from their debut record after falling off the radar a bit. Their last show in town was pure sweaty exuberance, though, and I'm hoping they bring their indie-pop best again. They're at the Mill on the 28th.

Another great throwback show is Dawes, playing Gabe's on the 9th. They have been building a massive Iowa following, thanks in no small part to their role in a variety of gigs

sponsored by Rock Island's Daytrotter. (If you haven't been to daytrotter.com, just stop reading and go there now.) I caught Dawes at the most recent Daytrotter Barnstormer show, which took place outside of Maquoketa on the

Fourth of July, and they are undeniably talented. The very next night (10th) Blitzen Trapper are coming through town, one of the most compelling of all the "beards and vests" bands who tap into '70s folk and AM radio rock. I saw them a few years back at SXSW when their debut had people abuzz, and they did not disappoint. Keyword: harmonies!

But if you like it a little more raw, a little more hot, then you certainly want to check Hott at the Blue Moose on the 12th. This local band is already approaching "local legend" status for their brand of rock and roll, and it's not a gimmick.

These are older guys who have seen and heard more than you. Allow yourself to get schooled by them while having a blast in the process. Yet another great "throwback" kind of band is The Wheelers, whose searing, grungy, super-'90s guitar songs have consistently impressed me. They are at Gabe's on the 21st.

Finally, my slightly left-field (and left coast) pick of the month goes to Lower Dens, a new project featuring San Francisco's Jana Hunter, who has been involved in one way or another with some of the best records from that area (she's pals with Devendra, Papercuts, etc.). Her solo work, in which she's often veiled behind her long hair and trucker cap, is mesmerizing. I expect this project to be reverb-heavy and thematically interesting, since rather than use effects to mask bad singing or juvenile lyricism, Hunter has always focused on songcraft. Whether she's headlining intimate rooms or opening a DIY show for Dan Deacon—and I've seen her do both—Jana Hunter makes you shut up and listen. **IV**

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.



Sandwiches

with

Nina

New York City-based musician Nina Nastasia is part of a long tradition of highly revered artists who are bigger overseas than their native country. Effortlessly mining a dark, melancholic aesthetic, she stands as a wonderful example of a genre I have long referred to as “pretty sad music.” Pretty, as in beautiful—and sad, as in *pretty freakin’ heartbreaking*.

One reason for Nina’s inexplicably low American profile is that she fits poorly into neat categories. As a female songwriter who plays guitar, she certainly doesn’t play it safe like Jewel (though at the beginning of her career, some people tried and failed to push her in a soft rock direction). And while at times you can hear twangy undertones in her songs, they are a bit too weird to turn her into an alt-country queen like Lucinda Williams.

When trying to describe Nina Nastasia’s music, words fail. She has carved out a niche all of her own, finding a comfortable home on Touch & Go Records, which released the skuzzy punk of Big Black and the Butthole Surfers, and more recently Fat Cat Records, the label associated with the latter day psychedelia of Sigur Rós and Animal Collective.

Since 2000, Nina has released six critically acclaimed albums, each of which have been recorded by Steve Albini—who has worked with Nirvana, the Pixies and literally thousands of other artists over the past quarter century. Given that he is known for embracing loud, jagged sounds in his own bands (Big Black, Shellac), it might come as a surprise

that he’s a big fan of her music.

Albini has also earned a fairly cranky reputation over the years, and hasn’t always had the nicest things to say about those he recorded. Although he later took it back, Albini once referred to the Pixies’ *Surfer Rosa* as a “patchwork pinch loaf from a band who at their top dollar best are blandly entertaining college rock.” So when this man utters praise, it means a lot—for he doesn’t dole it out lightly.

“There are cruel ironies in making albums for a living,” Albini told British music magazine *MOJO* a few years ago. He laments that when making a record one has to listen to it so many times that the charms of even the best of the lot can wear thin from overexposure. Nevertheless, there are a few albums that have become favorites, like the first one he recorded with Nina.

“*Dogs* is a record so simultaneously unassuming and grandiose that I can’t really describe it, except in terms that would make it (and me) sound silly,” he says. “Of the couple thousand records I’ve been involved with, this is one of my favourites, and one that I’m proud to be associated with.”

Coming from a man who is responsible for the striking sonic qualities of PJ Harvey’s *Rid of Me*, Nirvana’s *In Utero*, the Breeders’ *Pod*, and other influential records, that’s a remarkable statement.

Nina’s latest release might very well be her best—though many fans still cite 2002’s *The Blackened Air* as a classic, while others remain fondest of her debut. *Outlaster* features a mini-orchestra that provides a thick, moody atmosphere that is very much the inverse of

her previous album. (*You Follow Me*, her collaboration with Dirty Three drummer Jim White, featured only guitar and percussion.)

“The big difference from my other albums is that a lot of those parts were written out, which added to the sound,” she says. “The nice thing is that we worked with our friend Paul Bryan, who did the arrangements, and it was also a really good group of musicians.”

I was lucky to be able to speak with her in depth, in part because I’m an old friend of Nina’s and her creative partner Kennan Gudjonsson, who designs all of her records. Over the past 15 years I’ve spent many nights sleeping on a couch in their small studio apart-

*This is “pretty sad music.”
Pretty, as in beautiful—
and sad, as in pretty
freakin’ heartbreaking.*

ment in Chelsea—where they handmade the highly sought after original pressing of *Dogs* (which easily was one of the top 10 album packaging jobs of the past decade). From that close vantage point, I’ve had the opportunity to watch her career develop.

My latest visit to Nina’s place was earlier this summer, when we talked about her decade of music making and the soon-to-be-released new album. In fact, Kennan was bent over a table furiously finishing the artwork for

Outlaster, which was due to the label the next morning. Nina is notoriously press shy and uncomfortable doing interviews, something that lends her an air of mystique (some internet message boards make her out to be a haunted, gothic figure, which is pretty far off the mark). Instead of a formal interview, we had a laid-back talk over a bottle of wine and some finger sandwiches, just like in years past when she wasn't the subject of one of my articles.

Until our recent conversation, I had totally forgotten that Nina grew up in Los Angeles. This little factoid is totally hilarious, because her music and demeanor are about as far removed as possible from that plastic glitter pit. It wasn't until Nina moved to New York City in 1991 or 1992 that she started playing guitar and writing songs for the first time.

"I played piano for a long time, and studied it as a kid," she says, "but it always felt very restrictive—so I switched over to guitar. There's something easier about writing on an instrument that you don't know."

A prolific songwriter, she built up a repertoire and began performing at venues like the Mercury Lounge and the now-defunct Tonic, where she had a small following. This was the 1990s, when the music industry was swimming in more cash than it had ever seen, before or since. In those irrationally exuberant times it was hard not to flirt with the major label route.

"There was someone at Sony Music Publishing who was interested in me, and we were having lunches and that kind of thing," she says, cringing, explaining how the music biz sharks crept her out.

That was reason enough to stay away from the culture industry's sausage machine, but she also witnessed firsthand a few cautionary tales.

"It was classic," speaking of our mutual friend Phil Roebuck, who went through major label hell with his band the Hollowbodies.

"Phil had the fat advance from the record company, and everyone talked him up like he was going to be huge, but then he had creative conflicts from the label, and then he was dropped. We watched that happen to him, and it was kind of a lesson of what not to do."

Opting out of the major label system, Nina went the other way—raising the money to finance *Dogs* independently.

"I feel really lucky to have gone in that direction," Nina says, explaining how she has retained creative control over her music (not to mention full ownership of her songs). "But there were some trade-offs," she says, laughing.

Without recording advances or tour support from a cash-infused label, there were more than a few times when she and Kennan were totally broke, and nearly evicted. Because Nina typically records with numerous players, their tours would sometimes lose money, but at least it built her a fan base overseas.

Despite a few setbacks, Nina has been much luckier than most non-stars, for she has had many people in her corner singing praises. Another early supporter was the late John Peel, a hugely influential deejay at BBC Radio 1 that championed *Dogs*—playing it often. Peel's enthusiasm (he called her debut "astonishing") helped spread Nina Nastasia's name throughout Europe, though it's not like that has made her rich.

Perhaps *Outlaster* will change her fortunes, or maybe not. Making it in music—even the independent world—is more about luck, timing and marketing gimmicks than talent. At least Nina can sleep well at night knowing that she has released half a dozen fully realized, stunningly recorded albums. Most artists don't even get to make one. **IV**

Kembrew McLeod is spending part of this summer working on a really big mixtape.



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Panhandling”—what it is, who can do it and where—has been a hot topic in Iowa City recently ever since the city council proposed—and ultimately passed—a new ordinance prohibiting “aggressive panhandling” in response to some folks’ concerns over solicitation on the ped mall.

That there already were laws on the books prohibiting this—laws that had never resulted in a single arrest—was apparently of little concern to them. This new law was, in the words of council member Mike Wright “a solution that’s roaming around searching for a problem.”

When it comes to “solutions roaming around in search of a problem,” I can always tell it’s summertime in Iowa City by the humidity that makes me wish I lived someplace dryer, like Cambodia, as well as by the arrival of the Mormon missionaries who arrive every year about this time.

I see them strolling through the neighborhoods—and patrolling the ped mall—talking to passersby while trying, I suspect, to convert folks to Mormonism, but I don’t know for certain as they’ve never actually approached me personally.

Considering the amount of time I spend downtown in areas where folks might be especially susceptible to conversion, the fact that I’ve never once been approached by them makes me wonder if there isn’t a photo of me taped to a wall someplace in Salt Lake City with “Do Not Save This Man” written across it in bold red letters.

I’ve considered stopping some of them to ask if this was the case, but, on the off chance that it was, I’d just as soon not know about it. It’s good to feel wanted and if I found out that there was an entire religion that wanted nothing to do with me from the get-go it would probably hurt my feelings.

There was an early morning knock on my

door a month or so ago and I crawled from bed to see an almost unnaturally beautiful woman standing there smiling at me.

I knew this wasn’t part of the dream I had been having because she was dressed far more modestly than the women in my dreams usually are—and also because she was clutching a handful of *The Watchtower*, the flagship publication of the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

I normally dispatch religious solicitors by

minutes to visit?” I was so busy trying to picture what she might look like in more locally appropriate garb and wondering how I could convert her to my way of life that I said “yes” almost before I realized I had done so.

It was then that the “we” part of her question stopped the fantasy reel that was running through my head and I peered over her shoulder to see another woman standing just a few feet to her right who may have once been a professional wrestler—or at least someone who had given birth to several of them.

She, I suppose, was the “bad cop” to the first woman’s “good cop,” part of a routine they had no doubt perfected over time as it had worked quite well on me. The first woman—the actual knocker—would use her beauty to get a foot in the door, literally and spiritually, while the second one was there to make sure that nobody got to “know” anybody else too well once she did—in the biblical sense of the word anyway. A guardian angel in comfortable shoes.

Once it dawned on me that our “visit” wouldn’t possibly transpire in the way I had imagined it might, I feigned obligation to “something I had on the stove,” bade them well, and retreated back into my apartment to lay some more groundwork for my inevitable eternal damnation.

A few weeks later I was sitting on my porch one afternoon when a group of young Baptist folks carrying Bibles walked by and stopped to ask if they could talk to me about my soul.

Always interested in talking about myself I said “sure,” and they gave me a compelling pitch about the coming End of Days and what I needed to do beforehand to guarantee that I wouldn’t be left behind, and how I would be if I didn’t cast my lot in with them.

They laughed when I asked them whether the Rapture would wipe out my credit card debt (but didn’t actually answer the question, leaving me to believe that it won’t, unfortunately) and invited me to come to a meeting



A panhandler might tell me that I should go to hell and a proselytizer might tell me I’m going to go to hell. But that’s ok, who am I to stop them?

pretending I’m not the actual resident of my apartment, but just a plumber there to fix a pipe that was, At That Very Moment, spewing raw sewage all over the bathroom and I had to rush back to it, but I never do any plumbing while wearing only my boxer shorts so my story might have seemed somewhat suspect. Besides, she was so compellingly beautiful that I was happy to listen to her for a few minutes just to stare into her eyes.

I listened for a bit (pre-coffee, I heard mostly just high tones and low tones) and when she asked me if “we could come in for a few

with them to learn more about their church.

I asked how long their church had been around for and they told me that their particular branch of the Baptist church had been around for almost 60 years.

I told them then that my faith had been around for almost 6000 years and I didn't have any real complaints about it (the films of Pauly Shore notwithstanding), so I wasn't looking to change my afterlife service provider at this time, but I would keep their offer in mind if I ever had a change of heart.

Neither of these events—complete strangers, at the door of my home, soliciting souls—caused me any discomfort, fear or unease. Why some people get so upset by folks asking them for mere pocket change while they're out in public is a divine mystery to me.

Even though it was unlikely I would have surrendered my soul to them (though had the Jehovah's Witness gal not had a chaperone with her, you never know) I was still more than happy to listen to their pitches and was left none poorer for having done so.

I'm neither too busy nor too important to spend a few minutes of my day talking to strangers—even when I'm only wearing boxer shorts and haven't had any coffee yet—and I wouldn't begrudge anybody their right to knock on my door to try and sell me something, be it everlasting and eternal life or a set of cheap, Chinese-made steak knives.

This being the case, I don't understand why the city council felt it necessary to pass a new ordinance aimed at cracking down on panhandlers and buskers on the ped mall.

I'd like to think—most days anyway—that

the value of my immortal soul is just slightly greater than the 50 cents or a dollar that the

earned just as much of a right to be there as anyone else, even if they hadn't seen a razor in a while.

Given the voluminous—and vociferous—amount of opposition to this ordinance, its passage was truly a tone-deaf move aimed at turning our vibrant downtown into a place just as soulless as the food court of the mega-mall that drew all the businesses away from it in the first place.

This public space (formerly public, anyway) belongs everybody, not just the well-heeled boutique store shoppers allegedly “too afraid” to come downtown to buy expensive gifts for their loved ones and who are too classy to express their feelings simply by sliding a cash-filled

envelope across the table. “Here, look, I got you some cash. Happy anniversary, baby!”

I may not want to surrender my soul—or the change rattling around in my pocket—to the folks who might be interested in either, but I also don't want to live in a place where I don't have the right to at least listen to offers for them, either.

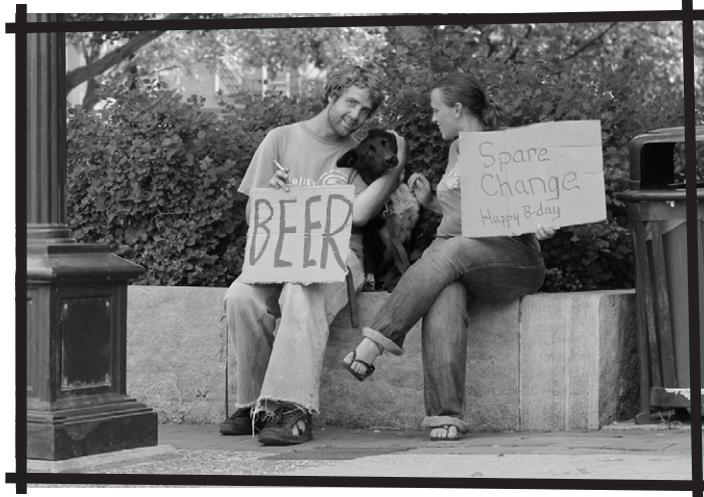
That our city council doesn't feel this way makes me wonder if, ultimately, they might be the ones most in need of a donation.

Not a monetary one, just a little bit of soul, to replace the soul they seem to be short on themselves. Fifty cents' or a dollar's worth is all I'm asking for.

If we all pitch in, it just might make a difference.

Anybody have a hat? **IV**

Yale Cohn “aggressively” enjoys people playing music on the ped mall.



I may not want to surrender my soul to solicitors, but I also don't want to live in a place where I don't have the right to listen to offers for it.

panhandlers and musicians had been asking folks for.

If given a brush-off, a panhandler might tell me that I should go to hell and a proselytizer might tell me I'm going to go to hell, but that's okay, ultimately, because for all I know both could be right and who am I to try and stop them from speaking their minds on the issue?

The panhandlers and buskers who were down on the ped mall day in and day out had established—in legal parlance anyway—“constructive possession” of the space and had

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Film Festival Preview

IN SEARCH OF THE CORN d'OR

Toward the end of *Ratatouille*, the food critic, wonderfully named Anton Ego, finally has a bit of Remy's cooking. The exquisite taste immediately clears away all Ego's judgmental grumpiness and takes him back to a moment in his childhood, when his mother fed him a comforting dish, the moment that inspired his career. In this age of *American Idol*, we're all a bit Egotistical. Everybody's a critic. The wonderful thing about film festivals is their power to suck us back to those moments in our childhood when we didn't know what to expect from the movies and were simply overwhelmed by the stories and characters splashed onto the big screen.

We have two great film festivals in August. Now in its 13th year, the Hardacre Film Festival takes place in downtown Tipton (about a half-hour drive from Iowa City), in the Platonic form of an old small-town movie theater. Just two days long, August 6-7, it's packed with little gems.

The Landlocked Film Festival here in Iowa City is a more sprawling affair—with screenings at the Englert Theatre, the Iowa City Public Library, and hotelVetro from August 26-29. Go to either one, and you'll be entertained by a mixture of narratives, documentaries, and short films; you'll get to rub elbows with the directors and actors who make you laugh and cry; you'll leave proud to be an Iowan.

Here's *Little Village's* take on a few of the many highlights.

We offer reviews of just a sampling of these fests' 100+ shows. Of course we couldn't evaluate all—the missed gems are for you to discover.

Check out www.hardacrefilmfestival.com and www.landlockedfilmfestival.org for exact show times and details.

Earthwork

L Directed by Chris Ordal
Landlocked Film Festival

It's hard to make a living as an artist. It's especially hard to make a living when your art involves organizing plants, mulch and rocks on the earth so that they form an image of Will Rogers if seen from a passing helicopter. Chris Ordal's *Earthwork*, one of the narrative features at Landlocked, tells a true story from the life of Stan Herd, a crop artist from Kansas, trying to make a living in all senses of the word.

In 1994, Stan deceived his wife, mortgaged his house and set out for New York City in order to transform an empty lot in Manhattan—owned by Donald Trump—into a living sculpture, particularly enjoyable to those in the upper reaches of the surrounding skyscrapers. In his persistent, competent, easy-going, Midwestern way, Stan comes to enlist the help of several homeless men who live in the underground railroad tunnel nearby—and they struggle against themselves and a society of junk and bureaucracy to cultivate their unlikely garden. The end of their story brings tears to the eye, though whether of triumph or trag-

edy depends on your point of view.

Though most movies about artists are notoriously vapid, usually focusing on anything but the making of art, *Earthwork* attunes itself to the creative process and the real contours of an artistic personality. Stan Herd participates in the great Midwestern conspiracy to make life livable. But underneath that quiet conspiracy of competent work and reticent friendliness, there flows an extravagance to shame all disheveled romantics. Herd's gentle passion is captured in a particularly fine performance by John Hawkes, one of those actors whose name you don't know despite having seen him a hundred times on TV shows like *Lost* and *Deadwood*, and in movies like *American Gangster* and *The Perfect Storm*.

One of the questions the movie firmly poses concerns the true nature of art. Is it about making something permanent? Being remembered? Being famous? Making a living? Beauty? Survival? *Earthwork* politely suggests that art as we usually think of it is but a moment in the great art of making life worth living.

Scott Samuelson



American Grindhouse

H Directed by Elijah Drenner
Hardacre Film Festival

Cleanfix

H Directed by Joshua Ligairi & Andrew James
Hardacre Film Festival

Movies, we're reminded every summer, are escapism. From robots and hobbits to sex and violence, the big money in moving pictures is in human fantasy.

"It's called 'The Business,'" famed director John Landis reminds us in *American Grindhouse*. "They will make anything if it makes money."

Shock sells. And *Grindhouse*, showing at this year's Hardacre Film Festival, is an homage to America's—and thus the industry's—obsession with lurid cinema.

The film takes its name from the seedy inner-city filmhouses popularized in the 1970s for "grinding out" horror, blaxploitation and skin flicks on a 24-hour-a-day schedule.

Starting in the pre-talkie-era, *Grindhouse* plays like a film school history lesson, albeit one sprinkled with nudity, violence and gore from what must be over 100 movies.

Unfortunately, to cover a century of film in 75 minutes, the film races through each decade. But the broad reach of the film provides repeated evidence for the central argument: Americans want to be shocked, we just need a good excuse to subject ourselves to the outrageous.

One of the most bizarre examples is a segment on the little-known childbirth film craze that packed theaters in the 1950s. Ostensibly produced as educational tools (which isn't entirely untrue) the films raked at the box office by providing cover for a nation of perverts to see a woman's naughty parts on the big screen.

If *Grindhouse* is a celebration of pushing the limits of taste, *Cleanfix* is an examination of staying within the lines.

Cleanfix, also shown at Hardacre, examines the industry's parasitic "edited films" subculture.

The film, co-directed by Joshua Ligairi (a Mormon) and Andrew James (no longer a practicing member of the church), depicts the rise in popularity of edited films—stripped-down (pardon the pun!) versions of R-rated blockbusters.

Deferring to the wishes of church leaders who decry the corrupting influence of sex and killing in popular entertainment, many Mormons avoid the originals when they show at the multiplex.

But beginning with an edited version of *Titanic* (cleansed of Kate Winslet's bare breasts), Clean Flicks, a chain of rental stores dealing in edited movies, provides an alternative to Hollywood's "dirty" cuts.

Predictably, the Director's Guild of America objects to this blatant disregard of copyright laws, and the film follows the legal battles that follow.

Comically, the same moral code that demands the axing of a mere mention of anatomy in the classic *Kindergarten Cop* line "boys have a penis, girls have a vagina," allows for a nearly uncensored version of *Fargo's* infamous body-through-a-woodchipper scene.

Of course, Mormons aren't alone in their unbalanced views on sex and violence. One only has to watch primetime network television and start counting the bloody corpses on *CSI* or *NCIS*, with nary a bare butt to be seen since the exit of *NYPD Blue*, to ask: Why do we fear our own sexuality while we celebrate brutality?

This and other larger questions aren't fully explored in *Cleanfix* but it all makes for a good story, including an unexpected scandalous twist in the film's final act.

Ironically, even *Cleanfix* would offend the moralists with its share of skin and bad language.

But, for the rest of us willing—or excited!—to watch sex, drugs or a little bit of the old ultra-violence on the big-screen, these two films are a primer for a broader discussion on the intersection between morality and art.

Go watch them. I promise it'll be...educational.

Andrew Sherburne

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Voices Unveiled: Turkish Women Who Dare

L Directed by Binnur Karaevli
Landlocked Film Festival

"Voices Unveiled" is a rich tableau of images from the idiosyncratic edifice of Istanbul to the feral beauty of Cappadocia and Mardin. It follows three Turkish women—a dancer, an artist and an activist—who each in their own way struggle for individual identity in a collective world. The filmmakers begin with stock footage of Istanbul (1908) over which can be heard a narrator giving voice to the words of Halide Adivar, an author and activist of the time. She speaks of the Bosphorus, of harem life, of Western education and of doubting the faith. This introduction, along with later quotations from Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic (1922) and a women's rights activist, brings together past and present in a way that neatly evinces just how little the discourse in Turkey has really changed.

Modern day Turkey must be understood first from the human dimension for to Western eyes the only functioning democratic state in the Middle East must seem incomprehensible alongside its continuing political, social and economic oppression of women. This is a world in which "honor is a woman's obedience," virginity is prized to the extent that it is the family's business to protect it and where one's body is not one's own but a component of family and society. The various accounts of oppression depicted

are moving to say the least. But rather than appeal to base emotion this film instead attempts an appeal to reason. The filmmakers never linger upon one anecdote or another. They move from one to the next, accumulating facts and begging us to consider them rationally. This is enforced through such execrable statistics as the following:

"Only 3% of Turkish women receive a college education."

"Between 2002 and 2007, 1,806 Turkish women were murdered in 'honor killings.'"

"In the same period, 5,375 women died in 'honor suicides.'"

The three women for whom the majority of runtime is devoted each preserve something of tradition in their lives, at once rebelling against the old hierarchy while embracing a modern perspective and crafting their own traditions. But the filmmakers are careful to note early through testimony that Turkey itself is a patchwork. One can't speak of the "Turkish woman" per se, but only of *specific* Turkish women as culture groups vary so dramatically between the more modern urbane environs and the vast stretches of desert defining the majority of the nation. While this film was made ostensibly to honor the women of Turkey it is also intended for Western audiences. It is at once a political document of Turkey itself and a portrait of the continuing struggles of women the world over.

Matthew Mesaros

Broken Dreams

L Directed by David Crabtree
Landlocked Film Festival

"Broken Dreams" is a coming-of-age story imagined through the perils of love, friendship and addiction. Johnny is a young filmmaker struggling to complete work on his documentary about an agoraphobic "little person" named Julie, played ably by Nicole Gerth. Amidst this work he discovers that his best friend Ryan has asked his other best friend Elizabeth to marry him. She has yet to give him an answer, giving Johnny time to surreptitiously reveal his long concealed love for her and perhaps win her over before it's too late. He is encouraged to do whatever it takes to finish his film to that end, leading him to pursue a dangerous path with a new pill, appropriately titled "the blues," in order to ramble through the editing process. In the course of events he becomes addicted, cut off by his dealer, shunning his friends and placing them all in danger.

We are told at film's open from Johnny himself that his story is one of conquering fear. "Sometimes in life you run up against fear, blocking your way forward." The various ways this fear manifests—from fear of the future (wasting away on the couch like his brother) to fear of unrequited love forever lost—is truly the locus of "Broken Dreams." The filmmakers intimate this smartly in several ways, multiple montages



of drug use probably being the most persuasive physical and psychological manifestations. So leave the kids at home for this one, folks. We are taken on a rather intimate journey with this character as he snorts his way through various substances, often in a hazy, sleepless delirium.

The best expression of Johnny's fear, and the film's most tender and affecting scenes, is to be found in his communion with another character. In the course of making his documentary Johnny becomes a friend and mentor to Julie. He captures her timorous life on film and then helps her to create a new one by overcoming her fear of the outside world. Julie in turn prods Johnny about his own demons, allowing him to give voice to them for the first time. From here we can only be beguiled by the gravity of Johnny's situation, and the questions raised: Can Johnny secure Elizabeth's love, get clean and make amends with his dealer before it's too late?

Matthew Mesaros



Mind the Gap

IN SHORT

In the golden days before iTunes trailers and stealth marketing, the previews used to be the best thing about going to the movies. In the golden days before previews, it was probably the animated and live-action shorts that invariably preceded the main attraction. They're still the best thing when it comes to film festivals. There's just something about a short movie that, if mixed reasonably well, has the power to make us almost immediately happy—like a martini.

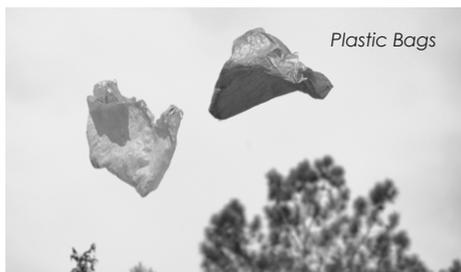
The movies at a film festival ambush you with their fine excesses. This is particularly true of the shorts. Not until the closing credits roll do you know how long they're going to go, how many twists the plot will take, or even what the genre of the movie is. *Patient* (Hardacre) starts out like a slightly cracked romantic comedy, veers into a horror movie, careens into a thriller, and then abruptly comes to an ending we don't have a pigeonhole for—in the space of fourteen minutes.

Even when a short conforms to standard formulas, it's with concentrated pizzazz. For instance, *Clemency* (Landlocked) condenses all the good parts of a horror movie down to 20 minutes, beginning with a gruesome chase scene, and concluding with a harrowing confrontation between a woman and her sister's killer. I wouldn't be surprised if a studio picked *Clemency* up and watered it down into a feature film. Even better on this score is *Survivors* (Landlocked), a surreal, Bollywood take on the post-apocalypse. Though it's a little rough around the edges, it ends with the most claustrophobic scene in the history of movies.

But more often shorts don't fit into any formula at all. In *Mind the Gap* (Hardacre), a gorgeous, leggy blonde sits down next to a sad, elderly gentleman on a train. His tired eyes give off a little gleam. What happens next? You'll never guess, but it makes perfect sense and teaches a sharp little lesson about youth and age. *The Other Side*

(Landlocked), a Danish short about two boys having a sleepover, flirts with horror, abuse and the supernatural, only to end with a marvelous surprise that dispels all ghosts and exposes human nature.

Definitely not to be missed is *Plastic Bag*, written and directed by Ramin Bahrani, who's made such terrific features as *Man Push Cart* and *Chop Shop*. *Plastic Bag* is about—well, anything and everything. It's the autobiography of a plastic bag, narrated by Werner Herzog with his trademark mixture of deadpan humor, odd nobility and over-the-top German nihilism. In the beginning, the bag is filled with the groceries of the woman



he calls "his maker." She takes him home and uses him for daily tasks. The bag is joyful. He has a purpose. Then his maker's dog—the monster—takes a dump on the floor. Soon the bag is in the position of escaping a landfill and restlessly searching the world for a purpose, for love, for his maker.

There's a gentle moment of homage to *The Red Balloon*, when our hero romantically entwines with a red plastic bag. Though it's very similar to its great predecessor in creating a powerful symbol, *Plastic Bag* is a much lonelier tale and speaks deeply to the spirit of our times. A gem of humor and humanity, a poem of despair and grace, a reminder of why we love the movies, *Plastic Bag* alone is worth the trip to Tipton and the price of admission to Hardacre.

Scott Samuelson

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So Much Fun

Moonraker

Self Released

myspace.com/somuchfunandfriends

The first 30 seconds of the first song “Balaban” on *Moonraker* tells you right away what’s up. An unusual sequence of guitar chords and raw Farfisa organ introduce a voice ornamented by fleeting delay effects. So Much Fun isn’t afraid to indulge in proggy gestures; while the overall sound is alt-rock modern, the willingness to wander around harmonically recalls The Moody Blues, and even the mighty, much-ridiculed Yes.

Both bands whose occasional brilliance was occasionally undone by their penchant for virtuosic noodling and comical pomposity. So Much Fun seem to avoid those pitfalls. They do this by using their considerable technical skills to underline and show off their songwriting, and never losing their sense of fun.

And they get to the damn point. The ambitious, three part “Moonraker” suite covers considerable ground in under seven minutes. More tasty sound design and guitar effect change ups happen along the way than usu-

ally decorate entire CDs. It culminates in Part III, which combines squee-skronk keyboard clatter with heavy-metal kick pummeling and Dinosaur Jr. spaz-fuzz guitar. Nick Miller’s vocals, strangely, remind me of Ozzy Osbourne more than anything else, which works better than it sounds like it would.

Throughout the CD, short little blurbs of ambient weirdness like “Deuterium Bottleneck” add to the atmosphere without derailing the flow. On their not-sure-their-serious power ballad “Velvet Joy” when Nick Miller sings “It brings me velvet joy, I have your picture in a velvet frame, it’s the softest kind” and slapdash falsetto backup singing barely keep it together. The point of this all is, as the band name indicates, Fun. And that’s one thing that, despite their irrepressible penchant for complexifying their song, So Much Fun never forget to provide.

Kent Williams

TOP 10 OF 2010 (SO FAR)



1. BIG BOI

Sir Lucius Left Foot: The Son of Chico Dusty
(Purple Ribbon Records/Def Jam)

One of the most consistent rap releases since *Blueprint*. The worst cuts are still solid club jams.

2. BEACH HOUSE

Teen Dream (Sub Pop)

A little less lo-fi, Beach House hit a proper studio and embraced a more conventional sound (guitar up front, live percussion) and churned out an almost excessively accessible third album.

3. FLYING LOTUS

Cosmogramma (Warp)

Flying Lotus unloads 17 stunning instrumental hip hop gems, *Cosmogramma* is trippy, glitchy, funky, idiosyncratic and full of constant rewards to those who spin it multiple times.

4. TWILIGHT

Monument To Time End
(Southern Lord)

Black metal supergroup (featuring members from Nachtmystium, Leviathan, Krieg, The Atlas Moth and Minsk) almost make you forget who Jacob and Edward are on their sophomore release.

5. SAM LOCKE WARD & DARREN BROWN

From the Privilege of the Grave

(Grotto Records/Mission Freak Records)
Iowa City’s premier lo-fi popper Samuel Locke-Ward teams up with Boy Dirt Car noise-maker Darren Brown for a creepy, dense and stunning album; possibly the best in Locke-Ward’s already crowded catalog.

6. JANELLE MONÆ

he ArchAndroid (Suites II and III)

(Woodland Arts Society/Bad Boy Records)
This R&B chanteuse proves she can do just about everything on her first long-player, and it doesn’t come off sounding like a disjointed, audition tape.

7. YELLOW SWANS

Going Places (Type Records)

The swan song from noise music greats is as dense as ever, glutted with analog feedback and searing, electronic hisses, but the duo develop a eerie, pseudo-dub beat which they slip in and out of throughout the record.

8. RENE HELL

Porcelain Opera (Type Records)

Occasional Iowa Citian, Jeff Witscher, has released the first full-length under his new moniker, Rene Hell. *Porcelain Opera* is the lush, ambient soundtrack to a paranoid, sci-fi thriller just waiting to be made.

9. HIGH ON FIRE

Snakes for the Divine (E1 Music)

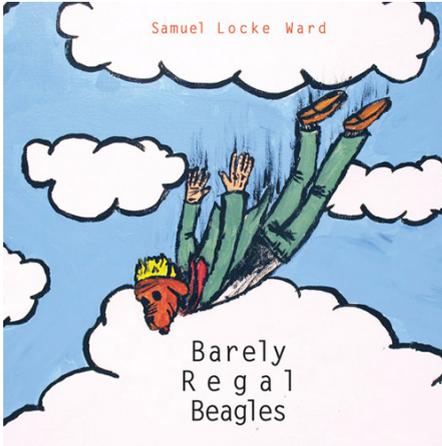
This stoner metal outfit from Oakland take on Judeo-Christian tradition—re-writing the Adam and Eve story—and keep it thick and sludgy on their fifth record.

10. ALEX BODY

Just Say Yes (Self-released)

Body trots out his self-loathing, apathy and anger to put on a parade of negativity soundtracked by swells of seeping synths and Casio drum beats. Body’s solo debut is shambling and a bit chaotic, but as delightful as a record so awash in negativity can be.

John Schlotfeld



Samuel Locke Ward

Barely Regal Beagles

Self Released

myspace.com/samuelllockeward

Even though I have been in Iowa City for the past two years and spent a large section of that seeing local bands, I have a dark secret to admit: I've never heard Samuel Locke Ward. I see his name all over downtown and on the Mill website, but reading a flyer on a telephone pole or a kiosk along the ped mall is a lot different than sitting in the audience of a show. For folks like me who have never listened to a single one of his songs, this CD will make you wonder why you didn't start listening to him earlier.

For those of you who like consistency, *Barely Regal Beagles* may not be for you. Each song varies greatly in tone and style. Throughout listening, it is difficult to find any connection point between tracks other than the fact that they have a guitar and are sung by Locke Ware, and even in some cases, this isn't totally true as a few are yelled. The differences can be seen in the first four songs. The opening track "Funeral For Coach" is a psych pop song highlighted with synth bridges and a slightly orchestral feeling. This contrasts with spastic no-wave on "Give Them Hairless Hacks," a vague homage to Weezer with "Will

Be Heaven," and the rambling gypsy style of "Four Nightmares." This is only a sample of the styles present here.

The standout track is "Little Moonface" with its plaintive folk strumming and otherworldly warble. I've never heard someone hold the word 'cry' for so long. It will get stuck in your head immediately. Another is the seven-minute primitive epic "This Pooch Will Fly" featuring a very modulated Locke Ware yelping over tribal drumming, which recalls Butthole Surfers for me. Other highlights include the fist-pumping punk-pop stomp of "Golden Kids," and "Pleasant Are The Leisure Days" with its hypnotic synth line, dynamic sound shifts, and Ward's general spookiness.

Fun, diverse, smart, attention-grabbing and full of spirit, *Barely Regal Beagles* is a good entry point into the world of the prolific singer-songwriter for the uninitiated. I'm sure it will also please long-time fans, but I think they already know that.

A.C. Hawley would rather have the light of the sun in the night as his days start at 10 p.m.

Indie Film in the Heartland | August 6 & 7, 2010 | www.HardacreFilmFestival.com

ART/EXHIBITS

African American Historical Museum and Cultural Center of Iowa

55 12th Ave SE, Cedar Rapids

www.blackiowa.org

Our Sister's Many Hats, ongoing • Endless Possibilities, ongoing

AKAR

257 E. Iowa Ave. Iowa City

www.akardesign.com

Lauren Gallaspy, thru Aug. 13 • Northerner's Show, opens Aug. 20

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

Art Bites "Enrique Chagoya" with CRMA Curator, Sean Ulmer, Aug. 4 • SmArt Saturday, Aug. 7 • The Sky's the Limit, Marvin Cone's Clouds, ongoing • From Monet to Picasso, ongoing • Norman Rockwell: Fact & Fiction, ongoing • Malvina Hoffman, ongoing • Mauricio Lasansky, ongoing • Art in Roman Life, ongoing • Grant Wood: In Focus, ongoing

CSPS/Legion Arts

1103 Third St SE, Cedar Rapids

www.legionarts.org

Brave New Era, Jul 30-Aug 3

Faulconer Gallery

Grinnell College, 1108 Park St., Grinnell

www.grinnell.edu/fulconergallery

Harry Shearer: The Silent Echo Chamber, thru Sept. 5 • Michael Van den Besselaar: Unconscious Optics, thru Sept. 5 • Mark Wagner: Face Value, thru Sept. 5 • Bryan Drury: Feast, thru Sept. 5

Herbert Hoover Presidential Museum

West Branch

www.nps.gov/heho

Hooverfest, Aug. 7 • Diane Blair Kunzler, ongoing

Hudson River Gallery

538 South Gilbert St., Iowa City

www.hudsonrivergallery.com

Michael Kienzle, thru Aug.

Iowa Artisans Gallery

207 E. Washington, Iowa City

www.iowa-artisans-gallery.com

Brian Andreas: Such Small Things, thru Aug. 30 • Pairings, opens Aug. 27

Johnson County Historical Society

310 5th St., Coralville

www.jchsiowa.org

20th Annual Barn Tour: Amish Barns of Johnson County, Aug. 14 • African Americans in the Military, ongoing

University Museum of Art

uima.uiowa.edu

Check website for locations

UIMA@IMU, ongoing

University of Iowa Museum of Natural History

Macbride Hall, UI Campus

www.uiowa.edu/~nathist

Mysteries in the Valley of the Sloths, thru Aug. 1

MUSIC

Blue Moose Tap House

211 Iowa Ave, Iowa City

www.bluemooseic.com

Snow Demon, Bloodcow, Kill Grid, The Old Man, Smokestack and the Foothill Fury, July 30, 8pm • Murder by Death w. Mewithoutyou, Buried Beds, Aug. 6, 5pm • HOTT w. Lipstick Homicide, The Tattle Tales, Plane Crashes, The Fizzy Pops, Aug. 12, 5pm • New Found Glory w. Man Overboard, Fireworks, Balance and Composure, Aug. 16, 6pm

• Emmure, Aug. 19, 4pm • RVAP fundraiser w. BF Burt, Aug. 29, 2pm

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids

www.crma.org

Stephen Swedish Concert, Aug. 19

CSPS

1103 Third St SE, Cedar Rapids

www.legionarts.org

Closed through Mar. 2011 for repairs/renovation.

Downtown Saturday Night

Ped Mall, downtown Iowa City

www.summerofthearts.org

Alma Sub Rosa and Soulsa, July 31 • Dave Bess and Sarah Cram & the Derelicts, Aug. 7 • Iowa Friends of Old Time Music present: Drollinger Family Band AND the Gilded Bats, Aug. 14 • Poison Control Center AND Christopher the Conquered, Aug. 28

Englert Theatre

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.englert.org

* Matt Alber, Aug. 18, 8pm

Friday Night Concert Series

Ped Mall, downtown Iowa City

www.summerofthearts.org

Amanda Miller & the Smoking Sextion and Clean Livin, July 30 • Burlington Street Bluegrass, Aug. 6 • The Beaker Brothers, Aug. 13 • Orquesta Alto Maiz, Aug. 27

Gabe's

330 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.iowacitygabes.com

All shows at 930pm unless otherwise noted

Open Mic with Garreth Spinn every Wednesday • Night in the Box w. Jeremy Bos & Justin, July 30 • Human Aftertaste w. Raw Mojo, ILLTH, July 31 • Jamie McClean Band, Aug. 3 • Electric Leaves, Aug. 4 • Stoney LaRue, Aug. 5 • Dawes w. Young Man, Aug. 9, 6pm • Blitzen Trapper w. Adam H Stephens, Aug. 10, 830pm • David Zollo w. Songbird, Aug. 13

Bored?

Get the low-down on the weekend with the Little Village Weekender in your inbox.

little village
Iowa City's News & Culture Magazine

Log on to www.LittleVillageMag.com and sign up for the Weekender

• Melovine w. Park Lane, Speed's the Name, Aug. 14
 • Sexy Delicious w. Red Daughters, Purple Asteroid Cadillac, Aug. 19 • Neutral Uke Hotel w. Golden Bloom, The Motion Sick, Aug. 20, 630pm • The Wheelers w. Nebula Was, The Post Mortems, Aug. 21 • Illth w. Dark Adaptation, Midwest Avengers, Aug. 28

Iowa City Farmers' Market Chauncey Swan Parking Lot

www.icgov.org

Market Music: Cetnral Standard Time, Aug. 4 • Al & Aleta Murphy, Aug. 7 • Nic Arp, AUG. 11 • Mutiny in the Parlor, Aug. 14 • Kalimbaman, Aug. 18 • Terrapin Isle, Aug. 21 • Collectible Boys, Aug. 25 • Mayflies, Aug. 28

The Mill

120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City

www.icmill.com

Shows at 9pm unless otherwise noted

Study Hall, the game, Sundays, 9pm-Midnight

Open Mic with J. Knight, Mondays, 8pm, call 338-6713 to sign up

Tuesday Night Social Club, Tuesdays

David Zollo & the Body Electric w. Brother Trucker, July 30 • Catfish Keith, July 31, 8pm • All-Girl Boys Choir, Wax Cannon, TBA, Aug. 3, 7pm • Bob Log III w. Pork Torta & Wolf Wars, Aug. 6 • Liz Sleichter Benefit w. Dave Zollo, BF Burt, Dave Moore, Aug. 7, 4pm • Amelia White w. w. Bree Nettie, Sam Knutson, Aug. 10 • Burlington Street Bluegrass Band, Aug. 11, 7pm • The Recliners, Aug. 13, 7pm • Wylde Nept, Aug. 14 • Sweetback Sisters w. Danny Schmidt & Carrie Elkin, Aug. 17, 9pm • William Fitzsimmons w. Rosi Golan, Aug. 18, 7:30pm • Hamell on Trial w. The Lonelyhearts, Aug. 19, 7pm • Lower Dens w. David Israel, Alex Body, Aug. 20 • Con Queso w. The Blood Beats, Aug. 21 • Burlington Street Bluegrass Band, Aug. 25, 7pm • Long Players Live w. Sad Iron Music, Alexis Stevens, Sarah Mannix, Aug. 26 • Tapes n' Tapes w. Birds & Batteries, The Western Front, Aug. 28, 7pm

Music in the Park

S.T. Morrison Park

www.coralville.org

Jeffrey Morgan & Friends, Aug. 5

Public Space One

129 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.myspace.com/publicspaceone

Check website for summer listings

Riverside Casino

3184 Highway 22, Riverside

www.riversidecasinoandresort.com

Kool and the Gang, Aug. 28

Sand in the City

Downtown Iowa City

www.summerofthearts.org

Complete Schedule online

Sand Sculpting, Aug. 20 • Funk Stop, Aug. 20, 7pm

• Grooveship, Aug. 21, 4pm • Collectible Boys, 6:30pm • TBA, Aug. 22

White Lightning Warehouse

www.myspace.com/whitelightingic

Permanent Vacation, Brutheear, SS Piss, TBA, July 30 • Obchod Na Korze, Mr. Hide, Olivia Rose Muzzy, Aug. 6 • Rave ft. Outmode, Diamond Hymen, TBA, Aug. 7 • Audrey Chen, Ed Cray, TBA, Aug. 8

Yacht Club

13 S. Linn St., Iowa City

www.iowacityyachtclub.org

Shows at 9pm unless otherwise noted

Magnetos w. Paradise Waits, July 30 • The Messy Blend w. Item 9 & The Mad Hatters, July 31, 8pm • Black Thursday, Aug. 5, 10pm • Ephraim Zenh w. Mad Monks, Aug. 6 • Dead Kenny G's w. Mike Dillon, 5 in a Hand, Aug. 8 • Kylie's Going Away Dance Party, Aug. 13, 10pm • Shame Train w. Old Man, Aug. 20 • PB & The Jam w. Smashed Pumpkins, Aug. 21 • 5 in a Hand w. Dan Hubbard and the Humidors, Aug. 27 • Amanda Miller & The Smoking Sextion, Aug. 28 • Black Thursday, Sep. 2, 10pm

University of Iowa Music

Riverside Recital Hall

calendar.uiowa.edu

Tony & Friends IV, Aug. 29

THEATER/DANCE/ PERFORMANCE

Dreamwell Theatre

Festival Stage, Lower City Park

www.dreamwell.com

9 Parts of Desire, Aug. 19-21 & 26-28

Englert Theatre

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.englert.org

Bugsy Malone, Aug. 13-15

Old Capitol City Roller Girls

Coralville Marriott

www.oldcapitolcityrollergirls.com

Fresh Meat Scrimmage, Aug. 7 • Lacrosse Skating Sirens, Aug. 21

Old Creamery Theatre

39 38th Ave., Amana

www.oldcreamery.com

Miss Nelson is Missing, Aug. 3, 5, 11 & 13

Penguin's Comedy Club

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

www.penguinscomedyclub.com

Check website for showtimes

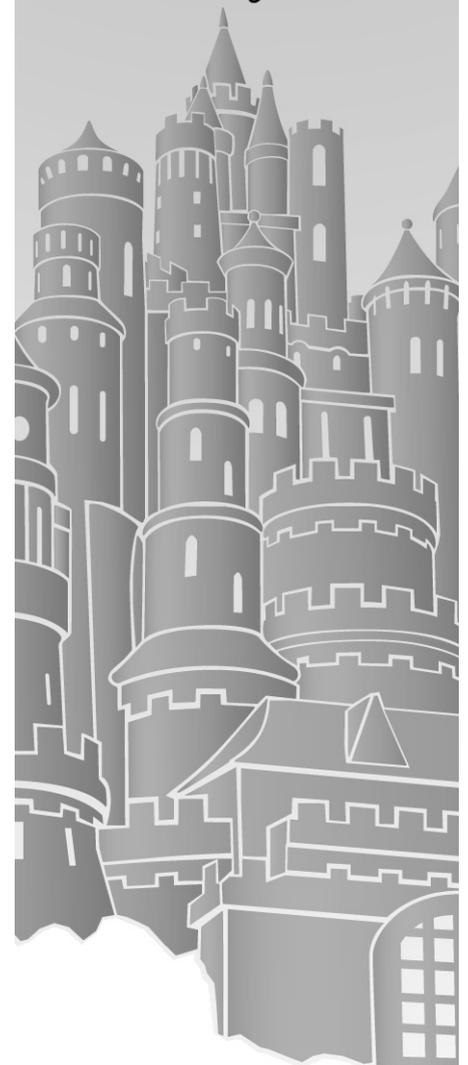
Pauly Shore, Aug. 5 • The Midnight Swinger, Aug. 13-14 • Dwight York, Aug. 20-21

BANK OF THE WEST

sand
 IN THE CITY

August 20-22

entertainment
 sand castles
 culinary row



BANK OF THE WEST

summerofthearts.org



New this Year!
Great Entertainment
on the Ped Mall

JULY 31
Alma Sub Rosa
& Soulsa

AUGUST 7
Dave Bess
& Sarah Cram
& the Derelicts

AUGUST 14
Iowa Friends
of Old Time
Music Present
The Gilded Bats

AUGUST 28
Poison Control
Center &
Christopher
the Conquered

summerofthearts.org



CALENDAR

Theatre Cedar Rapids

4444 1st Ave NE, Cedar Rapids
www.theatre.org
Talent Fest Finale, Aug. 8, 4:30pm

WORDS

Prairie Lights

15 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City
www.prairielight.com
All "Live from Prairie Lights" readings at 7pm
unless noted
J.C. Hallman, Aug. 5 • Alexa Stevenson, Aug. 9 •
John Langhorne, Aug. 17

CINEMA

Alexis Park Inn

1165 S. Riverside Drive, Iowa City
www.alexisparkinn.com
Aviaton Movie Night, Aug. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31,
6:30pm

Bijou Theatre

IMU, UI Campus, Iowa City
www.uiowa.edu/~bijou/
Pulp Fiction, Dogtooth, Aug. 27-Sept. 2

Hardacre Film Festival

www.hardacrefilmfestival.com
Check website for schedule
Film screenings, Aug. 6-7

Landlocked Film Festival

www.landlockedfilmfestival.org
Check website for schedule and locations
Film screenings, Aug. 26-29

MidwestOne Bank Free Movie Series

Pentacrest, Iowa City
www.summerofthearts.org
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, July 31 •
Shrek, Aug. 7 • Finding Nemo, Aug. 14

Park it at the Movies

Youth Sports Park
www.coralville.org
Star Trek, Aug. 20

University of Iowa Museum of Natural History

Macbride Hall, UI Campus
www.uiowa.edu/~nathist
Planet Earth: Ice Worlds, Aug. 8

KIDS

Iowa City Public Library

123 South Linn St. Iowa City
www.icpl.org
Storytime at 10:30 Mon-Sat, 2pm Sun

University of Iowa Museum of Natural History

Macbride Hall, UI Campus
www.uiowa.edu/~nathist
Night at the Museum, Aug. 13 • Storytime Explorers:
Pandas, Aug. 15

MISC

Leukemia Lymphoma Society Old Brick, Iowa City

www.leukemia-lymphoma.org
Cook Off For A Cure, Aug. 19, 5:30pm

PATV

206 Lafayette St., Iowa City
www.patv.tv
The Smartest Iowan game show Wednesdays, needs
contestants, email smartestiowan@gmail.com

The Red Avocado

521 E. Washington, Iowa City
www.theredavocado.com
Iowa City Green Drinks, Aug. 12 • Backyard
Abundance, Aug. 25

Little Village
Live
(still 100% free)



little village
Iowa City's News & Culture Magazine

Wednesdays, 5-6pm on KRUI 89.7FM

Little Village Live is Iowa City in audio form: interviews, music, opinions and more.

Curses, Foiled Again

After police arrested Ronald White, 35, for shoplifting in Cinnaminson, N.J., they discovered he had outstanding warrants that required posting \$400 bail. White paid cash. The next day, Detective Sgt. William K. Covert discovered that five of the \$20 bills White used were counterfeit. "They're pretty poor," Covert said. "I didn't have to touch them, and I knew they were bad." Before police could locate White, he showed up at the police station to complain that he had overpaid his bail and wanted his money back. Officers found two more bogus \$20 bills on him. "One of my favorite sayings is, you can't teach stupid," Covert said, "because every day something else comes up, and you just shake your head." (*Philadelphia Inquirer*)

When Guns Are Outlawed

Police in New Port Richey, Fla., charged Angelic Innamorato, 28, with assault after they said she tried to hit her cousin with a ceramic toilet lid. (*St. Petersburg Times*)

Hypocrite of the Week

Farmer David Jungerman, 72, posted a sign in a cornfield in Bates County, Mo., accusing Democrats of being the "Party of Parasites," who "always have their hand out for whatever the government will give them" in social programs. When asked about farm subsidies he has received totaling \$1,095,101 in the past 15 years, including \$34,303 last year, Jungerman insisted, "That's just my money coming back to me. I pay a lot in taxes. I'm not a parasite." (*The Kansas City Star*)

Parasites of the Week

California welfare recipients are able to use state-issued debit cards to withdraw cash from automatic-teller machines at 32 of the state's 58 tribal casinos and 47 of 90 state-licensed poker rooms. To make it easier for cardholders to locate ATMs in casinos, the Department of Social Services lists them on its website. (*Los Angeles Times*)

Overstimulated

More than 1,200 prison inmates defrauded the government of \$9.1 million in tax credits reserved for first-time homebuyers, according to a report by the Treasury Department's inspector general. Among the recipients were 241 inmates serving life sentences, who received \$1.7 million. The report disclosed that thousands of non-incarcerated people filed erroneous claims, resulting in more than \$28 million being improperly doled out. (*CNN Money*)

Mother of the Year

Police responding to call from an 11-year-old boy in Surprise, Ariz., who reported that his mother was leaving him and his 6-year-old brother, said that Christina Muniz, 29, told them she was abandoning her two boys because she was sick of them and wanted to pursue her dream of becoming a stripper. Officers called Child Protective Services, which presented Muniz with a temporary custody notice placing the children with their father in Phoenix. When she saw the notice, "she looked at the 11-year-old and told him she never wanted to see him again," police Sgt. Mark Ortega said, adding that as CPS workers started to take the children away, the 11-year-old tried to hug his mother goodbye. "Christina made a fist with her right hand and she punched him in the stomach." (*ABC News*)

Emergency Dating Service

Authorities said Audrey Scott, 57, of Alliance, Ohio, called the 911 emergency line five times looking for a husband. "You need to get a husband?" the dispatcher asked. Scott replied, "Yes." When told she could face arrest for misusing 911, Scott responded, "Let's do it." She was sentenced to three days in jail. (*Alliance's The Review*)



No Extra Charge—Yet

A U.S. Airways flight set to depart Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport returned to the gate for what passengers were told was a "minor emergency." The problem turned out to be maggots falling from an overhead bin. "A passenger had brought a container of spoiled meat onto the plane," airline official Todd Lemacher said. "After it was discovered, all passengers were checked to make sure no other carry-ons had been contaminated, and the passenger with the spoiled meat was reaccommodated on another airline." The flight continued, with the remaining passengers, to Charlotte, where the plane was taken out of service and fumigated. (Atlanta's *WAGA-TV News*)

Dumbing Up

- Law schools at New York University, Georgetown and eight other universities have made their grading systems more lenient in

the past two years, so their graduates will appeal to prospective employers. And in June, Loyola Law School Los Angeles announced it's inflating its grades by a third and making the change retroactive. "If somebody's paying \$150,000 for a law-school degree, you don't want to call them a loser at the end," said former Duke University geophysics professor Stuart Rojstaczer, who now studies grade inflation, "so you artificially call every student a success."

- Duke, the university of Texas at Austin and other law schools now offer their students stipends to take unpaid public-interest internships. And Southern Methodist University's Dedman School of Law recently began paying for-profit law firms to hire its students. (*The New York Times*)
- New York kept its promise not to dumb down statewide exams that determine whether students advance to the next grade; however, it awarded partial credit for wrong answers on the state math test. A miscalculation by a fourth-grader that 28 divided by 14 equals 4 instead of 2 is "partially correct," for example, if the student uses the right method to verify the wrong answer. A student who answers that a 2-foot-long skateboard is 48 inches long gets half credit for adding 24 and 24 instead of the correct 12 plus 12. State Education Department official Tom Dunn defended the scoring, explaining that students are asked to show their work, and the scoring guidelines, called "holistic rubrics," require that points be given for answers that indicate "a partial understanding of the mathematical concepts or procedures embodied in the question," even if that understanding leads to fully wrong answers. (*New York Post*)

Nuts to Charity

When Joe Cooper, 24, agreed to undergo a bikini waxing at a charity fundraising event in Leicester, England, onlookers bid to pull off the strips. One strip stuck to his scrotum, and an over-energetic tug by one bidder tore off several layers of skin, causing Cooper to nearly lose a testicle. He was taken to the hospital, where, "They told me if any more skin had come off, that would have been it," he said, adding, "I'd never do it again." (*Associated Press*)

Compiled from the nation's press by Roland Sweet. Authentication on demand.

Do microwaves kill bacteria?

If I take a piece of pizza that's been sitting on the table awhile and microwave it for one minute, would that kill bacteria and decrease the chance of food poisoning, or am I just eating nice hot bacteria?

—David Chattin-McNichols

Your query contained the elements of a rewarding investigation, David: microwaves, pizza, food poisoning, death, and—this was a deft touch—the eating of sizzling bacteria. I sent word to the lab: break out the petri dishes.

Before we start, three critical questions: First, can bacteria really just land on your food while it's sitting on the table? Second, what's the best way to kill bacteria? Third, is a microwave a suitable tool for bactericide?

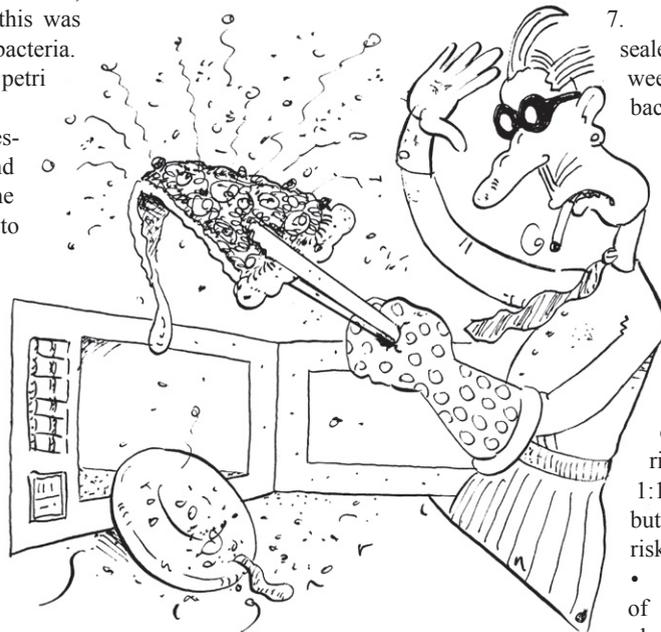
The first question is easy. Yes, bacteria not only are found on floors, tabletops, and other surfaces, they drift around in the air too. Scientists collecting air samples for 17 weeks in San Antonio and Austin, Texas, recently found 1,800 types of airborne bacteria. Among them were cousins of *Francisella tularensis*, sometimes mentioned as a potential bioterror weapon. OK, Texas is known for its abundant lower life forms; still, this is something to keep in mind if food-storage procedures at your house are a bit casual.

Next question: killing bacteria. Alcohol will do the trick, which may lead pizza lovers to think: problem solved. Unfortunately, the alcohol concentration needed to kill bacteria will go a long way toward killing you. Sealing bacteria off from oxygen will suppress some, but anaerobic bacteria can do fine without.

The best method is heat. Milk, for example, is pasteurized by heating it to about 162 degrees Fahrenheit for 15 seconds. But even that's not a sure thing—some bacteria thrive at temperatures up to 167 degrees, and certain bacterial spores, such as *Clostridium botulinum* (responsible for the deadly botulism toxin), can survive for hours at 212 degrees.

Will a microwave kill microbes? Sure. Microwave ovens use electromagnetic radiation to heat water molecules in food. It's the

heat, not the microwaves, that's lethal here; the hotter you make your food, the more likely you are to kill the bacteria in it. (Some contend microwave energy itself is fatal to bacteria, but that's unproven.) The key is making it hot enough uniformly enough for long enough. If the food heats unevenly, a common problem in microwaves, some bacteria may survive.



Time for the Straight Dope science staff to do its stuff. My assistants Fierra and Una sprang into action as follows:

1. They assembled 30 petri dishes containing agar gel (a bacteria nutrient), plus an impressive collection of graduated cylinders and other lab equipment.
2. One Pizza Hut Meat Lover's Pizza (Fierra's favorite) was ordered. Upon delivery three swabs were taken of the pizza and applied to three petri dishes. Additional samples of pizza were diluted with distilled water, in ratios of 1:10 and 1:100, and applied to two more pairs of dishes—making seven dishes in all—just in case the pure pizza swabs gave rise to such swarming masses of microbes that we couldn't count the colonies individually.
3. The pizza was allowed to sit in the open air for four hours. Then three more swabs of full-strength pizza were applied to petri dishes, as were two each of the 1:10 and 1:100 dilutions, for a total of seven more

swabbed dishes.

4. The pizza was microwaved in a 1,000-watt oven for 30 seconds on the highest setting. Another seven dishes.
5. The pizza was microwaved on high for 30 additional seconds. More dishes.
6. Control swabs were taken from distilled water; another control dish was exposed briefly to the air.
7. The petri dishes were set aside (in sealed bags to prevent dehydration) for one week at 75 degrees, then examined for bacteria.

Results:

- The undiluted samples taken from the freshly delivered pie generated 11 bacterial colonies. (Nothing doing in the diluted samples.) We'll take that as our baseline for normal, generally harmless bacterial infestation.
- The full-strength samples taken after the pizza had been sitting out for four hours generated 28 bacterial colonies; two more showed up at the 1:10 dilution. Probably all were harmless, but I figure triple the bugs = triple the risk.
- The samples taken after 30 seconds of microwaving produced 17 bacterial colonies; the 60-second samples produced only three. The diluted and control samples produced nada.

Conclusions: (1) Heating the pizza for 30 seconds was relatively ineffectual. (2) Heating it for a full minute killed most of the bacteria but not all. Having exhausted the science budget, we didn't go in for another round of testing, but we suspect that at least two minutes of microwaving would be needed to ensure 100 percent bacteria eradication, at the possible cost of rendering the pizza inedible. (3) Fresh pizza has its share of microbes, most undoubtedly benign—still, you never know. Care to join me for a light supper of guaranteed-sterile agar gel?

—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. And now you can subscribe to the Straight Dope podcast—search for "straight dope" in the iTunes Store.

ASTROLOGY FORECAST FOR AUGUST 2010

FOR EVERYONE—Temporary future shock. As August opens, we will all realize that the future has started happening, all around us, right before our eyes. Big changes will be coming willy-nilly, like it or not, ready or not, one after another. But we will also see that these changes do need to be thought through more carefully. We aren't ready for all of them, well-thought out or not. That's especially true if they involve simplistic, band-aid solutions to tough, complicated, important issues. Fortunately, our express train to the future will slow down, stop and return to the station. We will all get a chance to negotiate and adapt and prepare ourselves. We can sit in familiar, comfortable surroundings again and rethink our itinerary. For a while. The express train to the future will depart again early in 2011. This time it won't return.

♈ ARIES—Step back. As August begins, work, family and partnership issues are reaching a crisis point. A painful confrontation isn't out of the question. It might seem a small price for freedom from these aggravations. You need to resist that temptation. Tensions will ease appreciably by mid-month. The issues won't go away, but everyone will feel more inclined to negotiate. You will also be feeling somewhat more confident in your position, more philosophical about the issues and optimistic about an acceptable resolution. Still, some difficult truths will need to be spoken.

♉ TAURUS—Keep a lid on it. In early August, the emotional and mental cross-currents will be intense. Mental and physical health could be affected. Also, in relationship areas, mixed signals will be the norm. Neither you nor potential partners will be clear about what they want, or when they want it. This confusion will not keep feelings from surging anyway. Pressures will ease later in August. You should probably regard this as a crisis you must handle internally, through careful thought. Self-discipline and dedication on your work is the best approach.

♊ GEMINI—Be realistic. You and many people in your life, including many in your inner circle, would be seriously affected by changes being discussed. They would require big adjustments for everyone, especially in relationships. People are understandably worried. Meanwhile, ironically, your imagination is a little too active, multiplying attractive but unrealistic possibilities. Mid-August brings relief. Spirits will rise. Everybody will calm down. Discussions will yield workable options. The need for change will remain, but the process of change will become more manageable. Avoid issues that will upset everyone without helping anyone.

♋ CANCER—Forbearance. August 2010 is an especially emotional month for an especially emotional Sun sign. You will face stubborn and seemingly irresolvable conflicts. You will believe deeply that you can and must push yourself and others beyond this impasse. You might be tempted to force issues others want to avoid. If you do, you could unleash forces you aren't prepared to deal with, yet. Be patient. Resist the temptation to be impatient and/or pushy. Everything will seem less urgent and intense by mid-month. People will be more willing to negotiate.

♌ LEO—Leverage. You have a surprising degree of leverage over a surprisingly complicated and intense situation. It would be best not to follow your first impulse. That would push people farther than they're ready to go and cost you more than you want to pay. That is, if the whole thing doesn't just fizzle. A lot of what you want and know is needed must await a more opportune time. Meanwhile, use your considerable influence to keep things moving gently forward. Don't focus on the darker aspects of people or events.

♍ VIRGO—Stay grounded. Important people are now contemplating big changes that will affect your financial future. These ideas are scaring some people but they suggest exciting possibilities for you. You are dreaming very big dreams about the future, maybe too big. Remain realistic. A lot must be done before any of these really big ideas are implemented. And most of the radical ideas put forward in early August will quickly yield to more moderate ones. Everything, including your own speculations, should return to safer, more realistic levels before month's end.

♎ LIBRA—Stay above the clouds. You can safely ignore your worst fears. Librans are in the midst of a major life turning point. The first half of August will probably be the scariest part of the whole thing. Prospective changes will be perceived in their most extreme form. Energy will be low. Your fears will be hardest to combat. But you'll never reach the edge of any cliffs you might be imagining. The challenges won't evaporate overnight, but before August is out, every aspect of your situation will start looking better.

♏ SCORPIO—Maneuverability. It would be hard not to notice the stresses, tensions and outright conflicts in your environment. Still, there's always someone in these circumstances who avoids the worst and derives whatever benefits there are to be derived in a situation. This time around, that person is Scorpio. Your real challenges are internal. Intense and conflicting emotions seek an outlet. If you turn these emotions into determination you can shape the situation in a way that will help everyone. Even small improvements can help people a lot in situations like these.

♐ SAGITTARIUS—Patience. The moment for change seems to be here. The need seems obvious. Pressure is building. Expectations are high. But then the moment will slip away. This delay is a big blessing in disguise. Changes made now would have backfired, big time. The moment will return early next year. You'll be better prepared then. Ongoing relationship issues will not simmer down, though. Take time alone to think things over and give each other a break from tensions and stresses. The relationship would work better generally with more space for each of you.

♑ CAPRICORN—Delicate negotiations. Capricorns will be in the most complicated, tension-filled and important negotiations in recent years. The issues are tough, stakes are high, and a lot of people are involved. Your feelings will be seriously conflicted. It will be hard to stay centered. You'll have insight into peoples' darker secrets. You'll see their weaknesses. And you'll be tempted to manipulate. Don't. Say only what you need to, and as gently as possible. You could burn bridges you'd better not burn. If you can hold your fire until mid-month tensions will ease.

♒ AQUARIUS—Embrace delay. This seems like the time to make a move. But key relationship and financial matters are tied up in endless rounds of decision-making. A hundred different decisions by any of the key players could seriously affect your plans. Second-thoughts are multiplying, some are serious. Resistance is developing. Increasingly, the process has a reckless feel. To succeed you need to cement key relationships. For that you need to make tough trade offs. Everyone just needs more time. You'll all get that time. Delay is everybody's best friend right now.

♓ PISCES—Revisiting. Recently you took yourself out of an old and familiar setting, suddenly and irreversibly. Mentally, emotionally and otherwise, you got more than you bargained for. The planets are returning you, temporarily, to familiar mental and emotional ground to reconnect - to integrate the new you and your new situation with the old. You must make some tough and real commitments to people and things you unceremoniously left behind. You'll need these connections to your old life in the future. If you don't reconnect you could find yourself uncomfortably adrift.



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