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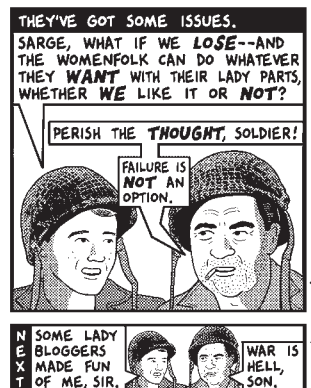
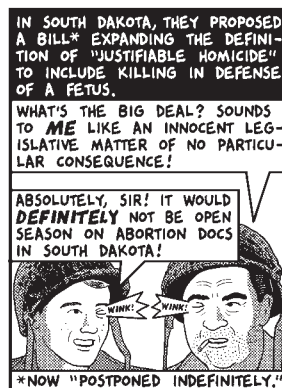
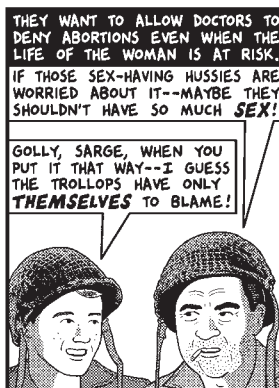
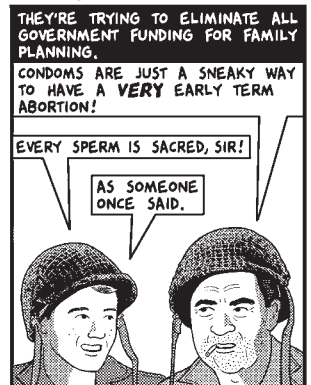
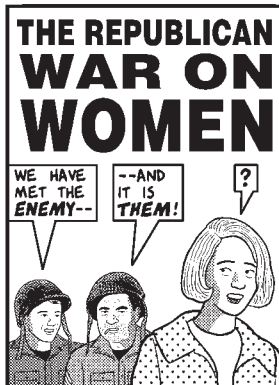
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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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Where
has all

THE

GOOGLE

gone?

Change is coming to downtown Iowa City. Since the “21” referendum last fall, this mantra has been chanted incessantly by people from all sides of the issue. For better or worse, change has *already* come to downtown Iowa City, with the closure of several bars.

Honestly, I don’t want to enter the mainstream of the fray on this debate. The obvious issues have been argued, and continue to be argued, *ad infinitum*—or *ad nauseam*, depending on what mood I’m in. But whenever change comes to downtown Iowa City—and change is always coming to our city center—one issue always concerns me: our storefronts.

This concern randomly bubbled up into my consciousness recently as I was walking on Washington Street near the Java House.

There was a lighted marquee that added a somewhat garish but endearing kind of visual excitement to Washington Street. ✨

Looking across the street, I gazed upon the gray expanse of the US Bank building extending into the middle of the block and I remembered what used to be there: The Astro Theater. When I attended graduate school at the University of Iowa I from 1986-1991, the Astro Theater was still in operation. An old single-screen commercial movie house, the Astro was hardly a wonder palace. But it was one of five commercial movie screens providing the kind of entertainment now

nonexistent downtown (and yes, this was the era of the notorious wall-down-the-middle “double” screen at the Englert!). Aside from the devastating loss of the movie business in the business and cultural center of our community (I’m leaving the Bijou out of this discussion), the disappearance of the Astro also erased a chunk of the lively variety of architectural façades in downtown Iowa City.

Granted, neither the outside nor inside of the Astro were comparable to even the modest grandeur of the Englert across the street. But there was a lighted marquee that added a somewhat garish but endearing kind of visual excitement to Washington Street. Multiple glass doors at street level bookended by glass-encased one-sheets marked the invitation to partake of Hollywood’s latest brilliance—or dreck. On summer nights, when the doors weren’t hurriedly closed against the cold, the warm smell of popcorn wafted to the sidewalk.

Today, that active pop-cultural storefront has been cemented and glassed over by the gray extension of the US Bank building. The same thing happened on the other side of the building along Dubuque Street at some point. I don’t begrudge the bank’s success that allowed for expansion. But we must always consider losses as well as gains as “progress” ensues.

In the chapter entitled “The Corporatisation of Cities” in his book *The Modern Urban Landscape* (1987), Edward Relph discusses what happens when corporate towers expand in cities: “Individual buildings . . . merge into an architectural mass of similar towers. . . .

At street level the chief impression is one of monolithic austerity. . . . The larger they are the less detail they have. They have often taken over whole city blocks formerly occupied by a multitude of different shops, replacing detailed architectural textures and on-street vitality with great blank facades and deserted plazas. This elimination of texture and variety from city streets has proceeded in a lock-step fashion with the change from mostly small to mostly big business that has taken place in capitalist economies in the past hundred years, and particularly since 1945.” One other result from this elimination of texture and variety: “This visible change has been accompanied by a shift of activity from outside on the street to inside in offices and enclosed shopping malls” (169-170).

This is exactly how I feel walking through much of downtown Chicago, Minneapolis and even Omaha—endless expanses of concrete and glass with little architectural interest, in large part because the human scale has been lost. Architectural detail (if any) has been

I don’t begrudge the bank’s success that allowed for expansion. But we must always consider losses as well as gains as “progress” ensues. ✨

expanded to a massive canvas that emphasizes the skyscraper rather than street. We see this happening in Iowa City, writ smaller. We’ve lost the Astro and several other storefronts at Washington and Dubuque. The Old Capitol Mall and its parking ramp replaced two full city blocks of visual and cultural interest with plains of brown brick and gray concrete. Urban renewal in the 1970s replaced the big ol’ late 19th century Odd Fellows Hall with the monolithic Plaza Centre One. History says many of these old buildings had deteriorated beyond repair and could not be salvaged. OK, fine. But PCO is already four decades old and I don’t hear much admiration for its featureless 1970s vibe.

We’ve lost this material vibrancy and heritage on a smaller scale, too. If my memory serves me correctly, the old Mott’s Drug Store on Dubuque Street—aside from its incomparable international newspaper and magazine collection that is no longer anywhere to be

found—boasted an art-deco-type storefront, as did a shoe store on Washington Street where the Record Collector eventually opened. Z'Marik's Noodle Café now lives in Mott's space and Mama's Deli occupies the shoe-

This is exactly how I feel walking through much of downtown Chicago, Minneapolis and even Omaha—endless expanses of concrete and glass with little architectural interest, in large part because the human scale has been lost. ★

store/old-Record-Collector location. Those are fine establishments—and both have tasteful storefronts (and insides)—but, in some ways, the historical and aesthetic variety of downtown would have remained more colorful if those old deco faces had been preserved, as the Soap Opera has done on the Ped Mall.

Granted, the Astro Theater itself had an altered façade. Its movie-house predecessor in that location was the Varsity Theater, which displayed a modest yet cool art deco front before the Sputnik-era “Astro” turned it into pale “Googie” style. And I’m not even sure what the Varsity’s predecessor, the Garden Theater, built by William Englert himself, looked like. Yet any of those frontages would offer at least a visual palette connecting us better to history, heritage and human scale—even the Astro’s funky space-age veneer.

Downtown’s changes in the wake of the 21 ordinance will be wide-ranging, from the retail to the cultural landscapes, in terms of both economic development and community

Iowa City has maintained much of its historical and street-level individuality, for which I am grateful, but we’ve also lost a lot of it. ★

character. I’m also concerned, however, about the most immediate landscape—the visual one, the architectural one. Iowa City has maintained much of its historical and street-level individuality, for which I am grateful, but we’ve also lost a lot of it. As new businesses fill in the gaps that closed bars have left, I hope that we don’t experience further flattening and erasure of what Edward Relph called “on-street vitality.” **IV**

Thomas Dean remembers seeing the first Michael Keaton Batman movie in the Astro.

shop **drawer thirteen**

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FEBRUARY

THE MONTH THAT WAS

"MURAL"

Jackson Pollock's "Mural" was up for sale, then it wasn't. This was an interesting cause for Republican House Appropriations Committee Chairman Scott Raecker, but we've got a theory about why he felt compelled to pick this particular fight.

The top donor to Raecker's electoral campaigns is the Associated General Contractors of Iowa. The fourth-largest is the Master Builders of Iowa. Pollock knocked down a wall in his apartment to accommodate the canvas on which "Mural" was painted. Without employing a licensed, bonded, union-trained carpenter.

This was payback. Or maybe just a bad idea.

DONATION STATIONS

Since summer, panhandlers needn't go to the trouble of speaking with visitors to the Ped Mall. Instead, they've been anxiously waiting the first biannual distribution of funds from the cheery purple parking meters installed this summer. And what a score! The Free Medical Clinic, Johnson County Crisis Center and Free Lunch Program each received \$260, with the possibility of slightly more or less in a year.

Those are all great organizations and each of them can do wonders with a couple of bucks.

We just wonder why the donation stations were ever presented as alternatives to the traditional means of change distribution. A good idea's a good idea and we, in the People's Republic of Johnson

County, have kicked in to the meters at a 33 percent greater clip per-capita than folks in Denver, whose donation stations inspired ours. But they're not convincing anodynes to the misgivings some of us had about the panhandling

ordinance's First Amendment implications. Positing the purple parking meters as a complete alternative to panhandling carries with it more than a whiff of not-in-my-backyard. And the Ped Mall is *our* backyard.

DOWNTOWN

Problem is, backyards aren't often thriving commercial zones. Our downtown has taken hits from the Old Capitol Mall, the Coralville strip and Coral Ridge Mall, and it has countered by...well, mostly by spawning new bars. Thanks to the 21 ordinance and increasing attention to good-character guidelines for owners, a liquor license isn't a license to print money in our town these days. Downtown's going to change and somewhat soon, and no one knows exactly how.

But we can start reading the tea leaves. On February 16, developer John Millar delivered a presentation in the Old Capitol Center on "The Hidden Economies in College Towns." Invited by a group of business owners, local developers, City Council and University of Iowa officials, Millar challenged his audience to think of ways that downtown Iowa City can attract retail business on a larger scale than it has in the past. Millar cut his

lifestyle retail shops and restaurants, high-end condominiums, town homes, and 'game day' condos for visitors, alumni and residents."

City Manager Tom Markus may have been listening intently to Millar. Markus has some ideas about replacing "big-box bars" (his apt phrase) with larger retail stores than our downtown has been able or willing to attract. Think Anthropologie. Markus favors a more deliberate, more intentionally planned approach than Iowa City has traditionally taken to business development and, while he's said all the right things about listening to the community, you



Downtown's going to change and somewhat soon, and no one knows exactly how.

can bet that when he sees a need for developing downtown's business environment he's going to come up with a comprehensive plan for doing so.

MAKEOVER

Downtown Iowa City can be developed up (by tearing down buildings and replacing them with more 14-story towers) or out (by expanding the boundaries of what we consider "downtown.") Capital improvements to the Northside Marketplace are underway, but plopping large retail outlets into that neighborhood would damage its charm and threaten the character of the nearby residential area. East of downtown lies another important residential zone and west lies the university. Which leaves south.

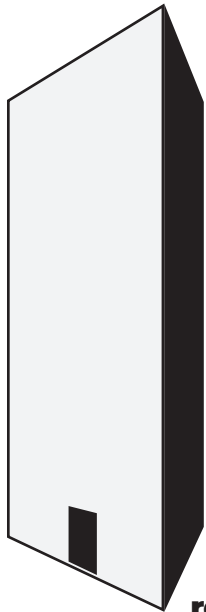
The area extending directly south of Burlington Street from downtown is officially called the Near Southside, an ambitious new plan calls it Riverfront Crossing and you might also hear SoBu, SoBur or, further south of Bowery, SoBo. Whatever you call it, it's a patchily developed region and it's where the retail-



The Free Medical Clinic, Johnson County Crisis Center and Free Lunch Program each received \$260.

teeth developing mixed-use shopping malls that incorporate office and residential spaces. His college town projects have run to creating "town centers" away from downtown. Promotional materials for an effort on the outskirts of State College, PA, claim it to be "the heart of a 1,250-acre planned community, with upscale,

For more on the current status of Riverfront Crossings, see [PAGE 12](#)



development and alumni-condo crowd is likely to look.

A proposal to reshape this area was approved in 1995, but the plan was never fully carried out. The Riverfront Crossings project imagines plenty of green space and floodwater-absorbing wetlands, a host of new mixed-use residential/office/retail buildings and lots of parking for all those

Some folks in town notably relish the idea of living twelve stories up in steel and glass.

folks living twelve stories up in steel and glass.

Some folks in town notably relish the idea of living twelve stories up in steel and glass. Others of us can't quite warm to the notion, not in Iowa City. One thing's for sure: Our downtown and surrounding areas are in for major changes and soon. Now's the time to speak up, to speak loudly and to keep at it. **lv**

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

Left Hand Brewing Company Milk Stout

BREW OF THE MONTH: MARCH

Not only does the March equinox mark the change of seasons, the transition to spring swings beer cravings back toward the light, citrusy and often hoppier brews enjoyed during T-shirt and shorts weather. But screw that. There is tons of time for IPAs and hefeweizens later. March means St. Patrick's Day, when the Chicago River turns a lighter green and Irish stout reigns supreme.

But instead of drinking one of the Irish Big Three—Guinness, Murphy's or Beamish—I recommend honoring Saint Patrick by raising a pint of Milk Stout, brewed by the Left Hand Brewing Company.

Milk Stout is a tasty compromise: It offers the bitter, roasted coffee and chocolate characteristics dark beer hardliners expect and the "stout light" creaminess and mass drinkability offered by the Big Three. When poured into a pint glass, Milk Stout is a jet black that is a shade away from being opaque. Out of a bottle, a couple fingers of creamy, tan head develop and dissipate slowly to leave a bubbly lacing, thin film and ring around the edge. On draft, a thick, Guinness-like cap rises and keeps its form throughout the pint.

Milk Stout has a delicious chocolate aroma, which is a blend of both roasted dark chocolate and sweet milk chocolate. Along with a subtle roasted coffee presence, a little vanilla, toffee and nutmeg are mixed in as well. The mouthfeel is very smooth and creamy and the taste has a backbone of roasted chocolate and coffee malts. However, the bitterness, which scares many away from stout, is countered and balanced with the sweetness of milk chocolate and milk.

Casey Wagner

BREWER: Left Hand Brewing Company of Longmont, Colorado.

STYLE: Milk/Sweet Stout.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 6 percent ABV.

FOOD PAIRINGS: Anything with chocolate will make a good pairing, but Left Hand offers two recipes using Milk Stout on its website (www.lefthandbrewing.com): Chocolate Milk Stout Cake and Milk Stout Barbecue Sauce on Beef Short Ribs.

WHERE TO BUY: John's Grocery, New Pioneer Food Co-op and most area Hy-Vee stores. Milk Stout is also on tap at the Hideaway (310 East Prentiss St.)

PRICE: \$10 per six-pack.



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JAMIE POWERS

Pastry Chef and Owner of
Deluxe Cakes and Pastries



Photos by Bill Adams

the
LAST WORD

on cupcakes

Cupcakes certainly are in the air these days. Iowa City High School's *Little Hawk* featured them in February, *Little Village* celebrated issue 100 by making cupcakes for the cover and I've personally been trying to master the art of the cupcake all winter long.

I acquired a wide array of cupcake paraphernalia ranging from cupcake cookbooks to frosting spatulas to gel icing coloring (for those days when regular food coloring just doesn't cut it). But all too often, when it came to the cake itself, I let Betty Crocker do the dirty work.

Now, don't get me wrong, Ms. Crocker has perfected the art of the 20-minute dessert. Her cupcakes are suitable for a Friday night in with friends watching *The Notebook*. They're like kittens—easy enough to take care of, with a charming personality. But lately, I'm seeking the lion of cupcakes. A "coming-of-age" cupcake, so to speak. Something you might see on a silver-lined cake stand in a patisserie in France. Something that looks almost too good to eat. The *perfect* cupcake.

This sort of endeavor should not be attempted alone. No, this is a time to call in the experts. Cue Deluxe Cakes and Pastries (812 S. Summit St.), Iowa City's gourmet neighborhood bakery.

Don't let the baby pink walls and darling décor fool you; this place means business. The bakery offers an extensive menu that will woo even the biggest dessert snobs and put your grandma's repertoire to shame. From tarts to petit-fours to the ultra-trendy French macarons, look no further.

Only high-quality ingredients cut it in this haven of heavenly desserts. As Pastry Chef and Owner Jamie Powers says, "The most

important thing for me in baking is using the best ingredients possible." Deluxe goes through an impressive 7,800 pounds of sugar and 2,340 pounds of butter each year!

Powers created her bakery from the bottom up—literally. The business originated in her basement before moving into an old art gallery on Summit Street in 2003. Deluxe is now snuggled into a neighborhood that's removed from Iowa City's downtown area, an aspect that adds to its charm.

"There are no neighborhood places anymore. They're gone. There are no neighborhood coffee shops. I just wanted to bring that back to life and connect people in that way," says Powers.

On my quest for the perfect cupcake, Powers shared her abundant and not-so-sugar-coated knowledge.

Lately, I'm seeking the lion of cupcakes.

LESSON #1: All cupcakes are not created equal. Sure, I knew that I had a choice between Betty Crocker and Duncan Hines, but chocolate ganache versus buttercream? Sanding sugar versus toasted cashews? The crash course in cupcakes had begun.

LESSON #2: The perfect cupcake does not exist. Well this was enough to make me want to throw in the towel (or throw in a box mix of brownies and eat half the pan). Luckily, I avoided a letdown (and a sugar coma) when I learned that while there is not a single perfect *cupcake*, there are some darn

amazing *cupcakes* out there that everyone should taste at least once.

Deluxe generously offered up the how-to on not one, but two different cupcakes.

The first is the crowd-pleasing red velvet topped with fluffy vanilla buttercream. The red velvet has an attitude. It is a vixen of a cupcake. But, with its cutesy pink frosting, the Deluxe version reminds me of a young child saying a curse word. Adorable, right? (Unless said child is your offspring, and then it's just naughty.) Powers is less metaphorical in her affections: "What I love about red velvet is it's the moistest cake in the bakery. It's got a lot of sugar in the frosting and the cake is really smooth," she says. The red velvet is

Deluxe's best-selling cupcake, winning customers with its charmingly good looks and then, again, after they take a bite.

The second cupcake is Powers' personal favorite: a chocolate buttermilk cake with

a chocolate ganache and vanilla buttercream swirl. What makes this cupcake extraordinary isn't simply the sweet and salty combo, but the garnish. Powers tops this one with homemade toffee and toasted cashews. If you aren't up for making your own toffee—let's be honest, we can only conquer so many culinary adventures in one day—Powers suggests buying a locally made toffee or topping with your favorite candy bar.

After digging into both desserts the verdict was clear: mission accomplished. These are two seriously sinful treats that you need to try for yourself. Make a batch if you want to impress at a dinner party, craft circle...heck, you don't actually need an excuse to make these. It may even be more convenient if you don't have an event to take them to, just in case you decide to hoard the entire batch for yourself. Make them to celebrate your graduation from the box mix—just make sure you reward yourself for a job well-done with... a cupcake, or five.

Make your treat showcase-worthy with a few tips from the pros:

GET EQUIPPED

Pastry bags, star tips, and flat tips (all tools for creating that professional frosting job) are available at Ace Hardware.

ICE, ICE BABY

To frost, spoon heaps of frosting into the bag and squeeze a small bit out to get rid of the air. Fold your pastry bag over like you're rolling up your sleeve and squeeze onto the cupcake in a fluid, circular motion.

TOP IT OFF

- Powers perfects the red velvet cupcake by rolling the frosting in sanding sugar and topping with a raspberry.
- Coat the bottom of your chocolate frosting with any kind of toasted nut (*pictured: cashews*). Top the frosting with a piece of toffee or your favorite candy bar. **lv**

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

**RED VELVET CAKE**

- 2½ C. Cake Flour
- 2T. Cocoa
- 1t. Salt
- 1½ C. Sugar
- 1½ C. Vegetable Oil
- 2 Eggs
- 1T. Red Food Coloring
- 1t. Vanilla
- 1C. Buttermilk
- 1½ t. Baking Soda
- 2t. White Vinegar

Directions-----

1. In 5 qt. bowl with whisk, add oil, eggs, red coloring and vanilla.
2. Combine cocoa, cake flour, sugar and salt.
3. Alternate adding dry ingredients with buttermilk.
4. Mix soda and vinegar then quickly add to mix.
5. Mix for 2 minutes on medium speed, scraping down bowl.
6. Pour into cupcake tins and bake at 300° until done.

VANILLA FROSTING

- 2 stx. Butter
- 8C. Powdered Sugar
- ½ C. Whole Milk
- 1t. Vanilla

Directions-----

1. In 5 qt. bowl with paddle, cream butter and sugar.
2. Add the milk and vanilla, and paddle until light and fluffy.



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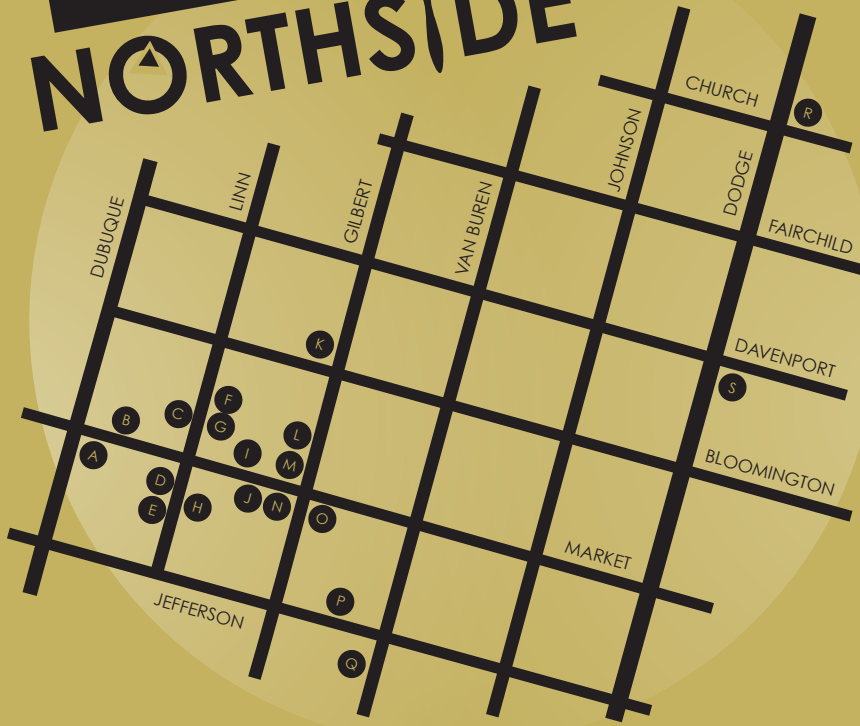
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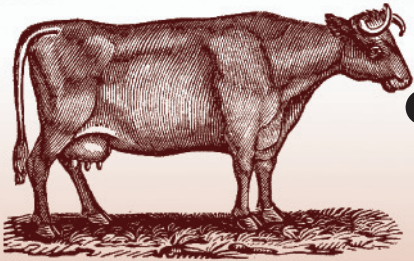
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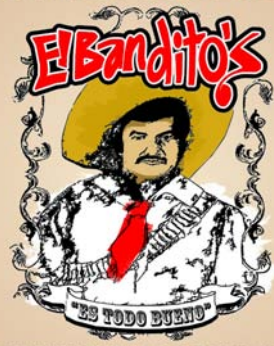
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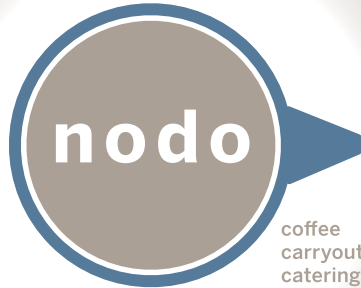
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S



STROLLIN'
Proposed riverfront
residential courtyard

Illustrations courtesy of HDR, Inc and the City of Iowa City

“I hear it all the time,” said local realtor Clay Claussen. “People want to live close to downtown, but not in the heart of the party district.” Unfortunately, he says that demand is not being met. “I’ve got a guy that’s been looking for a year and a half who wants to be close to downtown, but there aren’t a lot of options,” he said.

Iowa City’s Riverfront Crossings district, an area just south of the downtown core, could be the answer this unlucky house hunter has been searching for. Riverfront Crossings

City drawings attract a lot of interest and a little bit of ire, but will they attract developers?

(or RivCo, as us wannabe hipsters call it) has been in the redevelopment spotlight since a federal planning grant prompted a series of public meetings in late 2009. Recently released plans now provide a more focused vision of how this area could meet downtown’s growing residential and retail needs.

On January 27, more than 140 people packed into the Iowa City Public Library to see preliminary plans for a southern portion of the district, presented by city officials and

their team of consultants. The plan, which was made possible by a federal grant, envisions a transformation of this 76-acre quasi-industrial area into a more walkable, mixed-use neighborhood, featuring a 26-acre riverfront park, 1 million square feet of residential and over 200,000 square feet of retail and office space. Higher densities of three and four-story buildings are shown along sections of South Gilbert and Clinton streets, filled with a mix of residential, retail and office. Plans for the park replace a flood-prone water treatment plant with green space, an amphitheater, a riverfront

boardwalk and wetland areas to better handle flood events.

Reactions were mixed. While many like the vision and the rehab of the riverfront, others were concerned about the effect on existing businesses and the feasibility of the project.

Greg McDonald, owner of McDonald Chiropractic, is one of the more enthusiastic ones. He said the plan is needed to transform the hodge-podge area into “more of a neighborhood.”

“It certainly is supportive of what I did on this corner,” McDonald said about his

four-story mixed-use building on the corner of Kirkwood and Gilbert streets.

However, not all businesses in the area are exactly gung-ho. Representatives at Aero Rental said their business would likely relocate if the plan was enacted. Laurie Riley of Old Capitol Screen Printers shared a similar thought, saying that although she supported the vision, her light manufacturing business had no place in it. “There’s quite a bit of small manufacturing in the area,” Riley said, “I didn’t see a lot in the plans of where that could fit in.”

In anticipation of these concerns, city officials have emphasized that any changes in the district will not be heavy-handed. “This is not an urban renewal project,” Howard said, referring to redevelopment projects of decades past that notoriously bulldozed anything in its path.

Officials say the strategy here is different. “No one is being forced off of their land. The public is investing money that will create value for the private market,” Howard said. The key public investments will be the riverfront park, creek restoration and streetscape improvements, which could include changes such as rerouting one-way streets, widening Gilbert Street and adding “sustainable” features such as bike lanes, pervious paving and street planters.

In theory, these investments will create value for developers by attracting people to the area, improving traffic flow and making the area more visually attractive. With the added value of public investments and the guidance of a detailed plan, Howard said, “we are counting on developers and private property owners to make this vision happen.”

Local developer Marc Moen agrees with this approach. “The City is not going to fast

anybody could open up those little boutique shops they want.”

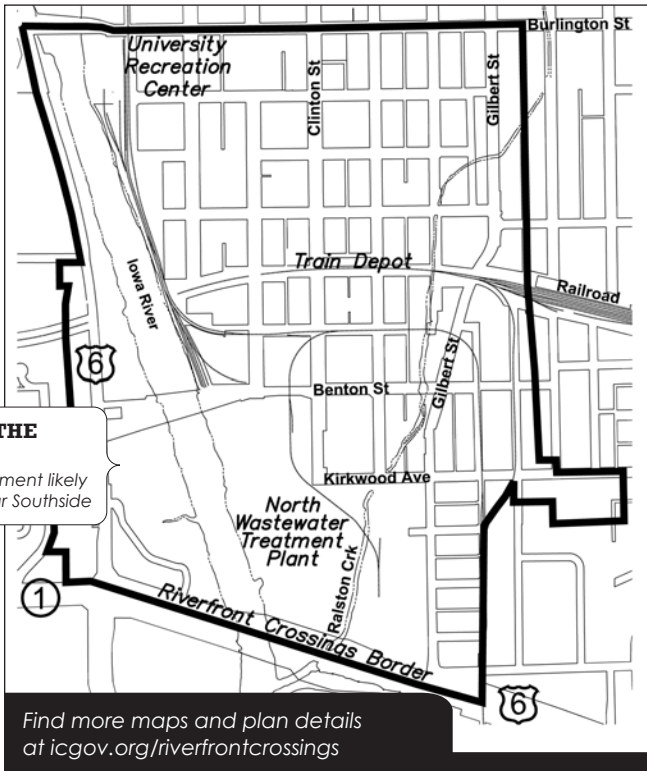
Andy Ockenfels, CEO of City Carton, is also skeptical that the plan will develop any time soon. “A Riverfront Development project may work in the future, but until someone can come up with the money to drive a project like this, I do not believe you will see a lot of business interest waiting for it to happen,” he said. In fact, Ockenfels seems to be betting

“This is not an urban renewal project,” stresses Iowa City Assistant Planner Karen Howard, referring to redevelopment projects of decades past that notoriously bulldozed anything in their path.

track this by buying and moving current occupants,” Marc commented, “I think that is a good thing.” The public investments in green space and recreation, he adds, are critical to the redevelopment process.

As for the question of demand for new development, officials say it is there. “There is a latent demand to develop higher density near downtown,” said Howard. (Remember the guy that had been looking for downtown living for over a year?) She said some property owners and developers were reluctant to invest in the area with the water treatment plant still in place. But as public investments change the landscape, Howard believes developers will set to work on fulfilling the demand for downtown living and retail. This, in turn, may provide some current property owners an incentive (in the form of a hefty profit) to sell their land for development. Pair all this with the hoped-for turnaround in the economy and the plan for an organic process of private redevelopment looks possible.

future plans for his business on the notion of an extended timeline. Though he’s in favor of the plans for the water treatment plant area, many of which show City Carton property as parkland, he said that the business has made no plans to move.



Not everyone agrees that investment in the area is realistic. “It’s just a dream,” Becky Baumgartner of Aero Rental said. “It sounds nice, but in a time like this I don’t see how

Timing is certainly an issue. The City will make its public investments in the park and the streets, but as to how the private market will respond, no one can say. Certain aspects are more concrete, such as the 3 to 5 year timeline for the riverfront park. Other aspects, such as the proposed widening of Gilbert Street,

RIVCO CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 >>

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will require negotiation and cooperation from all affected property owners, making a definite timeline impossible.

Another wrench in the process is the potential loss of the proposed passenger rail line connecting Iowa City to Chicago. The line would have run straight through the district, creating a natural hub of activity and promoting development. Federal funding for the line was secured last year, but Gov. Terry Branstad has now said he will not provide state money for its operation, putting the entire project in jeopardy.

As public investments change the landscape, Howard said developers will set to work on fulfilling the demand for downtown living and retail.

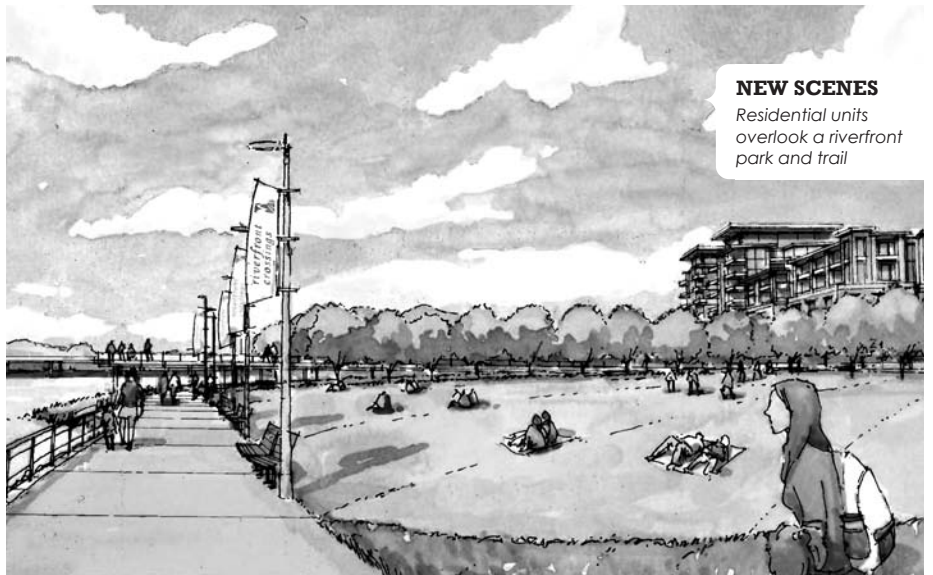
Despite the uncertainty and setbacks, odds seem to be in favor of change in the area. “This whole process has been accelerated by the flood,” Howard said. In fact, the flood is arguably the reason why planning in this district has been able to take place at all. Both the present and previous federal grants were earned in large part because of the pressing need to decommission the wastewater treatment plant after it was flooded in 2008, and to find an appropriate re-use.

In addition to needed flood response, the area is well-situated for development in many other ways, with accessibility to downtown and the university, a regional trail network and significant past and planned investments from the county, the university (Clapp Recital Hall and the School of Music) and private developers (Hieronymus Square Project).

“It’s just a dream,” said Becky Baumgartner of Aero Rental. “It sounds nice, but in a time like this I don’t see how anybody could open up those little boutique shops they want.”

“I believe this area is ripe for residential development,” says Moen. “We need a critical mass of diverse residents—students and non-students; young and old and in-between—living within walking distance of downtown.”

But the way this is all done matters a great deal, Moen explains. Any redevelopment should make sure to respond to the demands



NEW SCENES

Residential units overlook a riverfront park and trail



KIRKWOOD AVE. & GILBERT ST.

Potential view of South Gilbert Street

of those most likely to live here, which for him means maintaining the “funky flavor” of the area as much as possible. Moen

The answer largely depends on how we as citizens respond to city initiative. Based on the process to date and feedback from the public, the consultants will submit a final plan within the coming months. But, when they do, don’t expect to see any magic overnight transformations. A number of City and private investments are a sure thing, but much of the plan is meant as a guide, a reflection of what the public has told the city they want and how consultants have recommended they get there. Developers, property owners and members of the community will be the ones to drive most of the change and their “funky” visions will likely take decades to form. **IV**

compares RivCo to the developing area just north of downtown: “The Northside Marketplace is very hip and keeps getting better. I see the same potential for Riverfront Crossings, but with a different twist.”

Exactly what this “funky twist” will be is still undetermined. Will this be the mixed-use, sustainable, recreational haven the city hopes for? Or will it just be another neighborhood full of student apartments?

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



Clarence Johnson interviews
Idris Goodwin for LVtv:
www.LittleVillageMag.com/lvtv

In his collection, *These Are The Breaks*, Idris Goodwin addresses race, class, culture and rap in essay and prose poetry. He takes a sprawling and diverse topic and does what this sort of work does best: filters it through the lens of the human *I*.

The *I* in "I like rap" isn't like it used to be. There are plenty of rap fans going to work as cops, lawyers, teachers and civil servants every day. Hard to believe that there are many but, statistically speaking, it's inevitable there are rap heads who are also dedicated Republicans. It used to be it was a lot more monolithic, what rap was. It was conscious, or gangsta, or radio-friendly pop and that was about it. Those were your options. As the genre has matured, there has come to be a lot of what some would call bloat and others would call diversification.

It's not so hard anymore to find just the right kind of hip-hop to fit your personal needs. Whiney white kid ennui from skateboarders, middle-class ironic joke rap, conspiracy theorist rap, millionaire rap, it's all out there if you want it. You don't have to hear about crack slinging if that's not your bag, but, if it is, you have the option of listening to rap that talks about *nothing* but crack slinging. The field is wide open for listeners and, as the fans get older and stop to ponder what it all means, Goodwin offers up something a little more authentic and thoughtful in response.

Goodwin doesn't write about just rap music in *These Are The Breaks* but when he's not

covering rap he's covering something that makes more sense if you know about it. It's a book that has a rhetorical sign next to it, like a rollercoaster, *you must be at least this hip hop to get this ride*. In that way it is a very gratifying book from the perspective of a rap fan. There is the innate sense of satisfaction when you consciously pick up on a cultural signifier or reference that you know the less with-it



what it feels like to be made uncomfortable by the thing you love, to wonder if you are betraying something by listening, or being betrayed by your music.

Goodwin's prose is finely tuned and efficient, and it could not be otherwise—as a rapper, he works in rationed syllables. The effective, tight verbiage in most of the pieces is a tribute to that line of work. He is

LISTEN UP

Goodwin reads from his new book
Wed., March 30 | 6-8 p.m.

Afro-American Cultural Center
(303 Melrose Ave., Iowa City)

skilled at tying different threads of meaning together

and he uses humor well when he chooses to. There is almost always a wry, self-effacing tone and the level of honesty in many of the pieces—especially where he talks about his middle class youth and the construction of identity as a response to cultural influences—is a welcome change from the current state of rap, where former cops can call themselves hustlers and millionaires spit lines about a struggle.

There are a few uneven pieces, which don't seem to align with the tone of the whole, but they are few and far between. At 41 pieces in 100 pages it is a fast-moving collection, best digested in smaller bits because the density of ideas is thick and rich. It's the kind of book that drives me to google references, one every few pages, to hear a song or artist I might not be as up on as I feel like I should be after reading a piece. To read about the life of a Detroit mayor, to see pictures of the embarrassments and victories he edges around. The learning curve will be steep for those not already a little in the know. But the journey is the reward and the nimble wordplay—in his poetry, his essays and his mixing of the two—makes it worth the effort. **IV**

Clarence Johnson lives, writes, catches wreck, gets loose and turns the party out in Iowa City.

HIP-HOP HANDBOOK

wouldn't have parsed properly. There is also, though, the sense of a known, familiar sadness, for someone who's heard the song the title of the book refers to and every song like it that followed in its wake. "The Breaks" are two things: bad breaks like losing a job, or getting your phone turned off, or losing your girl; and bad breaks like Apache, or The Stroke, or Funky Drummer, or Cold Sweat. To be tuned in enough to pick up all his references is also to know and have heard and lived through a portion of the moments that he captures in amber. An informed reader will appreciate how he documents the seminal battle between Lord Finesse and Percee P. It's a powerful moment, skillfully depicting how a crowd is as much a part of a freestyle battle as the battlers are, and he captures the feeling of both being the rapper and being the person watching, the person hungry for the win and the person deciding who wins. He writes a familiar blues in "Don't Be a Sellout," a piece that shows



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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).

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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.

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Space Tacos

You like science, and that's okay. I like feelings, and that's fine, too.

After our debates about science which lead to bigger issues of belief, God, and death, you tell me I'm smart and then maybe I cry a little because of leftover childhood feelings of insignificance.

"Oh, Rabies," you say. "Don't be sad. We're all just particles and atoms organized in particular arrangements. Isn't that amazing, that you and me here, talking to each other, is just physics?"

"Physics!" you shout.

"And math?" I ask hopefully, burying my head into the fat cat you've just handed me.

"Math, too," you say, and everything is back to normal happy.

We are normal happy, but it hasn't always been this way with me. I tell people that with you I feel a pervasive sense of well-being and then they're like, "whoa," and give me whatever they've been holding in their hands, like a box of cereal or fruits. "Hold this," they say, "because you are, like, *okay*?" I blow their minds with my normalcy and then they hand me things to hold because I'm finally more stable than they are.

"You can't be a writer if you're happy," they say. "You're, like, totally screwed."

Have I mentioned

this is a true story or, in the case of this story, a true non-story?

A non-story, true or not, is a story with no climactic moment and no point, usually told

with gestures of great enthusiasm.

It's what happens sometimes when writers become happy: their forms fall apart and they must find new ways of expressing this strange and uncomfortable way of feeling. They turn to epistolary tales fraught with bunnies in teacups and live puppy webcams, lyric lab reports chronicling taste bud experimentation, sestinas that invoke "divine fascia" and "tangerines," all manners of ill-advised white space and perverse line breaks, one act plays about blonde-haired ponies, stories that begin "we wake up" and then continue on with other sophomoric conceits. They become obsessed with discovering the fourth-person point of view, convinced it is some sort of cosmic perspective to unite all in one, one in all.

And then we sit down on the couch and the kitties come running, meowing their heads off about low-fat yogurt.

"You know what's a really bad idea?" you ask. "Space tacos. I mean, think about it." I imagine the chunks of tomato floating around and all that shredded cheese.

"Space tacos would be uncontainable," I say, and we both sit there on the couch licking low-fat yogurt from spoons and imagining Sally Ride with ground hamburger in her curly hair and what a drag that would be.

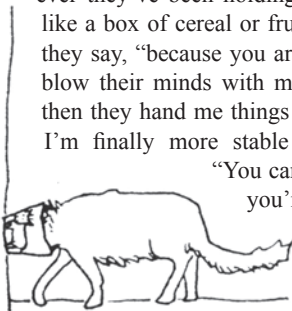
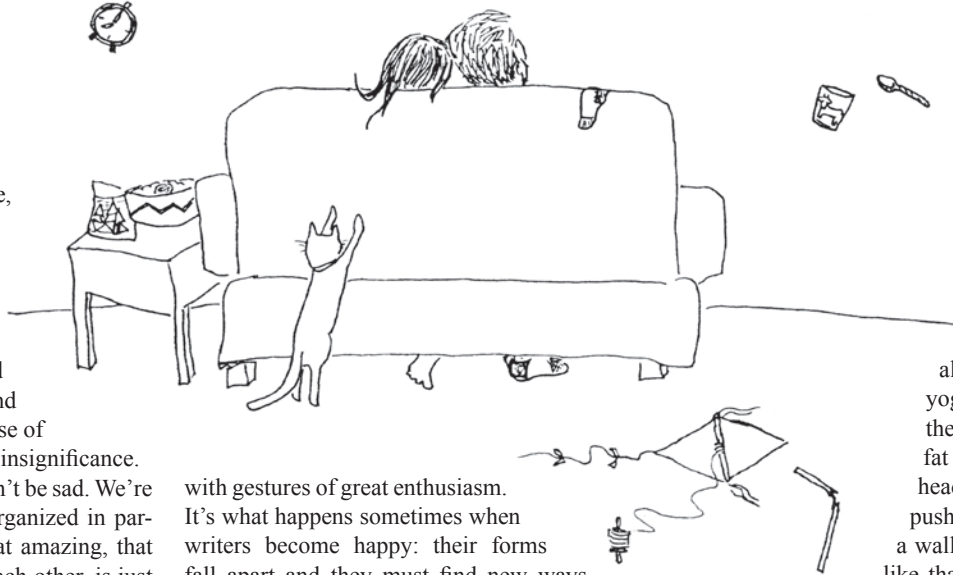
"Salsa," you say, and I say, "Oh, shit."

I put my almost empty yogurt cup on the floor and the fat one sticks its head all the way in, pushes the cup into a wall, and just stays like that. I smell your neck. "I don't believe in

fate, but I like to think that 3.8 billion years of evolutionary history have been leading to this particular moment," you say, and the fat one comes to us with pink yogurt all over her hairy black face. The other brings a dirty sock baby in her mouth and curls between us to groom it.

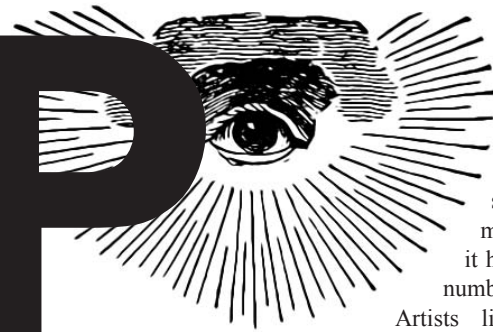
One day soon, or in a while, or maybe in thirty-five years, I will write you a better story than this non-story, one with metaphors and character development and very complicated math problems, one that has suspense and asks big questions and maybe even touches the very face of God, or the very face of Physics, depending on your belief system. But for now, I don't know. Does there really have to be something going on, you know, like a plot? Because I like it when we just sit here on the couch and pet cats. **IV**

Rachel Yoder is a graduate student in the Nonfiction Writing Program at The University of Iowa. You can also read her work in The New York Times, Nerve, and Sun Magazine.



Illustrations by Amanda Nazario

HIP-HOP OCCULTISM



the movement and its members sometimes provided security for 1970s hip-hop shows. By the mid-to-late 1980s, it had gained a large number of adherents.

Artists like Rakim, Big Daddy Kane, Busta Rhymes and the aptly named Poor Righteous Teachers began dropping references to the Five Percenters. They introduced slang terms like “dropping science,” “break it down,” and even “word.”

The Nation of Gods and Earths was but one of many African-American sects and secret societies that blossomed in the 1950s and 1960s, which can trace their roots back to the Moorish Science Temple of America. Founded in 1913 by a man known to followers as Noble Drew Ali, it borrowed much of its symbolism and ceremonies from Freemasonry’s Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. Better known as the Shriners, this Order introduced America to Arabic and Islamic imagery.

In his book *Occult America*, Mitch Horowitz writes, “a veritable who’s who of early black-power figures joined or came in close contact with Moorish Science in the 1920s”—including

Popular culture—particularly music—has long been fingered by the far right as a satanic conspiracy. Rock and roll remained a scapegoat for decades, but more recently hip hop has entered the equation. Jay-Z, for instance, has received widespread scrutiny for the imagery used in his music videos, clothing, lyrics, photo-ops and interviews. In the music video for 2009’s “Run This Town,” the rapper wears a hooded sweatshirt bearing the phrase “do what thou wilt,” which has deep roots in modern occultism and was a key maxim of 19th century mystic-provocateur Aleister Crowley.

Jay-Z’s clothing line, Rocawear, is often emblazoned with Masonic symbols like obelisks, pyramids, the all-seeing eye and the occasional pentagram. Many suspicious minds have noted that his record company name, Roc-A-Fella, is an allusion to the elite Rockefeller family, a dynasty that is at the center of paranoid New World Order and Illuminati conspiracy theories. This is proof, it is said, that Jay-Z is in on the plot.

Kanye West also set off all sorts of conspiracy theory rumors after his appearance in Jay-Z’s “Run This Town” video. During an interview with Danni Starr on *96.3 Now*, a Minneapolis radio station, he acknowledged as much. Asked “What is the craziest thing you’ve read about yourself and you were like, ‘Well, where’d they get that from?’”—a line of questioning usually provokes an answer along the lines of, “I can’t believe people think I’m dating Jennifer Aniston!”—Kanye stammered, “Well, uh, the Illuminati thing. Because I, uh, I wanna know, at least I wanna know *what it is*.”

The occultic, Egyptian-laden symbolism used by Jay-Z, Nas, the Wu-Tang Clan and other hip-hop artists often gets interpreted

as being purely Masonic (which is an odd connection, given that Freemasons are primarily old white men). However, it can be more directly traced to Afrocentrism and several quasi-mystical religious sects popular with African-Americans since the mid-20th century.

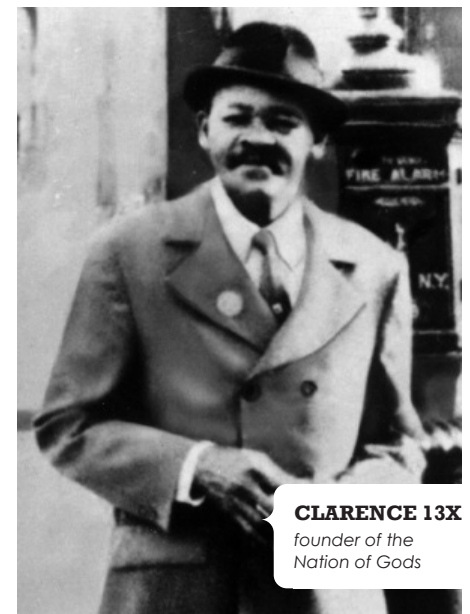
One such group is the Nation of Gods and Earths, which was founded in the early 1960s by a charismatic Nation of Islam student-minister named Clarence 13X. He opened

>> THE OCCULTIC, EGYPTIAN-LADEN SYMBOLISM USED BY JAY-Z, NAS, THE WU-TANG CLAN AND OTHER HIP-HOP ARTISTS OFTEN GETS INTERPRETED AS BEING PURELY MASONIC. <<

his own street academy in Harlem, teaching a condensed version of the Nation of Islam’s *Lost-Found Lessons*, which rejected the idea of a supernatural “mystery god.” Instead, the black man was his own god—the master of his own destiny. The members of the Nation of Gods and Earths are commonly known as Five Percenters because of their belief that only five percent of the world’s people are enlightened.

The rest were poor, ignorant and uncivilized (85 percent of the population) who are preyed upon by bloodsuckers (the other 10 percent, holding positions of power in corporations and the government). Like many such sects, it takes a conspiratorial view of history. The only ones who could foil the plot were a chosen few “poor righteous teachers” who were put on the Earth to emancipate the mentally deaf, dumb and blind from their bondage.

The Five Percenters have been part of hip-hop culture from its beginnings in the South Bronx. Afrika Bambaataa was affiliated with



CLARENCE 13X
founder of the Nation of Gods

Nation of Islam architects Wallace D. Fard and Elijah Muhammad. The Nation of Islam’s cosmology was as imaginative as it was convoluted. One of its science fiction-inspired origin stories involved a mad scientist named Dr. Yacub who created the white race to place blacks in slavery. There was also a spacecraft,

**REPRESENT**

Jay-Z's 2010 album, *The Hits Collection, Volume One*

ology, mysticism and biblical texts. He could not accept many of the Nation of Islam's teachings, including the belief that white people were devils ("black people be devils, too," he countered).

Years later, these ideas were absorbed into hip-hop and fanned out into popular culture via song. On "Impossible," from their hit 1997 album *Wu-Tang Forever*, group member U-God ends his verse with the line, "Our everlastin' essence stay flyin' over Egypt." It's a reference to the Afrocentric and Five Percenter notion that Egypt—the cradle of civilization—"is where the original black Asiatic man first emerged,"

>> THE FIVE PERCENTERS AND OTHER AFRICAN-AMERICAN SECTS AND SECRET SOCIETIES EMERGED AS A REACTION TO SEGREGATION, URBAN DECAY AND A DESIRE FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY. IN THE ABSENCE OF CONTEXT, THESE CODED ALLUSIONS HAVE BEEN USED AS EVIDENCE THAT THESE MEN ARE NEW WORLD ORDER CONSPIRATORS. <<

The Mother Ship, which would eventually arrive on Earth and liberate them.

Far from being relegated to the obscure fringes of African-American society, these stories resonated with many, including Nation of Islam convert Muhammad Ali. The Nation of Islam's teachings tapped into a strand of "Afro-futurism" that ran deep through twentieth century African-American popular culture. Figures like avant-jazz legend Sun Ra, dub reggae pioneer Lee "Scratch" Perry, Parliament-Funkadelic's George Clinton, Outkast's Andre 3000 and Janelle Monae have used these tropes.

They mixed playful fantasy, wild costumes and out-there-but-funky music to express their alienation, while at the same time imagining a better world. Born in Birmingham, Alabama at the height of segregation, Herman Poole Blount—aka Sun Ra—took on a new name and claimed Saturn as his homeland. He began his career in the 1950s on the same Southside Chicago streets that embraced the Nation of Islam. The iconoclast never joined Elijah Muhammad's organization but he was a member of a secret society named Thmei Research group, which shared the Nation of Islam's fascination with outer space, science and esoteric knowledge.

Like the Nation's bow-tied foot soldiers, Sun Ra could be seen on street corners lecturing and passing out his hand-typed tracts. Pedagogy was an integral part of the package. The jazz musician was, as critic John Corbett calls him, "a supersonic cosmoscience sermonist." While looking toward the future, Sun Ra kept his feet firmly planted in the past: studying Africa, Egyptology, numer-

RZA says in his book *The Wu-Tang Manual*.

Rick Ross and Jay-Z's 2010 hit "Free Mason" is similarly laden with Afrocentric and Five Percenter imagery. "We the lost symbols, speak in cryptic codes / ancient wisdom, valuable like gifts of Gold," Ross raps before launching into the chorus: "Free Mason, freelancer / Free Agents, we faster / Big contracts, big contractors / Built pyramids, period." Rather than a serious pledge of allegiance to occultism, it's more of a masculine black power boast.

The Five Percenters and other African-American sects and secret societies emerged as a reaction to segregation, urban decay and a desire for self-sufficiency. In the absence of context, these coded allusions have been used as evidence that these men are New World Order conspirators. For many Tea Partiers, Illuminatiphobes and other paranoid white folks, Jay-Z and our Jigga-quoting Black President are part of an elite secret society that quite literally "run this town"—and world, for that matter.

They are convinced that common people have no chance of succeeding when these men are gaming the system. But as Jay-Z cleverly puts it in his verse on the previously mentioned Rick Ross track: "I said I was amazin', not that I was a Mason." **IV**

Kembrew McLeod is an Associate Professor of Communication Studies at The University of Iowa, and on the side he is working on a nefarious plot to destroy the world.




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Reflections Reproduced

1955 saw the opening of Disneyland in Anaheim, California, the phrase “In God We Trust” added to all currency and Rosa Parks arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery. It was also the year that artist, professor and inventor Virginia Myers first stepped off the train in Iowa City.

Originally from Cleveland, and having completed a Master of Fine Arts from the California College of Arts and Crafts, she returned to the Midwest for further graduate study in Urbana, then Iowa City. She landed with no place to stay and only \$150 to her name, but she had a dream of continuing her artistic study in printmaking with renowned artist Mauricio Lasansky.

As an undergraduate and graduate student, she was concerned with her proficiency in drawing and was told to take up Printmaking as a way to sharpen her skills. She enrolled

She landed with no place to stay and only \$150 to her name, but she had a dream of continuing her artistic study in Printmaking with renowned artist Mauricio Lasansky.

in a few classes learning from Lasansky and also studied painting with Professor Eugene Ludins.

Myers freelanced as a framer (using a miter saw borrowed from the school) and made enough money to get by until, one day, she had what would prove to be a fateful conversation with Ludins. As they conversed about framing, Ludins told her that he used

FOIL IMAGING: A NEW ART FORM

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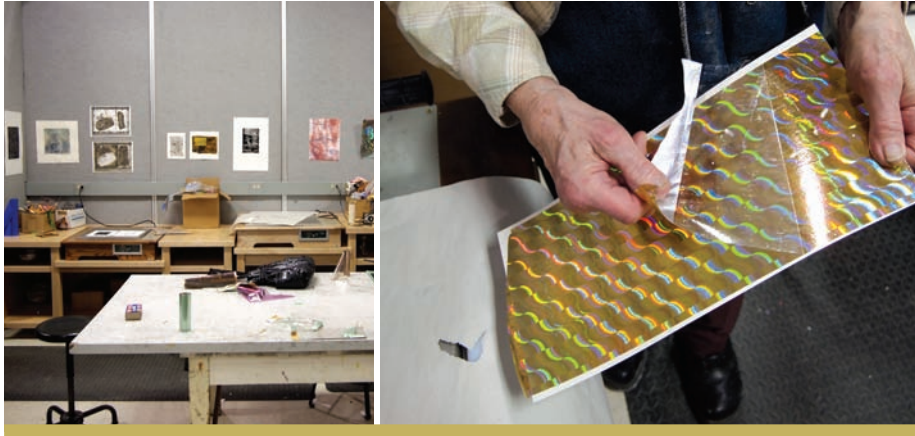
Meet The Artists: March 19, 7:00 p.m. at
Arts Iowa City

Photos by Chris Mortenson

to be a framer and that, if she wanted, he would teach her how to silver leaf the frames she was making, giving her an instant niche that no one in the area could compete with. This became her first artistic interaction with shiny surfaces, an interest that still excites her to this day.

Myers studied at University of Iowa for six years as a post-graduate. During that time

a friend in the commercial printing industry, Myers was sent a packet of foil cards that held samples of every type of foil imaginable, “There were ten kinds of silver, ten kinds of gold. Some had mirrored surfaces and some had a matte surface.” Enticed by the samples, she attended a conference for the printing industry to have all of her questions answered



she became Lasansky’s research assistant and sharpened her skill with burin engraving and intaglio. In 1961, Myers was awarded a Fulbright to Paris, where she studied at Atelier

A piece of inspiration came when she thought, “What is this shiny stuff you see on Christmas cards and ads?”

17 with Stanley William Hayter. In 1962 she returned to Iowa City, this time as a printmaking instructor for the university.

She continued to make work and gradually began thinking about how one might print onto the silver leaf that she was using for her frames. Years were spent pioneering a technique to leaf a sheet of paper and run it through a press so the image from a plate would transfer onto the leafed surface. Eventually, this technique was perfected and the reproduction of numbered prints, each one identical to the next, became a reality.

Having created her own printmaking technique, she began to write a book illustrating to others how they could achieve the same results. But, there was something missing, a problem—she realized—that printing on a piece of silver leafed paper couldn’t solve: how to achieve a mirrored surface *within* the print.

A piece of inspiration came when she thought, “What is this shiny stuff you see on Christmas cards and ads?”

That shiny stuff ended up being commercially printed hot stamp foil. After talking to

and, in the mid 1980s, she began experimenting with foil in her work.

The foil adhered better if it was heated from both the bottom and the top, she found. With that, she had identified the guiding principle of what would become the Iowa Foil Printer, which Myers is credited with inventing in 1986.

The IFP, as it is commonly referred to, has a heated roller coupled with an intricate electrical system that tempers heat to the roller.

Pieces of foil are placed on acrylic-prepared paper, which are then laid on top of an electronic, thermoregulated hot plate and adhered with even pressure as the IFP is rolled



VIRGINIA MYERS
UI Art Professor
since 1962

With that, she had identified the guiding principle of what would become the Iowa Foil Printer, which Myers is credited with inventing in 1986.

back and forth across the print. A work-in-progress to this day, the newest model of the IFP is slated to come out later this year.

MYERS CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 >>

Get Artsy

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

The ‘Wreck’ Room: Postdiluvian Art

Cornell College (Peter Paul Luce Gallery)
Feb. 20–March 20

An installation by performance artist and CSPS co-founder, Mel Andringa. This exhibition revisits work damaged in the Cedar Rapids flood of ‘08 and recreates it as something new. Additionally, attendants can converse with the artist (“The Captain”) at his dry dock via Skype from the “passenger lounge” in the gallery.

Philip Miller (Louisville, KY) & Danielle Rante (Dayton, OH)

Times Club (15 S. Dubuque St.)
March 4–26

A 2-person exhibition of meditative drawings on paper. The closing event on March 26 will include a reading by Writers’ Workshop alumnus Kiki Petrosino, who recently completed a chapbook with drawings by Philip Miller.



Rante | *Holy Weave 1*, graphite on collaged paper, 19” x 21”

Chelsea Finch: For Real

Public Space One (129 E. Washington St.)
March 4–19

Recent Iowa Arts Council grant recipient and east coast transplant Chelsea Finch presents luscious, large-scale oil paintings moving from figurative to abstract.

Opening reception: March 4, 6-8 p.m.



Finch | *red dots*, oil on canvas, 60” x 48”

>> MYERS CONTINUED FROM 21



"I learn more from [my students] than they'll ever learn from me."

UI began to offer a class in foil imaging in the spring semester of 1990, through which Myers and her students continued to experiment with these new techniques.

She credits her students for as much or more of the advancement in the technique as herself and she includes many examples of student work in her text, *Foil Imaging: A New Art Form* (Virginia A. Myers, 2001).

In addition to the courses offered during the school year, she offers an intensive summer workshop in foil imaging that will enter its 21st year this summer.

For 56 years Virginia Myers has been a part of Iowa City and has made great contributions to both the local art scene as well as the medium of printmaking. In creating a new technique, she has left an everlasting legacy to the storied ladder of UI's department of art, but she was brought here with only the hope of studying with Mauricio Lasansky. "If he had been someplace else, I would have gone there." Luckily for us, she came to Iowa City.

Reflecting on her time here, a big smile comes across her face and she simply states, "it was beyond golden."

The real legacy she is building will live on long after she retires from teaching. She holds nothing back from her students, eager to teach them everything she knows and she is quick to give them all the credit, "I learn more from them than they'll ever learn from me. They think I'm kidding, but that's not true. Not true at all." **IV**

Chris Mortenson holds an MFA in Art and studied Foil Imaging with Professor Myers in the spring of 2008.

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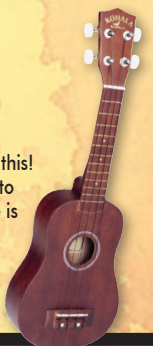
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>> RECIPES CONTINUED FROM 9



CHOCOLATE CAKE

- 2C. All Purpose Flour
- 2C. Sugar
- 1C. Butter
- 1C. Coffee (cold)
- ¼ C. Cocoa (unsweetened)
- ½ C. Buttermilk
- 2 Eggs
- 1t. Baking Soda
- 1t. Vanilla

Directions-----

1. In 5 qt. bowl with whisk, combine all dry ingredients.
2. Slowly add eggs.
3. Slowly add butter, coffee, vanilla and buttermilk, scraping often.
4. Mix on medium speed for 3 minutes.
5. Pour into pans or cupcake wrappers.
6. Bake at 300° until done.



GANACHE FROSTING

- 2C. Heavy Cream
- 16oz. High Quality Chocolate
- ⅛ C. Honey

Directions-----

1. Bring cream and honey to a boil.
2. Pour over chocolate and whisk until completely combined.
3. Cover and leave at room temperature overnight to turn into spreadable icing.

CREAM CHEESE ICING

- 2stx. Butter (unsalted)
- 12oz. Cream Cheese
- 4C. Powdered Sugar
- ¾t. Vanilla

Directions-----

1. At room temperature, with 5 qt. bowl and paddle, mix cream cheese and butter together until light and airy.
3. Slowly add powdered sugar and vanilla.
4. Paddle until light and fluffy.
5. Apply to cool cake or cupcake.



- MAR 4, 8PM **OSG**
+ ANIMATE OBJECTS & THE WHITE TORNADO VS PAUL KRESOWIK
- MAR 6, 6PM **ASEETH**
+ DREDGE, MANTOUR, MOGADISHU & LOST COVES
- MAR 7, 5PM **ATTICUS METAL TOUR:**
DARKEST HOUR, BORN OF OSIRIS + AS BLOOD RUNS BLACK & THE HUMAN ABSTRACT
- MAR 11, 8PM **MIRACLES OF GOD**
+ DATAGUN, ED GRAY & WOLF WARS
- MAR 16, 5PM **SENSES FAIL**
+ A GHOST INSIDE, MAN OVERBOARD & TRANSIT
- MAR 23, 6PM **NOW, NOW / SANTAH**
- MAR 28, 7PM **BRITISH SEA POWER**
+ A CLASSIC EDUCATION
- MAR 30, 9PM **MONDO DRAG**
+ NATIVE, BLIZZARD AT SEA & THE FREEMASONS

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Dead Kennedys

Conservative producer Joel Surnow's eight-hour miniseries, *The Kennedys*, will now premiere in April on something called "ReelzChannel" after being rejected by the History Channel, the network that originally commissioned it. Its citation-free depiction of Kennedy's sexual shenanigans (including a scene in which Joseph Kennedy gropes his secretary while advocating U.S. compromise with Hitler) sparked preemptive outrage from prominent historians and inflamed the nation's ever-growing pundit class. Despite staggering production costs, History Channel executives deemed the series unfit for its brand, effectively banishing miscast star Greg Kinnear's painful Boston accent to the cable TV hinterlands.

Surnow (24) has built a niche market out of conservative entertainment, with mixed results. Most of his work aims to correct the imbalance he perceives in political representations on television. *The Kennedys* serves as his right-wing response to CBS' 2003 liberal screed *The Reagans*, while his dreadful *Half Hour News Hour*, from 2007, was billed as a "Daily Show for conservatives."

At first glance, "uber-liberal" Hollywood seems like an ideal setting for an indignant conservative like Surnow, an appropriate boys' room for him to smoke in. But his posturing only works on a superficial level. Hollywood is the most hyper-capitalistic address west of Wall Street and savvy deal-makers there aren't exactly shoved to the margins. It's an Arizona State frat party by the freeway. Its "B" and "C" lists are saturated with such Republicanism that A-listers like Barbra Streisand have to schmooze extra hard to conceal it.

Even television's modus operandi is becoming increasingly Republican.

For generations, TV networks have ordered high-budget series from independent production companies and poured lots of money into assembling the best casts and launching the best marketing campaigns. Thus, throughout TV history, the profit incentive on dramatic series has been overwhelming. When this formula produces an *ER* or a *West Wing*, the

costs are justified. But when it turns out a flop like *The Kennedys*, all that money goes to waste. The History Channel will never recoup the capital it spent on Surnow's costly script rewrites or on Kinnear's unqualified vocal coach.

Token Gen-Y writers at national news magazines label our current media landscape "democratized." They're right. The standard TV production model is outmoded and irrelevant. The cost of risk-taking is too high and hits come too few and far between.

The History Channel will never recoup the capital it spent on *The Kennedys*, Surnow's conservative response to CBS' liberal screed, *The Reagans*.

So forward-thinking executives now attack the problem with some very conservative strategies.

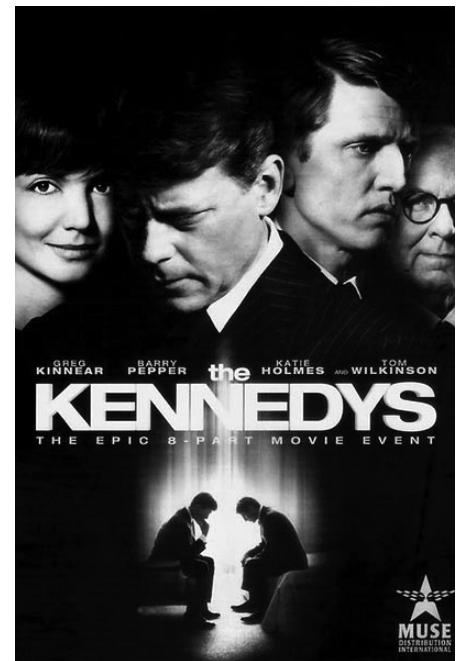
FX president (and Rupert Murdoch employee) John Landgraf orders more pilots than any executive in television. He keeps the budgets low and minimizes risk. While other networks allow producers like Joel Surnow to steer big-budget prestige projects into icebergs, Landgraf instead hopes that one of his numerous low-cost ventures will generate positive word of mouth and succeed on Hulu or iTunes. His cost-cutting measures are downright Reaganomical and his strategy reflects a fundamental faith in the marketplace.

By keeping his budgets so low, Landgraf avoids bigger production companies and their high commission demands, instead handing his capital directly to the creative teams responsible for writing and producing his pilots. He cuts out the middle men like a true free-market fundamentalist, dodging all the petty "industry" concerns that render big production companies so unproductive. He values innovation (famously greenlighting *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* after seeing a \$200 digital short produced by creators of the show) and entrepreneurship (granting comedian Louis C.K. just \$250,000 and some cameras to shoot the pilot for his now-hit series *Louie*.) And he fights government agencies tooth and nail to keep censorship

and archaic content guidelines away from basic cable.

Landgraf has already lectured on his theories at the Museum of Television and Radio. Media pundits and fellow Hollywood executives are taking note. His playbook represents the future of a medium that many insiders believe lacks one, a last-ditch remedy for an overpopulated, bureaucratized market.

While Joel Surnow congratulates himself for taking on the Kennedys (in 2011), John Landgraf brings conservative strategy to the world of scripted entertainment—and it's working. Surnow plays blustering idiot



to Landgraf's shrewd behind-the-scenes innovator, dealing in standard industry tropes while Landgraf changes the way the game is played. The death of *The Kennedys*, in light of Landgraf's success, should send Surnow an unequivocal message: *Stop swaggering like a conservative and start producing like one.* **lv**

Patrick Howley is a UI English major.

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We will be joined by Rockne Cole, a local lawyer whose firm consists primarily of family based immigration, removal defense and criminal law. Mr. Cole graduated from Luther College in 1997 with a major in Economics and a minor in Spanish. During his time at Luther, Mr. Cole developed a strong interest in Latin American history, politics, and culture. He was a three-year member of Latin American Concerns and studied abroad in Costa Rica in 1995 and in Cuenca, Ecuador during the Summer of 1997. In 1998, in conjunction with the University of Iowa's celebration of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, Mr. Cole

helped plan a human rights conference. He received his JD with distinction from The University of Iowa College of Law in 2000. He was also active in The UI Legal Clinic. For his efforts in the Clinic, he received the first Michelle Bennett award for client service.

For nearly three years, *American Reason* has endeavored to bring you insightful and intellectually honest dialog on the radio; we are now bringing this to the stage. If you are looking for a scream-fest or a snooze session, look elsewhere. Our goal is to investigate this issue with an open mind. Whether you believe in amnesty or enforcement, sanctuary or security, this discussion will elucidate the key points of this debate for you.

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MAGNIFICENT FILTH

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN WATERS

DIVINE INDULGENCE

At home on the outer limits
(*Pink Flamingos*, 1972)

Everyone has their first time with John Waters. For me, it was the summer of 1976, when I took off from my Grandmother's house in Provo Utah, after a weird, lonely, freshman year at BYU (don't ask) and hitchhiked around the West. I ended up—rather crazed after sleeping rough alongside Interstate 5—in Berkeley, crashing with hippie friends. My first night in town they took me to see a midnight showing of *Pink Flamingos*.

Someone who has grown up with the internet can't know what it meant to collide head-on, with no prior knowledge, with *Pink Flamingos*. Divine kills cops and gnaws their bloody femurs, the Egg Lady sits in her playpen and the Singing Asshole flexes its way into infamy to the tune of "Surfin' Bird." It wasn't so much that it was obscene or shocking; it was a completely different category of experience and it oddly captured the zeitgeist, at least for the freaks, losers and misfits we all imagined we were. That infamous scene at the end where Divine chomps on the dog crap and smiles that horrible, brown smile? We were all right there with her. Him. As children in the 70s, we felt like we'd been eating shit and trying to smile in spite of it our whole lives.

The films of John Waters are arresting and unique. His breakout trash trilogy of *Pink Flamingos*, *Female Trouble* and *Desperate Living* was a counterculture litmus test; they horrified the straight citizens as much as they tickled the freaks. They celebrated the grotesque, the antisocial and the criminal, cartoonishly exaggerating the frightening spectre the media presented of hippie culture. They were garish, tasteless, mean-spirited, loud and wickedly funny.

With *Polyester*, Waters cut down on the gross-outs in favor of a more nuanced kind of social satire; Divine plays a repressed & depressed housewife trapped in a loveless marriage. He still worked in some deviance and filth, but there was some genuine heart to *Polyester*, even if it came in the form of a 300-pound man playing a housewife. The movie still ends in murder and mayhem,

but it's a happy ending, reconciling Divine with her delinquent children.

Hairspray, his next film, was a crossover hit. It even—shockingly, for Waters—garnered a PG rating from the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). The story of a "pleasingly plump" teenager (Ricki Lake as Tracy Turnblad) pursuing her dream to win a TV dance contest was irresistibly sweet. Divine's transformation from hippie boogie monster to acclaimed character actor was made complete with her dual roles of Edna Turnblad and Arvin Hodgepile. *Hairspray* has turned into an enduring franchise, with a Tony Award-winning Broadway musical starring Harvey Fierstein and film version of the musical with John Travolta reprising Divine's role.

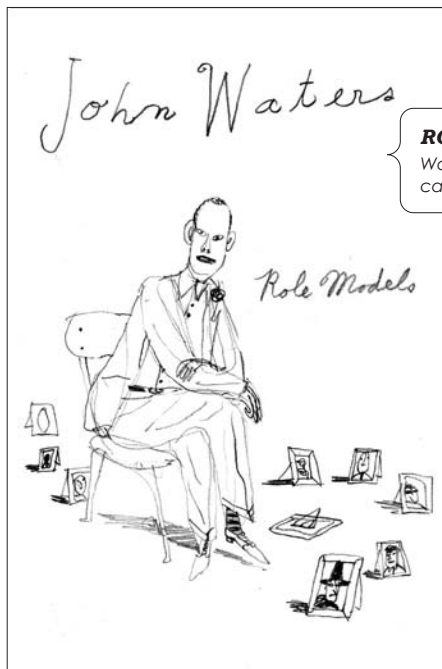
Water's has a second career as a writer, with three books to his credit. His most recent,



Read our extended interview with John Waters online: www.LittleVillageMag.com/johnwaters

Role Models, presents a rogue's gallery of the diverse people who Waters finds inspiring, from Johnny Mathis to former Manson Family member and convicted murderer Leslie Van Houton. He's even curated a unique Christmas album comprising some of the most tasteless and misbegotten holiday songs ever recorded.

I spoke to Waters on the phone in mid-February and found him to be a charming and convivial interviewee.



LITTLE VILLAGE: I have this quote from Quentin Crisp: "In an expanding universe time is on the side of the outcast. Those who once inhabited the suburbs of human contempt find that, without changing their address, they eventually live in the

HIS BREAKOUT TRASH TRILOGY OF PINK FLAMINGS, FEMALE TROUBLE AND DESPARATE LIVING WAS A COUNTERCULTURE LITMUS TEST; THEY HORRIFIED THE STRAIGHT CITIZENS AS MUCH AS THEY TICKLED THE FREAKS.

metropolis." Do you feel like you've gone through progression in terms of your art?

JOHN WATERS: Oh well I never say the word art, you can say it, I certainly never say 'art,' ... I would think history would be the judge of that. I think that the ultimate irony in my life is that I am an insider now, yes, and

I didn't really change that much. But I think that's if they can't get rid of you they learn to embrace you. But ... I knew Quentin, and at the very end of his life he was rejected again by

"I'VE ALWAYS SAID THAT MY BIGGEST MOST CORE AUDIENCE IS MINORITIES THAT CAN'T EVEN SIT IN WITH THEIR OWN MINORITY."

the gay world because of his fairly insensitive comments about AIDS. So at the end Quentin was kind of back where he started. Even being rejected by the outsiders. I've always said that my biggest most core audience is minorities that can't even sit in with their own minority.

LV: Your public persona always seemed to have some of Vincent Price's cheer, were you a fan of his? When I've seen stuff—I watched *This Filthy World* on Netflix last night and you remind me, you're not the same at all, but you remind me a little of Vincent Price.

JW: Oh I love Vincent Price! I met his daughter and I told her I've been trying to steal her father's career forever! And Vincent Price called me once, because there was a documentary very late in his life about him, and I was interviewed in it just saying what a childhood hero he was and everything, and he called me up and thanked me. It was really lovely! I was obsessed by Vincent Price ever since *The Tingler* when I saw it, which is one of the first movies that ever mentioned LSD. But he was I think hilarious and great and yes I, um, he's one of my idols.

LV: Edith Massey's dream when she young was to be in the movies. You made that dream come true. Did she ever go Hollywood on you?

JW: She never went Hollywood but she died in LA. She moved to Los Angeles and she had a thrift shop. Edith never went Hollywood but ... she was an underground movie star. Definitely.

LV: She was also, I think, an incredibly good sport. In watching *Pink Flamingos*, she's sitting in her underwear in a playpen, covered in fried eggs, and you can see her breath steaming.

JW: She was a trouper, let's put it that way. She had a hard time memorizing lines and she was not in real life a bohemian certainly. But she had had a very very tough life, and

she did become a movie star, and loved her fans. She lived for her fans. And later she was in a punk rock band which she travelled with, so she got to travel all over. She was a classy lady in a weird way.

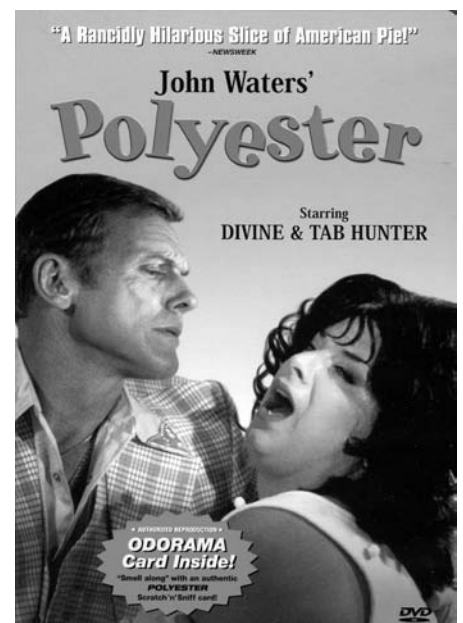
LV: When Divine played women, he's obviously in drag,

but I forget he's in drag and it feels like a really sympathetic character. Even in *Female Trouble*.

JW: He was playing a role that isn't a role a drag queen would ever play. In *Polyester* he played an alcoholic housewife, and he played a blue collar hag, almost, in *Hairspray*. What drag queen would ever allow themselves to look like that? He wasn't a drag queen in real life, he wouldn't walk around in drag or anything, ever. Maybe he did a couple of times when he was 17 but no he wasn't a transvestite or anything certainly. He was an actor and he liked playing men just as much really. When we'd established the image of Divine as this frightening monster, like a hippie mobster, then when he switched it all around completely and played the opposite, a sad mother, that's when he got really good reviews because it was against type. But we had to make his 'type' be the type in the beginning for that to happen.

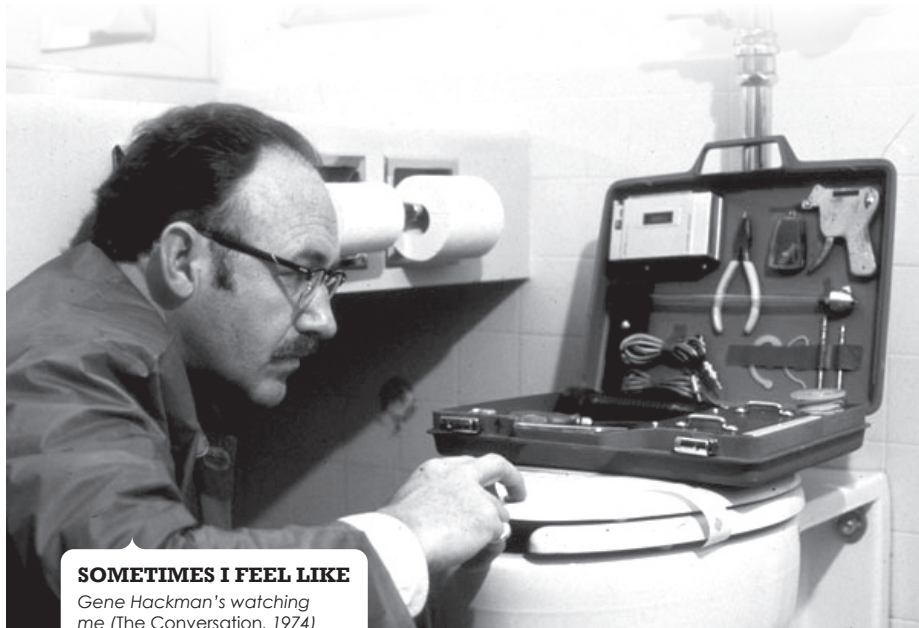
LV: What I've read is that you've had trouble getting *Fruitcake* made, your new movie.

INTERVIEW CONTINUED ON PAGE 30 >>



WikiLeaks

and the Movies



SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE

Gene Hackman's watching me (*The Conversation*, 1974)

In a recent “dump” of diplomatic cables by WikiLeaks, Putin and Medvedev were compared to Batman and Robin. The Slovenian philosophical rock star Slavoj Žižek has taken the simile further and compared Julian Assange, the spooky mastermind behind WikiLeaks, to the Joker in *The Dark Knight*. In Christopher Nolan's twist on the Batman myth, the Joker is the symbol of truth at all costs, who wants to reveal Batman's true identity as well as the fact that Harvey Dent, the admired district attorney, has become a murderous vigilante. Batman and the police

BUT, AS WE'VE THOROUGHLY LEARNED IN OUR AGE OF FACEBOOK AND WIKILEAKS, THE INFORMATION WILL ALWAYS OUT. ■

commissioner cover up the truth in both cases, using the rationale that outing the facts would undermine the public's trust. Isn't that movie weirdly like the whey-faced Assange's attempt to reveal the cover-ups and secret identities of the world's Putins and Hillarys?

So, is Julian Assange a deranged Joker, or is WikiLeaks providing the basis for a sequel to *All the President's Men*?

The movie I think about in relation to WikiLeaks is Francis Ford Coppola's 1974 masterpiece *The Conversation*. It's about Harry Caul (Gene Hackman, in one of his many superb, precise, understated performances), a surveillance expert, whose job is simply to collect and report information, though he agonizes over the consequences of what he reports. Caul's conscience eventually gets the best of him and he refuses to turn in a tape of an ambiguous conversation. But, as we've thoroughly learned in our age of Facebook and WikiLeaks, the information will always out.

Not only does his conscience haunt him, Caul is obsessed with his own privacy. In the famous last scene of the movie, he rips up his own apartment, paranoid that he's being bugged with the same expertise with which he has bugged others. I wonder if that scene has the same force for viewers now as it did when I first saw it. It's easy to imagine a teenager shrugging, “What's the big deal? Everything is always being taped.

Now Showing

Add these selections to your March to-do list.



High Fidelity

Bijou | March 3–4

My nomination for the last good romantic comedy is Stephen Frears' *High Fidelity* (2000), in which John Cusack plays a noncommittal audiophile and record-store owner. The movie has all the charm and beauty of a well-made mix tape. Is it possible that MP3s are partially responsible for the death of romance?

American Falls & other recent work

w/ post-screening Q & A with director Phil Solomon

Bijou | March 5, 8:00 p.m.

The Bijou is screening recent work by the experimental filmmaker Phil Solomon. His films are reminiscent of those of the great Stan Brakhage, who in fact collaborated on a few projects with Solomon. The movies will be strange, haunting, and challenging. Hopefully his talk afterward will be just as weird and interesting.

Badlands

Englert | March 16, 8:00 p.m.

Terence Malick's masterpiece *Badlands* (1973) is not to be missed on the big screen. A lost teenager from South Dakota (Sissy Spaceck) falls for a greaser (Martin Sheen) who takes her on a killing spree. Though lots has been made of the movie's meditations on violence and pop-culture, what remains most powerful is its religious sense of emptiness, embodied by the Dakota badlands.

Come to think of it, he should set up a webcam and have a podcast.”

The distinction between private and public—so dear to old-timers like Caul and myself—has been radically transformed. There used to be phone booths because nobody would make a private call in public. Now, Clark Kent has to find somewhere else to take off his glasses. The world has become one big phone booth, with all of us crammed inside. Let's face it, if Superman did exist, someone with a cell-phone would have already captured the *Daily Bugle*

reporter stripping down and posted the video on YouTube.

As prescient as *The Conversation* was about this brave new world where we're always being watched, it was really a swan song of the old world's conscience and humanity. There once

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC HAS BEEN RADICALLY TRANSFORMED. THERE USED TO BE PHONE BOOTHS BECAUSE NOBODY WOULD MAKE A PRIVATE CALL IN PUBLIC. NOW, CLARK KENT HAS TO FIND SOMEWHERE ELSE TO TAKE OFF HIS GLASSES. ■

was a principled difference between privacy and lying. Superheroes used to hide their identities because they wanted to protect their loved ones. Now, it's just a big cover up.

THERE ONCE WAS A PRINCIPLED DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRIVACY AND LYING. ■

It's hard for this moviegoer not to wonder if the magic of the movies hasn't thereby been dimmed. The movie theater, like a place of worship, is a public space of the most intense privacy. It's public in that a crowd gathers there and is governed by shared rules of being together. Yet, in the darkness, as we munch our Milk Duds and commune with the giant glimmering images, the public around us

fades away and each of us enters into a deep privacy of thought and emotion. If we no longer feel Caul's intense commitment to privacy, a public space like the movie theater loses



JULIAN ASSANGE

WikiLeaks founder
and editor in chief

Photo by Espen Moe

some of its allure and charm. Movies become just something we stream on our iPads.

In a world run by Dark Knights like Putin and Mubarak, we need a Joker like Assange. As the movies with their swirling newspapers remind us, we need to speak truth to and about power.

But truth is one thing, and privacy another. Moreover, the bulk of information unleashed by WikiLeaks, much of it very trivial but some of it very damning, too rarely awakens our Caul consciences. The common response seems to be, "Oh, well. I always figured that kind of stuff was going on. Plus, I'm not going to read all that; I've got my blog to work on." In other words, the real casualty of a surveilled world is not privacy but the public space of political action.

In the John Ford classic *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, a newspaper editor famously commands, "When the legend becomes fact, print the legend." But that holds only if the legend is one we can believe in. Maybe our problem is that our imaginations can no longer envision a credible heroism. It's less that Putin is like Batman than that Batman has become much too much like Putin. **IV**

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

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FRI, MAR 4 - THU, MAR 10

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>> INTERVIEW CONTINUED FROM 27

JW: I haven't made it yet. I don't think many independent films are getting made that are budgeted at \$5 million. They're budgeted below a million or at \$100 million. We're still trying, but, the independent film business has radically changed in the last five years. New Line Cinema, who did all my movies, all the people that were there [that I knew] are gone now. It's a different time... I have a book out. I'm always trying to reinvent myself every year, so you've got a couple of careers to pick from.

LV: Have you considered going to more guerilla filmmaking with cheap digital equipment?

"[THIS FILTHY WORLD IS] ABOUT MY INTERESTS, IT'S ABOUT MY CAREER, IT'S ABOUT MY OBSESSIONS, ABOUT CRIME, ABOUT FASHION, ABOUT MOVIES, ABOUT HOW TO HAVE A HAPPY LIFE IF YOU CAN BE A NEUROTIC AND STILL BE HAPPY."

JW: No because I have four people that work for me, and I live in a couple [of cities]. I did that, I'm not going to go backwards and have a faux revolution. I did that. It would be forced, it wouldn't be natural which it was when those years happened.

LV: Well you don't need to have so many people working for you when you write a book.

JW: It takes longer though.

LV: You want to talk a little about *This Filthy World*? I watched the DVD -

JW: It's very different than the DVD, it's different, completely updated and re-written. It's about my interests, it's about my career, it's about my obsessions, about crime, about fashion, about movies, about how to have a happy life if you can be a neurotic and still be happy. I think it's a self-help speech for lunatics. **lv**

Kent Williams has been distracted by shiny objects in Iowa City since the Ford Administration.



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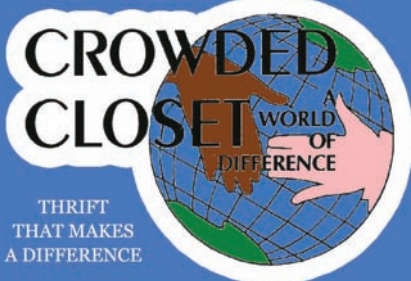
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Porch Builder

Can't Be Trusted

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Once more into the breach with West Branch's finest blue collar shit-kicking band. They don't play a single lick I've never heard before and yet I want to hear them play them over and over. *Can't Be Trusted* seems to be more overtly country than their last CD, but it's the mean, unvarnished kind of country music—George Jones before he got sober, Johnny Cash before he found Jesus, Willy Nelson before... no, Willy's kinda where he always was, bless his heart.

Maybe Porch Builder would be more famous if they'd leave the bottle alone and try and pass a urine test now and again. Or maybe they're not as messed up as they pretend, but they talk a good game. It is true though that their favorite subject is the classic country narrative: Drink too much, get into trouble, and regret it the next day. But not so much so as not to do it again.

And they can play those damn guitars. This CD sounds pretty great for being recorded in a basement in two evenings. And it's mixed

like a hip-hop CD, with a ton of bass and rude snares. Boom-bap for pickups on gravel roads? I think it could be a trend. "Got Too Drunk Last Night" is a nearly perfect example of a drinking man's country song. It's a simple blues boogie, but the lyrics have a sort of Zen simplicity: "I threw my chair across the bar / I threw my bottle down on the floor / I mugged the TV and they threw me out the door."

"Hopped Up" is a brilliantly simple country blues two-step instrumental evocative of string ties, Brylcreem and gingham dresses. "Delta Avenue Blues" is yet another blues song, but it's got a sweet Bob Dylan (circa *Blonde On Blonde*) sound—in fact you could sing "Leopard Skin Pillbox Hat" over it, no problem. At the end of the song you can hear someone say "that's about as good as that one's gonna get," and that's a good description for the whole CD.

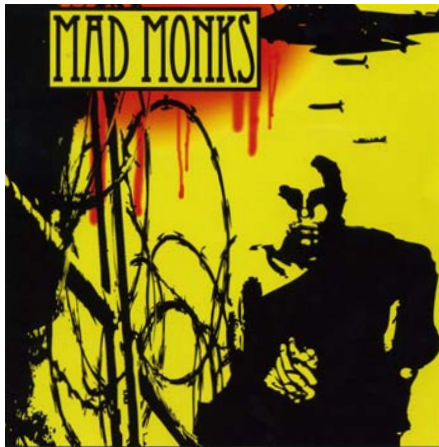
least 1967. Mad Monks are definitely standing on the shoulders of giants—as they cite on their Facebook page: Jimi Hendrix, Captain Beefheart, King Crimson, Muddy Waters, Buddy Guy. Interestingly, Hendrix influenced them not so much with his wailing guitar style but with the deft, sophisticated songwriting of his later work.

I love me some electronic music but Mad Monks do something a kid with Fruity Loops can't: they can play. Their songs are more complicated than strictly necessary, but they never go over the edge into arbitrary noodling. They're also well-served by Luke Tweedy's recording and mixing. This CD sounds like a band playing in a room, but somehow more focused. Each instrument is clearly defined, without that hyped, piercing sound so common in modern rock.

The opener "Relentless Second" gets prog-rocky-freaky, with tempo changes and modulations galore, but it does so nimbly. The vocals have a real late 60's feel, very Bay Area Acid Rock. The titanic "All There Is" that closes the album has the most Hendrix-esque shredding and you can definitely hear Jimi in their chord progressions.

"The Omen" starts with a stately bit of blues marching music before modulating down chromatically into the verse, whose sophisticated melodic twists make this the most overtly pretty song on the CD. It's the 'one for the ladies'—the ballad all metal bands used to put on every album. But I'm a guy and I think it's an ace song—there's enough melodic meat here for the Bad Plus to do a jazz cover.

Above all, Mad Monks rock, brilliantly. "Tasteful Rock" is an oxymoron, but the Mad Monk style is a collection of impulses and gestures that, if taken too far, could be ludicrous. They have a lot to give but give only what a thoughtful headbanger needs, no more.



Mad Monks

Mad Monks

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J Trey

BLUE I SOUL

reverbnation.com/jtrey

J Trey have been around since 1999 on the Iowa hip-hop scene, but this new CD represents a big step up. Their sound has been enlarged with the addition of female vocalist Jasmine and a full band. Sure, there have been hip hop bands before—Black Eyed Peas and Bad

BLUE I SOUL IS THE FIRST IOWA HIP HOP CD I'VE HEARD IN A WHILE THAT IS CONSISTENTLY TOP QUALITY—GREAT SONGS, GREAT VOCALS, DOPE BEATS.

Fathers come to mind. But the former are pop entertainers and the latter are a hyped up rock/rap hybrid. J Trey is another thing altogether. The vocal front line of JT, JB and Jasmine sing as much they rap and their voices are more soul than rock.

The first song, “Drift Away,” is an acoustic remake of the 1972 Dobie Gray hit and it showcases their tuneful vocal quality. “Can’t Drop The Mic,” next up, is a jaw dropper for me, showcasing Jasmine’s double-tracked vocals on the hook. The smooth, jazzy beat is driven by understated keyboard work and

the rhymes are in the pocket. But Jasmine’s verse is so sweet it requires a rewind. There just aren’t that many singers around—especially in Iowa!—who sound so relaxed and in command. Imagine Erykah Badu, but with a purer tone and killer vibrato under perfect control.

“Rhythm & Booze” finds the sweet spot between R&B and hip-hop and, again, Jasmine makes the track with vocal improvisation behind the rhymes on the verses. I don’t want to bang on too much about Jasmine because JT & JB are decent MCs, too, and the vocal interplay of the three is crucial to their sound. And they ride some great beats, half (the slinky, jazzy half) produced by their keyboardist Al Fraser.

BLUE I SOUL is the first Iowa hip-hop CD I’ve heard in a while that is consistently top quality—great songs, great vocals, dope beats. It’s one thing for a hip hop crew to be “good for Iowa,” but J Trey have a sound that would turn heads anywhere. **lv**

Kent Williams would write the Great American Novel if he could figure out how to get people in and out of rooms.

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Penguin's Comedy Club

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

Check [website for showtimes](http://www.penguinscomedyclub.com)

Open Mic Night, March 9 • Open Mic Night, March 23

Performing Arts at Iowa

performingarts.uiowa.edu/

See [website for times and locations](http://performingarts.uiowa.edu/)

Maurita Murphy Mead and Friends in Chamber Music, March 1 • Maia Quartet, March 3 • University Choir, Timothy Stalter, Director, March 4 • Chamber Orchestra, March 6 • CNM Composer's Workshop March 6 • Piano Sundays, March 6 • University and Concert Bands, Mark Heidel, director, March 7 • John Milbauer, piano, March 8 • Cory Mixdorf, trombone, March 9 • Andrew Parker, oboe; Alan Huckleberry, piano, March 10 • Winterriese; Andrew Whitfield, baritone, March 21 • Massimo La Rosa, trombone; Elizabeth DeMio,

A-List



March Madness: Iowa Women's Basketball

Big Ten Tournament: March 3-6

NCAA Tournament: March 19-April 5

You gotta respect the Hawkeye. You *know* this. But, in the month of March, who would agree? The answer: anyone who's checked out Lisa Bluder's 2010-11 squad.

In February, Bluder's ballers wrapped up the regular season with five straight wins, making Iowa (22-7) one of only two Big Ten teams to finish in the AP top-25. This March they take their hot streak into the Big Ten and, hopefully, NCAA tournaments, starting with a tough match-up against Ohio State on March 4.

Think women's basketball is boring? Think again. The Iowa women lit up Indiana to the tune of 93 points in their Feb. 27 season finale—more than the Hawkeye men were able to put up in any regular season outing.

It's not too late for either team to make a flashy finish and, of course, we will be cheering for both teams. But, this March, Iowa's greatest chance for glory on the hardwood lies with the Hawkeye women.

piano, March 21 • Society of Composers Concert, March 26 • Richard B. Hervig Memorial Concert, March 27 • UI Symphony Orchestra, William LaRue Jones, conductor, March 30

Public Space One

129 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.publicspaceone.com

Little Village Live: Head for the Hills, March 2, 5 p.m. • Koplant_No, March 5, 8 p.m. • *Little Village Live:* Santah, March 23, 5 p.m.

Riverside Casino

3184 Highway 22, Riverside

www.riversidecasinoandresort.com

The Robert Cray Band, March 25, 8 p.m. • Jonny Lang, March 26, 8 p.m. • John Mayall with Shemekia Copeland, March 27, 4 p.m.

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 Warehouse

www.myspace.com/whitelightingic

Check website for events TBA

Mondo Drag with bands TBA, March 4, 7 p.m.

Yacht Club

13 S. Linn St., Iowa City

www.iowacityyachtclub.org

Shows at 9 p.m. unless otherwise noted

Head for the Hills with Mayflies, March 2 • The Workshy with Lick It Ticket, March 4 • Dennis McMurrin & The Demolition Band, March 5 • Roots Post Show Party with Jimkata, March 9 • Gypsy Lumberjacks with Smokin' Joe Scarpellino & Friends, March 10 • Valentiger with Clovis Mann and Rea (from the Honeybees), March 11 • Oakhurst, March 14 • St. Patrick's Day Massacre VIII with The Trollies, Nebula Was, Mayflies, Ryan Persinger, Synthaholics, Uniphonics, Mad Monks, 5 in a Hand, March 17, 7 a.m.-2 a.m. • Mooseknuckle with Todd Day Wait's Pige, March 18 • Porch Builder CD Release Party with The Fowlers and Seth Wenger, March 19 • Dead Larry CD Release Party, March 25 • Flight School Dance Party, March 29 • Or, The Whale with Chamberlin and Kerosene Circuit, March 30 • Das Racist with Hood Internet and Rich Rok, March 31

THEATER/DANCE/ PERFORMANCE

City Circle Acting Company

www.citycircle.org

See website for times and locations

New Play Festival Five, March 4-6

Englert

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.englert.org

The Magic Flute, March 23, 7 p.m.

Penguin's Comedy Club

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

www.penguinscomedyclub.com

Check website for showtimes

Joel Lindley, March 4-5 • Greg Hahn, March 11-12 • The Midnight Swinger, March 18-19

Performing Arts at Iowa

performingarts.uiowa.edu

See website for times and locations

Dancers In Company Home Concert, March 3-5 • Antigone 2.0 adapted by Carol MacVey and Jen Silverman, March 3-6, 10-12 • "Honors Week," March 21-26

Riverside Theater

www.riversidetheatre.org/

See website for showtimes

Walking the Wire: Monologues at Riverside: OMG!, March 4-6, 10-13 • Thursday Theatre Talk: The Syringa Tree, March 24

Theatre Cedar Rapids

4444 1st Ave NE, Cedar Rapids

www.theatreocr.org

See website for showtimes

Sweeney Todd, March 4-26 • Doug Gabriel, March 6 • Horatio's Purgatory, March 9

WORDS

The Mill

120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City

www.icmill.com

Literary Death Match, featuring: Peter Orner, Sandra Allen, Micah Bateman, Robin Hemley, March 2, 10 p.m.

Prairie Lights

15 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City

www.prairielight.com

Readings are at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted

Check website for TBA Live from Prairie Lights readings

Alan Heathcock reading from his debut story collection, *Volt*, March 26, 5 p.m.

Mission Creek

Check MissionFreak.com + LittleVillageMag.com/

mc2011 for a listing of Mission Creek literary events (March 28 thru April 4)

CINEMA

Bijou Theatre

IMU, UI Campus, Iowa City

www.uiowa.edu/~bijou/

Four Lions, March 1-3 • Waste Land, March 1-3 • Queen of the Lot, March 3 • High Fidelity, March 3-4 • All Good Things, March 4-10 • Made in Dagenham, March 4-10 • "America Falls" and other recent work by Phil Solomon, March 5

Englert

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.englert.org

American Filmmakers Series: Jim Jarmusch: Down By Law, March 1, 8 p.m. • American Filmmakers Series: Terrence Malick: Badlands, March 16, 8 p.m. • American Filmmakers: Terrence Malick: Days Of Heaven, March 17, 8 p.m.

Figge Art Museum: Saturday Afternoon Film Series

225 West Second St., Davenport

<http://figgeart.org/>

North by Northwest, March 5 • Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, March 12 • Murder on the Orient Express, March 19

Old Capitol Museum

Pentacrest, Iowa City

www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap

See website for locations

Chaos and Creation on the Pentacrest – Film Series, March 20, 1:30 p.m.

UI Museum of Natural History

www.uiowa.edu/~nathist

See website for locations

Movies@MNH: Wall-E, March 6, 2 p.m.

KIDS

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids

www.crma.org

Doodlebugs Preschool Program at the Cedar Rapids Public Library: Doodlebugs TV, March 4, 10:30 a.m. • SmArt Saturdays, March 5, 10:30 a.m. • Pajama Storytime: Playtime Poppy's Pop-Up Pals, March 10, 7 p.m. • Pajama Storytime: Dreaming Dinosaurs, March 24, 7 p.m. • Doodlebugs Preschool Program at the Hiawatha Public Library: Doodlebugs 3-D!, March 25, 10:30 a.m.

Iowa City Public Library

123 South Linn St. Iowa City

www.icpl.org

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

UI Museum of Natural History

www.uiowa.edu/~nathist

See website for locations

Storytime Adventures: Rocks and Fossils, March 20, 3 p.m. • Night at the Museum: "Arctic Underwater Animals," March 25, 6-9 p.m.

MISC

Brucemore

2160 Linden Drive SE, Cedar Rapids

www.brucemore.org

Guided Tours Reopening, March 1, 10 a.m. • Pruning Perennials Workshop, March 15, 6 p.m.

Green Drinks

www.greendrinks.org/IA/IowaCity

See website for details

Informal environmental issues discussion every second Thursday of the month
Meetup at The Red Avocado, March 10, 5:30 p.m.

Iowa City Scrabble Club

Monthly Gathering

March Gathering: Iowa City Public Library, March 20, 2-5 p.m.

Old Capitol City Roller Girls

www.oldcapitolcityrollergirls.com

See website for locations

versus Quad City Rollers, March 12 • Versus the Unholly Rollers of the Mad Rollin' Dolls, March 19 • Versus Des Moines Derby Dames, March 26

Old Capitol Museum

Pentacrest, Iowa City

www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap

See website for locations

WorldCanvass with Joan Kjaer, March 6, 6 p.m. • National History Day! District 10 Competition, March 18, 8:30-5 p.m.

Exhibits from Local Environmental Organizations & Agencies

www.jcht.org

Parkview Church, 15 Foster Road, Iowa City
Prairie Preview XXVIII: Rain Gardens & Beyond, March 8, 6:30 p.m.

UI Museum of Natural History

www.uiowa.edu/~nathist

See website for locations

U.I. Explorers Lecture Series: Jerry Schnoor, March 17, 7 p.m.

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Curses, Foiled Again

- Even though arson-for-hire suspect Ismael Ortiz, 24, wore latex gloves when he started a house fire in Titusville, Fla., police found his fingerprint, plus the finger that left it. While fleeing the scene, Ortiz “slammed his finger in the door,” Detective Jessica Edens said, “and cut the tip of his finger.” (*Orlando Sentinel*)
- Police identified Cody Wilkins, 25, as their suspect in a house burglary in Silver Spring, Md., because he left his cell phone at the scene, charging in an electrical outlet. Police learned that Wilkins, who lives nearby, had lost power during a snowstorm, prompting him to charge his phone while looting the house. He had to flee abruptly, however, when the homeowner interrupted him. (*The Washington Post*)

Rogue Cocks

- Jose Luis Ochoa, 35, died shortly after being stabbed in the leg by a razor-sharp blade attached to the leg of a rooster that attacked him at a cockfight in Lamont, Calif. Noting roosters are drugged, mutilated and have knives and razor blades attached to their legs to make them better fighters, Kern County Public Health Director Matt Constantine said that for rescued birds, rehabilitation is “a real challenge.” (*Bakersfield Californian*)
- A fighting rooster with razor blades attached to its legs slashed its owner’s throat in India after owner Singrai Soren tried to force it back into the ring too soon. Roosters are usually given at least an hour’s break between fights, “but Soren wanted the rooster to go to the ring within a few minutes of its first fight,” said a witness, identified as Dasai. “The rooster tried to get away from the ring several times, but Soren pushed it into the ring repeatedly. This upset it, and it attacked Soren.” (*Britain’s Daily Mail*)

Man Purse of the Week

Corrections officials said that during a “clothed pat-down search” of Antoine Banks, 25, after his arrest on drug charges in Louisville, Ky., they found a small bag of suspected crack cocaine tied to the waistband of his underpants. They proceeded with a strip search and found “another small baggie” containing crack rocks in the foreskin of his penis. (Louisville’s WLKY-TV)



Overseas Homeland Insecurity

- U.S. service members and their families stationed at Kadena Air Force Base in Okinawa are accepting money from local companies to bring tourists onto the base, despite warnings that this activity is against the rules and poses a security threat. Companies such as American Pro and Friends Abroad International Cultural Exchange sell trips that offer American cultural experiences to students on mainland Japan, Kadena military officials said. The companies recruit mostly military spouses to host the visiting students for a day and sponsor tours of military facilities. “When sponsors sign somebody onto the installation without knowing their intentions or motivations, it puts the whole of Kadena at risk,” Air Force official Ed Gulick said. (*Stars and Stripes*)

Snow Daze

- Police investigating a disturbance at a housing project in Norwalk, Conn., reported that Clara Nelson, 53, and her daughter, Cristalle Nelson, 31, had just finished digging out their car, when Sheryl Rogers, 35, and her 16-year-old son, began shoveling and tossing snow where the Nelsons already cleared. As the two families argued, Cristalle Nelson hit Rogers over the head with her shovel. Rogers’s son tried to hit Cristalle but missed and struck Clara Nelson instead. Police charged Cristalle Nelson and the son with assault. (*Stamford Advocate*)
- Authorities accused Leo J. Powers, 23, of making bombs at his former residence in Abington, Mass., and using them to clear snow so he wouldn’t have to shovel. Noting that Powers had been blowing up snow banks for some time, Police Chief David Majenski said investigators who searched the home discovered a container filled with “military-grade ammunition and other stuff, including powders of some sort.” (*Quincy’s The Patriot Ledger*)
- Veteran alpine skier Roland Fleck, 78, was arrested for skiing uphill at Wyoming’s Jackson Hole Mountain Resort. After informing Fleck that skiing uphill was against Wyoming law and repeatedly ordering him to “ski properly,” seven ski patrollers and two deputies spent 3.5 hours trying to stop Fleck before finally handcuffing him and tobogganing him off the slopes. (*The Jackson Hole News & Guide*)

Leave Ill Enough Alone

- When an unrecognizable woman became an Internet sensation after surveillance video at a shopping mall in Berks County, Pa., showed her falling into a fountain

while texting, Cathy A. Cruz Marrero, 49, willingly identified herself to news reporters as the klutz. She also demanded an apology from mall security officers for releasing the video. Reporters recognized Marrero when she showed up days later in Berks County Court on an earlier criminal charge for unauthorized credit-card use. They checked court records and learned Marrero has multiple charges for retail theft and one for hit-and-run. After her rap sheet became public, Marrero insisted she only came forward in the first place to remind the public of the dangers of texting while walking. (*Reading Eagle*)

Odd Endings

- Alexander Lawrence Jay, 40, committed suicide while alone in his cell at Oregon’s Washington County Jail, according to sheriff’s Sgt. Vance Stimler, by using a jail-issued pencil to stab himself in the arm and hit an artery. (*Portland’s The Oregonian*)
- British tree surgeon Adam Baldock, 27, died while trimming a tree that turned on him in Mitcham, Surrey. “It seems he was trying to cut a branch,” a police official said, “and it pushed the chain saw back at him.” The industrial saw cut into his neck and shoulder. (*Britain’s Daily Mail*)

Provocative Proposals

- Utah Rep. Carl Wimmer introduced a bill to designate a semiautomatic pistol as the state’s official gun, joining the state’s official cooking pot and 23 other state symbols. Wimmer told the House Political Subdivisions Committee that the Browning M1911 would honor its inventor, Utah native John Browning. He explained he chose the M1911 instead of another Browning gun because it’s widely used by the military, police officers and private citizens and “has defended American values and the traditions of this country for 100 years.” (*Associated Press*)
- A cash-strapped British council proposed heating a community swimming pool by using furnaces at a nearby crematorium. Instead of heat from the incinerators at the Borough of Redditch Cemeteries & Crematorium going up the chimney, Carole Gandy, head of the Redditch Borough Council, declared that the measure “will save the authority money and, in the long-term, save energy, which is what we’re all being told we should do.” (*Britain’s The Telegraph*)

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

Will wind power change the weather?

On a recent drive along I-80 I was amazed at the number of wind turbines that have been added in the last couple of years. If enough wind turbines were constructed to supply a significant proportion of the Earth's electrical needs (let's say 50 percent), would this noticeably alter the weather?

—Marc S. Williams

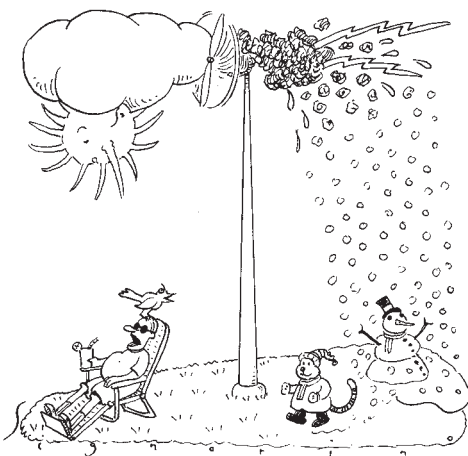
The unimaginative are now thinking: what a ridiculous question. Tell that to the editors of the journal *Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics*, who published a paper on the subject last year—a paper, moreover, that was in the finest Straight Dope tradition of pushing the experimental envelope. The conclusions are a bit more technical than I'd care to present in a newspaper of general circulation, but, in layperson's language, here's the takeaway: holy \$#!+.

The paper, "Weather Response to a Large Wind Turbine Array," has many fascinating aspects, which I discussed at some length with its authors, Daniel Barrie and Daniel Kirk-Davidoff. The highlights:

- When these guys say "large," they're not kidding. They simulated the effects of a hypothetical wind farm covering 23 percent of the land area of North America, some 5.7 million square kilometers. It took in virtually all of the central U.S., extending in a giant swath from New Mexico to Georgia on the south and reaching all the way up through the Great Lakes to Hudson Bay in Canada. Turbine count: close to 9 million.

- The simulated turbines collectively generated almost 2.5 terawatts of imaginary electricity. To put that in perspective, total world electric power capacity right now is estimated to be around 5 terawatts. In other words, the two Dans were calculating the weather impact of extracting 50 percent of the world's electricity from the wind, assuming we did it all in one place. (That's coincidental, by the way—their actual goal was to see what might happen if you used the wind to generate the U.S.'s total energy needs, not just electricity.)

- Using a computational climate model, the two calculated that with the turbines operating normally, wind speeds within the array would drop and winds nearby might shift direction—nothing too dramatic. But if you suddenly stopped all the turbines at once, well now: you might be able to change the course of storms in the North Atlantic. In short, under the right circumstances, you could use wind turbines to mess with the weather.



That's interesting all by itself; other studies have also found significant local and global weather effects. But potential climate change is only part of the impact of large-scale wind power. Consider:

- Barrie and Kirk-Davidoff agreed their hypothetical wind farm is far larger than anything likely to be built. That's true in the sense that no one is proposing one giant turbine array. (For one thing, the decreased wind inside the array would make the whole thing less efficient.) But the fantasy farm gives you an idea of the resources required to generate a substantial amount of electricity using the wind. It's estimated that meeting world energy demand (not just electricity) is going to take something like 44 terawatts of capacity in 2100. There's talk of generating 10 percent of that with wind power—4.4 terawatts.

- That's a lot of windmills. In another widely noted paper published in 2010, Chien Wang

and Ron Prinn of MIT write, "Presuming these turbines are effectively generating at full capacity only 1/3 of the time, about 13 million of them are needed to meet an energy output of [4.4 terawatts], and they would occupy a continental-scale area." If they were spaced 800 meters apart, 13 million turbines would occupy more than 8 million square kilometers—roughly 5 percent of the world's total land area, equal to more than a third of North America. (I ignore offshore installations.) Cost: \$45 trillion.

- Only a fraction of those turbines would be installed in the U.S.; nonetheless, we're looking at a good-sized project. The Department of Energy estimates that meeting 20 percent of the country's electricity demand with wind power in 2030 will require 300 gigawatts of generating capacity. That translates to 150,000 turbines in 46 states.

The biggest U.S. wind farm at the moment, the Horse Hollow Wind Energy Center in Texas, has 421 turbines. The Cape Wind Project in Nantucket Sound off Massachusetts, which received federal approval in 2010, calls for 130 turbines. Cape Wind provoked years of controversy. Now scale that up to 150,000.

Look, I like wind power. Generating an equivalent amount of electricity with fossil fuels would cause much worse environmental damage. But large-scale wind power will, at minimum, transform the landscape to an extent not seen arguably since the clearing of the virgin forest.

Sure, that worked out OK, and if in the end it just means the countryside is dotted with windmills, I guess we'll get used to it. But as Barrie and Kirk-Davidoff's little exercise demonstrates, any time you make an investment that massive, you have to wonder: what else might change?

—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 MARCH 2011

FOR EVERYONE—Over the threshold. Things will move faster, now. Changes will be more numerous, more frequent and more dramatic, more up front and out in the open, harder to avoid, hard to gauge. Exciting in many ways. Challenging in many ways. More people will move in and out of our lives more often and more quickly. We will also be more open and more welcoming to new people and ideas. To keep our personal and work lives on track, we will need to devote extra time to processing the thoughts and feelings that flow from new and unexpected experiences. A little extra time comparing notes with trusted friends and allies wouldn't go amiss.

♈ ARIES—Rapid transition. You'll soon be in the middle of major changes you've been planning for a long time. The onset of actual change coincides with the start of a new, 12-year cycle of healing, growth and expansion. The stars are with you. Now that things are really starting to happen, keep your partners and allies on board. That will take a steady, confident approach. You'll have to translate support and enthusiasm into practical, real world actions. This big release of changeable energies will affect your health in a good way.

♉ TAURUS—Intoxication plus. Taurus is getting hit with several 'destabilizing' vibes. You could feel: extreme impatience with your own situation in life; a tendency to have numerous infatuations at once; completely unrealistic levels of idealism. All of the above long-term. Escapism is fun. So are flirtations. Idealism is enjoyably uplifting. But this could get extreme and go on for awhile. Do try to keep your feet on the ground even as the planets try to sweep you off your feet. If this happened to anyone but levelheaded Taurus I'd be worried.

♊ GEMINI—Ultimatum? Authority figures, mostly at work, will speak firmly and loudly about how things will definitely have to be. It might be intimidating and worrisome, at first. However, you will ultimately find yourself in harmony with the forces of change. Those stern mandates could morph into vague, idealistic goal-setting. You could even find the pursuit of these goals liberating. Still, this will go on for a long time. Take steps to keep your life simple, organized and on track as these seductive and confusing forces take over.

♋ CANCER—High(ly) wire(d) act. Your ambitions will meet up with the raw material for success. You will have the high energy needed to combine the two. Overcoming inertia and countering resistance will also be easier than you think. Your charisma will be enhanced. Your intuitive powers will kick into overdrive. Luck and a little leg work should supply the rest. However, these high energy levels could cause strain. This is especially true since we are talking about long-term influences. You definitely need to protect yourself against overdoing.

♌ LEO—Plan A = Plan B. You might think you can avoid all the frantic changes, the overly idealistic chatter and stay detached, calm and grounded. Nope. Ultimately, the

stimulating ideas, changeable events and seductive interpersonal energies will be impossible to resist. Actually, the stars have in mind a specific role for you: go-between. You have surprising influence with decision makers. You'll need to use this influence, often, to help keep things on track for everybody. You can't avoid it. Just try not to, you know, get caught in a cross-fire.

♍ VIRGO—Hard facts. You sympathize with those making needed changes. You sympathize with those forced to accept those changes, who increasingly want a bigger say in the process. However, neither side sympathizes with the other. Only you seem to understand how important cooperation is. You need to point out the mistakes both sides are making, which could easily wear out your welcome in both camps. Focus on the real bits, the parts where the rubber hits the road, however unpleasant. Idealistic abstractions, for example, will seriously confuse the issue.

♎ LIBRA—Reality checks mandatory. Read the fine print, twice. It would be easy to end up on the wrong end of a one-sided deal that started out seeming very attractive. You are coming under deceptive, confusing and highly seductive influences. Idealistic notions, romantic overtures, projects at work, medical diagnoses, personal relationships, whatever. With everything that's happening and all the people you need to deal with, it won't be easy. However, your welfare and that of everyone who relies on your judgment needs you to keep making clear and accurate judgments.

♏ SCORPIO—More solid ground. You will soon have more leverage in relationships where you are dependent or must take orders. You can learn anew and grow in these relationships and better assert your independence. You will also be in greater harmony with mysterious 'currents' that might have destabilized your home situation previously. Spiritual insights will enrich your personal involvements and empower you. All told, you can take a firmer, more confident hand in guiding your own affairs. A conservative approach to finances is strongly recommended as earnings tend to plateau.

♐ SAGITTARIUS—Strong currents. Your biggest priority is a steady income. You're determined to land on your feet, financially. But it's getting tougher to keep your footing. You have a growing sympathy for unconventional, protesty sorts. Mysterious forces are undermining

personal beliefs. Other forces are loosening ties to home and family. This is a long-term process and there won't be quick resolutions. You'll need to figure it out, over time. You will remain in surprising harmony with the overall flow of events, though. And your luck will run unusually strong, for awhile.

♑ CAPRICORN—Flexibility needed. Your grip on the overall situation remains surprisingly firm. Personal charisma and moral authority remain strong. You can still impose order by the sheer force of your presence. However, unconventional, non-conformist ideas have a growing influence. Rebellious attitudes and unruly impulses are increasing. Let decisions be influenced by more idealistic, spiritually-minded people as well as the more commonsensical. Their moral support is valuable. Their advice will also help you chart a new course. Any financial difficulties you are experiencing will moderate. However, finances will remain a concern.

♒ AQUARIUS—Aquarius is back. Years of private, solitary transformation are over. You, your ideas and/or your personal ideals will be at center stage often from now on. Those familiar with the quiet, reclusive Aquarius (including yourself) will be happily surprised by the self-confident, outgoing person now before them. You could very often find yourself challenging authority, apathy or entrenched ideas in coming months and years; you might need to polish up your diplomatic skills. As your community involvements and personal commitments expand, don't get overextended, either financially or in other, more subtle ways.

♓ PISCES—Self-possession. You have been feeling rebellious and ready for big challenges, except when you've been feeling reclusive and self-protective. It's been tough to strike a balance. You've chosen the quiet, self-protective option whenever possible. The world is getting ever more challenging and intrusive and you'll find it harder to indulge your reclusive inclinations. Fulfilling your financial needs will require a more outgoing approach. However, you will be in far better touch with your core, Piscean strengths. That will enable you to meet the world on a more equal footing.

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