

little village

Iowa City's News & Culture Magazine



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IOWA CITY

TUES: HIP-HOP OPEN MIC
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THURS: DANCE PARTY

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w/ Brotherhood of the Mudkat

Wed, January 19

Nice Jewish Girls Gone Bad

Fri, January 21

NuVibe Warmth Event

Thurs, January 27

Groove Theory

w/ Koplant No, Saul Lubaroff Quartet

Fri, January 28

Strange Arrangement

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Salsa Vibe in Iowa City

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Ted Leo (SOLO)

w/ The Poison Control Center,
Birth Rites

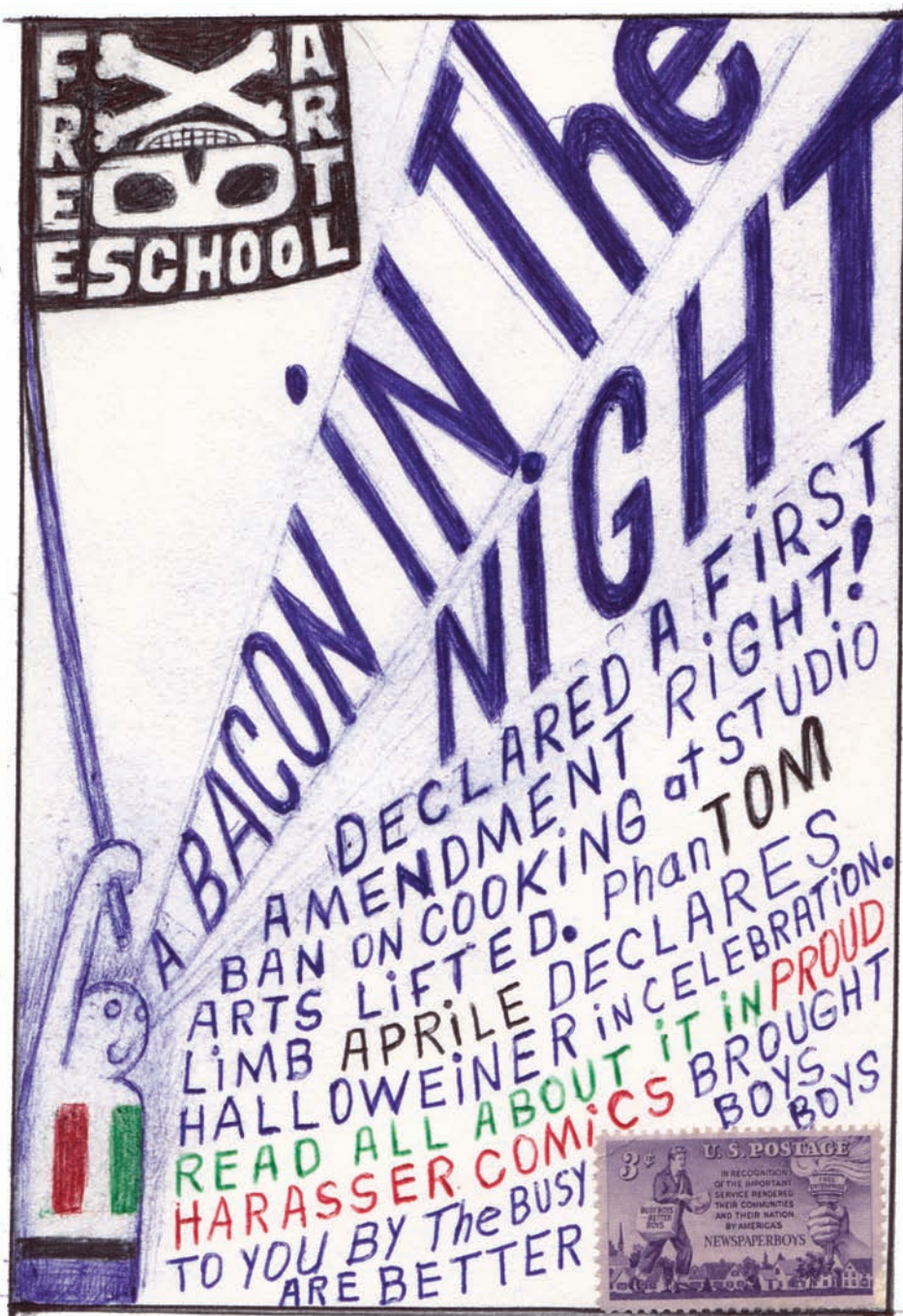
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Iowa City's News & Culture Magazine

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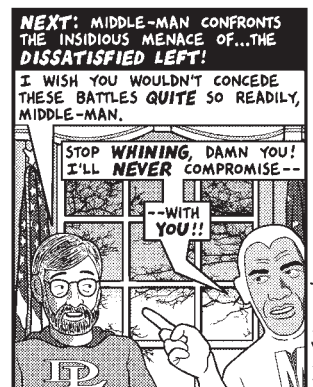
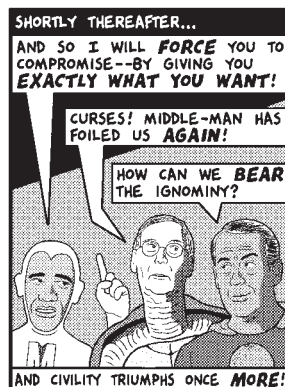
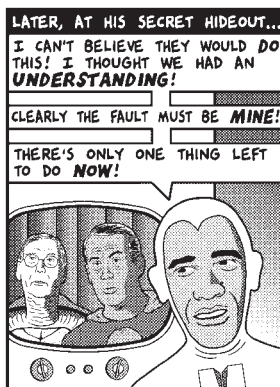
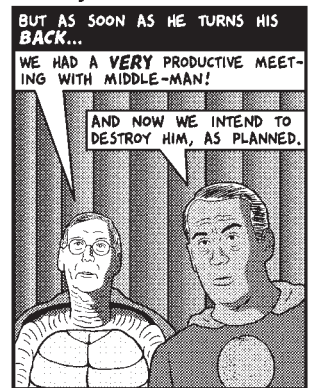
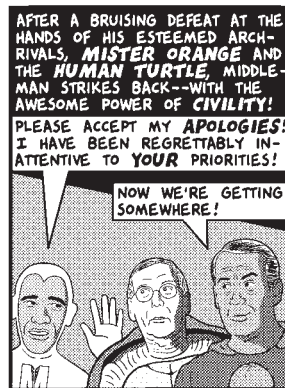
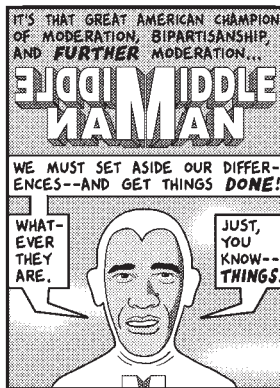
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Get 2011 off to a stellar start

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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Bad eyesight and new reading glasses. Just another step along the way of middle age? Yes, but last month, they also sparked in me some new thoughts on place.

I'm of a largely geographic bent when it comes to place. That is, I believe a large part of "place" is what's "out there." When I was in graduate school, deconstruction was all the rage. For the Foucault-minded, "reality" was little more than infinitely self-referential language. By extension, "place" could be nothing more than a linguistic construct. Maybe my vision of place is an Oedipal rebellion against my graduate training.

Regardless of whether it's only language or not, a lot of people want to make "place" out to be a state of mind. Which it is. To an extent. I'm no essentialist, but I do believe there's a "there" "out there." Much of what's "out there" is what we interpret it to

I'd just take my glasses off and bring what I was trying to see right up to my eyes.

be, but I think the unique challenge of place is to explore those connections between mind (and, I believe, emotion) and

matter, between interpretation and geography. And so it's kind of funny that a new pair of reading glasses brought me to the next step of my own thinking about place.

Even if we do believe in a geographic "out there," there are questions of scale and limits. When is something too big or too small to be a "place"? Geographer Yi-fu Tuan suggests it's contextual. A place can be as big as "Spaceship Earth" as seen from an Apollo space module or as small as a chair in the corner of the room. One question I've often asked myself is, "How low can you go?" What is the smallest location that can still be a place? What is the geographic horizon of place?

My "discovery" through bad eyesight has been a long process. I've been terribly nearsighted since grade school. Glasses have been part of my life since 4th grade. As I moved into my later 40s, I started to fall victim to the double-whammy of farsightedness, too. My bifocals became trifocals. Eventually my

bifocals really didn't give me the precision I wanted to see really close things, like threading a needle, or reading tiny print, or seeing whether the new state quarter was from the "D" or "P" mint for the kids' collection. So I'd just take my glasses off and bring what I was trying to see right up to my eyes.

I do a lot of reading. But as my eyes have become more uncooperative, I've found that even reading through my bifocals has become less comfortable. In the past year or so, if I

other than books, particularly food. If I take off my glasses and bring a bowl of ice cream or noodles close, I suddenly see the creamy details of melting dairy edges meeting frozen middle, or the gentle contours of pasta lying abed each other. Being in this small, private space that reveals the subtleties of my food is a special place I had never thought about visiting before.

Certainly there's something Zen-like about all this, in many ways it's about being in the

Seeing Tiny Places

was hunkering down for a long reading session, I'd just take off my glasses and bring that book right up close to my face like a like a nerd from a TV show.

I discovered that I really liked doing this. I've always loved enclosed places. Even though I also love the wide, flat expansiveness of the prairie and plains, I also thrive in dark, enclosed spaces. I was an inveterate under-the-blanket-with-a-flashlight reader as a kid. I also concocted an enclosed area in my bedroom with a chair and a lamp that I called "Cozy Corner." I loved to while away the hours under the dark, embracing, ground-sweeping bowers of the old pine tree in a vacant lot in my neighborhood. So when I took my glasses off and brought a book up to my face, my memory banks flashed that old "Cozy Corner" feeling right through me.

I was an inveterate under-the-blanket-with-a-flashlight reader as a kid.

cites fictive or virtual places as one of his "five dimensions of place-connectedness." But I'm not just talking about a nearsighted method of transporting myself into my imagination. I'm also talking literally about being in the physical book, or me and the book comprising a kind of minimalist, yet infinitely rich place. With my glasses off, my poor vision blurs everything around me. It is just me and the book within this small slice of geographic space.

Since I enjoyed this "place experience" so much, I sometimes have tried it with things

moment. But that's not mutually exclusive to the geography of closeness. They intertwine to create both being and place.

I visited the optometrist recently for my annual checkup. Since I had more or less abandoned my regular glasses for intensive bouts of reading, I asked about readers. Like my computer glasses, which give me my middle-range lens in a larger singular unit, I figured the expanded field of vision of readers might make them more conducive to languid reading and more comfortable than shoving a book almost literally to my nose. The optometrist confirmed my suspicion, and she even added a little magnification to my new lenses.

And so I love my new reading glasses. I put them on, and the larger world about me dissolves into fuzziness. My vision becomes crystally connected to the book in front of me. It's just me and it, in this tiny, intimate space, even snuggler than my childhood "cozy corner." It is about the smallest "place" I can create, and it is both comforting and inspiring. **IV**

Once while in college, in order to eliminate distractions, Thomas Dean secreted himself into his apartment closet to study. His roommate heard a rustling emanating from the closet and was sure his roomie had finally hanged himself.

DECEMBER

THE MONTH THAT WAS

PORTER AGONISTES

The City Council decided to “defer indefinitely” a motion to decide on renewal of The Summit’s liquor license after Police Chief Sam Hargadine submitted a newly expanded chronicle of Porter’s deepening financial troubles. We’re not saying that the writing’s on the bathroom wall for the man who profited so handsomely during the go-go pre-21 days, but things are looking awfully grim. Porter’s racket was based on the same principle as the UI’s: attract young people flush with their parents’ money, the government’s, and whatever dollars they can earn on their own and get them to invest that money here. The university returns that investment in the form of (presumably) educated citizens and a contribution to the sort of fundamental research that leads to life-improving discoveries. Porter’s bars, it’s fair to say, returned the investment in the form of inebriated citizens, variously moistened alleyways and a contribution to the private wealth of a man who didn’t quite know how to handle it. It’s not uncharitable to suspect that cutting him off and calling him a cab is the right thing for everyone involved.

PAYING IT FORWARD

The City Council will hold a public hearing on Jan. 10 to discuss proposed grants totalling \$1,398,000. The grants are penciled in for the city itself (for parkland acquisition), the

million for construction, \$2.7 million of which will be paid back by May; these projects form the first round of funding from the repayment. Originally, the plan had been to use the repayment to attract supplementary state funding for a levee project, but Des Moines rejected Iowa City’s application. As for the balance of the Aniston Village repayment, the council will consider in late winter whether to approve \$1,205,000 in housing grants supporting ISIS Investments (which focuses on small families headed by teen parents), Shelter House and the Weatherby Condos.

OFF YR DUFFS!

If you noticed a pattern among those Aniston Village-related grant proposals, you might have what it takes to fill an open position on the Housing & Community Development Commission. If not, a handful of city commissions still need your time, thoughts, and energy. Go to icgov.org/default/?id=1563 for more info on these opportunities.

BONDO

The city approved the issue of up to \$2 million in tax-exempt Midwest Disaster Area (MDA) bonds supporting the development of a new facility in Northgate Corporate Park for Eye Physicians and Surgeons (EPS). EPS is currently located in the Mercy Medical Complex, at 504 E. Jefferson. EPS Properties would get the cash as a loan to be repaid, and the city’s liability for the bond is greatly mitigated under the MDA program.

Bondholders make a few bucks in the long run, EPS saves thousands in taxes and Northgate gets a new tenant. Everyone wins, right?

Well, on its face, this is the sort of creative solution that traditionally gets things done in a city. Business wants to move, city has no objections, each party finds a way to do so at minimum mutual expense. But this one makes us think.

MDA bonds were originally established by Congress in 2008. Similarly to bond programs established for Gulf regions affected by hurricanes, they allow municipalities to sell bonds to investors and use the proceeds to fund loans to local development efforts, with all transactions carrying little to no liability for the cities and towns involved, and all exempt from taxation. In December 2009, the IRS revised a rule that focused the use of MDA bonds on redevelopment efforts strictly on flood-related projects and, in the process, placed discretion on the use of MDA bonds in the hands of the Governors of qualifying states.

We’re not sure how badly EPS suffered during the floods of 2008 and, if there’s money to go around...well, that’s the quibble. With states starving for operating money—even Iowa, which has kept its books in relatively good order compared to our batshit neighbors to the east—using disaster-relief schemes to help existing businesses avoid the tax hit that might come from financing a move within town seems chillingly penny-wise.

ADVENTURES IN GIVING SMALL THINGS GRAND NAMES

The Literary Walk is set to expand into the North Side Marketplace Streetscape. In other news, the city has a North Side Marketplace Streetscape! Otherwise known as the bit of downtown bounded by Dubuque and Gilbert, Jefferson and Bloomington—its charm protected by Van Allen Hall from the chi-chi-fying forces affecting the rest of the city center—or as “on the way to Dirty John’s.”

Some local business owners, while acknowledging and celebrating the area’s unique character, have been pushing for better sidewalks and streets. In addition to such infrastructural improvements and bronze things celebrating book-learnin’, the Streetscape project seeks to add a few more parking spaces, plant new streetside greenery and provide more public seating areas and bike racks. **lv**

Bob Burton remembers when Iowa City used to be cool. Just like you do.



The City Council will hold a public hearing on January 10 to discuss proposed grants totalling \$1,398,000.

Johnson County Crisis Center, the Iowa City Free Medical Clinic, Habitat for Humanity, Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County and the Visiting Nurse Association of Johnson County.

This represents a portion of \$2.7 million that the city has coming from the Aniston Village project, which provides affordable rental housing. The city loaned Aniston Village \$2.9

BEARS BEAT



After a season that began with high hopes and ended with stories of high players, people are looking elsewhere for their football fix as we enter the time of year where games have real meaning. Sure, the Hawks were invited to the Insight Bowl (motto: "Arizona is warmer than wherever the hell you're from this time of year") to play the University of Missouri Tigers. But—slavish loyalty to all things Hawkeye aside—was anybody really breathless with anticipation over this game? Instead, many are looking a few hours east, to my hometown, to cheer on my Chicago Bears.

Mike Martz's play-calling involves the use of sextants, the Pythagorean Theorem and a flux capacitor.

Following an 0-4 record in the preseason, Bears fans began the season with expectations that were, to put it politely, muted. They stayed that way almost entirely through the season, despite racking up an impressive

amount of victories. The last three seasons brought no playoff appearances whatsoever, but, ever the optimist, I was never surprised to see the 2010 season unfold as well as it has.

Nor was I surprised by the hiccups. The off-season addition of Offensive Coordinator/Guru Mike Martz was bound to take some time for the team to get used to. After all, much of his play-calling involves the use of sextants, the Pythagorean Theorem and a flux capacitor. These were not the "run first, pass only if we absolutely have to" offensive schemes that have

These were not the "run first, pass only if we absolutely have to" offensive schemes that have historically dominated Bears football.

dominated Bears football ever since they played their first game against the Visigoths in the Roman Coliseum in 410 A.D.

Though they won their first three games out of the gate, expectations remained guarded. They had some lucky breaks and were the beneficiaries of some questionable calls (get used to it, Detroit, you're *Detroit*) but, last I checked, there's no spot in the stats column for "Pretty" or "Impressive" or "Convincing"—only Wins and Losses, and the Bears kept accumulating the former.

Especially early on, they played with an offensive line only slightly better at blocking than an equal number of sand-filled roadside

construction site barrels and Quarterback Jay Cutler got sacked more often than Paris Hilton at an Oscar party, but, where other teams might have found a way to lose, the Bears did the opposite.

Even after they won three straight in November, they still weren't getting the respect they deserved. Their last game in that month was against a Philadelphia Eagles team who had, two weeks prior, conducted a nationally-televvised vivisection of the Washington Redskins, a team that had beaten the Bears earlier in the season. Conventional wisdom held that they would do the same to the Bears, revealing them as pretenders instead of contenders. But, when the final whistle blew, it was the Bears who were victorious and the Eagles who were sent home in stitches with orders for three days bed rest.

When they started December with their fifth straight victory, the bandwagon started to get a little less roomy than it had been for most of the season but, though we're big people, we found a way to make room for these latecomers.

There was the unfortunate business of the blow-out loss to the Patriots in week 13, but the Bears learned from their mistakes and came back the next week in a rare outdoor game

Early on, the Bears' offensive line only slightly better at blocking than an equal number of sand-filled roadside construction site barrels.

in Minnesota and trounced the Vikings on Monday Night Football, ending Brett Favre's night (if not his career) after only 18 minutes. This was also the evening when Devin

Hester—though only in his fifth season—returned yet *another* kick for a score, making him the player with the most kick returns for touchdowns in NFL history. Why opposing teams continue to kick to him is a mystery—it's like hiring Charlie Sheen to be a valet at your party, it won't end well—but as long as they're willing to do so I support their decisions 100%.

And so it was, with that pretty and impressive and convincing win over the Vikings the Bears won their division and guaranteed themselves a playoff berth for the first time since the 2006 season.

Kicking to Devin Hester is like hiring Charlie Sheen to be a valet at your party, it won't end well.

How far they'll go is a matter of how well they continue to coalesce and correct the mistakes they're still making, but having the opportunity to look forward to playoff football featuring my beloved Bears brings me no small amount of joy—especially when we enter that gloomy part of the year when the holidays are over, going outside is suicide and there's nothing much for me to look forward to, sports-wise, until the Roller Derby season starts up again in March.

So let us sing: Don we now our BEARS apparel, Da Da Da Da Da, Da Da, DA BEARS!!! **lv**

Yale Cohn has made arrangements to be cremated after he dies and his ashes spread at Soldier field as this way he knows his friends will come visit him.

Brother Thelonious

BREW OF THE MONTH: JANUARY

Much like Iowa's arctic freeze, the season for high gravity beer persists through January. An ideal time to polish off the remaining supply of festive winter warmers, this month is also perfect for sipping jet-black imperial stout, barley wine and finely-crafted Belgian strong dark ale like Brother Thelonious.

Named in honor of jazz legend Thelonious Monk (a playful way of paying homage to the monks who traditionally brew Belgian abbey ales), Brother Thelonious is best served in a snifter, tulip or oversized wine glass to trap and concentrate the beer's aroma. Its color is ruby brown, and one or two fingers of slightly tanned head will develop and dissipate to leave a spotted lacing and ring around the edge.

The smell is of bready Belgian yeast, a little spice (which I thought was reminiscent of clove), dark fruits such as cherry and plum, toasted caramel malts and just a tiny hint of alcohol. Brother Thelonious is thick and creamy, and the taste is a smooth and pleasant medley of flavors that is both delicious and difficult to deconstruct: Belgian yeast, spice (perhaps clove), maple sugar, cherry, plum, sweet caramel and apple. Its alcohol content is well hidden but noticeable, and a slightly bitter aftertaste leaves the cheeks tingling after each sip.

Not only does Brother Thelonious warm the body with its high ABV, it also offers the warm fuzzy feeling of philanthropy. For every case of Brother Thelonious sold, its brewers make a contribution to the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, a nonprofit organization that provides jazz education programs for public schools and enables young musicians to train with jazz masters.

Casey Wagner

BREWER: North Coast Brewing Company of Fort Bragg, California.

STYLE: Belgian strong dark ale.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 9.4 percent ABV.

FOOD PAIRINGS: The North Coast website suggests pairing Brother Thelonious with "[g]rilled marinated flank steak with lime-chipotle sauce." Other pairings include sharp cheeses such as blue and cheddar, and pungent cheese like gorgonzola and limburger.

WHERE TO BUY: Waterfront Hy-Vee and John's Grocery.

PRICE: \$12.99 per four-pack, \$3.99 per 12-ounce bottle.



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MASON

This morning, out to borrow a floor jack, I opened the metal door to my brother's garage, and there sat my nephew, hunched over the plywood workbench, moving a straight screwdriver carefully into a one-pound block of paraffin wax. His hands were covered in little specks of white, like wool gloves. It was a Sunday.

"You shouldn't be using that screwdriver without supervision," I said, but he just carved and inspected, white specks thickening. So, I inspected the emerging sculpture, too, and asked him where he found the wax. "Right here," he said. The whittle marks were clumsy and crooked, as though he had been doing it with the wrong hand.

I saw what he was making. I should have told him to set the screwdriver down, to go inside for supper because it was near supper-time, but I didn't. I grabbed the floor jack, tussled with his hair like uncles do, and said, "Your dad uses that wax to pull the down feathers out of the geese he shoots." And then I moved outside of the garage to watch the first flurries of snowflakes move horizontal above the ground. Supervision, I thought, was necessary. From earshot outside the garage, I stood in reverence of the accumulating weather, too warm to last, and thought around my nephew's sculpture in that same manner. He ignored me—our communion was the slow, even tap of metal nicking plywood—but a distance was narrowing, carved into wax brick.

There was a still frame, or a statue, or some imagined memory.

There was a still frame, or a statue, or some imagined memory: four years ago, when it was deep Spring and flowering, on a day with fine weather, after a May daughter but before the shoebox-sized casket—my brother sat at his workbench, supervising I think, and he held

his May daughter, and his son fiddled with a ratchet set and a bike chain. He looked at her as if to see how her soul was (that is, warmly), and it looked fine; and her tiny hands grasped, white as paraffin.

I wondered if my nephew saw that same picture, or any picture, or if he simply knew of her differently.

I supervised from just outside the garage, and it was a Sunday. It had begun to snow. The tap, tap of the screwdriver silenced, and for fear that he had injured himself, I went to check on my nephew. He had finished, wiped his hands on his shirt and lifted his sculpture to show it. I took the carving, tussled with his hair like uncles do and held it close to my face. I didn't smell the clean scent I was hoping for, but the cold, unmoving smell of paraffin. It didn't matter. My nephew grabbed back the whittled brick and looked close, moving his fingers over every uneven bump, and maybe they were together then, reborn in that bright lump of wax. **lv**

Bob Plantenberg is a student in the Nonfiction Writing Program. He has lived in Iowa City for a year, and he thinks that is just fine.

LITTLE VILLAGE LIVE

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at Public Space One



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Iowa City News & Culture Magazine

HOT TIN ROOF IS A PROGRAM TO SHOWCASE CURRENT LITERARY WORK PRODUCED IN IOWA CITY.

Each month a selected piece of creative writing up to 1,000 words is published in the pages of *Little Village*, Iowa City's News and Culture Magazine.

Oh, and the author receives an honorarium of \$100. That's right, \$100, to one writer, every month!

The series is organized and juried by representatives of three Iowa City-based cultural advocacy organizations: The Englert Theatre, Iowa City UNESCO City of Literature and *Little Village* magazine. Financial support comes from these three organizations and from private business donor Mark Ginsberg of Ginsberg Objects of Art, whom we can't thank enough for his tireless support of local artists.

The series takes its name from a famous play and movie by former Iowa City resident Tennessee Williams, who graduated from the University of Iowa in 1938. He was chosen as our patron saint because his artistic life refused to be confined to work in any one genre. Moreover, it seemed right, given the many acclaimed writers to have lived and worked in Iowa City, to honor one whom, at the time, was a relatively obscure undergraduate.

It is a pleasure to invite you to become part of Hot Tin Roof—a sampling of Iowa City's renowned, yet growing, literary tradition.



Photo by Megan Ranegar

January: time to take *A Charlie Brown Christmas* off repeat, drag the tree to the curb and send off a thank you note for each and every gift card you received. If these tasks seem cheerless after last month's festivities, add some crafty fun to your to-do list by whipping up some easy, personalized cards to thank everyone from Grandma to the co-workers.

If you only dream of getting something exciting in your mailbox between tax returns, this project can double as a way to honor your New Year's resolution to keep in touch. A letter on homemade stationery will make up for not having made contact for the past year (or five), and you might even discover that letter writing is more fun and gratifying than shooting off an email.

Megan Ranegar is the kind of girl who's always packing heat—mostly a glue gun. She's crafted a name for herself as a do-it-yourselfer, student and Hawkeye runner. Contact her at ranegar620@comcast.net

SUPPLIES

8.5" x 11" cardstock

a small envelope

old magazines

spray adhesive

scissors

STEP 1: RESCUE AN ENVELOPE

Before you toss this year's collection of holiday cards, grab one that has a small envelope to use as a template. Carefully open the flaps of the envelope and lay it on a piece of cardstock. If the flaps don't extend over your cardstock, trace and cut out a template.



01



02

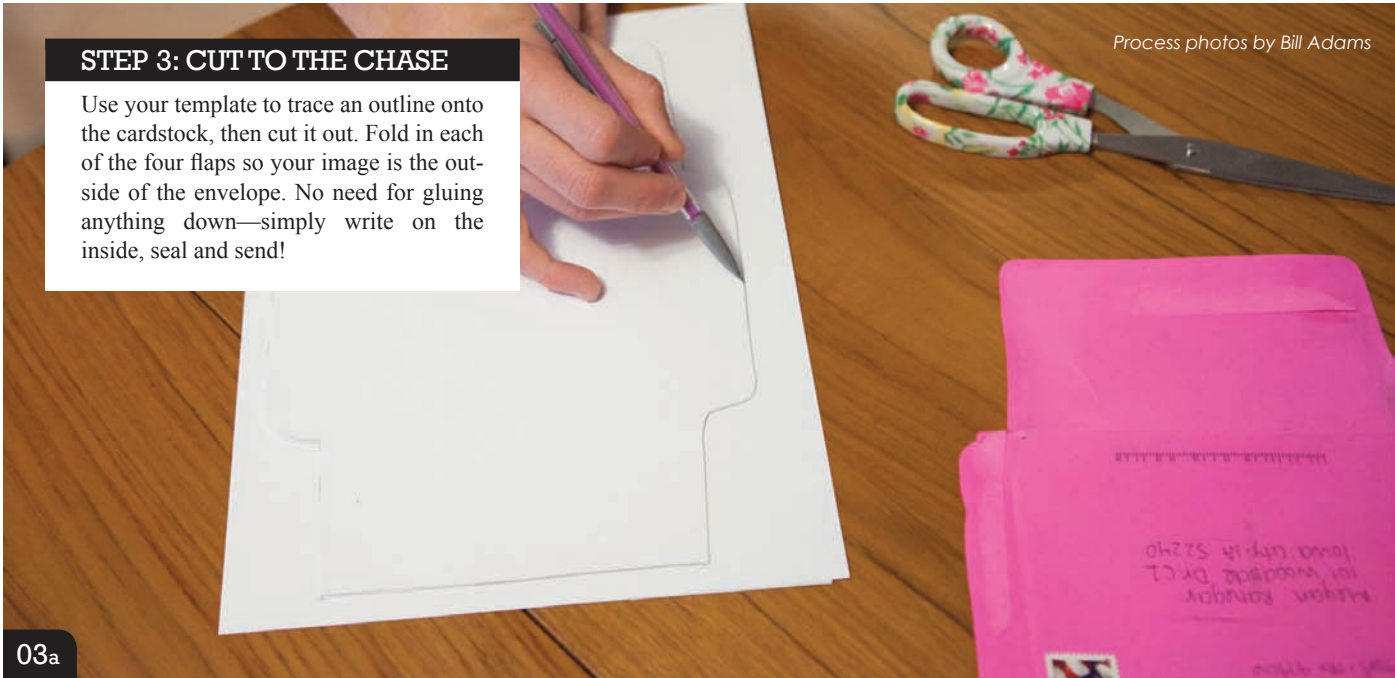
STEP 2: GET PERSONAL

Gather all things fun and papery. Get creative and make some stationery that really fits the recipient. Use an old GQ for your favorite bachelorette, comic book pages for your nerdy brother or some leftover wrapping paper for your eco-conscious companions. Once you've chosen the perfect images, lightly spray a layer of adhesive on both a clean sheet of cardstock and the backside of your image (do this outside or somewhere with good ventilation). Smooth your image onto the cardstock.

Process photos by Bill Adams

STEP 3: CUT TO THE CHASE

Use your template to trace an outline onto the cardstock, then cut it out. Fold in each of the four flaps so your image is the outside of the envelope. No need for gluing anything down—simply write on the inside, seal and send!



03a



03b



03c



03d


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DESPAIR VS. THE MOST EFFICIENT MACHINE EVER INVENTED



Photos by Ofer Sivan

CODY GIESELMAN
makes the wheel go round

Do you get frustrated with traffic congestion and scarcity of parking in town?

Does owning and maintaining a car rank high on your list of expenses?

Do the constant news reports warning of mass-scale environmental degradation, pollution and economic recession seem depressing?

Do you prefer to not even think about health problems such as heart disease, diabetes or cancer?

It doesn't really matter how you answer these questions because we can't despair, complain or ignore our way out of them. Perhaps a better question is: What are we doing about it?

For many of us, the answer is "not enough" or, perhaps, "too much," since some solutions to current problems may require doing *less*—less consuming, wasting and damaging.

One solution single-handedly addresses multiple problems. It significantly reduces our

oil consumption, produces no emissions, re-centers communities around people (not cars and highways), contributes to overall physical and mental health, is affordable for all and, to top it off, is downright fun—even in winter.

When Cody Gieselman and Steve Goetzelman opened 30th Century Bicycle (310 Prentiss St.) they were already using bikes as a primary mode of transportation for themselves and their cargo.

I spoke with them about increasing bicycle transportation in Iowa City, not just in the summer, but year-round.

LITTLE VILLAGE: Something you don't advertise is the fact that you two haven't owned a car for about five years. How do you do it?

30TH CENTURY BICYCLE: We had both used bikes for most of our in-town needs and we started challenging ourselves to buy less gas. Could we fill up once a month?

Once every two months? We just tried to go by bike more often. We finally made the choice to get rid of our car after barely using it for two years. We rent or borrow one if we need to, but those times are few and far between.

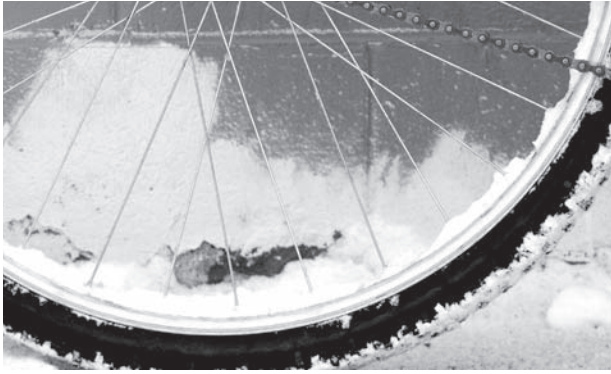
LV: In 2009 the League of American Bicyclists designated Iowa City a 'Bronze Level' Bicycle Friendly Community. What has Iowa City accomplished in the past few years to earn this recognition?

TCB: The Bike Library, the Bike to Work Week schedule of events and the addition of "sharrows" have all helped. Plus, we have a Transportation Plan that includes bicycles and a Complete Streets policy.



LV: Iowa City also has some work to do to. Limited public transit and a lack of comprehensive bike routes come to mind. What are some improvements you'd like to see?

TCB: Public transportation improvements will be huge! Serious interest and policy from the university, under their sustainability efforts, to encourage students to be car-free and limit car use on campus; a train to Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, the Quad Cities and Chicago; more traffic calming; better snow removal from bike racks; more covered parking options for bikes; no mopeds parked at



bike racks. We have this idea that Drivers' Ed should be changed to Transportation Ed and should teach people not just how to drive a car, but how to use the bus system, how to use commuter trains and, of course, how to get around by bicycle.

LV: The following are reasons (excuses?) for people avoiding using bicycles. What solutions can you offer?

Too Hot Outside

TCB: Ride slow, pick shady routes, carry things you need with panniers or Xtracycle rather than a backpack, get comfortable with the idea that yes, people sweat, and it is okay!

Too Cold

TCB: No such thing as bad weather, just wrong clothing. [We're] Not talking spendy tech fabrics, just use layering and insulation.

Too Snowy/Icy

TCB: Pick your routes carefully, allow extra time. Studded tires will help glue you to the road, even on ice, but they are not a cure-all.

A RECENT NATIONWIDE PERSONAL TRANSPORTATION SURVEY STATES:

- 25** PERCENT of all trips are made within a mile of the home.
- 40** PERCENT of all trips are within two miles of the home.
- 50** PERCENT of the working population commutes five miles or less to work.

82 PERCENT of trips five miles or less are made by personal motorized vehicle.

Could these trips be better served by bicycling?

In A Hurry (also: Too Far)

TCB: [For city trips less than five miles] experience shows that bicycle travel time, door to door, will be as fast, maybe faster, depending on parking options.

Hauling Groceries

TCB: Panniers, Xtracycle, trailer. Groceries by bike

is a very doable, satisfying task and a way to build confidence in what you and your bike can accomplish.

Hauling Everything Else, Including The Kitchen Sink

TCB: Bikes at Work trailers, made in Ames. When we were building in our shop, we borrowed a truck for one massive lumber run, then did everything else with just a bike and a Bikes at Work trailer. It is amazing what you can move with one of those things—we literally brought our kitchen sink on one!

Bike Attire Is Unhip/ Expensive/Ugly

TCB: Apart from weather demands there are no dress requirements! You certainly don't need specific bike clothing to ride around town, so you can dress as you like or just carry other clothing with you and change when you get to your destination.

Bike Culture/Shops Seem Like A Boys-Only Club

TCB: With a woman co-owner who wears all the hats in a bike shop, including mechanic and wheelbuilder, we hope to demonstrate that doesn't have to be the case. **lv**

Nathan Thrailkill is a former Iowa City resident, currently in Montreal, Quebec conducting extensive research on alternative transportation. His fieldwork consists of scooting around on the subway, playing in the snow and riding his bike a lot.

January

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HOMELESSNESS AND SHELTER PART TWO

Even with more beds at the new Shelter House, some will sleep rough.

The old Black Hawk Mini Park on the Iowa City pedestrian mall was the distribution point, the place for the drop.

It was mid-November and a mild autumn was giving way to winter. About a dozen men milled around waiting to get a bag. There were a lot of sweatshirts, flannel and thick beards. A few men were sitting on a bench near one of those purple-painted parking meters soliciting coins to help the homeless that was installed in June, after panhandling was banned.

"This just saved me 80 bucks!" said a man hoisting a large black sleeping bag wrapped tight in a pack to a friend as he walked away.

It probably saved him more, since these "arctic sleep systems" retail for \$450, but Pastor Michael Langer was able to get a dozen of them from military surplus for \$175 each.

Shelter House offers an abundance of programs, but it's not for everyone.

From his jeans and canvas sneakers and rainbow-colored stocking hat, Michael Langer does not look a clergyman straight out of central casting.

"You understand how this works, right?" Langer asked a man in a hooded sweatshirt

and a MIA/POW baseball hat. "You can't dry clean it because that will ruin the Gore-Tex."

Langer insisted that the bags be top-quality and tough.

"These aren't cheap \$15 sleeping bags from Walmart," Langer said. "This isn't car camping for the weekend. They'll put a blue tarp over the top, and that will be their house for the winter."

Langer cites Biblical precedent for this: Jesus gave the poor the best stuff, the good wine, etc. He dealt in premium goods, never offering half measures. He says his congregation is small—services are held at the city recreation center—but it doesn't lack for ambition. They want to do all they can to make sure no homeless person freezes to death this winter. "Not on my watch," Langer said.

Iowa City's renovated and recently opened 70-bed Shelter House not only offers more than twice as many safe places to sleep as the old shelter, but it offers an abundance of services. Still there is a remnant of the local homeless population that—for whatever reason—is not likely to stay at this shelter. Some are fiercely proud of their independence. Some have social phobias or other mental health problems or they aren't ready to give up drink or drugs (sobriety is required at Shelter House) for the prospect of shelter.

Langer focuses his effort on this subset of the homeless population. Langer asked a homeless man who goes by "Dog" how many local homeless men and women would

sleep outside all winter. Dog said a dozen. Langer returned three weeks later with the sleeping bags.

Langer made arrangements with Dog to be there at 6:30 p.m. on the dot and Dog rounded up everyone who needed a sleeping bag.

Director Canganelli wants the shelter to provide a healthy living environment for families and adults so they can address their situation and move forward in their lives.

"Dog saw me coming up Washington and he immediately signaled to the guys, 'Get up. Stand up, walk to this guy.' And before I'd even handed out the first bag, Dog was saying, 'You need to tell this man "thank you" before you take this bag. You need to say, "thank you" to this man.'"

Dog remembers when Iowa City's Shelter House on North Gilbert Street allowed homeless men to drop in and sleep on the porch, but that was a long time ago. For years that old house had all its beds full and a collection of churches around downtown sheltered the overflow as best they could during the winter months.



It's a long winter.

Read part one of this series at LittleVillageMag.com/shelter

Dog has a bright beard and smiling eyes. He talks about riding trains and travelling all over the country. He praises the drop-in shelter model of places like New York City, where a place to sleep is provided no questions asked. He likes the tent cities that they have for the homeless in Las Vegas. Dog likes his freedom and doesn't like the rules and structure of Iowa City's Shelter House, oriented as it is toward pushing people towards stability—sobriety, a conventional job and an apartment. He says they take any money you make.

Shelter House Director Chrissi Canganelli said it is not the case that Shelter House “takes” clients' money, but she confirms that it is expected that in exchange for staying at the shelter rent-free, clients are expected to save 75 percent of their income towards setting themselves up to live independently.

Canganelli said Shelter House offers an abundance of programs to help people but it “most definitely is not for everyone,” and clients must submit to the guidelines.

“If you're going to stay here, these are our rules. And it's invasive, and people have to make a decision.”

While the new Shelter House has more beds than the old one, soon they will fill, too. Canganelli says that without rules and the use of “carrots and sticks,” intended to encourage people to put their resources into ultimately moving on, out of Shelter House, more deserving people will be unable to get help.

As for Dog's wish that there be a more no-questions-asked approach to offering shelter, without requiring sobriety, Canganelli said that is not possible at Shelter House.

“People want both, don't they?” Canganelli said. “Well you can't have both. You can't be all things to all people.”

She said sometimes communities have contradictory expectations. One minute, shelters will be criticized for harboring “those lazy no-good so and sos, just drinking all the time,

not doing anything.” And then if someone freezes to death under a bridge in the middle of January, she says, that same critic will say “Oh, why didn't that person have a place to stay? We have a shelter.”

Canganelli wants the shelter to be able to provide a healthy living environment for families and adults so they could address their situation—whether it be financial hardship, chronic health or mental health problems—and move forward in their lives. But, she said, Shelter House is not a substance abuse treatment center. They don't have the health clinicians on staff to deal with people mired in drug or alcohol dependency and all the complications that come with it.

“You can't have somebody who is heavily intoxicated, and then going through sobering back up and the stuff that can happen along

illegitimate panhandling. Dog says one man stays in a motel but comes downtown dressing like he's more homeless than he is; he says another guy doesn't really need the wheelchair he sits in when he's panhandling.

He respects the “hardcore,” those that eat at the Salvation Army and sleep outside. He admires “Walker,” who camps far away, walks several miles into town for a long day of collecting cans for deposit, then eats some dinner at a deli before walking home for the night. And Dog says there are some that just don't fit in the Shelter House model.

“Some of these guys can't stop drinking, or they took drugs too long, till they ate away their brains. A lot of these guys are veterans but they've never come back, if you see what I mean. Chipper was a tunnel rat in Vietnam. Do you know what that is? He doesn't want to

be confined anywhere anymore. These guys have been in the army, have been bossed around. And they don't like being treated like children.”

Amy Correia, a social services coordinator for the county, has worked in the “helping industry,” as she puts it, for twenty years.

She and her colleagues strive to be sensitive to the needs of people who might not want to get help. “If they don't want to get help, that's their choice, that's their right,” Correia said.

* * *

For about six months now panhandling downtown has been legally proscribed on the theory that giving money to beggars only enables addictions and substance abuse. Parking meters were planted in the pedestrian mall so passersby could bypass panhandlers and donate their change to social service organizations.

I asked Langer if he found it odd that the sleeping bag drop-off took place right in front of one of those meters?

“I hate those meters,” said Langer. “I hate them. I think it's impersonal.”

SHELTER continued on page 20 >>

“CHIPPER WAS A TUNNEL RAT IN VIETNAM.

Do you know what that is? He doesn't want to be confined anywhere anymore.

These guys have been in the army, have been bossed around. They don't like being treated like children.” — Dog'

the way, sleeping in next to other people who are not, who have to get up at four o'clock in the morning and go to work,” Canganelli said. “That's a different program, but our not having people in who are intoxicated does not mean we do not understand that there's a problem and an unmet need.”

* * *

Dog isn't above receiving some help, living off the fat of the land (and Iowa City has considerable fat, with its constant influx of free-spending students with large allowances). But Dog has a certain ethical code. He rides a mountain bike and loads its wire baskets up with bulging garbage bags full of cans most every day, working for his nickels and sleeping at his camp at night.

Dog discerns moral gradations among various panhandlers and has a certain contempt for those who maybe don't work as hard or aren't entirely straightforward. He makes a distinction between legitimate and

Local contractors
fix the roof on a
UniverCity house

DON'T I KNOW YOU FROM SOMEPLACE?

UniverCity gives new life to old haunts

Remember in college when you'd go to a house party in your friend's dank basement, prop yourself up for that keg stand, take a good look around at the upside-down graffiti-covered walls and think, "Gee, this would make a great nursery?"

Yeah, me neither. But for those few among you who *have* had visions of domestic bliss for the unlikeliest of houses, you're in luck.

Iowa City officials, with support from the University of Iowa and a few local banks, have started fixing up run-down rental houses to sell as single-family homes near the UI campus. Called UniverCity, this initiative provides \$50,000 of renovations for low to middle-income buyers.

While this initiative has the potential to significantly improve neighborhoods, its indirect effects must be strategically managed, in order to prevent a squeeze on Iowa City's already tight rental market.

UniverCity, funded from the state I-JOBS program, is partly a response to our skewed housing market. There is enormous pressure for rental housing in neighborhoods close to the UI campus, primarily from its students. Anyone who wants to buy and live in a house in those areas has to compete with would-be landlords and it seems that most potential buyers are finding it difficult. UniverCity wants to level the playing field by offering

affordable homes near campus solely for homeowners, particularly for workers at the UI and downtown businesses.

Despite the slow housing market, interest in the program has been increasing. Currently, 10 homes have been acquired, 13 buyers have applied, and two of the three completed houses have accepted purchase offers.

The interest is not surprising. Selling prices are kept low by excluding the \$50,000 in renovations from final costs, which range from \$60,000 to \$189,000. Sounds like a pretty good deal—especially for the 25 people buying a renovated house in a prime location for low dollar—but, you may be asking, why on earth are my state taxes paying for some dude I never met to get a cheap house? Turns out, the effect may go far beyond those 25 homes.

A main impetus for the program was concern among city and UI officials about the deterioration of some rental units and its effect on the surrounding neighborhoods. According to Jerry Anthony, a UI professor of Urban Planning, those concerns are well-founded.

"Research shows that when urban spaces decline, there is a tipping point beyond which they are beyond help," Anthony said. However, he believes programs like UniverCity can help "stem the tide" of decline and tip things toward improvement with strategically placed investments.



BEFORE

MUSCATINE AVENUE

Before UniverCity, this home used to be a true party house for bands



AFTER

These potential wide-reaching effects are a big part of the program's strategy, said Steve Long, Community Development Coordinator for the City of Iowa City, and director of UniverCity. His staff cluster UniverCity homes in areas that are close to a "tipping point," in order to give a "jump start" to neighborhood improvement. Long has already seen this principle at work as neighboring homes start sprucing up when the UniverCity crews get to work on their block.

This strategy has made the program more appealing to applicants like Gail Falk, who currently rents a home in the UniverCity's west side neighborhood. Due to the number of run-down homes, she was initially concerned about buying a home in her neighborhood. However, when she saw the extent of the city's investment, she became more optimistic.

"They are renovating four other houses on the street and I think that's going to help. All the time and money they are putting into this will make a difference," Falk said.

UniverCity targets neighborhoods where the majority of properties are rented. The program plans to convert several of these rentals to single-family homes in order to create an even "balance" between owners and renters. According to Barbara Eckstein, UI representative for the program, such a balance between rental and owner-occupied properties could inspire better landlord oversight and improve safety. She said owners put "eyes on the street," and act as a stabilizing force that benefits renters and owners alike.

However, rental housing in Iowa City is in high demand and city officials say vacancy rates remain low. Although UniverCity currently targets only a small number of houses, it still raises the question: If we are taking away rental housing in key neighbor-

hoods, where and how do we plan to *add* rental housing?

"It's like putting a puzzle together," Long said. A city needs to "provide options" for all kinds of rental, single-family and multi-family housing. UniverCity is part of the city's extensive plan for housing, which includes expanding and improving all options, including rental units.

Even with those efforts, the infusion of single-family homes into core neighborhoods could complicate the housing puzzle because the displaced rental units have few options for relocation. As Anthony points out, zoning codes restrict the

balance across the entire city.

Spreading rental housing throughout the city could prove difficult, however, due in part to negative stereotypes against multi-family or rental housing.

"A lot of people...don't understand why I want to live closer to downtown," said program applicant Jennifer Kerns. "It's looked down upon to live close in." She believes this could be partly the result of negative views of



DOUGLASS COURT
One house gets a badly needed kitchen renovation

AFTER

Photos from the UniverCity program staff



BEFORE

potential downtown neighbors, something she herself has wondered about. Shortly after her first purchase offer, the 21-only ordinance sparked debate about increased partying in her future neighborhood, due to its high concentration of student rental housing. "What have I gotten myself into?" Kerns said.

Though her fears were later allayed, this type of negative press surrounding rental housing can make it difficult for some to accept it in their own neighborhoods, making it hard to "relocate" rental units displaced by a program like UniverCity.

The low pricing of UniverCity homes could be another source of concern for some Iowa City residents. According to local realtor Dave Biancuzzo, the artificially low prices of UniverCity homes may skew the local housing market, putting open market sellers at a competitive disadvantage. Property owners may also sense the advantage of selling through UniverCity, which could explain why nearly 100 owners have offered to sell to the program. However, in the long term, this program could possibly help open market sellers by raising property values across the neighborhood.

UNIVERCITY continued on page 18 >>

➔ **WHAT: UniverCity**, a program to renovate deteriorated rental houses near campus and sell them as affordable single-family homes

➔ **WHERE:** ON THE EAST SIDE – North and East of Downtown
ON THE WEST SIDE – East and Southeast of Roosevelt Elementary

➔ **WHO CAN APPLY?** 1-2 PERSONS - no more than \$62,240
3-5 PERSONS - no more than \$71,575

FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.ICGOV.ORG/UNIVERCITY



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IN THE HEART OF IOWA CITY'S OLD CAPITOL CULTURAL DISTRICT
ARTWORK BY KRISTEEN WEGNER

>> UNIVERCITY continued from 17

To further complicate the picture, a new vision from the UI could be a game changer for the entire Iowa City housing system. Currently the UI houses only about 20 percent of its students on campus, leaving tens of thousands to flood the rental market. A program like UniverCity is, on a small scale, replacing low-quality housing that is intended for students with properties that are geared toward local professionals. Since rental housing is so tricky to “replace,” where do we expect students to live instead? According to some,

EAST SIDE UNIVERCITY AREA

921 rental properties + **2227** rental units.

909 owner occupied units.

WEST SIDE UNIVERCITY AREA

91 rental properties, **194** rental units.

73 owner occupied units.

(Estimates provided by the City of Iowa City)

the answer may be back on campus. UI Vice President of Student Services Tom Rocklin said the university wants a higher percentage of students to live on campus, since studies show that students in dorms perform better on average. Such a move could relieve some of the pressure for rental housing, making programs like UniverCity less of an uphill battle.

UniverCity is one small part in the complicated business of housing the varied and growing population of this university town. In the short term, the program can revive fading homes and improve the look of neighborhood streets. It can provide a few more housing options for our professionals and can keep some building contractors busy during a slow time. In the long term, it can help maintain Iowa City as a community of thriving, diverse neighborhoods. However, we must consider all the pieces of the puzzle to ensure that the pursuit of these goals does not prevent our city from accommodating the needs of any particular group, in this case, students and other renters. UniverCity's success will depend on how well it coordinates the entire housing system, from UI dorm construction to local zoning codes to picking out the nursery wallpaper. **lv**

Lorin Ditzler is a graduate student in Urban Planning at the University of Iowa. She likes banjos, Indian food and embarrassing herself.

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Illustration by Corbin Booth

WE'RE NEVER GOING TO LIKE YOU, GOVERNOR

Tall, thin and alienating, with angular features and a glaring bald spot, Spitzer once looked like a suitable political icon for those of us who prefer Paul McCartney to John Lennon.

estate mogul father is worth half a *billion* and Spitzer could probably challenge that figure himself in the private sector, where the objective tenets of free-market fundamentalism pay no heed to one's personal scandals.

No, rather, Spitzer's on-camera life coheres with a personality flaw that informed his trumpet-blaring political career and likely financed his therapist's summerhouse in the Hamptons: He wants people to love him. This is a man who could have been Madoff, but wanted to be Elliot Ness; a trust-fund baby who warped himself into some kind of consumer-rights Robin Hood.

Parker Spitzer is currently the darkest show on television. Beneath its typical right-left current-events debate, it brims with the quiet emotional neediness of an alienated genius. An insecure honors student who won all the spelling bees but never got voted onto Prom Court. A guy who couldn't even trust women to be intimate with him outside of the ice-cold context of bottom-line financial transactions.

Since October, CNN has filled its 8 p.m. weeknight time slot with a program called *Parker Spitzer*, co-hosted by conservative columnist Kathleen Parker and infamously-humbled former New York governor Eliot Spitzer. The show seems virtually indistinguishable from other split-screen partisan debate-fests but for one novel, ratings-courting feature: unlike, say, *Crossfire* or *Hannity and Colmes*, *Parker Spitzer* happens to employ a man who, in 2008, undid years of populist crusading and election night triumphs with some "personal failings" of the hooker-in-a-hotel room variety.

America seems hesitant to redeem him. The show has followed its poor reviews into a distant fourth place standing in the ratings, and Bill O'Reilly counts six times as many viewers in the 25-to-54 demographic. Spitzer has reportedly offended CNN staffers and feuded behind the scenes with Parker and, even within the arm-wrestling tropes of basic-cable news commentary, he can't quite figure out how to charm the viewing public.

Oddly, I've always found Spitzer, in his near-comical unlikability, sort of sympathetic. I remember a brief TMZ clip, posted shortly after his scandal, in which a paparazzo asked, "What are you doing, Governor? Working?" Spitzer, walking down a Manhattan sidewalk with a manila folder under his arm, flashed the sharp, toothy grin of a perpetual top student in class. "Always" he said.

He seemed like a calculating rationalist who would just go into the studio and *give the people their damn radio-friendly four-minute pop songs*. Yet, he ended up becoming one of the most emotional characters in recent American public life.

As New York attorney general, he was known as "The Sheriff of Wall Street," targeting corporate pay-packages and rescuing thousands of white-collar employees from top-skimming executives. His governorship began with one of the biggest landslide victories in state history and proceeded with characteristic flourish, including high-octane screaming matches with political rivals.

Now, like toe-sucking contemporary Dick Morris, Spitzer translates high-profile disgrace into basic-cable prominence. CNN executives don't seem to consider his presence on their network prohibitively tacky, and so allow the Princeton and Harvard Law grad to interview the likes of James Carville and Dennis Rodman on a nightly basis, wisely providing him a co-host pleasant and respectable enough to offset his charmlessness.

His new television career is not predicated on money. Granted, CNN pays Spitzer about half a million a year. I'm sure countless Americans would deem this "shameful," and I won't argue with them (mainly because I would feel redundant in calling the American mainstream "self-righteous"). But half a million is still only half-a-Van Susteren and it barely even registers in Spitzer's world. His real

Parker Spitzer is currently the darkest show on television, brimming with the quiet emotional neediness of an alienated genius.

Even within the arm-wrestling tropes of basic-cable news commentary, Spitzer can't quite figure out how to charm the viewing public.

Even out of office, Spitzer suffers from politico "Love Me Syndrome," the very same disease that forces dual Harvard JD/MBA Mitt Romney to sputter

off-putting "Who let the dogs out?" punchlines on primary campaign stops. The insidious virus responsible for Obama's bowling score and Al Gore's documentary and, during Iowa caucus season, for all the labored photostops lining the walls of Iowa City's kitschy Hamburg Inn.

The public should reject Spitzer's talk show not because it benefits an "immoral" man, but so as to liberate that man from his own long-standing pathology. Granting Wall Street's hug-deprived ex-sheriff our attention now will only distract him from the serious, non-televised work to which he *should* be devoting his post-governorship. We should remove him from the *TV Guide* (where his last name now appears in the listings between *Spongebob* and *WWE Raw*) and put his brilliant, unlikable, philandering brain back into a high-powered policy position, where it belongs. Spitzer should retreat behind the cameras, manila folder under his arm, shrug off our collective opinion of him and get back to work. **lv**

Patrick Howley is a UI English major.

>> SHELTER continued from 15

Most of these guys never cause any problems in this town. These guys are invested in the city. They live here. It doesn't benefit them to go break in windows and mug people. I think it was an overreaction. And I think it's stupid. And they're not invisible. They're people. And you would think in a city as progressive and open and intellectually advanced as Iowa City, they would treat them with some modicum of respect. You know our paradigm is that all people are created in the image of God. And therefore should be treated as such. So giving a sleeping bag to somebody so they don't freeze seems like a very minimal thing you do. It doesn't seem like that's an awesome thing, that seems like that's God-given humanity and honoring it as such."

But wasn't there some logic to the parking meter idea proposed by the city council?

"And you would think in a city as progressive and open and intellectually advanced as Iowa City, they would treat them with some modicum of respect." - Langer

Panhandlers funding a booze habit might not be the best stewards of charitable donations. Wouldn't giving that money to social services ultimately make for a better outcome?

"Well, you can't shove a sleeping bag into those fucking meters," said Langer, quickly apologizing for his profanity. "I'm sorry, but you can't. You can put a quarter in there, and a quarter doesn't fix the problem. Giving a quarter to that machine isn't a conversation with somebody where they feel some amount of dignity.

"And that's what we're shooting for. If we can develop real relationships with these people . . . that leads to real restoration, that leads them to real hope, then we are doing what we're supposed to do." **lv**

David Henderson is a graduate of Iowa City public schools, J.C.'s Cafe and The University of Iowa.



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SPEED BREAK

In October, Iowa's drug "czar" Gary Kendall issued an alert that methamphetamine labs are again plaguing our state—this time utilizing a new, easy and highly explosive manufacturing technique. The "shake and bake" method requires only a two liter bottle, a handful of chemicals and a serious lack of common sense.

In November, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) pressured manufacturers of Four Loko to pull their caffeine-laced malt beverage off the market following a spate of binge drinking mishaps. Four Loko has been nicknamed "blackout in a can" and "liquid crack." Meanwhile, Red Bull cocktails remain popular at college bars across the country.

Despite the best efforts of policy-makers to discourage the manufacture and sale of amphetamine, use of illicit stimulants is more popular than ever. Meanwhile, the sales of beverages containing huge amounts of legal stimulants—sugar, high fructose corn syrup and caffeine—are at an all-time high. So, how did we get to be a culture of speedfreaks?

Amphetamine is the devil in the occult folklore of modern culture. Western Society met Amphetamine at the crossroads of the industrial revolution and gladly sold its soul to Mr. Crank. From the rise of the Third Reich to the rise of the Religious Right, from "Mothers Little Helper" to Mexican cartels, an entire class of drugs known commonly as "speed" has clandestinely fueled the development of the modern world.

In Mick Farren's latest book, *Speed Speed Speedfreak* (Feral House Press, 2010), he examines the history and sociological significance of amphetamine and discovers that the use of speed is woven throughout the tapestry of 20th century culture. Invented initially as a bronchodilator at the beginning of the industrial age, it didn't take long before Benzedrine became the fuel of the burgeoning entertainment industry, the assembly line industrial model and the war machines of governments across the globe.

In 206 fast-paced pages (the book itself is shaped like a giant "black beauty" dextroamphetamine capsule) the author keeps readers engaged with a mix of historical detail and

"fa-fa-fade away," imitating the speech pattern of The Who's speedfreak fans (the fashionable teenage "Mods" used "yellow jackets" and "green and clears" to cope with the mindless workaday world of post-war England).

Then it was Farren's turn. Criss-crossing Europe in vans full of freaks cranked on cheap amphetamine sulfate, Farren and friend Lemmy Kilmister set the standard for speed-crazed rock and roll. Lemmy went on to found Motörhead, taking his band's name from British slang for speedfreak.

In *Speed Speed Speedfreak*, Farren does not dwell on his own story, or on rock and roll. The majority of the book is a fascinating look at how speed played a major roll in the big-picture history of modern society. Adolf Hitler was a notorious speedfreak whose

THE SALES OF BEVERAGES CONTAINING HUGE AMOUNTS OF LEGAL STIMULANTS ARE AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH.

personal physician administered a cocktail of amphetamine, cocaine and testosterone. The speed-induced madness of Der Fuhrer and his soldiers may very well have led to the psychotic megalomania that eventually tore the world apart. President John Kennedy himself was a patient of Dr. Max Jacobson (the original "Dr. Feelgood"), an upscale Manhattan physician who regularly prescribed speed to the "Jet Set."



AS MANY AS 80% OF PRISON INMATES ARE SERVING TIME FOR DRUG-RELATED CHARGES

political intrigue, infused with an insiders look at the effects of speed on the psychedelic '60s, biker culture and the punk music scene. As the lead singer of the British proto-punk band "The Deviants," Farren experienced the story first hand and tells it with a survivor's sense of humor. He was coming of age when the leather-clad Beatles were playing maniacal, speed-fueled marathon rockabilly sets in the strip clubs of Hamburg. He was on the scene when Roger Daltrey was stuttering

The book also tells the tale of years of failed drug policy, and the unintended consequences that came along with it. With the Controlled Substances Act of 1970, the era of easily obtainable, legal pharmaceutical speed came to an end. Far from ending the problem, the legislation ushered in the era of illegal "Biker Crank"—methamphetamine—know commonly known as "meth."

The American meth trade was the engine that powered the rise to fame of the

California-based motorcycle club, the Hells Angels. Using P2P (phenyl-2-propanone) pool-cleaner and other easily-obtainable

a synthetic ephedrine which is used in over-the-counter cold and allergy medications. Lawmakers patted themselves on the back for their bi-partisan victory in the war on drugs.

Busting local meth labs reduced the number of dangerous fires and explosions that come with cooking the volatile chemicals, and gave small-town media a steady source of headlines. However, drug enforcement officials admit that more than 80 percent of meth is imported,

not the product of local cooks. In the document "Iowa's Drug Control Strategy, 2011," recently released by the Iowa Governor's Drug Policy Advisory Council, officials point out that the rise of readily available Mexican meth

has lead to a steady price and an astronomical leap in purity—from an average 14 percent in 1998 during the height of the "epidemic" of domestic meth labs in Iowa—to an average 78 percent purity in 2010.

In addition, the document admits that domestic cooking is again on the rise with the advent of the so-called "shake and bake" method of small-batch processing.

Lest this article gives the reader the impression that speed use is just for bikers, truckers, strippers and denizens of the local trailer park, a 2008 report from The University of Michigan points out that up to 35 percent of American college students abuse prescription stimulants

like Ritalin and Adderall as "study aids." It would appear that the 1970 law restricting use of legal amphetamine was really only restricting access for the working class.

A March 4, 2010 article in *The Northern Iowan* (the UNI student paper) suggests that Ritalin and Adderall abuse is not uncommon on Iowa campuses. Yet the Governor's advisory council report does not even mention these drugs. Arrest records for abuse of the prescription speed are virtually non-existent. Are jail time, domestic abuse, rotten teeth and the other side-effects of illicit speed reserved for blue-collar abusers?

The distribution of legal amphetamines as diet drugs and alertness enhancers stopped in 1970, but researchers found a place for them—treating "hyperactivity" in children. "Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder" (ADHD) sufferers are commonly prescribed the same basic compounds that were long ago issued to Hitler's *Urbemensch* as they



UP TO 35% OF AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS ABUSE PRESCRIPTION STIMULANTS LIKE RITALIN AND ADDERALL AS "STUDY AIDS"

fought their way across the frozen Russian countryside. The omnipresence of high-quality pharmaceutical speed (among young people whose parents can afford health insurance) makes it easily obtainable by college students, with the highest percentage of abuse among fraternity and sorority house residents (according to the previously cited UM study.)

SPEED FREAK continued on page 30 >>

ARREST RECORDS FOR ABUSE OF THE PRESCRIPTION SPEED ARE VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT JAIL-TIME, DOMESTIC ABUSE, ROTTEN TEETH AND THE OTHER SIDE-EFFECTS OF ILLICIT SPEED ARE RESERVED FOR BLUE COLLAR ABUSERS.

industrial chemicals, the Angels perfected the "Nazi method" of cooking bathtub crank. They cooked in secret labs and distributed the dubious product through a growing network of local club chapters across the western United States.

When the federal government banned P2P, the Angels discovered that using ephedrine (a commonly used poultry medication) was even easier and provided a higher quality product. When the government cracked down on the Angels, Mexican drug cartels happily stepped in to provide an even more professional network for distributing cheap, high-quality crystal meth, or "Ice," across the American heartland—including Iowa. In 1996, the *New York Times* reported that meth use among Iowa's small-town working class had reached "epidemic" proportions.

In the late '90s, frustrated with the rapid growth of the Meth Problem and the seemingly endless supply, law enforcement agencies turned to cracking down on local tweekers, some of whom made small batches of meth in clandestine labs in trailers, garages, kitchens, even in the back seats of cars. This lead to restrictions on the sale of pseudoephedrine,



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JANUARY 2011 | LITTLE VILLAGE 23



TIMES CLUB

Last summer, Pete Schulte came on board as manager and curator of the Times Club (15 S. Dubuque Street). He has since been exploring the ways that a social space, such as a coffee shop, can be activated and perceived anew through thoughtful curation and mediation.

Since Pete's first show—*Gone to the Other Side*, September 2010—the Times Club has hosted a new exhibition of current (or “contemporary,” if you will) artists each month, making the space a destination for vital artwork taking place in Iowa City.

This month, Schulte and the Times Club will maintain this very high standard by presenting the work of Chicago-based artist Richard Rezac, whose show is slated to open on Jan. 27.

I spoke with Schulte about Rezac's work, the Times Club in general and his process of thoughtfully presenting new work in that space.

LITTLE VILLAGE: What do you think of (or maybe, how do you avoid) the typical coffee-shop aesthetic?

PETE SCHULTE: There are stigmas about art in coffee shops. At least maybe I had them. When I talk to people about the stigma of art in coffee shops they look at me like they don't know what I'm talking about. I guess what I'm talking about is decoration and background. Not even that there's anything bad with decoration necessarily, but things that are meant to be really innocuous, not get in your way, but somehow fill in the space on the walls. I wasn't actively trying to take on the idea of art in coffee shops or anything, I was more just trying to make some sort of curatorial program that didn't so easily slide into the background. How successful that's been I don't know, but I know that we're seeing some shows around here because of the Times Club space that we haven't seen before and that I think are pretty interesting.

LV: Have you found that that's been a mostly positive interaction, getting artists to take on the idea of the Times Club as a serious arts space?

PS: As the shows have come together, I've had lists of people to ask and I've only had one say no, and it was a very politely personalized letter rejection from a superstar in the art

world, you know, somebody who's extremely connected at this point. But everybody else I've asked has said yes. I'm not saying we have a who's who of people but there have been some people here with pretty hefty resumes. Like Richard Rezac, I think he's as good as anything I see anywhere. For him to do this show is really thrilling.

LV: You don't often see people who are represented in galleries in all the major cities in America doing shows upstairs in a loft/cafe in Iowa City.

PS: Yes, one of the artists I was talking to, she started referring to it as a “mixed-use space.” I thought that was really good. I've kind of adopted that and so it is. There are things to consider. We're not presenting things in a typical white box which, frankly, is kind of exciting. For Richard, for example, this is a whole different situation than he's used to showing in, at least these days. And for him it's

WE'RE NOT PRESENTING THINGS IN A TYPICAL WHITE BOX WHICH, FRANKLY, IS KIND OF EXCITING.

sort of a homecoming too because he actually lived in Iowa City for a period of time. I know he has some friendships here. Richard's wife, Julia Fish, a painter who was just in the most recent Whitney Biennial, was a visiting artist here for a period of time and Richard lived here also in



Read the extended interview
with Pete Schulte:

www.LittleVillageMag.com/TimesClub

the late 1980s early '90s I'm not exactly sure. Richard will be coming to do the install and is very particular about the installation. He and I will be doing that together. Then he's going to speak at The University of Iowa and then we'll have the opening reception after his talk at The Times Club. So it'll be great—he'll actually be here, people will be able to see the work after his lecture, you know how it is. He picked the work specifically for the space and it's an amazing selection of work. It's going to be really good.

LV: How has the correspondence with Richard Rezac been?

PS: The interaction so far has been great. He was someone who came to mind right from the beginning as far as wanting to show here. It's just really, really unique work in that it uses an economy of means that comes off as having some relationship to minimalism, but this stuff does not function in that realm at all. It does in terms of its economy of means but if you showed Donald Judd a Richard Rezac sculpture he would just roll over in his grave. It's much more idiosyncratic, it's extremely soulful, and it's also, well it kind of reminds you of all these things but it never goes there. The color relationships that he does, I don't want to use the word quirky... they're idiosyncratic for sure. They almost, um, you know, ah, people fumble for words when they're trying to write about him.

LV: Ahh, um. yeah.

PS: They almost always start off with his relationship to minimalism. People talk about a relationship to consumer goods, product packaging, things like that. These things look like shelves or they have the color palette from something you'd buy at a strip mall, or maybe they look like part of the strip mall itself. But they don't ever commit in those ways. They're far too individuated, far too, I don't know, there is too much love in them to go in that direction, in either direction: minimalism or consumer culture. This is a guy that's lived a life in art. And he's just kept refining and refining and refining and even when his work is fabricated or if some aspect of it is fabricated there is still this element of touch to it. You know what I mean? Not in a clear way. Not like, "oh you see that brushiness" or whatever.

In just the way that a human has crafted these things. And maybe not just in that work, but maybe all the work leading up to it has led to this point... plus just a real keen eye.

LV: Something that stuck with me from you talking about his work before and having seen some of the images on various websites, which obviously isn't the same as seeing them in person, is this alien quality. And maybe that's just an easy caveat or something. But there's something sophisticated, familiar but not quite....

LV: That brings up another point, or one of my interests in your space: what it means to have art

I LIKE ANYTHING THAT PUSHES WORK AND VIEWER INTO A DIFFERENT WAY OF LOOKING.

to have art on the walls as the main driving factor for people to come instead of, perhaps, the cup of coffee.

What does it mean when you come into the space and there are people sitting at a table below you, mediating your experience with the art that's hanging above their heads?



Photos by Ben Partridge

NOT JUST DECORATION

Pete Schulte breaks away from the "typical coffee-shop aesthetic"

PS: Yeah. John Dilg mentioned that idea of the extraterrestrial. I always shy away from that whether it's in Richard's work or someone like John McCracken, or somebody who's putting it out there, as these things being a monolith or something. I don't know why, maybe it's just my resistance to sci-fi or something, but it's there. It is there. But there's these things that you feel like they can only exist the way that they are, and when they really click, they're just right. You know what I mean?

LV: Mnn-hm.

PS: And even within a certain modesty of scale, they seem to be really aware of people, of a person's interaction with them. And one of the things I'm really excited to see play out is the way he negotiates a space that is heavily trafficked and has tables. Because he's very concerned about the way people move through and negotiate the space. So I'm pretty thrilled to talk to him about this.

PS: It's a good question. But it's one that I'm still learning about, to be honest with you. It seems like this show that's up right now [the December show: *As The Crow Flies*], this show seems to be a tipping point where people realize "oh this is a serious art space." People have come and they've really been looking at the show: taking the list down and walking around and doing it. And it is kind of strange when you have somebody sitting at a table and somebody's looking over you at a painting. But I don't know. I like anything that pushes work and viewer into—not that this is unprecedented territory—but into a different way of looking, way of seeing and negotiating the space, into a different awareness of self as you're engaging with the art. **LV**

John Engelbrecht is Program Director at Public Space One, a community art project posing as a gallery.

Ethics for the Age of Netflix

John Wyatt started using a spinning machine in 1735 and the Industrial Revolution began, Karl Marx observed, "without a word." When I began subscribing to Netflix in 2007, my life was similarly revolutionized. All of a sudden, with the power to instantly call up *Rashomon* or *It Happened One Night*, I found myself inexplicably watching *The Office: Season Four*, "Branch Wars," while on my desk a red-and-white envelope with Disc One of Kobayashi's *The Human Condition* gathered dust.

Overall, I think Netflix is a beautiful thing, if used well. The problem is, I rarely use it well. So, as a new year begins, this devoted movie-watcher has drawn up a decalogue for the age of Netflix, a set of ten resolutions to make him feel guilty for at least the next twelve months.

1 THOU SHALT HAUL THY LAZY FLESH TO THE MOVIE THEATER AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH.

I fell in love with the movies watching giant images flicker in the darkness, my feet stuck to the pop-soaked floor. One of the ugly side-effects of the Netflix Revolution is that my desire to see movies can be all too easily satiated in the comfort of my own home.

2 THOU SHALT NOT CLOG UP THY QUEUE WITH MOVIES THOU THINKEST THOU SHOULDST WATCH.

As a cinephile, I have a tendency to order forbidding classics. Disc One of *The Human Condition* collected dust on my desk for six months before my wife made me send it back for *The Wire*. Maybe some people suffer from the opposite problem, clogging up their queues with *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, when deep down they want to be exploring the late films of Fellini.

3 THOU SHALT NOT KEEP A MOVIE FOR MORE THAN A WEEK.

This will be my criterion for deciding if I really want to watch the movie or not.

4 THOU SHALT INSTANTLY AGREE TO WHATSOEVER VIEWING PARTNER WANTS TO WATCH ON INSTANT QUEUE.

Though I'm mostly a solitary viewer, I have gotten lost in the following conversation: "Let's watch A." "I just saw A. What about B?" "Oh, I don't feel much like B. What about C?" This goes on all the way through Z, and then, sometime around midnight, we randomly end up watching a half-hour of M before falling asleep.

5 THOU SHALT NOT TAKE MORE THAN FIVE MINUTES TO DECIDE WHAT TO WATCH ON INSTANT QUEUE.

The beautiful thing about Instant Queue is that you can start watching any movie you want and, if you don't like it, change to something else.

6 THOU SHALT WRITE DOWN RECOMMENDATIONS GIVETH BY FRIENDS AND MAKE GOOD USE OF THEM.

This is the best way of not taking more than five minutes to decide what to watch.

7 THOU SHALT NOT FRITTER AWAY MORE THAN AN HOUR ON THE OFFICE: SEASON FOUR.

Once you start watching a TV show on Instant Queue, it's all too easy to keep watching episode upon episode. One of the great things about movies is that they have a beginning, middle and end. One of the horrid things about TV shows is that they go on forever.

Now Showing

It's a new year, so out with the old and in with the new, right? Not so fast. A few excellent films from the millennium's first decade have encore performance's this month.



A Single Man

Directed by Tom Ford
Jan. 10, 7 p.m. | Senior Center

Colin Firth earned an Oscar nomination for his portrayal of George, a lonely English professor dealing with the loss of his long-time partner Jim (Matthew Goode). The directorial debut for fashion icon Tom Ford is impressive for matching style with substance. Part of an ongoing LGBT movie series at the Senior Center.

The Namesake

Directed by Mira Nair
Jan. 14, 1 p.m. | Senior Center

Kal Penn (between starring in Harold & Kumar films and working for Barack Obama) portrays Gogol Ganguli, the American-born son of first-generation immigrants from India as he searches for the origins of his name and explores his cross-cultural heritage.

Pushing the Elephant

Directed by Beth Davenport and Elizabeth Mandel
Jan. 19, 7 p.m. | IC Public Library

Rose Mapendo, mother of ten, fled the violence of the Democratic Republic of Congo, settling in Arizona and becoming world-renowned for advocating peace and reconciliation. Over a decade later, Rose is reunited with the daughter she left behind and must come to terms again with the past and the future.

8 THOU SHALT NOT CHANNEL-SURF WHEN THOU COULDEST BE WATCHING ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS.

If I'm dead-set on doing something other than reading, cooking, talking, writing or having a drink, then I can always watch an episode of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (available on Instant Queue!), which is invariably more charming than whatever is on Bravo.

9 THOU SHALT NOT FORGET THAT THOU ENJOYEST GOOD MOVIES.

Just because a movie is subtitled or black-and-white doesn't mean that it can't be supremely enjoyable. Stupid comedies, though they always seem like the best way of getting in some quality down-time, often leave me embittered.

10 THOU SHALT NOT EVER READ THE MEMBER REVIEWS.

This is almost as stupid as losing oneself in the readers' comments after a *Times* editorial. Of course, the problem with all our technological revolutions is that without a word they sweep us all up into their brave new worlds—unless you're Amish. In other words, I'm going to have about as much success sticking to the commandments as your average televangelist.



HIS GIRL FRIDAY



A GREAT DAY IN HARLEM

Photographer Art Kane inspired the 1994 film by Jean Bach

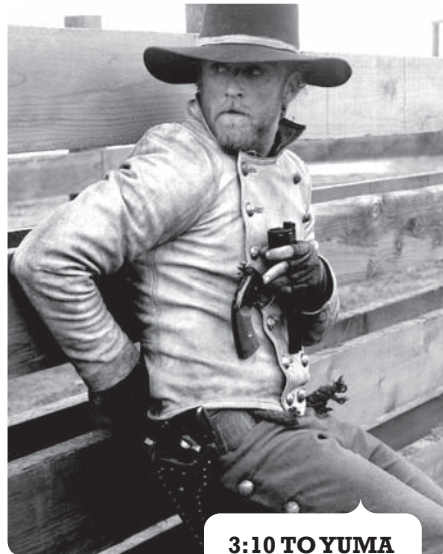
Some Netflix Instant Queue Treasures

Louis Malle, *Murmur of the Heart* (1971).

The greatest movie ever made about adolescence.

Delmer Daves, *3:10 to Yuma* (1957).

An austere, gripping, graceful Western—deeper than the recent remake.



3:10 TO YUMA

Chris Marker, *La jetee* (1961). If you have 28 minutes, then you should watch this one-of-a-kind work of science fiction, the inspiration for *Twelve Monkeys*.

Jiri Menzel, *Closely Watched Trains* (1966). One of the most humane, charming, lovely movies I know.

Howard Hawks, *His Girl Friday* (1940). The platonic form of screwball comedies.

Hayao Miyazaki, *Lupin the 3rd: The Castle of Cagliostro* (1980). A great animated adventure story for the whole family, with only a few swear words.

Jean Bach, *A Great Day in Harlem* (1994).

In exactly one hour this documentary does what Ken Burns couldn't do in twenty: capture the spirit of jazz.

Scott Samuelson teaches philosophy at Kirkwood Community College and blogs about music with his eight year-old son at billyanddad.wordpress.com.

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Directed by Daniel Alfredson | Sweden

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"3.5 Stars. Arguably the most GRIPPING of the Trilogy." - Moira MacDonald, *Seattle Times*

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Directed by Gareth Edwards | UK

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kicks off KRUI's Low Frequency Series at Gabe's on Jan. 30
 \$12 | All Ages | 6 p.m. doors

Lipstick Homicide has been one of the most frequently discussed bands in this column and, frankly, it's because they're damn good. Their particular brand of pop-punk comes with huge hooks and riffs but very little braggadocio, even though they've earned it. Dare I say it, there's an emotional urgency to their songs that transcends the teen diary aesthetic of so many bands in the genre. They share the bill with Coyote Slingshot, which is Dom Rabalais, the hardest working man in DIY electronic music right now, founder of the cassette-only Sweat Power record label and one half of Utopia Park (née Porno Galactica). Coyote Slingshot, which has ranged from a solo project to a full-on band, is worth seeing for big beats, guitar slinging and unparalleled enthusiasm.

The second portion of the night will rely on different instruments, but will deliver no less energy. Since adding Dustin Busch (who opens the show, solo) Illinois John Fever

In 1953, a guy named Pat Best wrote a song for his band The Four Tunes, called "I Understand (Just How You Feel)" a Pop/R&B crossover that broke into the Top Ten on both charts. The original recording is fine, if a bit basic, but soon the song was covered by a slew of pop groups—Elvis even did a demo of it at one point. My favorite version is by The G-Clefs, who, in one of the world's greatest (and earliest?) mashups, combined the song with that traditional New Year's jam, "Auld Lang Syne."

The sad-puppy honesty of "I Understand" ("It's over now / but it was grand / I understand") highlights the oft-discussed oddness

at the heart of "Auld Lang Syne": should old acquaintance be forgot? Of course not, but it's equally important to keep looking forward.

To say that 2010 was a strange and interesting year in Iowa City music and culture would be an understatement. From new ordinances to new venues, undoubtedly some things have changed. But one thing has remained constant: good music coming through town. This January is no exception, so here are my picks for kicking off the new year in style.

2011 starts strong with a New Year's Day double-header of local talent at The Mill. An early show with Lipstick Homicide and Coyote Slingshot will be followed by late-show sets by Dustin Busch (solo) and Illinois John Fever.

has matured musically while still maintaining the raw, occasionally political thrust of their "apocalypse blues." While traditional music is occasionally saddled with a certain kind of "seriousness," like attending a lecture, these guys love the music too much to let that happen.

The biggest national name coming through town in January is certainly Ted Leo, who will be at Gabe's on Jan. 30 to kick off a new series of concerts booked and produced by KRUI. They're calling it the Low Frequency Series, seemingly because KRUI is kind of low on your FM dial, not because it's really deep bass music (though that might be cool).

Ted Leo and his band the Pharmacists have been making widely celebrated indie punk/rock since their 2001 full-length debut, *The Tyranny of Distance*. I wasn't turned on to Leo until

Quick Hits

Put these shows on your calendar for the month of January.



JAILL

Jan. 14 | The Mill | \$8



THE DIPLOMATS OF SOLID SOUND

Jan. 15 | Blue Moose | \$7



FOL CHEN

Jan. 15 | The Mill | \$7



YACHT CLUB 8TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY

Jan. 22 | 8 bands for 8 bucks!

2003's *Hearts of Oak*, which features one of my favorite songs of the decade, "Where Have All the Rude Boys Gone?" Leo's not a dinosaur act, however; I thought his record from this year, *The Brutalist Bricks* (Matador Records), was as fine as anything he's done. I'm not entirely sure what things will sound like without The Pharmacists in tow but if anyone has the songwriting chops and back catalogue to keep a crowd entertained, it's him.

In the middle of the month, I'm really excited to see Fol Chen, a quirky pop group signed to Sufjan Stevens' Asthmatic Kitty label. Their song "In Ruins" was my summer jam—a twisted, danceable slice of girl-pop that deserved a nod on any "song of the year" list. Their album, *Part II: The New December*, is a really eclectic genre-bender,

>> Quirky pop group Fol Chen was recently signed to Sufjan Stevens' Asthmatic Kitty label.<<

but this is recommended if you like anything from Prince to Hot Chip.

The night before, also at the Mill, Minneapolis band Jaill comes through town, newly signed to Sub Pop Records and dragging around some of the biggest buzz of any band to make their debut last year. They got noticed after putting out a cassette on LA-based Burger Records, and next thing you know they added an extra "L" to their name and made the big time! (Seriously, you can look that up.) But, that aside, they make really catchy indie-rock, and anyone who's anyone is going to be there, etc. That debut record, which is good by the way, is called *That's How We Burn*.

For local flavor, you should absolutely never miss a chance to see The Diplomats of Solid Sound, featuring the Diplomettes. They make sweet soul music that channels the 1970s with incredible depth and detail, with horns, choreography, the whole bit. As all of the Daptone bands continue to grow in popularity (Sharon Jones, The Budos Band), you owe it to yourself and to these hard-working musicians to get out and see Iowa City's own hip-droppers. **lv**

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

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JAN 15, 8PM **THE DIPLOMATS OF SOLID SOUND**

JAN 15, 9PM **FEED MY PIRANHA**
+ THE BURNING HALOS & CORN BOSS (UPSTAIRS ROOM)

JAN 20, 5PM **DESTRUCTION OF A ROSE**
+ A CASUAL AFFAIR, SUCH CREATURES EXIST, AMIDST A RUINED CITY, & SUNDAY'S BEST

JAN 21, 5PM **QUIETDRIVE**
+ ROOKIE OF THE YEAR, PARADISE FEAR, & BACKDROP

JAN 22, 7PM **ORQUESTA DE JAZZ Y SALSA ALTO MAIZ**

WWW.BLUEMOOSEIC.COM
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>> **SPEED FREAK** continued from 23

It appears that Americans' appetite for stimulants is boundless. Aside from the more potent legal and illegal stimulants, the sale of energy drinks is increasing at a rate of nearly 50% per year over the last five years. Gourmet coffee shops serve a more expensive and upscale assortment of caffeine and sugar. Workers in an increasingly tenuous job market are feeling the pressure to perform and the market offers a stimulant for every budget and social class.

ASIDE FROM THE MORE POTENT LEGAL AND ILLEGAL STIMULANTS, THE SALE OF ENERGY DRINKS IS INCREASING AT A RATE OF NEARLY 50% PER YEAR OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

Near the end of *Speed Speed Speedfreak*, Mick Farren points out that "Drug panics would appear to be subject to a kind of natural entropy and will fade away of their own accord," whether or not the War on Drugs continues.

Regardless of the hype, drug abuse is a problem for a small minority of Americans, although as many as 80% of prison inmates are serving time for drug-related charges. With the privatization of the prison industrial complex and the introduction of the profit motive into the process of incarceration, that trend is likely to continue. Jails and rehab programs will remain full because, regardless of the risk of a stiff sentence, the evidence shows that some humans will continue to have the need for speed. **lv**

Rich Dana is the editor of OBSOLETE! Magazine, a quarterly underground paper that he describes as "a cross between PUNK Magazine and the Whole Earth Catalog." He loves feral cats, feral people and feral technology. Read more about OBSOLETE! Magazine at <http://obsoletemag.blogspot.com/>

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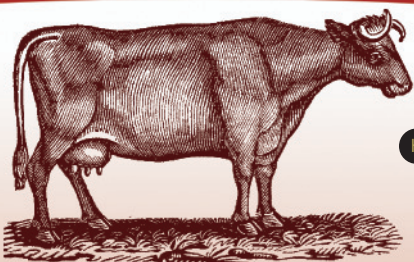
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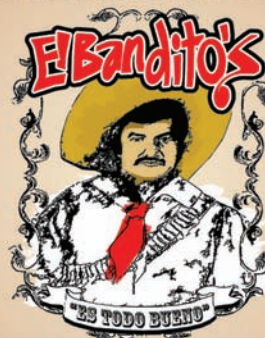


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Bermuda Report

EP

Self-released

myspace.com/bermudareport

Abbie Sawyer (formerly of the Diplomats of Solid Sound) is the lead singer of Iowa City band Bermuda Report. Abbie left the Diplomats in 2008 to pursue a Master's program in New Zealand. She came back home and in May of this year started working with the band that would become Bermuda Report. Supporting Sawyer in Bermuda Report are Paul Kresowik (from the Diplomats and his own band Local Clamor) on drums, Billy LeGrand (in Local Clamor with Kresowik) on guitars, Jeremiah Murphy (OSG Band, Public Property) on bass and Nick Leo (Brooks Strause & the Gory Details, Salsa Vibe) on Hammond B5 and Rhodes.

The band released a five-track EP that they consider to be the jumping-off point for upcoming live shows and plans for a full album release in 2011. I don't know the genesis of the band's name but between the dreamy cover art of Sawyer in the sun and the warm trade winds of jazz mixing with the cool night blues it accompanies, Bermuda Report easily evokes the idea of a recounting of a vacation in the tropics.

The short trip kicks off with a fun, calypso-time cover of "After Laughter," originally done in 1964 by Stax/Volt artist Wendy Rene. But it's the following track—a re-work of the Diplomats' "Smokey Places"—that is one of the high points of the EP for me. The song is transformed from its former R&B gospel-influenced commandment to a sultry smokey blues confessional. "I just strut and I walk—can I cozy up to you?" becomes a more subtle flirt in this version.

Another standout is "Tension" which started life as an instrumental in past Kresowik bands and is re-invented by Bermuda Report as a five-minutes-plus building torch song of frustration, convincingly carried by Sawyer, climaxing with the release of "I'm in a bind / help me unwind / I'm going to love again. I'm on my knees begging you, PLEASE!"

Sawyer told me that she's enjoying "dipping a toe into the abyss upon abyss of ideas, sounds and lovely people to share them with."

Sawyer told me that she's enjoying "dipping a toe into the abyss upon abyss of ideas, sounds and lovely people to share them with." I, for one, am ready to follow her into the warm waters of Bermuda Report.

This EP is available as a free download from the Bermuda Report Bandcamp site (<http://bermudareport.bandcamp.com>)

Michael Roeder



Fake Babies

We Started Blues

Safety Meeting Records

myspace.com/fakebabiesmusic

If you Google "Fake Babies" you find very little about the band, and a lot about a subculture I was unaware of: people who collect and play with creepily realistic life-size

He knows everyone, has been in a band with almost everyone, and he'll be down front at your show grinning and head-nodding, even if he has to work in the morning.

newborn baby dolls. Fake Babies (the band) has nothing to do with those, and *We Started Blues* has nothing to do with the Blues idiom. So they seem to like misdirection.

They also like synthesizers and crunchy sampled drum sounds, they have at least two singers and they frequently combine falsetto counterpoint vocals behind the lead vocalist. I presume they perform live, but songs like "Get Loved" would not exist except for the possibilities of computer multitracking. On "LA" the lead vocalist seems to be channeling Ian Curtis over a nervous beat and clattery synth squiggles, later joined by a multitracked choir. "Reprise" has some silly falsetto vocalese interludes, indistinct squalls of guitar noise and perhaps the most over-the-top use of vocal effects I've heard in recent years.

Sometimes you think Brian Wilson, sometimes Captain Beefheart, sometimes Weird Al Yankovic, and sometimes all three at the same time.

The only consistent attribute of *We Started Blues* is the oblique, absurd humor that imbues both the vocals and the busy, occasionally chaotic instrumental arrangements. Sometimes you think Brian Wilson, sometimes Captain Beefheart, sometimes Weird Al Yankovic, and sometimes all three at the same time. That's rather a lot for a listener to take on board. Fake Babies is willing to risk confusing the audience with their multi-layered wackiness. But they don't sound like anyone else, really, so even though I'm not sure I always like what they're doing, I hope they keep doing it.

Kent Williams



Distant Trains
Congratulations On Your Suicide

<http://music.centipedefarm.com>

Distant Trains is the solo project of Iowa musician Chuck Hoffman, who plays in Des Moines band Why Make Clocks, among other varied musical projects around the state. Web developer by day, rock and roll animal by night, Chuck is the sort of musician who keeps the Iowa rock scene exciting: he knows everyone, has been in a band with almost everyone, and he'll be down front at your show grinning and head-nodding, even if he has to work in the morning.

Congratulations On Your Suicide is a departure from the last CD-R I heard by him, which was a collection of sunny, up-tempo pop songs, roughed up with lo fi samples. Hoffman's bass guitar dominates this album, both as a pure sine rumble and as a fuzzed out lead instrument. The songs owe a debt to sludge-rockers like Soundgarden and the Melvins, but Hoffman is more of a surrealist, incorporating cruddy samples of evangelists on the monumental "DDDE," which sounds like the fade-out of the Beatles "I Want You" played at the wrong speed. "ABX" combines a herky-jerky drum machine beat with a muffled vocal before breaking down into rumbling and whispers.

"When did you finally realize you were grown?" Hoffman asks at the beginning of "62MF" and it's an open question. There's nothing childish about *Congratulations'* song-writing; Hoffman has an ear for satisfying riffs that develop and modulate, and while he loves his distortion pedals he never uses them to screech or scream. He retains a childlike affection for the direct sensual pleasure of sonic texture—loud, soft, distorted, pure, all dancing together.

Kent Williams

Selected Significant Iowa City Music of 2010

I hate the idea of 'Best Of' lists. If there's anything you can learn from hearing the broad variety of music released by Iowa City musicians, it's that there's no one definition of excellence. An incredibly accomplished, well-rehearsed, experienced outfit like Euforquestra is excellent. So is the scuzzy lo-fi madness of Taterbug, hunched over his guitar and cassette deck on the floor of White Lightning Warehouse. How do you draw a line connecting those two data points? Why even try? So, in no particular order:

Wax Cannon-The Ankle Hour

These guys have released several CDs, all covering basically the same ground: punk-inflected pop songs made with guitars and drums. But Jay and Dave write songs that I play over and over because they scratch an itch I didn't even know I had.

Be Kind To Your Neighbors-Self-Titled

Dan Davis might play loud guitar and scream his songs, but don't call it Screamo. His brief collaboration with Ed Bornstein for this project is huge like a Mahler Symphony.



Paul Cary-Ghost Of A Man

Paul Cary (of the Iowa City band The Horrors, lately of Chicago) writes stupidly good songs of white trash love gone wrong. They would still sound great coming out of an AM radio with a ripped speaker. He's in the same neighborhood as Tom Waits, but he's definitely working his own corner.

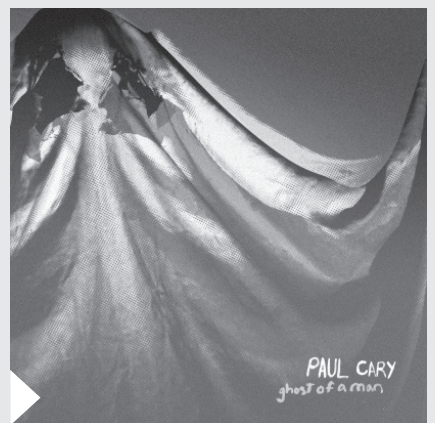
Tin Kite-Untitled Digital Demo

Recording in her basement with her newborn son in her lap, Stephanie Drootin (of the Omaha band The Good Life) created an unassuming collection of great songs and gave them away free to her fans. These absolutely lovely, guileless, open-hearted songs are country music from the country I wish I lived in.



Lwa-Various Live & TrainEaters

Chris & Matt do God knows what to their table full of electronic toys to create abstract slabs of noise grounded in drones and rumbling sub-bass. They used to perform blackout drunk and shirtless, but over the past few years they've become the masters of making something engrossing and satisfying out of the sounds most bands try to avoid making.



Kent Williams and John Schlotfeldt

ART/EXHIBITS

African American Historical Museum and Cultural Center of Iowa

55 12th Ave SE, Cedar Rapids

www.blackiowa.org

See website for times and locations

LS: The Oldest Finger Paintings in the World, Jan. 7

AKAR

257 East Iowa Ave., Iowa City

www.akardesign.com

Daniel Ricardo Teran Earthware, Jan. 21 thru Feb. 11

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids

www.crma.org

A Show of Hands: Ceramics from the Collection, Ongoing • China: Insights, New Photography from the Peoples Republic of China, thru Jan. 2 • Art Bites "Still Life Paintings by Grant Wood and Marvin Cone" with Terry Pitts, Jan. 5, 12:15 p.m. • Exhibition Opening-Wizards of Pop: Sabuda & Reinhart, Jan. 22, 10am

Chait Galleries Downtown

218 E. Washington St.

www.thegalleriesdowntown.com

The Small Works Show, thru Jan. 5

Figge Art Museum

225 West Second St., Davenport

<http://figgeart.org>

Tracks: The Railroad in Photographs from the George Eastman House Collection, Jan. 15 thru April 24 • The John Deere Art Collection, thru May 22 • 2010 College Invitational, thru Jan. 9 • Dancing Towards Death: The Richard Harris Collection, thru Jan. 9 • Lecture – Tracking the Trains: Artists and American Railroads, Jan. 30, 2pm

Hudson River Gallery

538 South Gilbert St., Iowa City

www.hudsonrivergallery.com

New "Seasons" pastels by Ellen Wagener, ongoing

Johnson County Historical Society

310 5th St., Coralville

www.jchsiowa.org

Check website for times and locations

4th Annual Coralville Winterfest, Jan. 30, 1pm

Old Capitol Museum

Pentacrest, Iowa City

www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap

See website for locations

Regular hours resume Jan. 18

Public Space One

129 E. Washington St., Iowa City

publicspaceone.wordpress.com/

See website for auction details

Seagull Storytelling, 8 p.m. • January Art Auction Exhibition, Jan. 21-28

MUSIC

Blue Moose Tap House

211 Iowa Ave, Iowa City

www.bluemooseic.com

Silverstein with Miss Mary I, Pierce the Veil, The Chariot and A Bullet for a Pretty Boy, Jan. 14, 5 p.m. • The Diplomats of Solid Sound, Jan. 15, 8 p.m. • Feed My Piranha with The Burning Halos and Corn Boss, Jan. 15, 9 p.m. • Destruction of a Rose with A Casual Affair, Such Creatures Exist, Amidst a Ruined City and Sunday's Best, Jan. 20, 5 p.m. • Quietdrive with Rookie of the Year, Paradise Fear and Backdrop, Jan. 21, 5 p.m. • Orquesta de Jazz y Salsa Alto Maiz, Jan. 22, 7pm

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Gabe's

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www.iowacitygabes.com

Brotherhood of the Mudkat with Reason of Being and Undisclosed, Jan. 15, 9 p.m. • Groove Theory with Koplant No and the Saul Lubaroff Quartet, Jan. 27, 7 p.m. • Strange Arrangement with Brainchild, Jan. 28, 9 p.m. • Salsa Vibe, Jan. 29, 9 p.m. • Ted Leo, Jan. 30, 7pm

The Mill

120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City

www.icmill.com

Shows at 9 p.m. 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

The Trollies with The Mayflies, Jan. 6 • Unknown Component with Bethann Gavin, Star City and Eugene Kelly, Jan. 7 • 13th Annual Elvis Benefit Tribute Show, Jan. 8, 8 p.m. • Burlington Street Bluegrass Band, Jan. 12, 7 p.m. • Jaill, Jan. 14 • Fol Chen, with So Much Fun and The Olympics, Jan. 15 • Awful Prudies with Adobanga, Jan. 16, 4 p.m. • Mooseknuckle with TBA, Jan. 21, 10 p.m. • The Recliners, Jan. 22, 7 p.m. • Burlington Street Bluegrass Band, Jan. 26, 7pm

Orchestra Iowa

www.orchestraiowa.org

See website for times and locations

Mussorgsky, Shostakovich and Tchaikovsky, Jan. 22-23 • Pied Piper Concerts - Percussion Ensemble, Jan. 26-29

Performing Arts at Iowa

performingarts.uiowa.edu/

See website for times and locations

Duo Recital: Hannah Holman, cello and Susanna Klein, violin, Jan. 18 • Masterclass with Guest Pianist, William Doppmann, Jan. 21 • Larry Zalkind, trombone, Jan. 21 • William Doppmann, piano, Jan. 22 • Rebecca Johnson, flute, Jan. 27 • La Traviata Opera, Jan. 27-30 • Katherine Wolfe, violin; Kate Hamilton, viola; Anthony Arnone, cello; Milton Misciadri, bass; Ana Flavia, piano, Jan. 29 • Maia Quartet with School of Music Woodwind Faculty, Jan. 29 • Honor Choir, Jan. 31

Public Space One

129 E. Washington St., Iowa City

publicspaceone.wordpress.com/

Liberty Leg (*Little Village Live* broadcast on KRUI), Jan. 26, 5-6 p.m.

Red Cedar Chamber Music

www.redcedar.org

See website for location

Music for Kids, Jan. 10-13 • Music for Seniors, Jan. 15 • Music for Kids, Jan. 19

Riverside Casino

3184 Highway 22, Riverside

www.riversidecasinoandresort.com

.38 Special, Jan. 29, 8pm

Uptown Bill's

401 South Gilbert Street

<http://www.uptownbills.org>

Live with Dustin Busch, Jan. 8, 7pm

White Lightning Warehouse

www.myspace.com/whitelightingic

Check website for events TBA

Yacht Club

13 S. Linn St., Iowa City

www.iowacityyachtclub.org

Shows at 9 p.m. unless otherwise noted

The Velcro Lewis Group with Mondo Drag and Alex Body, Jan. 6 • The Trollies, Jan. 8, 10 p.m. • Goodbyehome with Skye Carrasco, Jan. 13, 10 p.m. • Rubblebucket, Jan. 14 • Mad Monks CD Release Party, Jan. 15 • Messy Jiverson, Jan. 20, 10 p.m. • 8th Anniversary Party featuring Dead Larry, Lick it Ticket, Amanda Miller & The Super Secrets,

A-List



8th Anniversary Party

Jan. 22, 3pm

Iowa City Yacht Club

13 S. Linn Street

All Ages until 10pm, 19+ until midnight, 21+ after midnight

If you like "surfing" the "internet," or if you like live music, then you have probably discovered that one of the busiest online concert calendars in Iowa City is hosted over at iowacityyachtclub.org.

The ".org" is appropriate for the "ICYC" website because they endeavor to exist more as a community than as a business. From their homepage:

"If at the end of the night we break even but the band was great and you had a ton of fun, then we consider that a win. This has been our mission since the day we first opened and we still consider this our goal in life to this day."

This January, the Yacht Club celebrates eight years of great parties by offering eight of Iowa City's finest local bands at the itsy bitsy price of... \$8!

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Thanks for the memories, ICYC, and here's to many more.

The music starts early and will include:

Dead Larry • Lick it Ticket • Amanda Miller & The Super Secrets • Bermuda Report • Porch Builder • Item 9 & The Mad Hatters • Chasing Shade • River Glen

Calendar

Bermuda Report, Porch Builder, Item 9 & The Mad Hatters, Chasing Shade and River Glen, Jan. 22, 3 p.m. • The Malah, Jan. 26, 10 p.m. • The Sweeps with Mitch Mead and Red Lining Aspects, Jan. 27, 10 p.m. • Henhouse Prowlers with Smokin' Joe Scarpellino & Friends, Jan. 28 • 5 in a Hand with The Magnetos and White Tornado, Jan. 29

THEATER/DANCE/PERFORMANCE

Englert

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.englert.org

My Fair Lady: In Concert, Jan. 7-8, 7:30 p.m. • La Traviata, Jan. 27-30

Hancher Auditorium

www.hancher.uiowa.edu

See website for temporary locations

Events resume Feb. 8

Old Capitol City Roller Girls

Coralville Marriott

www.oldcapitolcityrollergirls.com

Check website for times and locations

Mixer bout with the Quad City Rollers, Jan. 8

Penguin's Comedy Club

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

www.penguinscomedyclub.com

Check website for showtimes and locations

Chris "Boom Boom" Johnson, Jan. 7-8 • Kevin Heffernan and Steve Lemme of Broken Lizard, Jan. 13-15 • Tom Clark, Jan. 14-15 • Mike Armstrong, Jan. 21-22 • Chinaman, Jan. 28-29

Performing Arts at Iowa

<http://performingarts.uiowa.edu/>

See website for times and locations

Tattoo Girl by Naomi Iizuka, Jan. 27-29

Theatre Cedar Rapids

4444 1st Ave NE, Cedar Rapids

www.theatreocr.org

Crimes of the Heart, opens Jan. 28

WORDS

Prairie Lights

15 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City

www.prairielight.com

Readings are at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted

See website for TBA Live from Prairie Lights readings



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iowacityyachtclub.org

FRI 1.14 Rubblebucket

SAT 1.15 Mad Monks CD Release

THU 1.20 Messy Jiverson

FRI 1.21 Useful Jenkins +
Evergreen Grass Band

SAT 1.22 8th Anniversary Party
Dead Larry + Lick It Ticket +
Amanda Miller & The Super Secrets +
Bermuda Report + Porch Builder +
Item 9 + Chasing Shade + River Glen

THU 1.27 The Sweeps + Mitch Mead +
Red Lining Aspects

FRI 1.28 Henhouse Prowlers

FRI 2.04 Bob Marley Birthday Bash

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www.uiowa.edu/~bijou/

Jan. 2011 showtimes are TBA, check website for details

KIDS

African American Historical Museum and Cultural Center of Iowa

55 12th Ave SE, Cedar Rapids

www.blackiowa.org

See website for times and locations

Storytime: George Washington Carver, Jan. 12 •

Proper Preservation: Childhood Memories, Jan. 22

• Scout Workshop, Jan. 22

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids

www.crma.org

Taking Wing: Children's Book Illustrations of Birds,

Bats, and Flying Bugs from the CRPL, Ongoing

• Doodlebugs Preschool Program at the Cedar

Rapids Public Library-Chomper Pop-Ups, Jan. 7,

10:30 a.m. • SmArt Saturdays, Jan. 8, 10:30 a.m. •

Junior Docent Training, Jan. 17, 1 p.m. • Pop-Up

Extravaganza! Family Fun Day, Jan. 22, 11 a.m. •

Very Merry Un-Birthday Party for Lewis Carroll,

Jan. 27, 5:30 p.m. • Doodlebugs Preschool Program

at the Hiawatha Public Library: Pop-Downs,

Jan. 28, 10:30 a.m.

Iowa City Public Library

123 South Linn St. Iowa City

www.icpl.org

Storytime at 10:30 Mon-Sat, 2 p.m. Sun

MISC

African American Historical Museum and Cultural Center of Iowa

55 12th Ave SE, Cedar Rapids

www.blackiowa.org

See website for times and locations

Martin Luther King Day Celebrations, Jan. 17 •

Iowa Civil Rights Talk, Jan. 21

Amana Heritage Museum

705 44th Ave, Village of Amana

www.amanaheritage.org

Check website for January events TBA

Brucemore

2160 Linden Drive SE, Cedar Rapids

www.brucemore.org

A Modern Salon at Brucemore, Jan. 14-15, 21-22,

28-29, 7:30pm

Cedar Rapids Ice Arena

1100 Rockford Road SW, Cedar Rapids

War on Ice, Jan. 14-15, 7:30pm

Englert

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.englert.org

The ICCA Innovative Excellence Honors, Jan. 31,

6:30pm

Green Drinks

www.greendrinks.org/IA/IowaCity

See website for location and details

Informal gathering every second Thursday of the month

Red Avocado Meetup, Jan. 13, 5:30pm

Old Capitol Museum

Pentacrest, Iowa City

www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap

See website for locations

Closed thru Jan. 17



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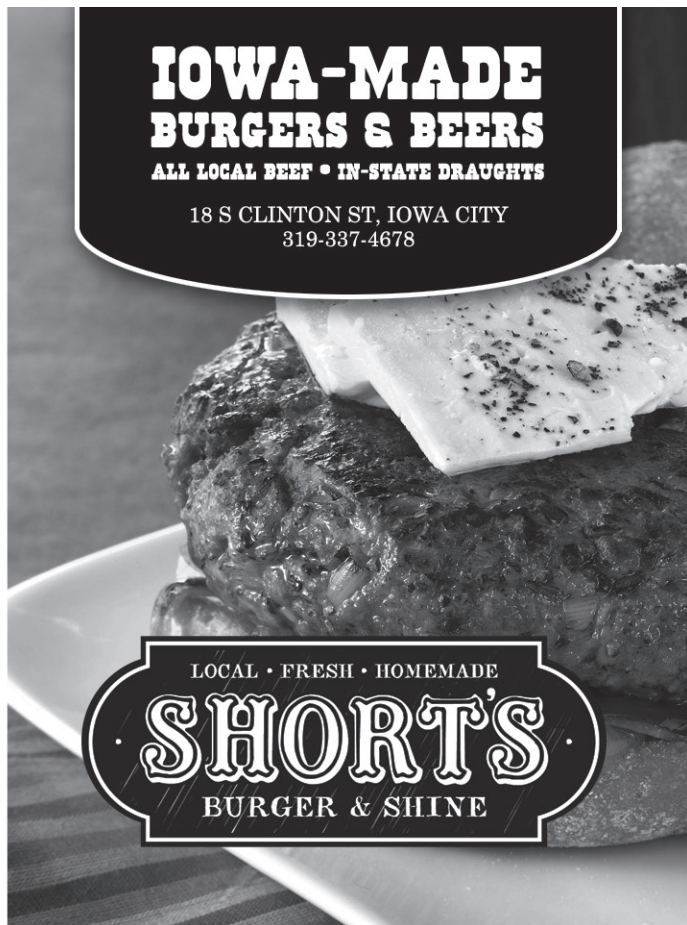
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Curses, Foiled Again

- Shortly after receiving a call about a robbery, Ottawa police said they got a second call reporting a stabbing. Responding officers found a man in his 20s outside a store that they suspect he robbed before tripping on his way out and stabbing himself with the knife used in the robbery. (CBC News)
- A man who tried to hold up a doughnut shop with a knife stabbed himself while committing the crime, according to Vancouver police. Constable Jana McGuinness said the 22-year-old suspect man was so drunk that he fell down, landing on the butcher knife he was wielding and stabbing himself in the abdomen. Officers found the suspect slumped on the floor, took him to the hospital to treat his wound and then arrested him. (CBC News)
- Darrell Fudge, 54, relied on his global positioning system to get him from British Columbia to his home in Newfoundland, but the GPS's shortest route led through northern Maine. When he arrived at a remote U.S. border crossing, agents searched his car and found a half-kilogram of marijuana in a cooler. (Lewiston, Maine's The Sun Journal)

Born to Be Wild

New York state officials announced plans to implement an emergency birth-control program because a flock of wild turkeys, estimated at 72 birds, won't stop pestering families living in Staten Island's Ocean Breeze section. "It's frustrating," said Christopher Decicco, speaking for Councilman James Oddo, who represents the area. "We want to do something for the residents in Ocean Breeze who keep calling and complaining their houses are surrounded by wild turkeys." Oddo recently suggested birth control for pigeons nesting at the Staten Island Ferry but denied he is anti-bird. "I have nothing against fowl," he said. "I have nothing against birds."

Even though the New York City Parks and Recreation Department said that wild turkeys citywide have gone from near extinction in the 1950s to 65,000 in the 1990s, it's illegal to hunt them. Instead, the state Department of Environmental Conservation said its program would coat the turkeys' eggs with vegetable oil during the breeding season to prevent them from hatching. (Staten Island's The Epoch Times and SILive.com)

Mensa Reject of the Week

German authorities reported that a 64-year-old man in Gumperda tried to seal off the entrance to his cellar with bricks but trapped himself inside. He didn't realize his mistake until he'd finished the work, then waited a few days to see if anyone would rescue him before deciding to free himself by knocking down a wall. Neighbors who heard drilling noise called police, who were waiting for the man. A police official noted that instead of escaping through the wall he'd just built, the senior citizen demolished a neighbor's wall. (Reuters)

Second-Chance Follies

Britain's National Health Service is so short of organ donations that transplant patients are being given the lungs of chain smokers. "In an ideal world, you would rather have lungs from 20-year-old healthy people, who have never smoked," said James Neuberger, associate medical director of the NHS Blood and Transplant. "But this isn't a luxury we have." The NHSBT said it's also resorting to transplanting hearts from elderly and obese donors. (Britain's Daily Mail)

Reasonable Explanation

After receiving three anonymous 911 calls reporting a murder and stabbing in Clarksville, Tenn., city police responded with county and state reinforcements, including a K-9 unit and a helicopter, to aid in searching for the victims. After coming up empty-handed, investigators, noting the third call mentioned that Alex Baker killed his girlfriend, traced all three calls to a phone owned by Alex Lee Baker, 20. Baker denied making the calls but under further questioning admitted reporting the false crimes. He explained he was bored and anxious because he hadn't had a cigarette in two days. (Clarksville's The Leaf Chronicle)

Prepositional Justice

John G. Mendez, 45, beat the charge of passing a stopped school bus in Fairfax, Va., because of a missing, two-letter word in the state law. The statute states that a driver is guilty of reckless driving "who fails to stop, approaching from any direction, any school bus which is stopped on any highway," omitting "at" before "any school bus." Lawmakers removed the preposition when they amended the law in 1970. "He can only be guilty if he failed to stop any school bus," Judge Marcus D. Williams said when pronouncing Mendez not guilty. Mendez gave extra credit for finding the loophole to his lawyer, Eric E. Clingan, who said he took

a look at the law, and "it just sort of jumped off the page at me." (The Washington Post)

Slightest Provocation

Police in Safety Harbor, Fla., arrested Joe Harland Capes, 44, after he punched his neighbor, Ronald Richards, during a shoving match that started, according to the arrest report, while the two men were "arguing over Conway Twitty's sexual orientation." The country singer died in 1993. (St. Petersburg Times)

When Guns Are Outlawed

A man wearing a black bandana across his face tried to rob a convenience store in La Mesa, Calif., by threatening the clerk with a glove scrunched up into the shape of a gun. Police said that when the clerk realized it wasn't really a gun, he pulled out a screwdriver and ordered the man to leave. He did. (The San Diego Union-Tribune)

Downsizing

Washington state's Corrections Department said it expects to save \$22,000 a year by providing inmates with shorter socks. (The Seattle Times)

Make and Break

Oklahoma Rep. Terry Harrison was so proud of killing a piebald, white-tailed deer that he summoned the media to boast about his feat. When game warden Shane Fields read about the hunt, he called his friend Harrison and suggested the lawmaker research hunting regulations. Harrison said his heart "just sunk" when he realized he had shot the animal illegally because he didn't have a permit. Facing a \$296 fine, Harrison admitted he should have known better because he helped write some of the state's hunting laws. (The McAlester News-Capital)

Rocket Science

James McGovern, 22, died instantly while mixing rocket fuel in the yard of his home in Kennett, Pa. Fire officials noted that McGovern was a chemical engineer with experience handling volatile materials and a passion for launching high-elevation rockets. "It was his hobby," said A.J. McCarthy, assistant fire chief at Longwood Fire Company, "and he won awards doing it." (Pottstown's The Mercury)

Compiled from mainstream media sources by Roland Sweet. Authentication on demand.

Why can't they make highways last forever?

As one way to alleviate my otherwise simmering rage while crawling along the Eisenhower Expressway these days, I've been trying to figure out why they can't make a highway that lasts forever. Aside from the need to preserve triple-overtime jobs for road construction workers, is there some other (possibly physical) reason why this can't be done?

—Dan Witte, Forest Park, Illinois

Uh, yeah. It's called reality. Eliminate that and you've got the problem licked. Since you seem like the can-do type, Dan, we'll put you in charge of highway maintenance and see how well you manage. Here's a rundown on the challenges you'll face.

Weather. I won't dwell on this, since you're from the Chicago area and thus presumably familiar with the concept. The principal phenomenon of interest is the infamous freeze-thaw cycle: snow falls, melts, seeps into cracks, and freezes again. The pressure of the expanding ice inexorably breaks up the pavement. Another factor is road salt, which can filter down into concrete and corrode the steel rebar within. So if you can do something about winter, half your problems disappear.

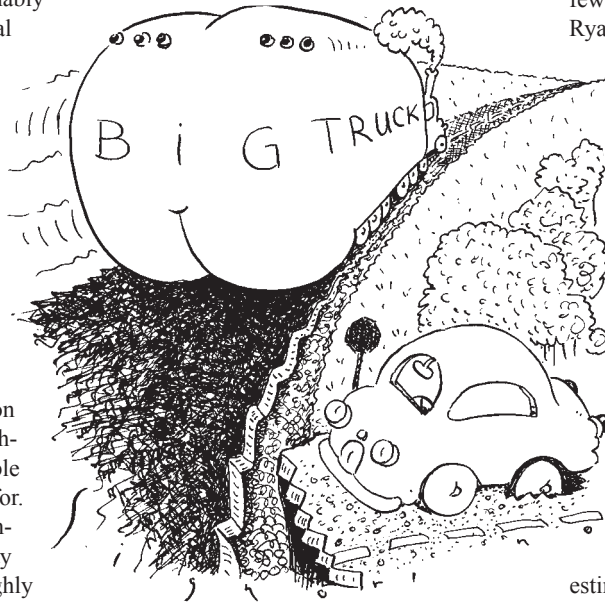
Traffic. Roads would last a lot longer if it weren't for all the vehicles driving on them. It's not uncommon to hear of highways in U.S. urban areas carrying double or more the traffic they were designed for.

Trucks are particularly problematic. The rule of thumb among highway engineers is that road deterioration is roughly proportional to vehicle axle weight to the fourth power. In other words, doubling the weight on an axle increases the wear and tear on the roads by 2⁴, or 16 times. Roads are usually designed assuming that a single axle on a big truck carries a maximum of 18,000 pounds. Compared to a typical car carrying 2,000 pounds per axle, a fully loaded truck stresses the road surface 6,561 times as much. Minor overloading can make a big difference. Exceeding the maximum load by just

10 percent increases road stress by 46 percent—that's why you see all those weigh stations on highways. So the next job on your list, Dan, is dealing with the damn trucks.

Money. Or more precisely, lack of money. Generally speaking, U.S. highways were built on the cheap, meant to last just 20 years. Unfortunately, some parts of the Interstate Highway System are now 50 or more years old. Highways in Europe are built to endure much longer than those in the U.S. For example, the Netherlands expects its roads to last 40 years.

How do they manage it? Although European highway designers use a variety of advanced techniques, two things stand out: thicker, more durable roadbeds and greater reliance on concrete.



This is something that as highway czar you're going to need to know about, Dan, so pay attention. The two main paving materials are concrete and asphalt. Concrete is strong and durable, but building roads out of it is complex, expensive, and slow—you need a lot of rebar, the concrete has to cure, etc. Concrete roads also tend to be noisy, and slick when wet (although that can be remedied), and when they do eventually fail, they're a pain to repair.

Asphalt, by comparison, is cheap, forgiving, and fast. True, it tends to fall apart quickly, but you can easily patch it till things have really gone to the dogs, at which point you just resurface the whole road. You can spread and roll the paving in the morning and drive on it in the afternoon, minimizing complaints by impatient motorists. The drawback is that you have to do this every few years, leaving everybody cumulatively more pissed off.

Don't get me wrong. You can make long-lasting roads using asphalt; in fact some modern highways use a combination of asphalt and concrete to get the best of both worlds. But there's no simple way to do this. You have to rip out the original excuse for a roadway and redo it from scratch.

That's what they did in Chicago a few years ago when rebuilding the Dan Ryan Expressway, a perpetually clogged truck route carrying 300,000 vehicles per day on a road designed for 150,000. The original road typically consisted of 12 inches of aggregate (basically crushed rock), ten inches of concrete, and five inches of asphalt, for a total depth of 27 inches. The new highway has a 24-inch-deep aggregate sub-base, six inches of asphalt, then 14 inches of concrete, for a total of 44 inches.

Good news: it's supposed to last 30 years—some say 40. Bad news: rebuilding 10 miles cost close to \$1 billion. The National Highway System, consisting of all critical U.S. roads, is 160,000 miles long. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that the country's roads and bridges will need \$930 billion worth of work over the next five years, less than half of which is likely to happen. So that's your final challenge, Dan. Once you've got the weather and the trucks under control, you'll have to see if you can make money grow on trees.

—CECIL ADAMS

Send questions to Cecil via straightdope.com or write him c/o Chicago Reader, 11 E. Illinois, Chicago 60611. Subscribe to the *Straight Dope* podcast at the iTunes Store.

ASTROLOGY FORECAST FOR JANUARY 2011

FOR EVERYONE—Starting line. January brings us to the end of the beginning. It is time to actually do some things. New possibilities are definitely coming into view. It won't be easy, though. It will be something of a scramble as people work to get their ducks in a row. However, events, some of them quite unexpected, will take unrealistic options off the table, simplifying our choices. The planets will provide a hearty, extra dose of good luck and a generous serving of helpful coincidences, also. One thing everyone needs to realize, too: these new times require higher personal, professional and ethical standards and a strong service ethic to go along with the work ethic and the profit motive. Genuine cooperation is required. Our dog-eat-dog, anything goes, devil take the hindmost, winner-takes-all days are fast running out.

♈ ARIES—Controlled optimism. You've been dealing willy-nilly with too much change for months. Now, you will begin to see the upside possibilities amidst the chaos. You will also begin to emerge as a key player and a trendsetter, if not a leader. However, to make all this work, you must exercise considerable discipline. Strong motivation is important, but you also need to remain organized. Require discipline of your partners, even if it means that some will bow out. Carefully establish good working relations with authority figures. Luck will lend a hand.

♉ TAURUS—Steady the course. Your attention is on greener pastures. There definitely are promising things developing. It's kind of disappointing, then, that work and health considerations are pinning you down. Things aren't really satisfactory and they seem unlikely to change anytime soon. Realistically, though, all those attractive opportunities just aren't ready to bear fruit. The stars suggest that you tough it out where you are, but stay informed about these developing opportunities. Right now, they'd cause more grief than they're actually worth. When it's time to make a move, you'll know.

♊ GEMINI—Fancy footwork. You need to update your network. It could be hard to strike the note needed to motivate others. You need to be steadfastly realistic *and* optimistic while others swing frequently between optimism and pessimism. You also have to keep the conversation fresh when others stubbornly seek the security of old, familiar patterns. You can take your cue from higher ups, who are in surprisingly good touch with the process of change. Unexpected events will help by removing unrealistic options. Count on lady luck for an occasional assist, too.

♋ CANCER—Parting of the ways. Friction has been building in key relationships for some time. The friction has been compounded by financial and professional issues. You've done your best to avoid drama and hold things together. Now, a break seems almost inevitable. Financial pressures are pretty much forcing everyone's hand. People need solutions. Opportunities are beginning to emerge. But to pursue these opportunities, people will need to go their separate way. Things might seem a little too frantic as these changes begin to go down, but luck will lend a hand.

♌ LEO—Purity of heart. Your own material success, and that of many others, depends on you. People you work with need to cooperate. Things could simply fail without it. You need to provide new ideas, shift attitudes, calm emotions and overcome habits and ingrained attitudes—all at once—to bring about the needed cooperation. As you make your moves, shun ulterior motives, secret agendas and ethical shortcuts. They will come back to bite you. But you can all count on help from ongoing events and the occasional lucky break.

♍ VIRGO—Straight and narrow. Expectations are clashing with reality. Opportunities are falling short of needs. Delays dampen hope. There's abundant creative potential in all this, however. Virgo is well-placed to develop that potential. You have an unusual degree of leverage over this complicated and fast-changing situation. However, things like personal responsibility, professional and ethical standards are of utmost importance, now. Ignoring them will almost certainly backfire. Daydreams and unconventional people can be inspiring but they can also mislead. Check your facts. Don't get carried away.

♎ LIBRA—Teachable moments. Things aren't coming together. People need greater understanding of their situation and they'll listen to you. But what you have to tell them might be met with disbelief. Dog-eat-dog competitiveness and/or narrow self-interest won't work anymore. Soon, rising above narrow self-interest and working cooperatively for the greater good will be absolute pre-requisites for success. You need to explain why this is so. Once you've convinced people, they'll need help figuring out how to apply these ideals. Your own well-being depends heavily on making others understand all this.

♏ SCORPIO—Provide the missing ingredients. Many people in your life seem to be grinding their gears. There's a lot of energy and lots of ideas, but nobody seems able to get it together. Too many people have too many questions. They also have personal reservations about proceeding. Scorpio, however, seems especially well-suited to define these issues, search out solutions and make the back channel contacts necessary to make things mesh. It's all very complicated. Things are so complicated, you might never get credit, but the help you provide will benefit many.

♐ SAGITTARIUS—Point man. You've learned some difficult and costly lessons about personal responsibility, cooperation, service to others and the importance of high ethical standards. You're also in touch with the leading edge, economically. You see the economic importance of what you've learned. But being responsible and cooperative, serving others and staying ethical aren't things you can do alone. Everybody has to go along. You need to teach others about the importance of these ideals and get people to practice them. Otherwise, nobody will be able to realize the new economic potential.

♑ CAPRICORN—Inspire the troops. Somehow, you've become involved in a complicated financial situation or gained influence in someone else's complicated financial situation. There are no quick fixes on the horizon. Everybody has to keep plugging. However, people are remarkably open to new ideas and show a willingness to change the way they do things. A little encouragement seems to go a long way. Options will soon be dramatically simplified as unrealistic options are taken off the table. Lady luck will lend a hand. Your public image is due for an upgrade.

♒ AQUARIUS—Look inward. Aquarians could find themselves tapping the brakes. Personal momentum is increasing. Your influence is rising. Events are pushing everything in an Aquarius-friendly direction. Things aren't about to slow down, either. You're wondering how to meet everyone's expectations and keep your life on track. Time off for personal renewal, and/or a big attitude update, is in order. In fact, the planets are strongly supporting just such a move. Right now, a little quality downtime would work much better than staying on the job. Coincidences work in your favor.

♓ PISCES—Soft landing. Real world circumstances and changes in your thinking at deep levels are both altering the way you see your future. This will cause bittersweet adjustments in important relationships. The fact that many others are going through similar things will bring some comfort and assistance. Also, your deep, thoughtful insight into other people's situations will be warmly reciprocated. These challenges also come as new and workable solutions to today's problems are coming on-line. Finally, many of the costs and risks will be offset by fortunate coincidences or lucky breaks.

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PUBLIC SPACE ONE