

little village

Iowa City's News & Culture Magazine



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w/ Jon Eric, Natalie Brown

Tue, February 15

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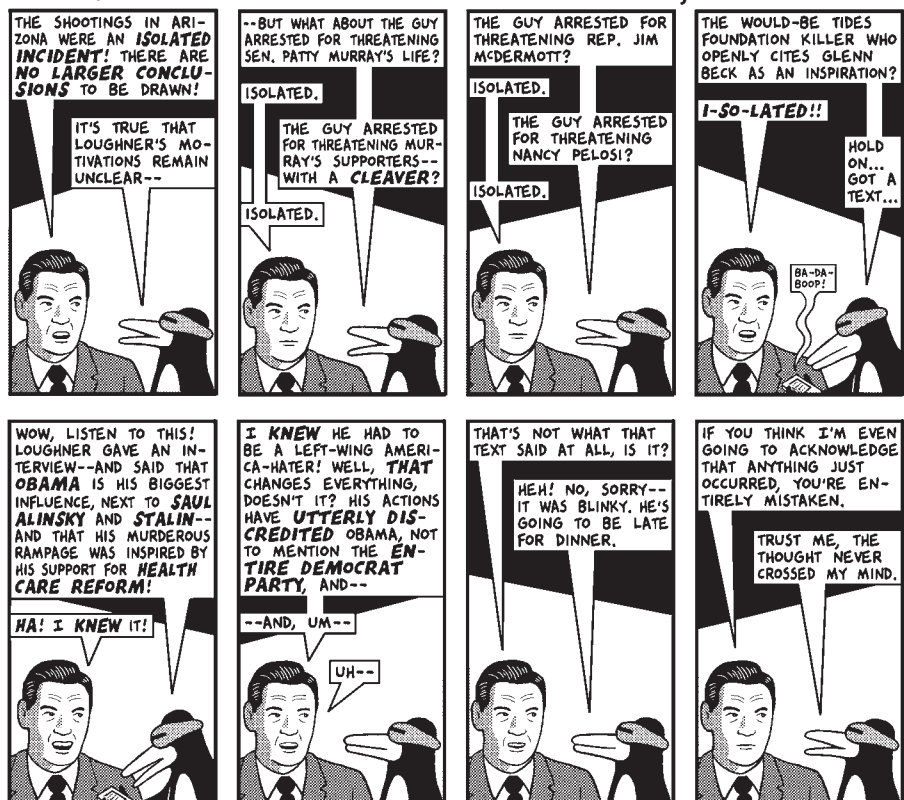
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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



BRIGID SENDS A FLAMING BIRTHDAY POEM TO LITTLE VILLAGE

Congratulations to *Little Village* on its 100th issue!

February is a wonderful month to celebrate this milestone. Here in the middle lands, most people moan and groan about February. Shoveling more snow, chipping more ice, wrapping up for another foray into a sub-zero morning—"Enough!" is the cry heard round the Heartland from Columbus to Wichita, from International Falls to Jefferson City.

We've forgotten what a truly remarkable time of year February is. We associate January with new beginnings—Happy New Year, what's your resolution?—and all that. But February is where it's at when it comes to restoking the fires.

In most ancient traditions, what we call February holds special power. This power derives from the cross-quarter day, halfway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. In February, we draw closer to rather than farther from the return of longer light. The fire returns not only to our skies, but to our arts, to our passions and to our possibilities.

In ancient Celtic culture, the cross-quarter festival is Imbolc, or Imolc, companion to autumn's Samhain. Imbolc itself means "in the belly," and in ancient agrarian cultures

relates to the beginning of sheep's lactation. It is a time when new life begins.

Brigid is the goddess of light to worship now, with her poetry, her healing ways and her smithing in the forge. Fire and purification are the essence of her power, and candles, holy wells and sacred flames are the symbols of reverence to her. In both ancient and Christian traditions, girls

and young women prepare Brigid's bed on St. Brigid's Eve and young men come and pay respect to the doll icon the girls place in it. Our modern celebration of the fires of passion—Valentine's Day—seems to me to follow clearly in the February fires that Brigid represents.

The pagans reinforced Brigid's power to light the fires of spring with the contrasting hope that the hag goddess Cailleach would fail in a similar task. Imbolc is the day Cailleach gathers firewood for the rest of the winter. To give herself plenty of time to gather a lot of wood and thus make the winter last longer, she makes sure the weather is bright and sunny. If she fails and the day is dark and gloomy, she will stay in bed, which means spring must come sooner. Cailleach clearly is grandmother to our groundhog, whose early February cartoon ritual is really about our preparations to light our fires of passion, life and creativity once again.

So what a great month to celebrate one hundred issues of *Little Village*. February is also my anniversary month—I've been writing "UR Here" since February 2002, nine years and counting. I can hardly believe I'm approaching a decade of exploring what it means to live in place—generally, in the Midwest, and here in our beloved (and maddening) Iowa City community.

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ALL My SONS

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Directed by Mark Hunter

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I've seen several editors, a number of columnists and features, and various approaches to this little but spunky and powerful publication come and go. Throughout all its changes, *LV* has maintained its eclecticism, its attitude, its funkiness and its enthusiasm for the cultural life of our "little village" here in Iowa.

While maintaining a consistent character, each new editor has also brought new vision and new energy. So I'd also like to belatedly welcome our new(ish) publisher and managing editor, Matt Steele, to the fold, as well as even newer features editor, Hieu Pham and Art Director Becky Nasadowski. Matt, Hieu and Becky are already making their marks on this publication and, again, February—and issue 100—are excellent times to celebrate the creative new directions with which they're firing up *LV*.

If you're a newcomer to *Little Village* or even a longtime reader, you may not appreciate how its influence in our community has grown. Over the years, *LV* has become not just the small but great

In February, we draw closer to rather than farther from the return of longer light. The fire returns not only to our skies, but to our arts, to our passions and to our possibilities.

little monthly you pick up at the coffee shop or on the street rack at the beginning of the month. It has also become an important cultural force in Iowa City, helping to sponsor, in both big and small ways, the Mission Creek Festival, Summer of the Arts, the Landlocked and Hardacre Film Festivals, the Intimate at the Englert series, the annual What a Load of Craft holiday fair, and much more. *LV* itself has hosted a Best Third Place Contest, an Iowa City Roast, and the new "Hot Tin Roof" creative writing initiative. It has expanded into other media, with a wonderful and extensive website that includes *Little Village Live* and *LVtv* to bring you the sights and sounds—and not just words about—Iowa City's vibrant music scene.

Little Village is central to the "cultural creatives" of this culturally creative city. Although it rarely makes it onto the set list of "Why We Are a UNESCO City of Literature," *LV* deserves to be there. It's February, and Brigid would be proud to celebrate this mag's century mark, and maybe even write a poem or smith something beautiful in her forge for us. Celebrate this special time with us, as *LV* embarks on its second hundred issues of great writing, creativity and cultural influence in this big little village in Iowa. **lv**

Thomas Dean *STILL* can't believe he's entering his tenth year of writing this column.



Congratulations to the writers and artists of *Little Village*. Thank you for all you have given to Iowa City.

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JANUARY

THE MONTH THAT WAS

FOUR WORDS

Worst. Prosecution. Witness. Ever.

PIANO LOUNGE

Chief Revenuer Sam Hargadine wants your tipples served with a chaser of good moral character. In recent months, Hargadine has lobbied for the non-renewal of liquor licenses to several Mike Porter-owned establishments on the grounds that Porter's financial troubles and failure to meet city building codes demonstrated a lack of good moral character. Now, he's after the Piano Lounge.

The Piano Lounge ain't One-Eyed Jake's and Hargadine's beef isn't quite the same, either. It turns out Chad Freeman, who owns 30% of PL, bounced a check in Linn County back in July, and his other business, Freeman Construction, has a long-unpaid landfill fee. The Piano Lounge has had no PAULA citations, no sales-to-minors citations, heck, no "other" citations in the last twelve months, according to Hargadine's memo to City Council. Their record's neat as a pin. Freeman's might be muddier, but here's a suggestion to all involved: take the landfill fees out of the \$700,000 in city contracts Freeman Construction has been recently rewarded and stop pretending that the unrelated legal adventures of a minority owner characterize the establishment as a whole. Or come clean about why the finger's being pointed at this particular bar.

RAPE

On Jan. 18, no Iowa football players were officially accused of rape. That's something to build on.

GUNS

On Jan. 1, Iowa enacted a law requiring sheriffs to issue a handgun permit to anyone not unqualified to receive one. Part of the statute (not titled the We're Really Not Arizona Act) indicates that permits "shall be valid throughout the state except where the possession or carrying of a firearm is prohibited by state or federal law."

This got some of our city's sharper minds—including Iowa City Public Library Director Susan Craig and City Attorney Eleanor Dilkes—to wonder what this meant for the city's property, city hall and the library, for instance. If the state government hasn't outlawed guns from public buildings, does the right to carry firearms extend to city property?

If the state government hasn't outlawed guns from public buildings, does the right to carry firearms extend to city property?

When Craig asked Dilkes for clarification, she got a clear and heartening answer: Iowa City reserves the right to ban firearms from its public buildings, reading the validity clause as requiring only that permits be acknowledged regardless of the Iowa counties in which they were issued. Since the state's attorney general agrees unequivocally, you'll need to leave your pistols with the nearest Ped Mall-trawling teenager when visiting the library. Better yet, leave 'em at home.

NUKES

On Jan. 6, no Iowa football players were officially charged with selling enriched uranium to North Korea. A needed feather in Coach Kirk's quickly thinning cap.

MAKE-BELIEVE IS FUN

Say you're a high-ranking university official. You work closely with students, especially with athletes. Let's call you the Associate Athletic Director for Football Services and Lack of Institutional Control. Better yet, the Associate Athletic Director for Student Services and Compliance. That sounds better.

One Monday, hypothetically, you happen to speak with three student-athletes about an incident. Student C says that he's worried about being named in a sort of rape-thing that he had nothing to do with. Because it involved a female student-athlete who doesn't like him. Student A says that he had sex with the woman,

and that the other didn't. Later, the woman speaks with you. She's already submitted her rape kit, but has requested that the police not be involved.

I know, I know, you can smell the bullshit from here. This is

After all, you've got three young people all but shouting "RAPE!" in your face. You know it, I know it. But in our little story here, which is totally fictional, let's say that you just blur your brain a bit and pretend nothing much is wrong.

serious stuff, demanding a thorough investigation if you're to honor the woman's wishes not to turn it all over to the police. After all, you've got three young people all but shouting "RAPE!" in your face. You know it, I know it. But in our little story here, which is totally fictional, let's say that you just blur your brain a bit and pretend nothing much is wrong.

The next time you talk with Student A, he says that Student C did have sex with the woman. You ask Student A a second time, he says the same thing.

Hold it—no investigation just yet, and no involving the police. Stupid, I know. Downright nasty. But bear with me.

By now, the woman is out of discreet options, and pursues other avenues. She's shocked to discover forensic evidence

**I KNOW, I KNOW, YOU CAN
 SMELL THE BULLSHIT FROM HERE.**

proving that Student C had sex with her that night, just as Student A said he had. She goes to the police.

Two questions:

1) At what point do you say to yourself, "I really should have taken this more seriously. Perhaps the university deserves someone in my position who's not as prone to this sort of vicious callousness?"

2) When Student A cops a deal and testifies during the inevitable trial by claiming to have been asleep during the alleged rape and therefore unable to say whether Student

**AT WHAT POINT DO YOU SAY TO
 YOURSELF, "I REALLY SHOULD HAVE
 TAKEN THIS MORE SERIOUSLY"?**

C had sex that night, who's lying? Who's the perjurer? For all the people who deserve to burn in this whole sad story, beyond even the two *other* high-ranking university officials who've already been fired, who's going to burn for *that*?

BOB

Also in January, Bob Pollard released another great record. Which the entire city council should listen to, along with all residents of Iowa City. Accuse me of shoehornery, but good music is good music.

THREE WORDS

Consent. Is. Sexy. **lv**

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



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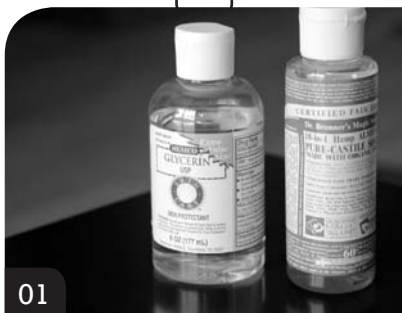
optional: essential oil

Few things are more pampering than unwinding with a hot bubble bath after a chilly day. But, if you're anything like me, lying in a mixture of "cocamidopropyl betaine" and "red #5" sounds anything but relaxing. Despite the daunting ingredient list on your bottle of Mr. Bubble, whipping up a batch of DIY-bubble bath is much easier than you might expect. This simple, eco-friendly bubble bath makes a thoughtful gift for your Valentine, or an even better gift for yourself if you'll be soaking (or sulking) solo.

Castile soap is a mixture of organic oils that gently cleans while producing a rich lather. It smells awesome and, better yet, is completely biodegradable, organic and fair-trade. I recommend Dr. Bronner's Magic Pure Castile Soaps, but any brand will do. You can find these at drug stores, natural food stores, or the organic section of your local grocery store.

Liquid glycerin is a natural by-product of the soap making process, combining water with the fat derived from vegetable oil. It has a wide range of uses, from lotions to household cleaners to candy. Liquid glycerin can be found at most drug stores or in the health and beauty aisle of many grocery stores.

Once you've picked up your supplies, your project is near complete. Simply combine one part castile soap to one part glycerin and stir, adding a few drops of essential oil if you please. Essential oil is not necessary (no pun intended) for your bubble bath, but it can help you create some fun scent pairings. Mix lemon essential oil with mint castile soap for a refreshing scent, or lavender oil with rose



01



03



02



04

Photos by Bill Adams



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soap for a little romance. If you're looking to create a really exotic fragrance, try ordering your soaps and oils from the endless options online. Try youngliving.com for unusual essential oils, including nutmeg, lemongrass and pine.

Time to kick off the month of love right: throw some Barry Manilow on the ipod speakers (or Foreigner's "I Want to Know What Love Is,"

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depending on your situation), pour some of your homemade bubble bath under a running bath and slip into a state of bubbly bliss. **IV**

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

Samuel Smith's Oatmeal Stout

BREW OF THE MONTH: **FEBRUARY**

My original plan for February was to tap into Valentine's Day tradition and recommend a beer reminiscent of the chocolate-covered cherries and dark fruit given to sweethearts across the world. However, the chocolate/fruit brews I sampled were downright awful. So I decided to substitute cherry with caramel.

The coupling of chocolate and caramel not only makes for a delicious candy combination, it provides a perfect malt backbone for many dark ales. This month's recommendation is a testament to that divine union: Samuel Smith's Oatmeal Stout.

When poured into a pint glass, it is a creamy, deep brown color that is leaning toward black. A couple fingers of tanned head develop and dissipate to leave a lacing of thick spots and a ring around the edge.

The aroma is a harmonization of sweet caramel, slightly roasted dark chocolate, oatmeal, brown sugar, black licorice and butterscotch. Though this is obviously much darker, the sweet caramel reminded me of Fuller's London Pride. The oats used in its brewing give the beer a creamy and smooth mouthfeel, and the taste is an enticing blend that mirrors the smell. The roasted dark chocolate is most prominent, and it leaves a nice bitterness; added to that backbone are flavors of oatmeal, brown sugar and butterscotch. The sweet caramel is there, too, keeping the roasted bitterness in check, but it doesn't announce itself as much as it does in the smell.

For brave souls who want chocolate-covered cherries in liquid form, I suggest trying O'Fallon Cherry Chocolate and Bell's Cherry Stout. Both are only winter seasonal offerings, so the local stock may run out soon.

Casey Wagner

BREWER: Samuel Smith Old Brewery of Tadcaster, North Yorkshire, England.

STYLE: Oatmeal Stout.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 5 percent ABV.

FOOD PAIRINGS: The "serving suggestions" from Samuel Smith are "pizza and salad; pasta and other Italian foods; lobster with drawn butter; steak and kidney pie; ploughman's lunch; dark flavoured bread; British and French cheeses."

WHERE TO BUY: John's Grocery, New Pioneer Food Co-op and most area Hy-Vee stores.

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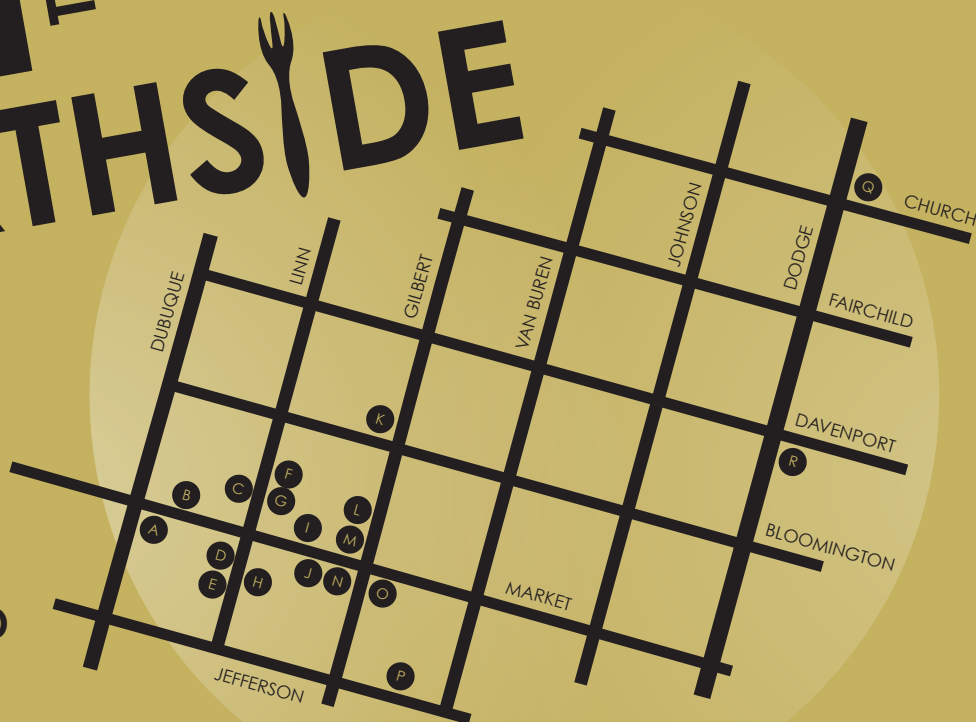
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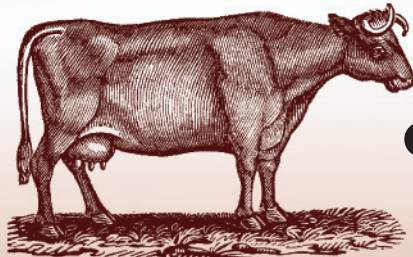


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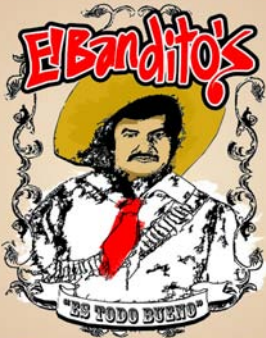
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R

OUR FIRST 10 YEARS

The Honor Roll

Counting to 100 is not just a milestone for a five-year-old learning numbers. We alt-magazine editors and contributors also take pride in counting that high.

We sometimes wondered if our baby would ever make it this far—most small organizations don't survive past three years—so 100 feels like a great time to recognize and celebrate the talent that got us here.

For this alt-literary trip down memory lane, former editor Melody Dworak scoured the archives to select a top story for each year, hoping to honor both the writer and the history this small city has seen. These stories were chosen for their cultural significance—both for their timelessness and for their ability to speak directly to a moment in time.

2010 "Knight Time," March 2010, pp. 12-13, Stephanie Catlett

This profile on J. Knight, open mic coordinator at the Mill, captures the local legend and his steadfast support for the local music scene. Knight has been encouraging new musicians to take the



Iowa City stage since 1981 and Catlett passionately describes the love he brings to his calling.

2009 "Love Songs" cover spread; June 2009; pp. 8-13; Jay Diers, Andrew Sherburne, Paul Sorenson, and Erin Tiesman

Iowa City was finding its feet as the newest UNESCO City of Literature, Eastern Iowa was still feeling the aftermath of the 2008 floods, the Hawkeyes were having their best football season in decades and neighborhood schools dominated local politics.

The June issue stands out for its coverage of a divisive issue: the April ruling by the Iowa Supreme Court that marriage maintained only for heterosexuals is unjust and unequal. That day in April, I walked around beaming—encountering strangers beaming for the same reason. *Iowa was cooler than California.* Unfortunately, the 2010 election taught us that Iowa voters had the same vulnerabilities



to out-of-state money and political interests as those in California.

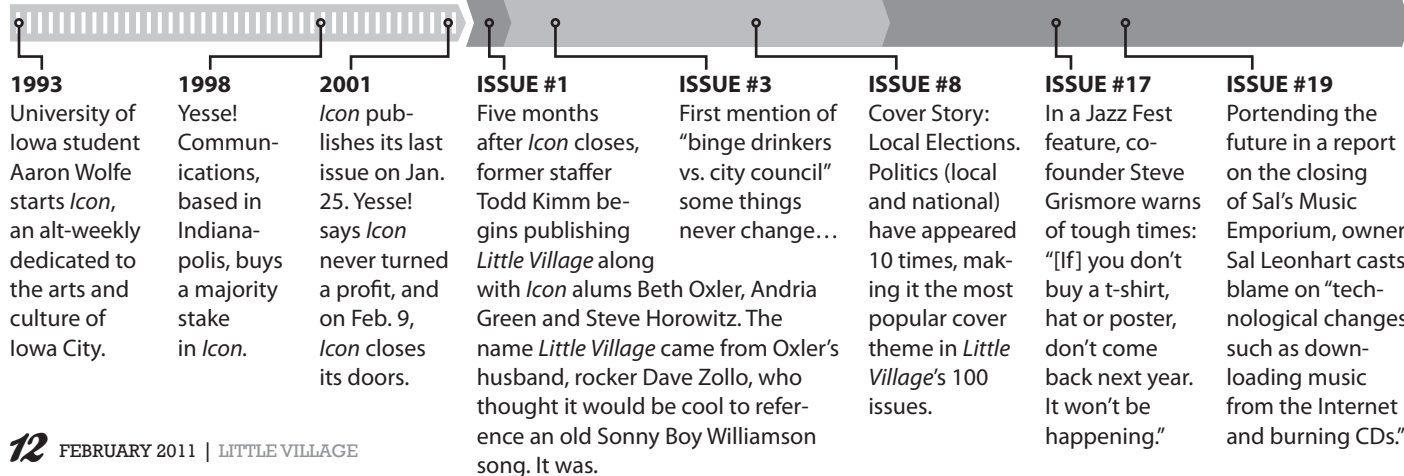
In the "Love Songs" spread, Diers's photography captured the joy and tenderness expressed by those whose love and commitment had just been legalized; Sherburne's chronology of civil rights-granting outlined Iowa's progressive history; and features by Sorenson and Tiesman covered two ordinary issues, faith and wedding planning, from this extra-ordinary angle.

2008 "IA Confidential," parts 1-3, July- September 2008, Adam Witte

Also a year with several well-written, informative and touching features, "IA Confidential" stands out among the 2008 articles as a historical cartoon covering the weird, wild and wacky past of the Iowa City area. With research assistance by Iowa City Public Library Information Services Librarian

Through the Years

How *Little Village* made it to 100.



**Remember these?**

Read the full articles, scanned and archived, at LittleVillageMag.com/bestof

Candice Smith, Witte brought to life mysteries from the 1800s that were both fascinating and entertaining.

2007 "Fear This," July/August 2007, pp. 11-12, Michael Lawrence

If the Aughts were to be described by only one emotion, fear would likely trump hope. In a post-9/11 world undergoing two wars, Virginia Tech shooter Cho Seung-Hui reminded us that April of our own Gang Lu, who in 1991 used a .38 caliber revolver to kill five people before committing suicide as the police arrived. Lawrence, who now lectures at Columbia College of Chicago, discusses fear in Iowa City on both lighthearted and more serious levels. What is it like to flirt with someone only to realize the person is an instructor or student of yours?



IA CONFIDENTIAL
July-September 2008

FEAR THIS July-August 2007

size, everything you
d that someone you
City adds to this the
> between observ-

How safe is it to walk under the downtown balconies on a party night? How justifiable was the university's kick-him-off-campus, publish-his-home-address reaction to a student who came to Macbride Hall wearing a ski mask that April? If you were here in 2007, you might remember the scare from mysterious email threats...you might also remember thinking it bizarre and ridiculous that someone might wear a ski mask for an entire lecture.

2006 "Indie-cent Exposure," March 2006, pp. 12-13, Adam Greenberg

Awwwww, our first story on the Mission Creek Festival. As mentioned in the introduction to this piece, we like it when a good thing keeps going. Too many creative and ambitious ideas die from lack of leadership or sustainability (i.e., funding), and the Iowa City area is truly lucky that the Mission Creek leadership continues to expand its network. In addition to a list of partners, the executive committee members Andre Perry and Craig Eley have pulled the following crew together to rock the 2011 programming, marketing, sponsorship and advising:

snouts from the balconies
take the form of the tired,
construction-worker style
encomia hurled at passing
women, or the cowardly,
tag-bashing flung like feces
by captive monkeys at any
chap who left his XL black
and gold T...



Nathan Gould, A.C. Hawley, Drew Ingersoll, Tanner Illingworth, Brian Johanessen, Todd Olmstead, Pete McCarthy, Joe Tiefenthaler, Chris Wiersema and Mikko Wolf. Big ups to everyone carrying Mission Creek into its sixth year! The childless music lovers (as well as babysitters) in this town thank you.



INDIE-CENT EXPOSURE
March 2006

PASSING THE TORCH Little Village's first publisher, Todd Kimm, hands the magazine off to publisher Alissa Van Winkle and editor Melody Dworak.

RELAUNCH After a six-month hiatus, former designer Andrew Sherburne heads a revival of the magazine.

ISSUE #29

Cover Story:
Celebrating 30 years of Iowa City's ground-breaking Emma Goldman clinic.

ISSUE #30

Thomas Dean profiles the ped-mall statue of an Iowa City legend: "Never got out of town, huh? Must be a loser. But I cant think of anyone who would dare call Irving Weber a 'loser.'"

ISSUE #40

On the eve of the last last call, Noah Seila remembers Mumm's, one of Iowa City's great dive bars: "it's not a place to compose any sort of deep relevant life-affirming crap-it's a bar for scars (good or bad) and the stories behind them."

ISSUE #52

In an article on the Newport Road controversy, farmer Mike Dooley explains the use of Gadsden flags (of "Don't Tread On Me" fame) in his protest of road expansion plans: "We're defending our homes just like the colonial Americans."

ISSUE #54

Little Village creates its first web presence...a MySpace page. Hey, it was cool back then.

ISSUE #57

A reader survey names the Ped Mall "Iowa City's Best Third Place." Rod Sullivan, in his nomination, writes, "[it] is inherently democratic. It is a public place, open to anyone...the air is filled with smells, music and conversations."

ISSUE #69

Little Village unveils a new look, colorful 32-page format, official website and 12-month frequency. Sherburne writes, "A community is a place. It is a people. It is a conversation...with our 69th issue we're rejoining the collective consciousness."

othering-
is at places like Dolls.
Gypsy Doliges, a supporter of
ari. Ruby's was a feminist sex
ch 26, exactly one month after
n't making enough to keep the

act of compassion, giving lonely
on women.
stage, giving "dollar dances" to the

EX
for Iowa City?
is and Ruby's Pearl beg the
a City going out of business?

at its edge. The strippers try to bill these as
high cost more. The really acrobatic dancers
face, landing their knees near a man's ears and
face, bouncing their pelvis up and down.
her a dollar.
ove to the man in the next occupied chair. At
ach their customers, but not vice versa. So, this
ce becoming the meat in a tit-sandwich.

She might breathe heavily in his ear and
and kids.

**IS SEX TOO SEXY
FOR IOWA CITY?**

April 2005

2005 "Is Sex Too Sexy for Iowa City?", April 2005, p. 8-11, Melody Dworak

2005 marked a transition in leadership for *Little Village*. Editor Todd Kimm had passed the red pen to Alissa Van Winkle in the fall and I came on board as her assistant editor. The earlier half of the year was strong in event and music writing, and this article stood out among the pack for its cultural investigation into the dwindling sexuality business in the area. IC Feminist sex shop Ruby's Pearl shuttered its doors within one month of Coralville strip club Dolls, Inc., and the timing forced the questions, How progressive is this area when it comes to sex positive feminism? What are the collective limits?

On a personal note, this was the first piece I published with the magazine, the one that probably changed the next five years for me. The night I saw it in print was the best night

of my undergrad life and I thought back to that every time I would approach a writer about contributing. Being published for the first time feels amazing. I encourage anyone reading this who has that writing craving to give it a shot—no matter how long of a shot it feels like it is.

2004 "Uptown Bill's Small Mall," August 2004, pp. 7-10, Adam Witte

Whatever Uptown Bill's is—business, organization or mission—there will be broken hearts in this town if ever it were to close for real. Moving further south of downtown was worrisome enough when the Gilbert Street staple no longer hung its sign in the window. This profile provides new residents a great introduction to Uptown Bill's and its key players, community leaders and disability rights advocates.

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don't have. A victim
tain injuries for an assault to be considered
forcible, but having medical evidence of

"I felt there were extraordinary pressures being put on her, and that they were not only extraordinary, there was an immediacy about them that I didn't feel had to be there."
-Assistant County Attorney Anne La

force, especially in cases of acquainta
rape, strengthens the case substantially.
victim's medical records indicate that
suffered "tearing and bruising to her vag
her shirt "showed so it was hardly a ma

2003 "Victim of Victim's Rights," May 2003, pp. 8-15, Denise V. Powers

"Will there be a day without rape?" is like asking if there will ever be a day without racism. When a Hawkeye football player can have sex with a potentially unconscious woman, go to court, and only have to serve

up to 30 days in jail, you really have to wonder what parts of the system are failing this woman. (And if he thinks it's okay to have sex with a potentially unconscious woman, chances are the system is failing him, too.)

In 2003, media attention fell on a

Hawkeye basketball player and the sexual assault charges raised against him. Powers bravely describes her own experience with sexual assault and explores the question, "What really is best for the victim?"

2002 "Fight for your Right to Hack," May 2002, pp. 6-9, Michael Conner

Yes, *Little Village* did indeed publish an article about hacking—it wasn't only a big topic in the '90s. Where the current conversation focuses on big business, provider profits, consumer demand and equal access, Connor's article highlighted the fear factor to regulating the internet. To quote Conner, "utopicist hopes for a democracy of information [had] been supplanted by fears of the power of this tool to cause harm." In the post-9/11 world, everything from snail mail to email was considered a cause for concern.

UPTOWN BILL'S SMALL MALL August 2004

For the next eight years, Bill would hold in North Hall, dropping in on the second pre-school for story time and playing the "Polka" on his harmonica, and generally bring the day of everyone he came in contact with.

may keep his folklore electronically alive, but to really win the hearts and minds, here needs to be a human connection, and his worries Walz more than anything.

As downtown property values rise, rents continue to skyrocket, forcing non-profit incturaries for the downtrodden—never model for successful capitalism—to find cheaper accommodations on the outskirts Iowa City. The Community Manual

wed be fine," Walz explains. A few dollars here and there sures the long-term success in ment, but support from the ge has been slow to snowball. In th Walz believed that college stuc come in droves to the Small Mal it is between campus and thous dent apartments. How could it fi

TURNING 100 Matt Steele takes over publishing duties, expands the *Little Village* website and begins periodic 40-page issues.

ISSUE #70

Delayed one week by the flood, *Little Village* still publishes despite the loss of its office space.

ISSUE #77

Celebrating Iowa City's new City of Literature status, *Little Village* dedicates the month to our love of books.

ISSUE #79

The Hip Hop Issue asks: "Is Iowa City homegrown hip hop the victim of the town having too much 'culture' already?"

ISSUE #84

In a special Green Issue, *Little Village* hands out grades on Iowa City's eco record. The verdict? A "B—" cumulative GPA.

ISSUE #90

Little Village celebrates the Iowa City music scene and publishes a first-of-its-kind Mission Creek Festival Guide insert.

ISSUE #95

First 40-page issue includes a profile on local cassette label Night- People, with online mp3 mix-tape companion.

ISSUE #98

Reflecting on why he writes about his time at war, Jesse Albrecht explains: "It helps to throw the memories a bone."

By The Numbers

100

Issues published

2704

Pages of content

316

CDs reviewed

26

Literary feature stories

410

Pages of calendar listings

303

Contributors

10

Years

story

Fight for your right...to

HACK

2001-2010 Honorable HONORABLES

FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHT TO HACK

May 2002

2001 "Iowa's Best Ambassador to the World," July 2001, pp. 10-12, and "Greg's Lean Years," August 1-15, 2001, pp. 10-14, Rick Zollo

Iowa City is no Silicon Valley—we're more of a Creation Prairie, where our business is all forms of the arts, and sometimes our paycheck is love.

Throughout these 100 issues, the focus on art, literature and music has always been at our core. Why? Because we have people like Greg Brown fueling that core. Interviews with "ambassador" Greg Brown are not easy to come by, and in 2001, LV published an interview Zollo conducted with the influential musician. In his responses, Brown describes what it was like to be an "Iowa" musician, storytelling in the "unknown interiors of America." **lv**

Melody Dworak's favorite part of being an LV editor (2005-2010) was learning from contributors. She has grown from each and every experience she has had with them, and has immense appreciation and respect for the talent in this town.

Andrew Sherburne began designing Little Village the month after he moved to town in 2004, and spent the last two years as publisher. He can't think of a better way to get to know a city.



**IOWA'S BEST
AMBASSADOR
IN THE WORLD**
July 2001

of his hiatus are greatly exaggerated. Greg Brown
kick back with Rick Zello and muse about things
with at Hacklebarney to the excitement of Iowa

you're taking this hiatus?
I call it "hums my ass." [Laughs] I had
decided to take this year off. Then I agreed
to do some benefits. And Dave [Brown] invited
me to do some shows. Other

2010

"What Dreams Have Come: The 21st Century (So Far) in Cinema," January 2010, p. 14, Scott Samuelson

"Flooded Expectations"; April 2010; pp. 6-7, 23; Pam White

"Finding Art"; April 2010; pp. 8-13, 16-17; Dawn Fray

2009

"IC + Books 4 EVA" cover spread; February 2009; pp. 10-23; Maggie Anderson, Andrew Sherburne, Paul Sorenson

"Closing Arguments"; May 2009; pp. 10-13, 20; David Henderson

"Green Is Not Just a Color" cover spread; September 2009; pp. 12-21; Maggie Anderson, Lorin Ditzler, Andrew Sherburne, Erin Tiesman, Whitney Warner

"We Are Such Stuff as Dreams Are Made of (We're Also #1)"; November 2009; pp. 8-9, 20-21; Yale Cohn

2008

"Derby Does Iowa," June 2008, pp. 12-14, Kevin Koppes

"Farewell, Mr. Higgins: Remembering Ron Prosser"; July 2008; pp. 4-5, 11; Thomas Dean

"Border Dispute," October 2008, pp. 8-11, Mike Brownlee

2007

"Reel Time" December 2006/January 2007, pp. 16-17, Riva Geller

"Breakin' Up is Hard to Do"; May/June 2007; pp. 10-11, 22; Kristin Hatch

"Fly, Mate and Die" July/August 2007, pp. 13-15, Stephen Schmidt

2006

"Thai Superwoman," May/June 2006, pp. 6-7, Gloria Williams

"Kickin' It for Free," July/August 2006, pp. 4-5, Thomas Dean

"Play It Again," September 2006, p. 10, Doug Roberson

"The Black Angel," October 2006, p. 11, Kristin Hatch

2005

"The Return of Ana Mendieta," May 2005, pp. 10-11, Atom Burke

"Portrait of a town as an old Jukebox"; December 2005/January 2006; pp. 8, 15; Dave Lazzarino

2004

"The Status of Peace," March 2004, pp. 8-10, 16; Jimmy Moore

"Athens, America"; October 2004; pp. 8-10; excerpts from the novel by Larry Baker

2003

"Does Peace Have a Fighting Chance?," March 2003, pp. 8-13, Jimmy Moore

"Emma Goldman Clinic Marks 30 years of Radical Wellness," August 2003, pp. 8-12, Vicki Krajewski

"555 Fun Things To Do," September 2003; pp. 8-15, 22; Adam Witte

2002

"Elegy for the Old Capitol Dome," January 18-31, 2002, Thomas Dean

"I Have an MFA in Poetry, May I Take Your Order?" February 2002, pp. 5-8, Laurel Snyder

"Welcome Back, Students: Does Iowa City hate you?" October 2002, pp. 8-13, 23; Michael Antonucci

2001

"The Final Moments," September 1-15, 2001; pp. 7-11; Adam Witte

"Notes from the Underground," Nov. 1-15, 2001, p. 10, Laura E. Crossett, Bill Ayers reads from his new book *Fugitive Days*

"Why Afghanistan?" December 1-15, 2001, pp. 5-9, Brendan Wolfe



YOU CAN FIND ALL OF THESE ARTICLES ONLINE AT littlevillagemag.com/bestof

> CONTEST OVERVIEW

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

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

> SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Judges will consider creative work in all genres and formats up to 1,000 words. These might include short fiction, short literary nonfiction, poetry, or even two pages of dialogue from a play or scenes from a graphic novel. Work may be pulled from a larger piece, but it will be judged on its ability to stand on its own. We are only interested in work that has not been published elsewhere—in print, online, or otherwise.

The series is designed to highlight new work produced in Iowa City, so entrants must live or work in the Iowa City area at the time of submission. Please include your current address with your submission.

Submit your work to: htr@littlevillagemag.com. Please attach your work as a Word Document, PDF or Rich Text file. Your name and contact information will be removed from your entry and it will be judged anonymously. Judges will be Andre Perry (UI Nonfiction MFA graduate and executive director of the Englert Theatre), Hugh Ferrer (associate director of the UI International Writing Program and board member at Iowa City UNESCO City of Literature) and Matt Steele (publisher and managing editor of *Little Village* magazine).

WWW.LITTLEVILLAGEMAG.COM/HTR

Ranking system: At least two judges will read every submission.

Finalists will be read by all three. Deadline will be the last day of the month,

every month. Work to be featured in January will have been received between November 1st and 30th; author of the work selected will be notified by December 15th.

Work will not be rolled over for consideration in the next month, no matter how highly it was ranked. However, if your piece is not selected, you may resubmit the same piece for consideration in another month, including the following month.

Winners are eligible to enter again only after 12 months have passed since the publication of their work.

Little Village does not publish in July. Work submitted between May 1st and June 30th will be considered for August publication.

> RIGHTS

Submitted work must be the intellectual property of the entrant only.

For all published pieces we buy first North American serial rights for the print magazine and first worldwide serial rights for our website. All subsequent rights revert back to the author.

The "(Great) Shit Happens" Clause: If it is absolutely impossible to choose between two pieces, and the cumulative word count is less than 1,001, we might ask you to accept a tie and split the reward.

Submit your piece now to htr@littlevillagemag.com

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\$100
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CURRENT LITERARY WORK
PRODUCED IN IOWA CITY**

Englert



m.c. ginsberg

little village
Iowa City's News & Culture Magazine

EXCERPT FROM

The Fourteenth Colony: A Novel

Around one, I heard the car pull in the driveway, the front door open, uneven footsteps across the floor. The radio came on, blasting out the Top 40 station.

I pulled the covers up to my ears. I could tell she was really drunk by how many times she stumbled into furniture and cursed. I curled into a ball. She ran into every object in the house on her way to the bedroom. Maybe she would just pass out. . . . No. She thumped around the bedroom, still talking to herself. She made her way into the kitchen. The refrigerator opened, closed, and then she opened and closed it again. *Just steer yourself to bed*, I said to myself.

The basement door opened and from where I lay in bed I saw her bare feet and legs begin their descent.

"I want a hotdog," she said in a sing-songy voice, like she was cheering for the home team at a football game. I played possum, eyes half-closed.

"I wanna hotdog, Hidey-Ho!"

She said it louder this time. When I didn't respond she kept saying it, stumbling down a step or two each time. At first, I saw her bare legs and thought she was in the baggy old T-shirt she wore as a nightie. But as she chanted her mantra, first her calves, then thighs, bare hips, waist, and finally breasts, pendulous and dangling, descended into the basement.

At the bottom she said, "I want a hotdog, Hi-dee-Ho!"

I didn't respond.

"You fucker, I want a hotdog."

"Go to bed, Mom."

"Don't tell me what the hell to do. I want a hotdog."

I couldn't look at her.

"We don't have any hotdogs," I said.

"Don't tell me that." She was breathing hard, and her speech was thick, like she was talking through two fat lips.

"Where's Stan?" I asked.

"I need a hotdog," she said quietly. She had started to cry.

She sat down hard on the steps, put her head between her knees, and threw up. Spit trailed from her lips.

"Why doesn't anyone want to love me?" she said.

"Why doesn't anyone want to love me?"



SHE SAID.

She lifted her hair above her head with one hand and wiped her mouth with the other. She had vomit running down the inside of her shins. It was all I could do to keep from puking myself.

When I was little, maybe five or six, she had a hysterectomy. I didn't know what that was, but knew it wasn't good. She came home from the hospital on a Friday afternoon. The next Monday she still couldn't get out of bed. I was late for school, Dad was already gone to work. I was standing by her bed, wondering what I should do, when she said, "Go into the living room and bring back your shoes." Her voice was weak, as it had been when she told me I would never have a brother or a sister, and

I was too scared to ask why. I sat on the floor beside the bed, and she talked me through tying my shoes—bow, loop, pull through; over and over she said it. I forgot about school. It took me a long time to get it, but finally I did. She smiled at me when I was finished.

"You're such a big boy," she said. "I'm sorry you had to learn to do it this way. I am sorry. But I'm so proud of you."

It was the tenderest moment I can remember between us.

"I love you, Mom," I said, getting out of bed. I said it again as I made my way around the vomit at the bottom of the stairs. I lifted her by her armpits and guided her up the stairs to the bathtub where I rinsed her and pressed chunks down the drain with my fingertips. The smell of vomit mixed badly with the honeysuckle bath wash: more than once, I bent over the toilet, thinking I was going to be sick, but nothing came up.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry."

Her body was still damp when I tucked her into bed. Beneath her grogginess, she looked miserable and scared, but I forced myself to remember the way her face looked that day she taught me to tie my shoes.

She said, "I want a hotdog," one more time before she drifted off to sleep. I watched her face go slack, all the tension released. **IV**

Jason T. Lewis is a graduate of the fiction program at the Iowa Writers' Workshop. He's the singer and songwriter of Sad Iron Music. The Fourteenth Colony is his first novel. He lives in Iowa City with his wife and daughter.

The Simple Truth of Dr. Star

SEEING STARS
Dr. Star charts IC

I have a dodgy relationship with astrology. I was introduced to metaphysics via backwater superstition. My parents believed that one of their son's eyes wandered because he had been "imprinted" in my mother's womb when she was startled in a stairwell by their cross-eyed landlord early in her pregnancy.

Astrology was fortunetelling, designed primarily to divine the date and method of one's tragic early death. We feared the future. We feared change. "Ignorance," my mother would fondly say, "is Bliss."

I wisely left that home at 15, but my metaphysical wariness clung to me like the spray of a skunk. Yet, each month I open my copy of *Little Village* from the back page, where Dr. Star lives. His work has served me well for years.

I'd considered that Dr. Star was a syndicated entity, like Mr. Food on the noon news, with a regional—if not national—market, designed to appear locally-produced, whether in California, Maine or Iowa.

But Dr. Star is no Mr. Food. He's our neighbor, having moved to Iowa City in 1982. He holds a degree in Religious Studies and a doctorate in History. His work is elegant: no mugging for a camera. His intentions, I can assure you, are not to gain money and fame. His work is a practical manifestation of altruism, infused with kindness.

Dr. Star has kind eyes.

"You know," he says, "this might seem corny, but doing the Dr. Star column every month is a labor of love for me."

I felt honored and skittish when Dr. Star agreed to answer a few of my questions for *Little Village*.

LITTLE VILLAGE: Tell me, Dr. Star, about the process of your work.

DR. STAR: I come at it from a practical angle. I just do it.

I use several different kinds of astrological techniques to come up with my forecasts and I vary my methods from time to time to keep my approach fresh. I also push my own limits so that each week I try to be just a little bit more specific, a little more detailed, a little more on target. I don't do this by rote.

One caveat. This is the Midwest and I learned a long time ago that Midwesterners are partial to facts and logical arguments.

I also try to do some reality checking. I know a number of people belonging to each Sun sign and before I finalize my forecasts, I do a mental check against the life of someone from that Sun sign to make sure it makes sense. I try to keep it upbeat, but I also like to keep it real.

One caveat. This is the Midwest and I learned a long time ago that Midwesterners are partial to facts and logical arguments and reality-based stuff generally, so I try to respect that. I've also lived in Iowa long enough to have come to share that preference.

Those intuitive, touchy-feely sorts of sources are all over the map and when you depend on them, things can quickly get out of hand. Astrology provides a stable, holistic frame of reference and helps keep things in perspective. I depend on it because of that. It allows me to use my intuition and draw on my more visionary side, but it puts information from these sources into perspective and keeps the inquiry on track.

Astrology is a framework of symbols, really, and those symbols can accommodate input from any field of study or life experience out there, from economics to psychology and medicine.

It is a delicate and carefully maintained inner dialogue between empirical observation, reasoned thought, astrological methodology and intuitive, visionary sources.

That's one of the virtues of astrology. It supports the simultaneous, interactive, intersecting use of all the faculties available to us, ranging from the most mundane through the highest intuitive and visionary.

So while you're staring at an astrology chart, your brain is furiously sorting through all its real-world knowledge, its astrological knowledge, your feelings, a blizzard of intuitive inputs and the occasional visionary overlay. And then you are trying to do

justice to this little mindstorm in a ninety-word forecast, all the while keeping it interesting and intelligible to the average reader.

Cognitively, it is a real workout.

LV: Dr. Star, what do you think about the proposal to reconfigure the astrological calendar from a twelve-month to a thirteen-month construct? Will you alter your charts?

It is a delicate and carefully maintained inner dialogue between empirical observation, reasoned thought, astrological methodology and intuitive, visionary sources.

DS: The astrological system used in the West today, tropical astrology, is an extraordinarily complex and sophisticated artificial construct that has evolved over time, incorporating new discoveries as they came along. The tropical system has a highly conditional relationship to the astronomical facts, and for reasons you would probably find compelling if you were presented with them.

When they talk about coming up with a new system of astrology, it's like saying, Oh, gee, by the way, I have nothing to do today, why don't I just rethink Newtonian physics; maybe I could derive an alternative version of quantum physics. Are you free tomorrow? How about reworking the principles of mathematics? Give me a break.

The key fact is this: your Sun sign is not based directly on the real position of the Sun at the time of your birth. Your Sun sign depends on where your Sun shows up in the system of astrology you are using.

As long as you are using tropical astrology, you are still an Aries or a Pisces, etc.

So people can relax on that score.



Photos by Dawn Frary

LV: What is your forecast for Iowa, Dr. Star?

DS: Iowa (a Capricorn state) is in the midst of a potent and enduring transformation. In the next decade, Iowa will re-invent itself completely. It will also take an increasingly prominent role in national events. Former governor Tom Vilsack's move to the DC stage as agricultural Secretary is not a flash in the pan; it's a sign of things to come. Have to say, though, the kind of transformation

we're talking about can be kind of rough in places.

Iowa City is also embarking on a major new cycle of growth and expansion. [It's] beginning to shake off a kind of self-absorptive trance that has enveloped it for the last decade or so. You will soon see Iowa City come to life and confront the future with a vigor that will stun naysayers.

When they talk about coming up with a new system of astrology, it's like saying, Oh, gee, by the way, I have nothing to do today, why don't I just rethink Newtonian physics.

The UI (a Pisces) is presently experiencing a surge of creative forces comparable to those that brought it into being in 1847. The UI is just beginning a transformation that will take it to the next level as a university, the next level and beyond. The UI will surprise even its most ardent supporters.

Sorry to disappoint the pessimists.

LV: Gentle Dr. Star, with great trepidation I ask you to address the Big Mayan Elephant in my metaphysical living room: 2012.

DS: Well, you know, I pooh-poohed that issue for many years. Then one day, I sat down and cast a chart for it. The popularly given

DR. STAR continued on page 20 >>

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WEEKEND OF LOVE
FEBRUARY 12-14

LEAF KITCHEN

SATURDAY
"SINGLE AND LOOKING TO MINGLE"
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DR. STAR

>> DR. STAR continued from 19

date for the end of the Mayan Calendar is, actually, one of the most astonishing charts I have ever seen. I do think that the date marks a big historical turning point. I think the problem is that the run up and the aftermath will be so thick with events that the day itself will probably get lost in the great wash of events.

You see what is happening in the world today; it's like that phrase from *Alice in Wonderland*, everyday, it's six more impossible things before breakfast. My belief is that the intensity and the pace of changeable events will increase continuously until December 21, 2012.

So, to be painfully and maybe embarrassingly honest, I am expecting the world to change forever and for the better in 2012 and in the years afterward.

But be advised, historical change of the magnitude we are talking about, even good historical change, can be a very messy business.

However, I don't see 2012 in an "end times" context, at all. To me, it looks like an absolutely huge and irreversible, historically transformative turning point. It will probably only be in retrospect that historians could look back and say that that date was the peak day.

So, to be painfully and maybe embarrassingly honest, I am expecting the world to change forever and for the better in 2012 and in the years afterward. To my eye, the astrological chart for that date is unequivocal on that point and I have been doing astrology too long not to take that very seriously.

LV: Tell me, Dr. Star, what else you have to say.

DS: I consider it a great privilege to be able to put my thoughts out there for everyone every month.

And that's the simple truth of the matter. **lv**

Michael Sinclair is writing his book in Sutcliffe, Iowa.

Steve Carell's decision to leave *The Office* in April, after seven marginally-rated but well-Tivoed seasons, has surprised the entertainment industry. Its producer, Paul Lieberstein, hopes that the show will continue even after Carell graduates to the full-time big screen roles, but I'd rather see it pink-slipped, and not because it's outlived its creative potential or degraded its TV legacy.

Monday-night Nielsen gravy train running?

Created by multi-millionaire college dropout Chuck Lorre, Sheen carries the show with the charm of a guy who is better than you and knows it. *Two And A Half Men* scores with every obvious punchline and second-hand two-act machination. It gets big ratings, makes big money and it's funny because it's *fun*.

Sheen's character, Charlie Harper, doesn't pretend to be someone he's not and he could care less if "nice" people like him. He goes through life without imposing moral judgments on others or subscribing to any himself. His sitcom glorifies the lifestyle of a high-earning bachelor at the comedic expense of his uptight chiropractor brother. It's a loud, garish, lowbrow, punk rock Republican repudiation of middle-class, self-effacing humility.

The Office, meanwhile, is written from the perspective of Jim Halpert (John Krasinski), a workaday Everyman, married to a sweet local girl, grinding out a sales job in his hometown and raising a family in his childhood home. He gives the show's faux-documentary cameras a knowing wink at appropriate intervals, when one of his more interesting co-workers exhibits eccentricity or ambition.

Verite-Lite camerawork can't distract from what *The Office* fundamentally is: a 22-minute ode to smug, bourgeois self-satisfaction.

Considering that *The Office* cast and crew read like a Who's-Who of effective Gen-Y personalities (most of the cast members are distinguished improv-comedy veterans or Ivy League graduates who log double-duty on the writing staff), the show's thematic viewpoint rings false. B.J. Novak, for instance, leapt from middle-class Newton, Mass. to *The Harvard*

Lampoon and a high six-figure Hollywood income. Now, as "Ryan," he's a swaggering asshole jester,

THE OFFICE CAST AND CREW READ LIKE A WHO'S-WHO OF EFFECTIVE GEN-Y PERSONALITIES.

selling out every like-minded nerd who ever felt bad because he couldn't just suck it up and sigh his way onto the honor roll.

That *Men* counts fifteen million viewers to *The Office*'s seven and a half has long agitated critics. They cite this viewership disparity as yet another harbinger of the decline of public taste. Maybe they're right. But maybe, instead, it indicates what television executives have long understood, and what critics fail to grasp:

TV viewers don't like to be judged, and the 21st-century American consumer is becoming increasingly odd, often sharing the ambitions, vanities and eccentric behaviors that *Two and*

a Half Men so sloppily congratulates.

The Office, by contrast, boasts a sharply-written, well-structured narrative universe in which middle-class caricatures smirk at each other for getting out of line. The status quo reigns supreme and the normal guy gets the girl. It is a smart kid's labored reconstruction of the way they think we live and a misguided testament to the humbler-than-thou virtues we supposedly espouse.

With network's two biggest sitcom stars gravitating away from the small screen, it might be appropriate to label this a benchmark phase in sitcom history last rivaled by the mid-2000's, when *Everybody Loves Raymond*, *Friends*, *Frasier*, and *Drew Carey* all simultaneously closed the book on sitcom's Golden Age. But, in considering the departure of Carell and the possible axing of Sheen, I can only bring myself to care about the latter. **IV**

Patrick Howley is a UI English major.

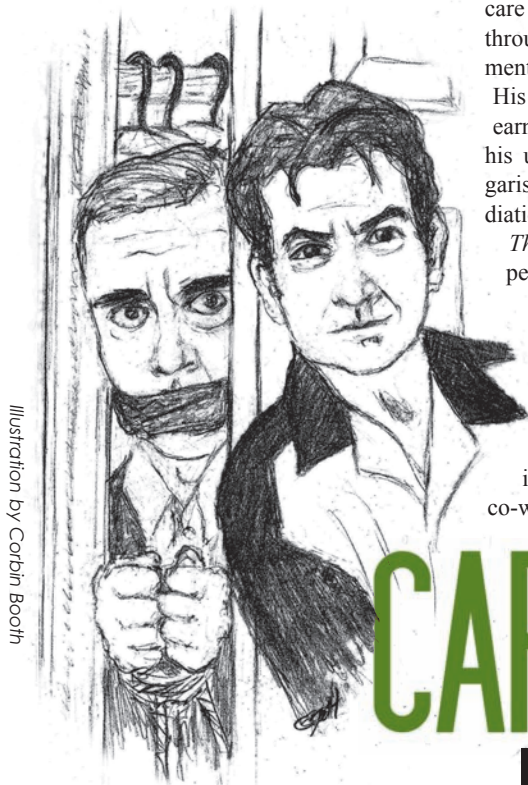


Illustration by Corbin Booth

CARELL VS. SHEEN

WHO WILL SITCOM-LAND MISS THE MOST?

In truth, *The Office* was never that creative. A remake of the BBC's unsparing and morally complex original, its American version feels defanged by comparison. Despite garnering awards for its writing and acting, it reeks of the supposed middle-class values that the Sitcom was engineered to reinforce. For example, characters on the show repeatedly and unrealistically turn down big-time job offers because *they're happy where they are*.

Carell has for several years been a perennial nominee and occasional winner at the Emmy awards. Each year, though, I'm rooting instead for Charlie Sheen of *The Office*'s funnier and more refreshing hit-sitcom contemporary, *Two and a Half Men*.

Now suffering the consequences of a turbulent personal life, Sheen, like Carell, finds his future in Sitcom-Land in question. *Men* producers are fighting tooth and nail to defend him, but Sheen still has media insiders speculating: Will he get fired or walk away from his million-dollar-a-week gig? Or will CBS executives stand behind him and keep their

Eighteen to 49-year old viewers get the hint and they, in turn, get to smirk at the oddballs right along with him.

In fashioning Halpert as the show's self-comfortable protagonist and vilifying the upward mobility of corporate climber "Ryan Howard"

(B.J. Novak), *Office* writers draw for the series a clear ethical viewpoint. Frustrated, talented young urban professional longing to escape the Chili's

and Target grind? What a jerk. Guy who looks and acts like your freshman-year Resident Advisor? Humble-minded hero.

The Office has always been a typical codification of small-minded suburban strip-mall values. Critics who praise the show for its stylistic originality might as well dole out sexual liberation awards to teenage girls who bare their midriffs before marriage.

IN TWO AND A HALF MEN, SHEEN PRESENTS GARISH, LOWBROW REPUDIATION OF MIDDLE-CLASS, SELF-EFFACING HUMILITY.

Iowa City

A Love Letter

For some, a single visit to Iowa City means love at first sight. For others, seeing the beauty in this town takes a little more time.

In honor of issue number 100, three friends (including two long-term LV contributors) got together to talk about Iowa City, why they're here, why they love it, and what it means to be living and working here.

5002

KEMBREW McLEOD: I first moved here ten years ago, in 2000. I came from the East Coast and had no intention of staying in the middle of the country, but I changed my mind. I like this place in part because we are on the periphery, on the margins. That's one of the big complaints about this town: We're not a big city, and we don't have the same cultural resources that "real" cities do, which is true. But what I like about us is that we're underdogs; we're a little scrappy. So in order for us to make things happen we have to do it ourselves, because we can't just soak up the things that big cities have.

ANDRE PERRY: I am also from the East Coast but I moved to Iowa City from San Francisco and I came for the grad program in nonfiction writing. Much like Kembrew I had this sense that I was going to be here for a few years, maybe become a better writer, maybe start working on a book project, then high-tail it back to San Francisco or get back to the East Coast and become a writer there. But there was something that just drew me in, almost immediately, when I got to town, which was just this idea that you could make fun, creative projects happen in Iowa City. Clearly you can do that in New York or San Francisco or any number of other cities but I've always liked being in that, as Kembrew said, underdog situation; working a little bit harder to get something.

KM: Iowa City is part of a Midwestern tradition that puts an emphasis on the arts, which, I think, partially has to do with the fact that Iowans are conscious of the fact that we're in the middle of nowhere. It's not like the arts, music, writing scenes just emerged from nowhere, for no reason. It's because the city and its citizens have historically been invested in this idea of creating a cultural oasis.

Love Triangle

CRAIG ELEY

Little Village columnist ("The Haps") and co-president of the Mission Creek Festival.

KEMBREW McLEOD

Little Village columnist ("Prairie Pop") and Professor of Communication Studies at The University of Iowa.

ANDRE PERRY

Executive director of the Englert Theatre, founder and co-president of the Mission Creek Festival.

CRAIG ELEY: It's worth noting that we're having this conversation in the Englert, which itself was the project of a lot of people getting together to restore a beautiful, old theater and who have a commitment to the arts. The renovation happened here, what, ten years ago? This is one small example among many of people who care about getting together and literally reviving physical spaces to make artistic and cultural things happen.

KM: Yeah, it's that combination of the community's energy combined with institutions like the Iowa Arts Council, which I'm pretty sure did some sort of matching grant for this place. But a lot of the rest of that money came from benefit concerts to which musicians and other volunteers donated their time, which raised little pots of money that added up. That's

why the Englert was resurrected. I wanted to take this opportunity to give a shout out to state and city governments that fund the arts. When you think about the returns that you get from investing in the arts—compared to big infrastructure projects like a municipal aquarium or a rain forest—it's a great deal.

AP: I think Iowa City is also interesting because there are palpable conflicts or tensions among the different artistic scenes or institutions that exist. Musicians, writers, visual artists, theater folks, and what have you—they don't always hang out together. It's as if they pick their own nights to be at the Foxhead or the Mill. I think there should be more cross-over or maybe I'm just being hopeful.

CE: Yeah, there are some productive tensions.

AP: Right, people have these chips on their shoulders sometimes, but then sometimes there will be a collaboration between two

It's not like the Iowa City arts, music and writing scenes just emerged from nowhere, for no reason.

different scenes. You have people in town like Jared Fowler who's in the grad music program and has made this concerted effort to bring musicians from the grad program together with some of the musicians in town who aren't in the grad program to do the *I Hear IC* project. So there are tensions but that's also kind of cool because it's not so copacetic here that everyone is just mellowed out and passive as if we were living in Fort Lauderdale. You have to work for the things you want, artistically and otherwise.

CE: When you're in a town with that kind of vibe it also allows you to do your own thing. Isn't there something about being in Iowa City that benefits your writing, for example?

AP: I don't know if I can quantify it... it's tough to get at that "thing" you're talking about. I think in bigger cities people can spend time stressing about things that get in the way of their so-called work. Yes, there are also distractions here: it's really easy to just leave your apartment to go see a show or—to be more frank about it—to go have some beers with a friend and watch a game at the bar; there's a lot happening for such a small place. But there are other stresses in the cities. The financial stress of living in New York City is like a rabbit carrying around a dump-truck and if you're an artist you might get caught up in the idea of maintaining some kind of image. Like, "Are those the jeans that Yeasayer likes to wear? No, not enough holes in the knees," or, "Is that where Tao Lin gets his coffee? No, that's Jon Foer's cafe: twenty dollars for a double shot after 9 a.m."

KM: In New York City, if you want to get from the Chelsea neighborhood in Manhattan to somewhere in Brooklyn, that's a lot of time

IC LOVE continued on page 30 >>

Warhol

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Andy Warhol (American, 1930–1987), *Tom Cashin*, undated, Gelatin silver photograph. Gift of the Andy Warhol Photographic Legacy Program 2008.174



Andy Warhol (American, 1930–1987), *Mick Jagger and unidentified woman*, undated, Gelatin silver photograph. Gift of the Andy Warhol Photographic Legacy Program 2008.187



Andy Warhol (American, 1930–1987), *Diana Ross, Ron Delsner, and unidentified woman*, undated, Gelatin silver photograph. Gift of the Andy Warhol Photographic Legacy Program 2008.194

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OUT IN THE ORDINARY

Iowa didn't mean anything to gay rights six years ago when novelist Nick Burd was in New York writing *The Vast Fields of Ordinary*. The presidential candidates vetted here didn't tend to favor expanding gay rights. And while most of the state's bigger towns were generally tolerant—for the Midwest, at least—same-sex unions seemed destined to be secluded to the coasts. It wasn't the kind of place likely to attract famed Hollywood producer and gay rights activist Bruce Cohen to take his first shot at directing.

Now the game has changed. Iowa shocked the country almost two years ago when it

started marrying same-sex couples. The state has one of the strongest anti-bullying laws in the country—one that specifically protects LGBT students—and Iowa City is among the most gay-friendly cities in the country. And famed Hollywood producer and gay rights activist Bruce Cohen is looking here to take his first shot at directing.

Cohen is working on securing funding to make a movie based on Burd's novel about a young gay man's "last real summer"—the one between high school and college—in a fictional Midwest town.

"My two great loves are making movies and being gay. They're kind of coming together in this film project we're trying to do," said

Cohen, who earned producing credits on *Milk*, *Big Fish*, and 1999 Academy Awards Best Picture *American Beauty*.

Cohen, Burd and a screenwriter spent time in Iowa City and Cedar Rapids earlier this year scouting locations and talking to high school students to get ideas for the script. Cohen said he wants to make *The Vast Fields of Ordinary* an authentic portrait of high school life, pointing to *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* and *Dazed and Confused* as films that got it mostly right.

"Hopefully it will be something that speaks to everyone—if you're gay or if you're just an outsider or weird or special," Cohen said.

Burd grew up in Cedar Rapids and lived in Iowa City while earning his English degree from The University of Iowa. In 2004, he enrolled in the Master of Fine Arts program at The New School in New York. That's where he started work on *The Vast Fields of Ordinary*, which started out as a short story but eventually turned into his master's thesis. He finished and polished the piece after graduation and a friend at a publishing company helped him land a young adult fiction deal.

The Iowa-native is a relatively young writer—he still has to work a day job in New York while he works on his second novel in

his spare time—but he's already apparently aware of the realities of pursuing a career in the arts and reciprocally grateful for his break.

"It could have just as easily gone the other way where 2,000 people read the book and you never hear about it again," Burd said. "I was lucky enough to be reviewed in *The New York Times* and I got a really nice review."

The Times named Burd's debut one of fewer than a dozen "Notable Children's Books of 2009." Reviewer Ned Vizzini wrote, "*The Vast Fields of Ordinary* reads like the best kind of first novel—it's packed with insights that might have been carried around for years, just waiting to come out."

The review caught Cohen's attention as he browsed the newspaper on a flight between New York and Los Angeles.

"I ordered it on my iPad and I started reading and from the first page it was so beautiful," Cohen said. "I fell in love on the plane. I finished it right on that flight and something told me this was the movie I wanted to do."

Shortly thereafter, Burd sold the rights to the movie and Cohen began the process of seeking funding and commissioning a screenplay.

As far as gay rights are concerned, Iowa today is ostensibly much different from the Iowa Burd grew up in and wrote about. The state has earned a reputation

as the lone Midwestern state to offer same-sex couples the same civil rights as opposite-sex ones. It's now a destination, attracting

/// **Fields Producer Bruce Cohen, whose production credits include *Milk*, *Big Fish* and *American Beauty*, is looking to Iowa as he takes his first shot at directing.**

/// **"I started reading and from the first page it was so beautiful," Cohen said. "I fell in love on the plane. I finished it right on that flight and something told me this was the movie I wanted to do."**

hundreds of couples from neighboring states to come get married in courthouses here.

Despite the apparent polarization brought about by gay marriage, Burd said Iowa has something unique to contribute to the LGBT discussion.

"We have almost this Libertarian point of view: Let me do what I want to do and I'll stay away from yours," he said, also pointing out Iowa's historical record on interracial marriage and women's rights. "I think that's much different than what you would find in other states. There's something about the mind-frame here that encourages a variety of different trains of thought."

However, just as quickly as Iowa's gay-friendly reputation has materialized, so too has opposition thereof. Social conservatives have poured time and money into stopping gay marriage and punishing those who cleared the way for its legalization. Iowa voters have already ousted three of the state Supreme Court justices who ruled in favor of gay



BRUCE COHEN & NICK BURD
(left to right) speak to students at Iowa City High School on January 10, 2011.

marriage and some Republican lawmakers are targeting the other four as well as pushing to amend the constitution to outlaw gay marriage once again.

But even with the politics of the issue muddled, *The Vast Fields of Ordinary*—which the author calls "personal but not autobiographical"—insists that the experience of a fictional gay teenager in this part of the country has something to offer.

"There are gay people everywhere but, growing up here, you don't quite have the same access to that culture. If it was in New York or L.A., it would be a lot easier to go out in the Village to go to a drag show or find a night club," said Burd. "I wanted it to be about feeling lonely and isolated when growing up and that's something that a lot of people everywhere feel but it's kind of emphasized in the Midwest." **lv**

Adam B Sullivan is a journalist and Iowa City native.



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Enter the Void

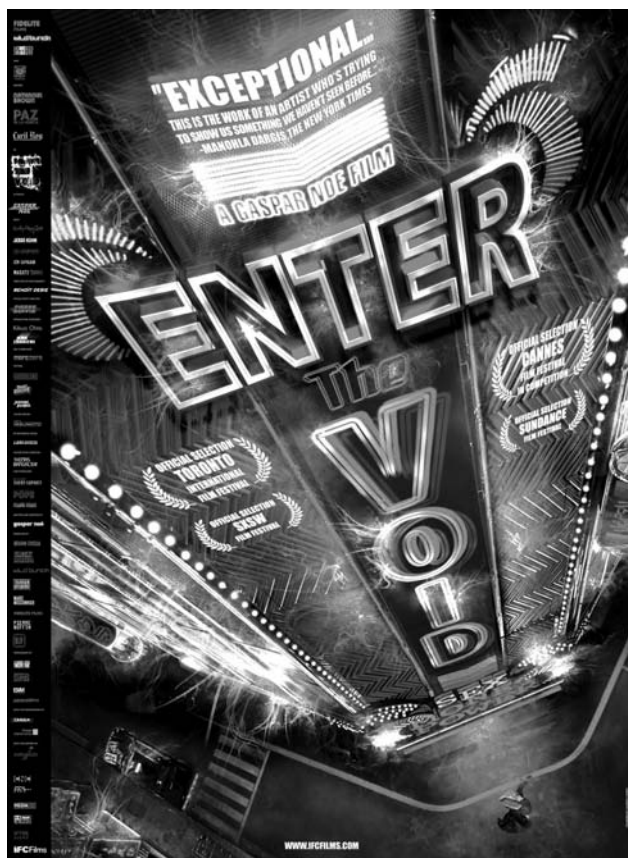
Directed BY Gaspar

Noé

Gaspar Noé will be known to some for his 2002 film *Irreversible* in which two men avenge the brutal rape and murder of a woman played by Italian beauty Monica Bellucci. Though its style and substance (particularly the rape scene) are notorious, it's unfortunate that its infamy has surpassed its praise because I revere *Irreversible* among the best films of the last decade. I'd like to encourage everyone to see *Enter the Void*, his latest work, which is playing at the Bijou February 4th through the 10th, but I must caution you: if you're among the many that couldn't sit through that film (or wished afterward you hadn't tried) you're in for a similar experience.

Like *Irreversible*, nearly every shot in *Enter the Void* is hand-held. *Irreversible*'s disorienting, sometimes even nauseating style was meant to connote the anger and fear of two vengeance-hungry men. *Enter the Void* is, out of narrative necessity, more graceful with its camera movements,

for it's the first-person perspective of a man full of ennui and high on hallucinogens who hovers as a ghost above a deviant, drug-addled and horny Tokyo. Noé has modulated his style



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Henri-Georges Clouzot's Inferno

Bijou | Feb. 18–24

The great Henri-Georges Clouzot, the director of *Diabolique* and *Wages of Fear*, planned on revolutionizing cinema with his movie *Inferno*. The only problem is he never finished it. Now we have this documentary of his failure, a partial reconstruction of a masterwork that never was.

Annie Hall

Bijou | Feb. 25–26

Woody Allen's most famous movie is the great reimagining of the classic romantic comedy. *Annie Hall* is playful, intelligent, funny, sad and enjoyable from beginning to end. Romantic comedies have gone steadily downhill ever since.

from speed-junkie to psychedelic, but much of *Irreversible's* visual affectation makes the cut, which leads me to a secondary caution: If you're epileptic, this

WE FIND OURSELVES FLOATING ABOVE THE CONCRETE JUNGLE AS OSCAR, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.

film may well be unwatchable. Blinking, radiating lights and strobe effects occur frequently.

We immediately assume the role of Oscar, who settles in to a comfortable place for a cocktail of dimethyltryptamine (DMT). The Wikipedia entry for DMT states that "when DMT is inhaled, depending on the dose, its subjective effects can range from short-lived milder psychedelic states to powerful immersive experiences, which include a total loss of connection to conventional reality,

men's room where he attempts to dispose of his wares. This time it's a gunshot that stimulates a "total loss of connection to conventional reality." We find ourselves floating above the concrete jungle as Oscar, somewhere between life and death, and forced to observe those dearest to him, the aftermath of his actions, and his entire previous life. Death is the ultimate trip.

This director is as interested in the psyche of his viewers as those of his subjects. Somehow he stretches the narrative of a single incident (and everything that preceded and followed it) for two hours, encircling the characters, building flesh upon the bone. For a Western audience accustomed to convoluted tales of intrigue, of various individuals coming and going to propel a narrative, such intense focus on a small event is provocative. In our action movies and thrillers we watch faceless evils, nameless henchmen

or numbered soldiers swatted like flies. Noé keeps his focus on the life and death of a single man. We haven't simply a glance at his corpse but a glare. Death is everywhere and Noé won't allow us to turn away.

As Oscar bears witness

which may be so extreme that it becomes ineffable." In a way this describes *Enter the Void* quite neatly. Oscar first experiences a short-lived and relatively mild trip. He draws on the hallucinogenic compound, each hit taking him deeper into the void as his modest Tokyo apartment steadily loses focus, the set lighting shifts between various hues and the now-disjointed room he finds himself in begins to fold into his consciousness. He lies on his back to gaze at the ceiling, which transmogrifies into a galactic wheel of gas and light in perpetual motion, forming imaginative shapes until the camera unhinges and flies through it.

We soon meet Oscar's friend, Alex, who agrees to accompany him on a drug deal to take place at a dive called "The Void." On the way Alex regales us with his knowledge of the afterlife, a knowledge derived from the Tibetan Book of the Dead, which he has loaned to Oscar and which will shortly parlay into their lives in a way neither could have imagined. Things go terribly wrong. His buyer has turned canary and put the squeeze on him. Coppers descend from all sides, forcing Oscar into the

to the negative consequences of his death on his family and friends, Noé confronts us with, among other things, Buddhist notions of circularity, Nietzsche's eternal recurrence, Parmenidean oneness and the tragedy and beauty of it all. We see the face of god wearing the mask of death. It drags in places, it's agonizingly long, but the journey is something to behold. *Enter the Void* is an impressive feat of filmmaking. It's an intense audio-visual experience. It's... a trip. **lv**

Matthew Mesaros is a freelance writer and the creator of *Cinologue.com*, a film essay website for cinephiles.



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FRI, FEB 25 -
THU, MAR 3

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WASTE LAND

Directed by Lucy Walker | UK

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GREAT THINGS,

Small Packages

Architecture in Helsinki's brilliant 2003 debut album, *Fingers Crossed*, kicks off with a short, Casio and drum machine instrumental called "One Heavy February." Unlike so many ultimately forgettable album intros (noise pulses, voice mails, carnival barking, string quartets, what have you), the song is a deliciously melodic twee dance number, and at just under a minute long, it's length seemed reflective of the month that appeared in its title.

Flash forward five years to the band's little-discussed *Like It Or Not* EP (worth seeking out for a Max Tundra remix alone), where

the song has been expanded into a 3-minute club track, appropriately titled "One Heavy February 2008." Complete with a break lifted from Bell Biv DeVoe's "Poison," the track is a hilarious, rollicking (mis)adventure that includes band members shouting the name of each month. I bring this all up as a long way of saying the month of February is just like this song; it starts small and gets stuck in your head until you find yourself returning to it, turning it over, wondering what you can do to make it better, more interesting, less sad and cold and dark. The answer, I'm afraid, is nothing. Except to have some fun with it.

Oh, and see live music. Here are my picks for this month's shows.

One of the more interesting developments in the music scene in this young year has been KRUI's foray into live music promotion. This month they're putting on no less than 3 shows and the first is with Fitz & the Tantrums, a retro, blue-eyed soul group from sunny Los Angeles who play the Blue Moose on Feb. 8. I was first turned onto them through one of the FutureSounds compilations a few years ago (#33, to be exact), and last year they got themselves signed to Dangerbird Records. They're great if you can handle the L.A.-ness of it all, but the show is only \$3 so no excuses there.

The second KRUI bill is for their website re-launch on the 12th at Gabe's. (Do people really still have website launch parties?) Baltimore's Dan Deacon, who I've heard described as an "absurdist electronic musician," will be there with vintage instruments, some new ones, and flashing lights. If you are into electronics, noise, dance and the confluence of all three, I would highly recommend it. The first time I saw Deacon was pretty revelatory and, while I've been less of a fan of his more recent recorded output, there is no denying that his shows are a party. Expect him to coerce you into crowd participation-type things (conga lines, etc.). Locals Wet Hair and Fairfield natives Utopia Park will open.

Finally, on Feb. 23 at Gabe's, KRUI will host Baths along with opening acts Braids and Star Slinger. Baths is the project of Will Wiesenfeld, who broke through with 2010's

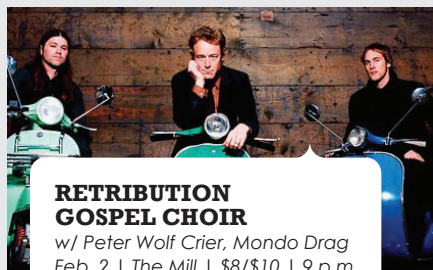
Cerulean, a funky and beautiful electronic record that manages

to cohesively incorporate a range of influences (people have cited Beck, Bjork, Aphex Twin). Pitchfork has described his live show as "genre-bucking garrulousness" (whoops, just threw up a little bit), so that's promising (right?). Also on this bill is Braids, a Canadian band who will likely have a hard time escaping Animal Collective comparisons with their recent debut record, *Native Speaker*. Still, it's an interesting, solid outing, and when you put it all together this is my most highly anticipated show of the month.

Outside of these KRUI events, the clubs are offering some equally noteworthy stuff.

Quick Hits

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



RETRIBUTION GOSPEL CHOIR

w/ Peter Wolf Crier, Mondo Drag
Feb. 2 | The Mill | \$8/\$10 | 9 p.m.

> FOOD PYRAMID

w/ Deep Earth | Feb. 6 | White Lightning
Wherehouse | \$TBA | 9 p.m.



FITZ AND THE TANTRUMS

Feb. 8 | Blue Moose
Tap House | \$3 | 6 p.m.

> DAN DEACON

w/ Wet Hair, Utopia Park | Feb. 12
Gabe's | \$12 | 9 p.m.



BATHS

w/ Braids, Star Slinger | Feb. 23
Gabe's | \$8 | 8:30 p.m.

> SUMMERCAMP ON THE ROAD: BATTLE OF THE BANDS

Feb. 25 | Yacht Club | \$5 | 8 p.m.

> CHRISTOPHER THE CONQUERED

w/ Cashes Rivers, So Much Fun | Feb. 25
The Mill | \$6 | 9 p.m.

First among them is San Francisco's Deerhoof, who are an experimental/indie/art rock institution. They'll play the Blue Moose on Feb. 18. Their career includes 10 albums stretching back to 1997's *The Man*, *The King*, *The Girl*, though I was turned onto them during their critically-acclaimed period starting with *Apple O'* (2003) and continuing with *The Runners Four* (2005) and *Friend Opportunity* (2007). As a band their music has become slightly more "song-oriented" in recent years, though their tendency for noisy guitars and the always-interesting vocal stylings of Satomi Matsuzaki means they will never quite be a "normal" band. This band falls under the "even if it's not really your thing you owe it to yourself to see them once" category. Then check it off your list, or, just maybe, you might get hooked. Personally, I think they're terrific.

Retribution Gospel Choir plays the Mill on Feb. 2 and, while they famously include members of Low, the bands couldn't be

**Making February better,
more interesting, less sad
and cold and dark.**

more different—in fact, in some ways they could be understood as opposites. Where Low is an exercise in minimalism and slow, pretty songs, RGC leans on pretty traditional rock elements: big guitars, even bigger choruses, multi-tracked vocals and drums. I didn't listen to last year's 2 enough to say more, but I think fans of Band of Horses, among others, should check this one out.

A lot of people in Des Moines have been hyping the hell out of Cashes Rivers, a singer-songwriter whose voice and delivery reminds me slightly of Colin Meloy (without the annoying antiquated language) or Conor Oberst (with less vibrato). Fans of either—and fans of solid acoustic guitar songwriting in general—should go see what all the talk is about. He tours with a backing band and they play the Mill on Feb. 25 with the always awesome Christopher the Conquered.

Lastly, for aspiring local jammers and their fans, the annual Summercamp Battle of the Bands is coming to the Yacht Club on Feb. 25. As per this annual tradition, a handful of local bands will duke it out, musical-style, for a shot at making the summer fest. **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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FEB 12 } DAVE MOORE

**FEB 25 } CHRISTOPHER
THE CONQUERED**

FEB 26 } AKRON/FAMILY

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FEB 10, 6PM **AGAINST ME
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FEB 11, 9PM **BERMUDA REPORT
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FEB 12, 10PM **MAD MONKS
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>> IC LOVE continued from 23

and energy. It could easily be an hour-long trek. In larger cities you feel like you're almost battling just to get through the day. I am making that sound more dramatic than it really is, but comparatively speaking, Iowa City is less draining. It's a fairly frictionless existence. What that means is you have more time to

I think in bigger cities people can spend time stressing about things that get in the way of their so-called work.

hang out with friends, watch a movie, go to a party, or see a concert. And you also have more time for your own creative work: writing, art, music, whatever. If you live in a big city like New York, you basically delete about three to four hours of your day just

to get around. I also have a theory that, in New York, every time you walk through a doorway \$20 disappears from your wallet.

CE: There seems to be something here that allows you more free time, more work time.

AP: And I think there's more time to work on projects that don't necessarily have to amount to some big end goal. In Iowa City you can meet someone and decide to make an ambient noise project that plays twice and that's just it. The pressure is not on the end product; it's in the process. When I went to school here I spent two years reading and writing experimental essays without ever feeling the pressure that I had to do anything else because essentially the people in my program were saying, "Hey, just take time and freak out and do what you need to do." So I was given that opportunity which I might not have had elsewhere.

KM: There's just more time to play around, fail, and try again. **lv**

Craig Eley, Kembrew McLeod & Andre Perry



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SO BO



Eugene Kelley

Las Animas

reverbnation.com/eugenekelley

This CD came our way when someone left it in the *Little Village* distribution box in front of New Pioneer Co-op, so never let it be said we're not on the lookout for new music. The cover—handmade and held together with scotch tape—features a stylized logo of an eye with a tear falling out of it, done in denim. That's some serious attention to brand identity!

Musically Mr. Kelley is a modern American primitive not too far from late-period Tom Waits. The primitive lo-fidelity recording sound is about half an aesthetic choice and half a matter of crap equipment. The Dictaphone-quality of title track "Las Animas" detracts not a whit from its charm. Its matter-of-fact vocal delivery and bare acoustic guitar is sufficient to make its pop perfection evident. It's a Top 40 hit from an alternate universe.

For rhythm, "Retro Man" makes the most of what sounds like someone banging on the front door. Kelley's voice is a raspy drawl bathed in bus-station bathroom reverb. It's hard to make out lyrics on most of these songs, but the bits that rise out of the murk have the off-handed surrealism of private daydreams.

>> It's hard to make out lyrics on most of these songs, but the bits that rise out of the murk have the off-handed surrealism of private daydreams.

"Balance You Out" starts "This land of constant harvest waiting on that new moon,

divide up these suspicions and you eat it with a spoon." It signifies who-knows-what but it rings true, somehow, modestly conversational in its oddity. This might be tiresome if Kelley tried too hard to be Dylan on *John Wesley Harding*, but he avoids that trap, maybe because he's more stilted and awkward when he tries to make sense.

A week after our editor found the mysterious CD in the LV box at the Co-op, we received a second one with a scrawled cover letter in the mail. The valediction is "Your Loving Trumpet, Eugene." So...okay, glycerine vibraphone to you too! For all its sonic cruddiness and opaque imagery, *Las Animas* is as comfortable as a raggedy sweat-shirt from the Crowded Closet.



CaseTheJoint

Stalking To Myself

myspace.com/casethejoint

There aren't many musical pursuits harder than making hip-hop. You have to write rhymes, you have to memorize them, you have to find or make beats. You have to deliver your rhymes in dingy clubs with crap sound and sell yourself to the pickiest audiences in the world—the people who added a new definition to the dictionary for the word "hate."

CaseTheJoint is an MC who, in spite of all that, jumps in with both feet on *Stalking To Myself*. To his credit, this CD doesn't sound anything like what's currently going on in commercial hip-hop. The lion's share of the tracks, produced by Imperfekt, are anchored by Jagged drum machine beats layered with jazz samples. This is a throwback style, pioneered by Guru and Digable Planets in

the early 90s, but Imperfekt manages to find something new to do with the style, making musically surprising assemblages from several

>> Blake B and Goodwill get cheekily illegal by biting on the Beatles & Wings, which will get Case sued if he ever really blows up, but hey even that's good publicity.

unrelated samples. Blake B (on "Let It Be") and Goodwill (on "Outta Here") get cheekily illegal by biting on the Beatles & Wings, which will get Case sued if he ever really blows up, but hey even that's good publicity.

Case's got a voice that has an earthy hint of gravel to it, and he sounds authentically hip-hop without trying to sound black. You can tell he's heard a lot of Del the Funky Homosapien and picked up some of his talent for diction and relaxed, conversational rhythm. That's something that can't be faked and his writing, at its best, is manically surreal, as on "Word Weaponry," where he says he "If mum's the word, silent flowers unite/I might gag Lady Gaga with Bagpipes tonight." "Cliché Statement" strings together a remarkable string of clichés, out of which pops silly bits like "I got a funny feeling my days are numbered like Tuesday."

There's room for improvement. There's not much bottom end to the beats and, while the rhymes are never bad, the merely okay lines aren't up to the standard set by the best lines. Hip-hop is a cruel master that way. But the fun Case and his crew had putting this CD together is evident and I look forward to hearing where they go from here.

Kent Williams is a cubicle rat at the UI Hospital. He wants to be on your guest list. Plus one, naturally.

Non Prayer s/t cassette

Non Prayer is a local "work in progress" band led by guitarist/singer Joe Heuermann. Usually moonlighting in the darkwave, synthesizer-led Goldendust with keyboardist Justin Thye, Heuermann takes a trip down fuzzy-reverb lane on this four-song jam. Recorded to tape in two nights by local, obscure record hoarder Mickey Shaw, the songs have an early SY sludge to them, but with Andy Buch's live drums sounding



more like a blown-out drum machine than a full kit. Sometimes you'll get Heuermann's shimmery guitar melodies, and sometimes you'll get that little Turkish Delight of high-end shriek and feedback. It's truly boss. There's something about guys who really

>> Sometimes you'll get Heuermann's shimmery guitar melodies, and sometimes you'll get that little Turkish Delight of high-end shriek and feedback.

dig Spaceman 3 but don't have a druggie attitude. It's refreshing to say the least.

With a gravestone on the cover of the cassette and a dapper Dan in a tuxedo on the insert, you would expect a pretty grim head-trip from these guys. But, apparently, all the songs are love songs, and they're all sung in an almost baritone lull that's pretty captivating. Heuermann's songwriting is spot-on, too.

Live, Non Prayer has a huge sound for a duo without the usual gimmicks. With a big stack of speakers and a serious heavy-hitter on drums, you'd expect a full-on rock sound. But there's a cool, hypnotic smoothness to it. It's like an old-school gothic baby's butt smoothness. And with Joe hunched over his microphone (do they even make mic stands tall enough for him?) it all can give off a weird, Murnau vibration.

Non Prayer is appearing at the Wherehouse on Feb. 28 with Tyvek. Night-People Records is also re-issuing the Goldendust cassette in early February, so don't miss that. And while Non Prayer is recording new songs for a long play on Night-People, entertain yourself with this self-released tape... if you can find it.

Brendan L. Spengler

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Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

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www.crma.org

Art Bites "A Show of Hands" with The Ceramics Center Executive Director, Ben Jensen, Feb. 2, 12:15 p.m. • Valentine's Jazz Brunch, Feb. 13, 10 a.m.

Figge Art Museum

225 West Second St., Davenport
<http://figgeart.org/>

Crossing the Mississippi: The Quad Cities, the Railroad and Art, Jan. 22 thru April 24 • Tracks: The Railroad in Photographs from the George Eastman House Collection, Jan. 15 thru April 24 • Young Artists at the Figge, Jan. 15 thru May 15 • The John Deere Art Collection, Nov. 6 thru May 22 • Lecture - The World's Most Perfect Servant: The Pullman Porter Company and the African-American Experience, Feb. 17, 7 p.m.

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

110 Parkside Drive, West Branch
<http://www.nps.gov/heho>

Underground Railroad Exhibit, Jan. 24 thru April 30

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

"A Home on the Farm: Changes in Farm Life in the Mid-20th Century" exhibit, ongoing

The Mill

120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City
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Talk Art, Feb. 9, 10 p.m. • Talk Art, Feb. 23, 10 p.m.

Public Space One

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Pete Schulte: Oceans & Sky, Feb. 4, 6 p.m.-9 p.m.

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Jazz Jam featuring students and faculty of the U of Iowa School of Music, Feb. 2, 7 p.m. • Mayflies with Sarah Cram & The Derelicts, Feb. 4, 9 p.m. • The Wailers (Bob Marley Birthday Bash) with Duane Stephenson, Feb. 5, 7 p.m. • Fitz and the Tantrums, Feb. 8, 6 p.m. • Big Gigantic, Feb. 9, 9 p.m. • Against Me! with Cheap Girls and Fences, Feb. 10, 6 p.m. • Bermuda Report with The Blend and Toussaint Morrison, Feb. 11, 9 p.m. • Mad Monks with The Oculus, Feb. 12, 10 p.m. • hellogoodbye with Jukebox the Ghost, Gold Motel, Now, Now Every Children, Feb. 18, 5:30 p.m. • Deerhoof with Ben Butler and Mousepad, Nervous Cop, The Tanks, Feb. 18, 7 p.m. • Slip Silo with Chasing Shade and DJ Lady Espina, Feb. 19, 9 p.m. • PM Today with Story Changes, JV ALLSTAR, and A No Coast November, Feb. 20, 6 p.m. • 40 oz to Freedom, Feb. 27, 9 p.m.

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Maia Quartet featuring violist Julia Bullard, Feb. 13, 4 p.m.

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Choloroform with Dr. Z's Experiment, Feb. 4, 8 p.m. • Lubriphonic with OSG and Amanda Miller, Feb. 5, 9 p.m. • The Nadas with Dastardly and Jared Bartman, Feb. 11, 9 p.m. • Dan Deacon, Feb. 12, 9 p.m. • Deadman Flats with Jon Eric and Natalie, Feb. 13, 9 p.m. • The Toasters with Surf Zombies and Brace for Blast, Feb. 15, 7:30 p.m. • Thunder Body, Feb. 19, 9 p.m. • Baths with Braids and Star Slinger, Feb. 23, 8:30 p.m. • Midwest Dubstep Summit with DJ Belly, Feb. 25, 8 p.m. • Skin Kandy with Raw Mojo, Feb. 26, 8 p.m.

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Old Capitol Museum

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

See website for locations

Piano Sunday featuring Dr. Rene Lecuona and Dr. Ksenia Nosikova, Feb. 6, 1:30 p.m. • School of Music Concert, David Gompper, Feb. 19, 2 p.m.

Orchestra Iowa

www.orchestraiowa.org

See website for times and locations

BeauSoleil Holiday, Feb. 12 • Orchestra Iowa Chamber Players, Feb. 26

Performing Arts at Iowa

performingarts.uiowa.edu/

See website for times and locations

John Manning, tuba and Lee Nguyen, piano, Feb. 3 • Salvage by Kevin Artigue, Feb. 3-5 • Timothy Shafer, piano, Feb. 7 • Operation Midnight Climax by Matthew Benyo, Feb. 10-12 • Arts Share Community Concert: Iowa Percussion, Feb. 12 • Songs of Fun and Foolishness: Katherine Eberle and students; Lynn Conway, piano, Feb. 13 • Center for New Music, David Gompper, director, Feb. 13 • UI Symphony Orchestra, William LaRue Jones, conductor, Feb. 16 • Guest Lecture: Writing History: The Composer & The Musicologist; Glenn Watkins, Feb. 18 • Wolfgang David, violin; Guo Gan, ehru; and David Gompper, piano, Feb. 19 • Ten-Minute Play Festival, Feb. 17-19 • Songs of Schumann, Beethoven and Liszt: Stephen Swanson, baritone; Uriel Tschor, piano, Feb. 20 • Adriana La Rosa Ransom, cello, Feb. 20 • Latitude Ensemble, Feb. 20 • UI Orchestra Invitational Gala Concert, Feb. 25 • Ksenia Nosikova, piano, Feb. 26 • Sunshine by Andrew Saito, Feb. 24-26 • Electronic Music Studio, Feb. 27 • Contrapunctus Brass Trio: Amy Schendel, trumpet; Bernhard Scully, horn; Todd Schendel, trombone, Feb. 27

Red Cedar Chamber Music

www.redcedar.org

See website for locations

Music for Seniors Concert, Feb. 3, 10 a.m. • Rural Outreach Concert, Feb. 20, 2 p.m. • Music for Seniors Concert, Feb. 23, 2 p.m. • Rural Outreach Concert, Feb. 23, 7 p.m. • Production Floor Performance, Feb. 24, 12 p.m. • Rural Outreach Concert, Feb. 24, 7 p.m. • Home Sweet Home, A Main-Stage Concert Series, Feb. 25-26, 8 p.m.

Riverside Casino

3184 Highway 22, Riverside

www.riversidecasinoandresort.com

The Bacon Brothers, Feb. 12, 8 p.m. • Righteous Brother Bill Medley, Feb. 13, 4 p.m.

A-List



48-Hour Film Race Screening: Thursday, Feb. 24, 10:00 p.m.

The cinematic arts in general merit the pomp and fanfare of Oscar season, but the fervor that Hollywood attempts to create (even in mediocre years) borders on lunacy. Pay tribute to this tradition *and* the craft itself by sacrificing your sanity for two days of pure, creative madness with the 48-Hour Film Race.

The UI Campus Activities Board, Student Video Productions and Bijou Theatre invite you and your crew to conceive, write, shoot and produce a movie... in 48 hours. Sound crazy? You bet it is--crazy cool as audience members laugh with you at your jokes, cringe with you at your mistakes and give you a high-five for all you managed to achieve, against all odds and, especially, against the unforgiving hands of time.

Ever dream of seeing your ideas projected on the big screen? This is your chance to take that dream off its pedestal, and ask yourself: "What if we just *did* it?"

Look for fliers or contact the Bijou for information on getting your team signed up, and show your respect for movie madness by attending the free screening on Feb. 24.

Calendar

Uptown Bill's

401 South Gilbert Street
<http://www.uptownbills.org/>
Open Words, Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.
Arts & Music, Thursdays, 6 p.m.
Open Mic, Fridays, 7 p.m.

White Lightning Wherehouse

www.myspace.com/whitelightinginc
Check website for events TBA
Food Pyramid with Deep Earth and more TBA, Feb. 6, 7 p.m. • Call Me Lightning with more TBA, Feb. 24, 7 p.m.

Yacht Club

13 S. Linn St., Iowa City
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8th Annual Bob Marley Birthday Bash featuring Natty Nation, Feb. 4 • Dennis McMurrin and The Demolition Band, Feb. 5 • Afro-Zep with 56 Hope Road, Feb. 10 • Euforquestra, Feb. 11 • Bradley Nowell's Birthday: Sublime Tribute with Second Hand Smoke, Feb. 12 • The Pimps of Joytime, Feb. 16 • Spankalicious, Feb. 17 • Uniphonics with Twin Cats, Feb. 18 • Flavor Savers with Big Funk Guarantee, Feb. 19, 8:30 p.m. • White Water Ramble with The Trollies, Feb. 24 • Summercamp Battle of the Bands, Feb. 25, 8 p.m. • Yam Cannon with Item 9 & The Mad Hatters and Old Shoe, Feb. 26

THEATER/DANCE/ PERFORMANCE

Englert

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City
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The Second City's Fair & Unbalanced, Feb. 4-5 • And Then There Were None, Feb. 11-13 • Gaelic Storm, Feb. 17, 8 p.m. • Lucinda Williams, Feb. 18, 8 p.m. • A Little Night Music, Feb. 25-27 • Hollywood Live! Hosted by Chris Okiishi, Feb. 27, 6 p.m.

Hancher Auditorium

www.hancher.uiowa.edu
See website for temporary locations
Merce Cunningham Dance Company, Feb. 8, 7:30 p.m. • Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m. • David Finckel, Wu Han, and Philip Setzer, Feb. 24, 7:30 p.m.

Penguin's Comedy Club

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www.penguinscomedyclub.com
Check website for showtimes
Michael Thorne, Feb. 4-5 • Tom Green, Feb. 10 • Mark Sweeney, Feb. 11-12 • TC Hatter, Feb. 18-19 • Heywood Banks, Feb. 25-26



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- SAT 2.05** Daddy-O
- THU 2.10** AfroZEP + 56 Hope Road
- FRI 2.11** Euforquestra
- SAT 2.12** Sublime Tribute
- WED 2.16** Pimps of Joytime
- THU 2.17** Spankalicious
- FRI 2.18** Uniphonics + Twin Cats
- SAT 2.19** Flavor Savers + Big Funk Guarantee
- THU 2.24** White Water Ramble
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Performing Arts at Iowa

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

See website for times and locations

UI Dance Faculty/Graduate Concert, Feb. 17-19, 8 p.m. • Tattoo Girl by Naomi Iizuka, Feb. 3-5

Theatre Cedar Rapids

4444 1st Ave NE, Cedar Rapids

www.theatretrc.org

Crimes of the Heart, Jan. 28 thru Feb. 12

WORDS

Prairie Lights

15 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City

www.prairielights.com

Readings are at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted

Kevin Brockmeier, Feb. 2 • Elizabeth Bishop Poetry Event, Feb. 8 • Meghan Daum, Feb. 9 • John Reimringer, Feb. 10 • Joseph O'Connor, Feb. 14

CINEMA

Bijou Theatre

IMU, UI Campus, Iowa City

www.uiowa.edu/~bijou/

Tamara Drewe, Feb. 1-3 • Marwencol, Feb. 1-3 • Enter the Void, Feb. 4-10 • Poison, Feb. 4-10 • Split Sides, Feb. 6 • Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, Feb. 4-5 • Oscar Shorts: Animated, Feb. 11-17 • Oscar Shorts: Live-Action, Feb. 11-17 • Disco Dolls in Hot Skin, Feb. 11-12 • Inside Job, Feb. 18-24 • Henri-Georges Cluzot's Inferno, Feb. 18-24 • Mulholland Drive, Feb. 18-19 • Jean-Michel Basquiat: The Radiant Child, Feb. 24 • 48-Hour Film Race: Screening Festival, Feb. 24 • Four Lions, Feb. 25-3 • Waste Land, Feb. 25-3 • Annie Hall, Feb. 25-26 • 83rd Annual Academy Awards Broadcast, Feb. 27

Old Capitol Museum

Pentacrest, Iowa City

www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap

See website for locations

CHAOS AND CREATION Film Series: A Grin Without a Cat, The Sixth Side of The Pentagon, Feb. 20, 1:30 p.m.

KIDS

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids

www.crma.org

Doodlebugs: Have a Ball!, Feb. 4, 10:30 a.m. • Smart Saturdays, Feb. 5, 10:30 a.m. • Pajama Storytime: Clifford the Big Red Dog, Feb. 10, 7 p.m. • Pajama Storytime: The Cat in the Hat, Feb. 24, 7 p.m. • Doodlebugs: Fluttering Butterflies at the

Hiawatha Public Library, 10:30 a.m. • Pop-Up Book Show-and-Tell, Feb. 27, 1 p.m.

Figge Art Museum

225 West Second St., Davenport

<http://figgeart.org/>

Family Event: Full Steam Ahead!, Feb. 5, 12 p.m.

Iowa City Public Library

123 South Linn St. Iowa City

www.icpl.org

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

Old Capitol Museum

Pentacrest, Iowa City

www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap

See website for locations

HiStory Time for kids! : Abraham Lincoln, Feb. 12, 1:30 p.m.

Red Cedar Chamber Music

www.redcedar.org

See website for locations

Music for Kids, Feb. 25, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

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

Celebrate Africa!, Feb. 5 • Homeschool Day, Feb. 16

Amana Heritage Museum

<http://www.amanaheritage.org/>

705 44th Ave, Village of Amana

Lecture Series: Janet Zuber, Feb. 1, 7 p.m. • Lecture Series: Peter Hoehnle, Feb. 8, 7 p.m. • Lecture Series: Jon Childers, Feb. 15, 7 p.m. • Lecture Series: Brandi Jones, Feb. 22, 7 p.m.

Brucemore

2160 Linden Drive SE, Cedar Rapids

www.brucemore.org

Home Sweet Home: Red Cedar Chamber Music, Feb. 25-26, 8 p.m.

Green Drinks

<http://www.greendrinks.org/IA/IowaCity>

See website for details

Informal gathering every second Thursday of the month

Meetup at The Red Avocado, Feb. 10, 5:30 p.m.

SOUP

913 E. Jefferson St., Iowa City

www.publicspaceone.com/soup/

See website for details

SOUP: Eat Soup, Fund a Project, Feb. 6, 7 p.m.

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Curses, Foiled Again

- When a woman reported that a man exposed himself to her and her children, police in Mesa, Ariz., knocked on the apartment door of upstairs neighbor Michael Polley, 55. He answered with his pants still around his ankles. Court records noted he became “immediately angry” at being interrupted and began cursing at the officers, who arrested him. (Phoenix’s *The Arizona Republic*)
- Police said Jerome Taylor, 20, entered a restaurant in Hartford, Conn., wearing a mask, pulled what looked like a gun on the cooks and demanded money. The cooks refused and grabbed their knives. Taylor promptly apologized and insisted it was all just a joke, and anyway, the “gun” was only an iPhone. (Hartford’s WVIT-TV)



Police alerted to the theft of a 50-inch television off a delivery truck in Auburn, Wash., arrested Johnathon Barnes, 22, whom they spotted right outside the police station pushing a shopping cart containing the stolen set. (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*)

Melodious Mutants

Japanese scientists started breeding mice that sing like birds. The researchers at the University of Osaka genetically engineered the mice as part of their “Evolved Mouse Project,” which accelerates mutations to see what develops. “We checked the newly born mice one by one,” lead researcher Arikuni Uchimura said. “One day we found a mouse that was singing like a bird.” He explained the “singing mouse” was a random mutation but that the trait has been used to breed 100 of them so far and will be used to breed more like it. “I was surprised because I had been expecting mice that are different in physical shape,” Uchimura said, adding that the project had also produced “a mouse with short limbs and a tail like a dachshund.” (Agence France-Presse)

Video Games in Real Life

A 23-year-old man was hospitalized in Anderson, S.C., after an SUV hit him while playing a real-life version of the arcade game “Frogger,” where players move frogs through traffic. The victim had been discussing the game with his friends, said Chief Jimmy Dixon, who said the man suddenly yelled “go” and darted into oncoming traffic in the four-lane highway. (Associated Press)

Transparent Scheme

Mary Evano pleaded guilty in a Massachusetts court to 23 counts of filing false insurance claims after she and her husband intentionally ate glass particles. The couple collected more than \$200,000 for claims filed against restaurants, hotels and grocery stores from 1997 to 2005. The couple owes more than \$100,000 in medical bills. (Associated Press)

Drinking-Class Heroes

- Defense attorney Tom Hudson helped his client beat DUI charges after the prosecution presented law enforcement video of Ronald Deveau at a DUI stop in Sarasota, Fla. Hudson hired a private investigator to videotape on-duty law enforcement officers making the same driving mistakes that officers cite as reasons for suspicion: wide turns, crossing double yellow lines and riding on lane markers. After comparing videos, Judge David Denkin declared that Deveau’s drifting was insufficient evidence of impaired driving and dismissed the charges. (Sarasota’s *Herald-Tribune*)
- A Ukrainian entertainment firm in Dneprodzerzhinsk now offers drinking buddies for hire. “It is a pleasant companion who can enliven a boring evening,” Yulia Peyeva, head of Kind Fairy, which also organizes weddings and birthdays. “Virtually all of our people are talented. They can play guitar, sing or recite poetry. Today you may want to talk about art and tomorrow to read Faust.” (Agence France-Presse)

Litigation Nation

After two men shot each other in a bar in New Kensington, Pa., one of them, Thomas Galloway, 42, sued the bar and its owner, claiming negligence because patrons weren’t searched for weapons before entering. Both men were armed, and Galloway was convicted of illegally possessing a weapon. A federal judge dismissed the suit. (Associated Press)

Predictable Results

When Jermaine Grosse, 26, was released from an involuntary psychiatric hold in Contra Costa County, Calif., he agreed to share a cab with a woman who’d also been released. When the taxi delivered them to the woman’s destination, Grosse asked the driver to help her with her luggage, then got behind the wheel and drove off. Police arrested Grosse the next day when they got a call from the Department of Motor Vehicles that he was trying to register the cab in his name. (*Contra Costa Times*)

Reasonable Explanations

- When police accused Michael Elias, 28, of half a dozen home burglaries in San Antonio, Texas, he explained he had to keep committing the burglaries so he could afford to pay his attorney \$150 a week to keep him out of jail. (San Antonio’s KSAT-TV)
- Police who arrested William Liston, 33, in suburban Cleveland on suspicion of driving drunk said he explained, “Ozzy Osbourne and his music made me do it.” (Cleveland’s WJW-TV)

All Runways Lead to Russia

Earth’s magnetic north pole is moving toward Russia at the rate of nearly 40 miles a year. Scientists attribute the shift to magnetic changes in the planet’s core. One consequence of the shift was the closing of Florida’s Tampa International Airport for one week to renumber its main north-south runway to reflect its new magnetic alignment. (*The Tampa Tribune*)

Bottom-Line Justice

Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour freed sisters Gladys and Jamie Scott, who had served 16 years of their life sentences for armed robbery, on the condition that Gladys, 36, donate a kidney to Jamie, 38, who requires dialysis. Barbour explained he decided to order their release so the state wouldn’t have to pay for Jamie Scott’s treatment. (Reuters)

The Eyes Have It

Prince Frederic Von Anhalt, 68, the husband of celebrity Zsa Zsa Gabor, glued an eye shut when he accidentally grabbed his wife’s nail glue instead of eye drops. “It was stupid,” Von Anhalt said after a doctor at an eye clinic in Beverly Hills, Calif., repaired the damage. Gabor, 93, suffered a similar eye injury years ago, according to her daughter, Francesca Hilton, when she mistakenly used “crazy glue” on her eyelashes. (CNN)

Price of Denial

A military jury at Fort Meade, Md., sentenced Lt. Col. Terrance Lakin to six months in military prison and dismissal from the Army after he disobeyed orders to deploy to Afghanistan because he doubts whether President Barack Obama was born in the United States and therefore questions his eligibility to be commander in chief. He said he would have gladly deployed if Obama’s original birth certificate were released and proved authentic. (Associated Press)

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

Are brown bottles better for beer?

The current ad campaign for Samuel Adams beer makes the somewhat dubious claim that the company's beer, stored in brown bottles, is better preserved than beer in—eww!—clear or green bottles. So, time to break out your beakers (and beer bottles) and tell me if there is any validity to this claim, or if it's just the usual marketing babble.

—David

Although we spurn outright trivia, David, we recognize that some of the questions we deal with at the *Straight Dope* are more consequential than others. The theory of relativity, species collapse, and so on . . . this is the stuff of party chatter. Every so often, however, we get to settle one of the great questions of our times. Today is such a day.

Despite the occasional introduction of civet feces (no joke) or other eccentric ingredients, beer is an essentially simple product, typically made from water, malted grains, yeast, and hops. These seemingly uncomplicated fixings give rise to more than 600 volatile compounds, with chemical reactions continuing the entire time the beer ages. As with most chemical reactions, heat speeds them up, as can the energy in light. Some of these reactions can yield a mellower flavor.

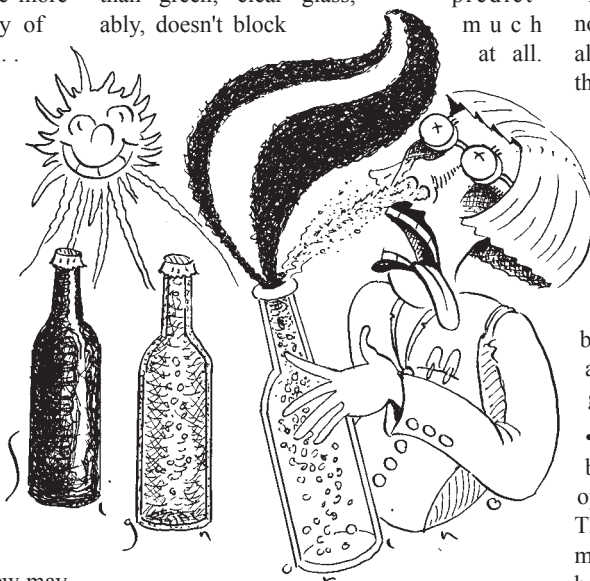
Too much light, however, and your brew may be "lightstruck," meaning you get skunky beer.

The first reference to lightstruck beer dates from 1875, but the cause was unknown until the late 20th century. The culprit: hops. You may ask: what *are* hops, anyway? I confess to being a little vague on the subject myself. Hops are the conelike flowers of the climbing plant *Humulus lupulus*, used to give beer its bitter flavor. When light reacts with certain hop-derived compounds, it creates a variety of unpleasant-smelling and -tasting chemicals, the biggie being 3-methyl-2-butene-1-thiol, or MBT.

There are several ways to prevent beer from becoming lightstruck: brew it without hops,

use light-resistant hop extract instead, or add antioxidants. Since all these things affect the taste, though, most brewers prefer to simply keep the beer away from light. Packaging beer in cans is one obvious solution, but beer snobs historically have shunned cans, claiming they impart a metallic taste. Modern high-tech coatings have largely allayed such concerns, and some now claim cans are the ideal way to package beer.

But you asked about glass. Colored glass can filter out both visible and ultraviolet light. Brown glass tends to block more light than green; clear glass, predictably, doesn't block much at all.



Since dark beers absorb more light than light beers, it's essential to store stouts, bocks, and the like in brown bottles, while lighter beers can be happy in green ones.

Or so goes the theory. To see how things worked out in practice, we turned, as so often, to the lab. My assistants Una and Fierri, both experienced home brewers, cooked up a batch of extra-hoppy German-style beer which they dubbed "Cecil's Dopetoberfest," containing a modest 4.6 percent alcohol by volume. They bottled it in brown, green, and clear glass and let it age for six weeks in a cool basement.

Next they grouped the bottles into five sets of three (each comprising one bottle of each color) and left them outdoors in direct sunlight for different lengths of time, keeping

control samples safely hidden. The five groups of bottles were exposed to three, eight, 24, 48, and 72 hours of sunlight respectively. Thanks to cold weather, keeping the bottles cool while in the sun wasn't a problem, although incursions by squirrels and possums required occasional intervention. After their time in the sun, the bottles from each group plus several control bottles were refrigerated to 35 degrees Fahrenheit and sampled in a double-blind taste test.

Results:

- After three hours of sun exposure there was no significant difference among the beers, although both testers rated the control beer the least palatable. Which isn't so odd—some research suggests exceedingly small amounts of MBT can improve beer flavor.
- After eight hours of sun the clear-bottled beer had developed a skunky odor and a bitter chemical taste. The other bottles were judged uniformly good.
- After 24 hours of sun, the clear-bottled beer produced a strong skunky odor and a taste Fierri noted as "Ewwwww!" The green-bottled beer started to taste metallic.
- After 48 hours, the clear-bottled beer became still more disgusting, and upon opening could be smelled from six feet away. The green-bottled beer had acquired a strong metallic taste—Una, summoning her inner barbarian, could choke it down, but not Fierri. The brown-bottled beer remained indistinguishable from the control.
- After 72 hours in the sun, even the brown-bottled beer was starting to go.


Conclusions: (1) In this world of mendacity and fraud, at least one ad claim has a basis in fact—brown bottles do protect beer better than green or clear. (2) Notwithstanding (1), in the war of beer versus sun, don't bet against the sun.


—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 FEBRUARY 2011


FOR EVERYONE—The gap. February is a point of departure for all of us. The past is pretty much gone. Necessity drives us forward. We can clearly sense new and encouraging opportunities. However, there is also a distinct gap between where we are now and where we need to be. We will all have to make a leap, take a chance, to reach our new starting point. Even when we reach our new starting point, though, a great deal will remain to be done. A lot of gaps will still need to be filled, a lot of unknowns defined. We kind of have to figure things out as best we can, then trust a little bit to luck. Have a little faith in ourselves, each other and the future.


 **ARIES**—Anchors aweigh. February brings a point of departure for Aries. A major phase in your life is fast ending. You will eventually cut all mental and emotional ties to this time as you go in search of broader horizons and greener pastures. Your excitement is contagious and your commitment inspires confidence. You will find the transition easier than you might have feared, too. However, you might want to take the early stages of this new enterprise in low gear. It would be a little too easy to get ahead of yourself.


 **TAURUS**—Strong currents. Your social center of gravity is shifting. The details are fuzzy, but it's clear that the financial and professional currents are carrying you in a particular direction, irresistibly so. Many of those you hoped would come along aren't quite on board; some never will be. Those who do come along will need constant coaxing and coaching. It's not worth holding on too tightly or forcing anyone's hand. Some need to go their own way. In any case, new faces will appear and new alliances will begin to form.


 **GEMINI**—Point man. Your superiors are quietly designing policies and shuffling personnel to best cope with unfolding events. Their plans will probably work out, but they won't necessarily go down easy. You are surprisingly well-suited and well-positioned to facilitate these changes. You might think you are performing a simple diplomatic chore, a bit of routine people-handling. In reality, you're helping lay the foundation for a lasting and beneficial new system. Without your people-handling skills and your charisma, which is very strong right now, this transition would be much harder for all concerned.

 **CANCER**—Keep a sharp eye out. There certainly is a lot of important stuff going on, but it's mostly happening to other people, and out of your control. The outcome will affect you, but you should be able to sidestep any adverse consequences. Watch for anything that affects your interests—like income, job security or professional relationships—and react accordingly. Key players in your life have a surprising degree of influence in the situation. They also stand to profit from what's happening. They can help protect your interests, too.

 **LEO**—Relationships in transition. Behind-the-scenes power plays are introducing a bunch of wild cards and unknowns at work. Changes are coming and you probably won't like all of them. However, new and potentially profitable alliances are coming into being; many are related to new opportunities. It's still early days, true, but the opportunities will keep on coming and some will definitely pan out. The most immediate challenge will be keeping your head on straight and your heart strong. Job changes could be very confusing and shifting loyalties could cause heartache.


 **VIRGO**—Power and influence. It's nice to be on good terms with high-powered decision makers. It's also good to have leverage over developing situations at work. However, you are bound to find yourself in awkward spots as you see the effects of your influence on others. Time spent learning how to help others cope with changes you helped plan would be time well-spent. You'll have plenty of need for such skills. The years ahead will see nonstop change and you will frequently have an influential say in managing that change.


 **LIBRA**—Social safety nets. Tensions in the home and family area are peaking; work issues are not helping. It's worrisome. Events could force your hand. But relations with close friends and youngsters are especially strong and creative areas are vibrant. You should easily find good ways around any limitations you're feeling in financial areas, personal energy levels or health issues. These lucky breaks will lead to lasting stability and security. Recent changes have been kind of rough, but you will soon find yourself in greater harmony with the forces of change.

 **SCORPIO**—Pushing the envelope. A complicated month for Scorpio. What others find easy and reassuring could seem inconvenient and unsettling to you. And vice versa. Also, when others prefer practical, grounded solutions, you are drawn to unconventional, idealistic and, well, otherworldly approaches. You might feel outnumbered. Not to worry. Scorpio will have a surprising degree of influence over long-term trends. Socially, you could find yourself distanced from some old associates and more strongly drawn to new people. You will soon be able to draw greater comfort from spiritual sources.

 **SAGITTARIUS**—Choose carefully. Many powerful forces—spiritual, psychological, economic, political—are keeping relationships fluid, now. People are open to new friendships, new business partners, new lovers. Much of this is very positive and will lead to solid, productive, profitable new alliances. But Sagittarius must be careful—not simply because a lot of the rhetoric and a lot of the opportunities won't pan out. Sagittarian concerns go beyond establishing a successful business arrangement. You need to get the spirituality, the psychology—all the unwritten parts of new relationships—just right.

 **CAPRICORN**—Loyalty tests. The pressures of necessity don't mesh neatly with new opportunities. You'll have to adjust your expectations, and your strategy. Some personal loyalties are pulling you in still other directions. You can't reconcile all these conflicting pressures completely. These pressures will linger indefinitely; you can't wait them out. It's probably time to expand personal and professional support networks in response to emerging realities. The forces of change will also be affecting your home. However, even amidst all this change, your home will remain a source of comfort and strength.

 **AQUARIUS**—Threshold. You appear stable, poised and self-possessed; inwardly, you are anything but. You are brooding about issues vital to your well-being. There don't seem to be any obvious solution, but there will be possibilities. Your influence and your range of involvements will soon expand very significantly. Let these vital personal concerns direct your path as this varied and eventful future unfolds. Without this focus on core concerns, the future could all too easily become a long series of distractions that leads you further away from the solutions you want.

 **PISCES**—Step by step. First, the bad news: pressure related to long-term debt, insurance costs and retirement savings is forcing a big re-think of long-term goals. The good news: worry and uncertainty over your prospects will fade. You will feel more secure and confident. Motivation will surge. You'll have the resolve you need to tackle the future. You are also in an expansive phase. However, the future is turning into a confusing place; with all the luck and motivation in the world, you would still need to plan—and act—very carefully.

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