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# little village

Iowa City's News & Culture Magazine

ATELIER

I.C.

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# little village

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### PUBLISHER & MANAGING EDITOR

Matthew Steele  
 Publisher@LittleVillageMag.com

### ARTS EDITOR | Kent Williams

Arts@LittleVillageMag.com

### FEATURES EDITOR | Hieu Pham

Features@LittleVillageMag.com

### COPY EDITOR | Stephanie Catlett

Steph@LittleVillageMag.com

### ART DIRECTOR | Becky Nasadowski

Design@LittleVillageMag.com

### WEB EDITOR | Drew Bulman

DrewB@LittleVillageMag.com

### SPECIAL EVENTS & LITTLE VILLAGE LIVE

Lisa Ann Stark  
 Events@LittleVillageMag.com

### CONTRIBUTORS | Cecil Adams,

Drew Bulman, Bob Burton, Yale Cohn, Krissy Dallmann, Thomas Dean, Lorin Ditzler, Craig Eley, John Engelbrecht, Tim Gavin, Patrick Howley, Kembrew McLeod, Andre Perry, Megan Ranegar, Michael Roeder, Scott Samuelson, Dr. Star, Matthew Steele, Roland Sweet, Joe Tiefenthaler, Casey Wagner

**PHOTOS** | Bill Adams, Ofer Sivan, Alicia Streeter

**COVER ART** | Tomás Lasansky  
 www.lasanskystudio.com

**ILLUSTRATIONS** | Becky Nasadowski

**CONTACT** | P.O. Box 736,  
 Iowa City, IA 52244

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Editor@LittleVillageMag.com

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## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

**LANGUAGE IS A VIRUS**

AN OCCASIONAL LOOK AT THE WAYS IN WHICH REALLY TERRIBLE IDEAS INFECT MAINSTREAM POLITICAL DISCOURSE

STEP ONE: REPUBLICAN POLITICIAN MAKES A **MODEST PROPOSAL**. TO PAY FOR TAX CUTS FOR THE WEALTHY, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD **EUTHANIZE** THE ELDERLY--



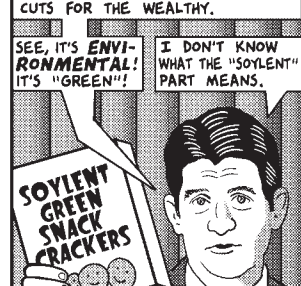
--AND THEN PROCESS THEM INTO **TASTY SNACK CRACKERS!**

THE PROFITS FROM WHICH CAN BE USED TO FINANCE FURTHER TAX CUTS FOR THE WEALTHY.

SEE, IT'S **ENVIRONMENTAL!** IT'S "GREEN!"

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE "SOYLENT" PART MEANS.

**SOYLENT GREEN SNACK CRACKERS**



STEP TWO: SERIOUS PEOPLE APPLAUD THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PLAN.

IT'S **EXTREMELY COURAGEOUS!**


PROCESSING THE ELDERLY INTO SNACK CRACKERS HAS **ALWAYS** BEEN THE THIRD RAIL OF AMERICAN POLITICS!



STEP THREE: LEFT-WING CRITICS ARE PORTRAYED AS NAIVE, UN-REALISTIC **IDEOLOGUES**.

IF THEY HAD **THEIR** WAY, GOVERNMENT WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE **CRADLE-TO-GRAVE PONIES AND RAINBOWS!**

THEY ARE SO UNSERIOUS, IT IS BARELY WORTH ACKNOWLEDGING THEIR **EXISTENCE!**



STEP FOUR: THE WINDOW OF ACCEPTABLE DEBATE IS SHIFTED EVER FURTHER TOWARD OUTRIGHT LUNACY.

PERHAPS WE COULD TAKE A MORE **MODERATE** APPROACH--AND SIMPLY ABANDON THE ELDERLY IN THE DESERT TO FEND FOR **THEMSELVES!**

THAT'S ABOUT WHAT I'D **EXPECT**--FROM A BIG GOVERNMENT SOCIALIST LIKE **YOU!**



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# THE CEREMONIES OF SPRING



Spring is renewal time. We reconnect with so much that has left us over the winter months: our gardens, the leaves on the trees lining our street, the open waters that we canoe or kayak, warm breezes, robins and cardinals singing in the morning, the first chirps of crickets in the gray dusk.

Reconnection with the natural world around us should be a daily project, not a one-time inhalation of, finally, 75-degree air, or the fleeting smile when the sentinel daffodils in your neighbor's yard open their petals. Those are wonderful moments, of course. But our lives today, especially, are so fraught with interior distractions—getting the job done at the office, cleaning the basement, answering email and updating Facebook, deciding on the

best health insurance plan during open enrollment—that we become easily disconnected from what's real in the universe. From the first day that a human being sparked something of an interior life—both psychologically and physically—the primal, and primary, relationship with nature began to fall away.

People have understood the need for reintegration for thousands of years. Chickasaw writer Linda Hogan seeks out a sweat lodge ceremony in her essay "All My Relations" from *Dwellings: A Spiritual History of the Living World* so she can reconstruct her fragmented connections with the greater universe

of which we are all a part. As the steam from the rocks becomes the breath of all life and spirit, she says, "We remember that all things are connected. Remembering this is the purpose of the ceremony ... The intention of a ceremony is to put a person back together by restructuring the human mind. This reorganization is accomplished by a kind of inner map, a geography of the human spirit and the rest of the world. We make whole our broken-off pieces of self and world." As the sweat lodge ceremony comes to a close, "it is as if skin contains land and birds ... the animals and ancestors move into the human body, into skin and blood. The land merges with us ... We who easily grow apart from the world are returned to the great store of life all around us, and there is the deepest sense of being at home here in this intimate kinship."

Hogan emphasizes how central story is to this reintegration process: "Story is at the very crux of healing, at the heart of every ceremony

Reconnection with the natural world around us should be a daily project, not a one-time inhalation of, finally, 75-degree air, or the fleeting smile when the sentinel daffodils in your neighbor's yard open their petals.

and ritual in the older America." In his essay "Landscape and Narrative" from *Crossing Open Ground*, Barry Lopez elaborates on this convergence of inner and outer landscapes,



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story and reintegration. In addition to the natural world that is the external landscape, Lopez says there is a “second landscape,” an interior one, a kind of projection within a person of a part of the exterior landscape ... The speculations, intuitions and formal ideas we refer to as ‘mind’ ... are deeply influenced by where on

you pass every day, or stop and move in closer to gently touch that last redbud flower stubbornly clinging to the tree as the heart-shaped leaves burst forth. Remember the story of the day you and your life’s love planted the flowering dogwood in the front yard of your first house.

**So here it is, May in Iowa City, and we’re ready to rebuild our connections to the living, burgeoning earth that has lain dormant for so long.**

this earth one goes, what one touches, the patterns one observes in nature ... A story draws on relationships in the exterior landscape and projects them onto the interior landscape. The purpose of storytelling is to achieve harmony between the two landscapes, in a harmonious way to reproduce the harmony of the land in the individual’s interior. Inherent in story is the power to reorder a state of psychological confusion through contact with the pervasive truth of those relationships we call ‘the land.’”

So here it is, May in Iowa City, and we’re ready to rebuild our connections to the living, burgeoning earth that has lain dormant for so long. I don’t know if everyone needs a sweat lodge, but we all could add a little ceremony and story into our days to heal the breach between the interior and exterior landscapes that winter may have wrought.

As you dig in the moist soil of your garden, feel and smell the dark humus and the worms that squiggle back below to safety. Tell your son or daughter or life partner or friend the story of the time you brought a pocketful of earthworms to grade school.

As you walk to work, ponder the last cream and maroon petals falling from that magnolia

As you let the dog out to the backyard in the morning, step out with him with your cup of coffee and your little

daughter at your side. Sing “Here Comes the Sun” together, which you were so delighted to discover she had learned in preschool.

Ceremony and story can be small as well as grand. Any conscious carving out of a mindful moment can serve as brief ceremonial time, as a new story itself. Such offices should be part of our lives every day, not just occasions full of pomp and circumstance. May is one of those months, with its cascading beauty of

**We realize we need to make our inner selves whole again with the external landscape, to redraw the map between spirit and nature, to make land and birds and flowers part of our blood and skin once more.**

renewal, when we realize how distant we have made ourselves from all that is important in the world. We realize we need to make our inner selves whole again with the external landscape, to redraw the map between spirit and nature, to make land and birds and flowers part of our blood and skin once more. Renewal, reorder, reorganization, reintegration—of mind and nature, of internal and external landscapes, of story and season. This is our task in May. **lv**

*Thomas Dean welcomes spring from his home on the east side of Iowa City.*



MAY 1, 4PM **GROOVY KATZ HAIR SHOW**  
 MAY 2, 7PM **JOE PUG AND THE HUNDRED MILE BAND**  
 + STRAND OF OAKS  
 MAY 3, 8PM **AIR SEX WORLD CHAMPIONS**  
 MAY 4, 8PM **TITLE TRACKS**  
 + THE WAR I SURVIVED  
 MAY 5, 9PM **BURNING HALOS**  
 + THE SULLIVAN GANG & FEED MY PIRANHA  
 MAY 6, 7PM **CHASING SHADE**  
 + BERMUDA REPORT & DREW WITTER  
 MAY 10, 5PM **IT PREVAILS**  
 + LIFE ON REPEAT & WE ARE DEFIANCE & AFFIANCE & STAND YOUR GROUND  
 MAY 11, 6PM **GO RADIO**  
 + SPARKS THE RESCUE & THIS CENTURY & SELECT START  
 MAY 13, 9PM **DELVIS**  
 + THE WHINES  
 MAY 20, 8PM **THE SEA AND CAKE**  
 + TBA  
 MAY 21, 5PM **SECONDHAND SERENADE**  
 MAY 25, 7PM **CURENSY**

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# APRIL

## THE MONTH THAT WAS

### CONTROVERSY ON A STICK

Cheered on by the Melrose Neighborhood Association, a committee led by Housing and Inspection Services Director Doug Boothroy recommended that vendors not be allowed to operate along Melrose Avenue on football gamedays. The committee reasoned that, since the area is zoned residential, anything short of a ban would constitute a willful disregard for regulations designed, after all, to make these things straightforward.

After a lengthy discussion, the Council of Elders declined to impose an outright ban, but will continue to discuss the idea of issuing temporary permits. According to Susan Mims, "The vast majority" of interested citizens "are saying, are you people crazy? And I have to agree with them." "Possibly because my husband is The University of Iowa's associate athletic director," she did not add.

Craziness aside, appeals to "tradition" that ignore the downside of gameday amount to idle whines absent an appreciation of the neighborhood's point of view. A handful of days a year, residents around Melrose get to see economic stimulus in the raw: crowds of people (and the fluids entering and escaping them), lots of noise and tons of garbage. It's a mixed bag, and the downside ranges from public urination to serious safety hazards; last year workers with Game Day Iowa punctured a natural gas line when setting up a tent on Melrose.

With that in mind, a bit more oversight isn't entirely outrageous. Boothroy's committee put the Iowa City Council on the spot and council members responded about as generously as they could. Could've been worse—Boothroy thinks that "we need to talk about" the "Iowa Fuckin' City" T-shirts sold by one salty vendor.

At the end of the day, though, it's really up to us schlubs to support a gameday environment that doesn't require overwrought regulation. Here are a few tips:

- The next time you see someone litter during pregame, finish your beer, throw it to the ground and punch the offender in the nose. Then pick up your cup.
- Help curb public urination the entrepreneurial way: open an adult-diaper concession. [Add your own black and gold joke here.]
- Legalize it. Hey, this month's column was due on 4/20.

### COMING SOON: HALF AS MUCH TO EXPLAIN TO YOUR PARENTS

In a continuing effort to seem less old and crazy, the City Council decided to vote this summer on lowering fines imposed for under-21 violations. Currently, the penalty for being caught at a bar after hours is \$500, plus another \$235 in fees of some kind. Being caught in possession of alcohol could tack on another \$365. By comparison, I have never paid \$1,100 for a car.

The proposal scheduled for consideration on July 1 would drop the first-time penalty for underage presence at a bar to \$535. By comparison, I have never ... you know, let's talk about something else.

### PROF. LEWIN CALLS ATTENTION TO THE NEED FOR BREVITY IN EMAIL COMMUNICATION

Fresh off the success of their 2007 game of capture the flag featuring illegal immigrants vs. border patrol agents, the UI College Republicans went fishing again this April and came up with a whopper. This time, the UICR cast a broad net, combining an animal-rights barbecue with a "coming-out party" for conservatives.

I'm not unsympathetic to the challenges the UICR faced in choosing a ploy: Just a week previous, an elementary school teacher in Virginia held a mock slave auction, which would've been golden. And I join Mark Foley, Larry Craig, Bob Allen, Ken Mehlman, Ted Haggerty, Mark Kirk, Lindsey Graham and countless others in applauding the idea of conservatives coming out.

I'm a bit disappointed, though, that such a shitstorm (pardon my French) erupted over Professor Ellen Lewin's simple response: "Fuck You, Republicans" (pardon hers).

Disappointed that Lewin didn't take a beat to consider that she was fulfilling exactly the role written for her by a handful of students whose sense of humor is indebted equally to Andrew Dice Clay and Guy Debord (the intellectual for stupid people who want to look smart).

Disappointed that the UICR's mock-shocks of righteous teenage indignation were so predictable.

And disappointed that the AP wire story, as written by new Iowa City correspondent Ryan J. Foley, missed much of the nuance I've ham-handedly crammed into this segment. Which, of course, helped him get his stuff picked up by Fox. Welcome, Ryan; may you use your time back in town wisely and may you hone your craft studiously.

### SACK UP

For a state that gave the world Michele Bachmann (born in Waterloo) and Bob Vander Ploos, Iowa's redistricting effort was boringly sane and reasonable. For a brief shining moment, it looked like we in the Fightin' Second would be treated to a Battle of the Sacks: Incumbent Dave Loebsack suddenly found himself in the First District, which includes congressional hopeful and former First Lady Christine Vilsack's hometown of Mount Pleasant.

But Vilsack moved to Ames, where she'll take on Steve King (who, along with Bachmann, is another, sadder, kind of sack). Loebsack will drag his carpet bag down from Mount Vernon and vie to stay in the Second.

### VITO'S IS DEAD; LONG LIVE \_\_\_\_

Regular reader(s) of this column know that I'm dubious about tax increment financing schemes, or TIFs, in which loans to developers are paid back by the increased tax revenues generated by new projects. But when the city stands to breathe life into a former Mike Porter joint, throwing TIF money to local developer/Vetro-inflator Marc Moen seems a bit more palatable.

Moen is requesting \$250,000 in TIF money to rehab the artist formerly known as Vito's. The ground floor is large enough to house an upscale retail outlet, though it needs repairs (including, somehow unsurprisingly, sewer work). The floors above have, again somehow unsurprisingly, gone unused for decades and Moen plans to turn them into suitable office spaces.



As it currently stands, the deal projects repayment in eight years or so once tenants are found. Speaking of which, there aren't any just yet—and the deal also stipulates that Moen won't put a bar or restaurant in the space. That's where Moen's knack for getting things done meets up with the dreams of Tom Markus and other champions of corporate retail downtown: The building seems destined to house an H&M or Urban Outfitters (both of which, my girlfriend assures me, sell clothes).

There's some risk here: Moen's stake in purchasing the building is unknown and that's a ton of floor space for a lone, big-box retailer, unserved by an immediately adjacent parking lot (modern life is disgusting, yes, but these are realities). So we're looking at sinking a quarter-million dollars to de-scuze Vito's in the hope that a major player will move in. The best-case scenario has the new space bringing significantly more people downtown, some of whom will become new customers at competing stores, while a decade of the new store's increased tax production goes to pay off an existing debt. The worst-case scenarios are too numerous and too lousy to dwell on, but they all boil down to throwing a ton of money at a developer whose optimism doesn't carry enough water.

This is happening, and it's big. Moen's worked well with the city in the past—the Vetro might look awkwardly out of place to some of us, but Moen brought a thriving grocery store downtown, even if it was on the second try, and it's a short list of folks who could've done that. For all our sakes, he needs to hit this one out of the park. **lv**

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



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## Great River Brewery 483 Pale Ale

**BREW OF THE MONTH: MAY**

**M**ay is for maibock. A native of Einbeck, Germany, it has lubricated traditional spring festivals for at least four hundred years, though was unfortunately absent at the Grant Wood Mayfest when I was in fifth grade. However, I am breaking with this tradition to recommend an excellent Iowa brew that should satisfy the hopheads.

483 Pale Ale, brewed by Davenport's Great River Brewery, is so aggressively hopped it gave me California flashbacks. (Brake lights stretching past the horizon—noooo!) Brewed with Centennial hops and dry-hopped with Cascade, 483 Pale Ale would fit right in among assertive West Coast pale ales and is a rejuvenating compliment to spring fever.

When poured into a pint glass, 483 Pale Ale is a clean and clear rust/pale amber color. One or two fingers of eggshell-colored head will develop and dissipate to leave a bubbly and spotted lacing and ring of foam around the edge. The aroma is an invigorating bouquet of all that is hoppy and nostril tingling. Scents of grapefruit, orange and lemon citrus can be smelled at an arm's length away from the glass and are complimented by pine spice. Amongst all the hops, hints of caramel and toffee are able to create a little elbowroom.

The first sip conjures images of Yosemite and Mount Shasta. Flavors of citrus (grapefruit, lemon and orange) and pine spice mirror the dominating scents, but the hoppiness is kept in check by smooth caramel and toffee.

*Casey Wagner*

**BREWER:** Great River Brewery of Davenport, Iowa.

**STYLE:** Pale Ale.

**ALCOHOL CONTENT:** 5.4 percent ABV.

**FOOD PAIRINGS:** The hoppiness pairs well with curried cuisine such as Thai or Indian, but will also go well with classic burgers off the grill on a warm evening.

**WHERE TO BUY:** John's Grocery, New Pioneer Food Co-op and most area Hy-Vee stores. It is also available on tap and in cans at the Old Capitol Brew Works & Public House, 525 South Gilbert Street, in Iowa City. Old Capitol will also fill growlers.

**PRICE:** \$7 per four-pack of 16-ounce cans, \$2-3 on draft. New growlers at Old Capitol are \$14 and refills are \$11.

**FOR TRADITIONALISTS:** For those craving maibock, I highly recommend Einbeck Mai-ur-Bock.



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Photos by Bill Adams

# HOT THYME IN THE CITY

## REASONS WHY YOUR APARTMENT MIGHT BE HINDERING YOUR HERB GARDEN PLANS:

1. As a student, you'll soon fill your car to capacity and head home for the summer.
2. Your landlord just doesn't understand the art in you taking a shovel to the yard.
3. ...what yard?

**D**on't let your apartment dwelling ways dictate your green thumb. You've got to fight for your right to rosemary (and basil and chives). The experts at Pleasant Valley Garden Center (1301 South Gilbert St.) have generously shared some tricks of the trade, so let's get your apartment-friendly herb garden started.

### LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Most herbs would like to see at least a half-day's worth of sunlight. You can start your herbs indoors in pots, but make sure to pamper them with sunlight. Keep them close to a bright window during the day. Herbs thrive outdoors, so move your pots to the porch when the weather gets warm.

If you plan on growing your herbs through the winter, most will survive the season potted

in your home sweet home. Rosemary and bay plants will grow for years in a pot. Take all of your herbs inside once October hits.

### THE SCOOP ON SEEDS

You'll find that some herbs are easy to grow from seed, while others are best to purchase already growing. Basil, cilantro, parsley and chives are good choices if you're looking to plant from seeds. Rosemary, sage, thyme, bay and the up-and-coming stevia plant are best when sprouted by the pros. Buying plants can be cost-effective, too. "If you can pick up a plant for a few dollars, it might be easier than paying for seeds," says a Pleasant Valley gardener. Make sure to wash your plants once you get them home.

### SOME LIKE IT HOT

Basil is a big fan of the heat, so planting in the summer months is your best bet. Other herbs such as peppermint, oregano, thyme, and parsley can handle a cold night, so plant these if you're raring to go early in the season. If the temperature gets below the 40s, take your herbs inside for safe measure.

### MIX IT UP

Herbs don't mind roommates. If you've got a larger sized pot, feel free to throw in a mix of your favorite herbs. Once they start growing, you'll have your own grocery store selection all in one place.

### SPROUT IN STYLE

No need to go out and buy fancy pots for your herbs. Most aren't snobby and will live in just about anything. Old pails? Perfect. That fishbowl Mr. Goldy (R.I.P.) left behind? Go for it. Spice up your old objects with a layer of chalkboard paint (found at your local craft and hardware stores) and some chalk. Decorate your tiny chalkboards with plant names, doodles, or friendly reminders (water me!). **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*





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# PROTEST JEST

Jerry Rubin began loudly complaining that the cops were being anti-Semitic.

After they were grudgingly let in, pandemonium erupted. “We had \$200 in dollar bills—enough to look like a lot of money—and we went and threw them down from the gallery of the Stock Exchange,” Hoffman says. “Trading stopped for about six minutes; the tickertape stopped—it was great!”

Soon after Krassner and Hoffman crossed paths a few times in the mid-1960s, they became fast friends. Hoffman was deeply influenced by *The Realist*, even going so far as to bring a Krassner-published red, white and blue FUCK COMMUNISM poster to a symposium on socialism, just to annoy the lefties at the event. On the heels of the Stock Exchange prank, the two plotted ever-larger spectacles, such as, as Krassner put it, “an event in the nation’s capitol that would publicly cross-fertilize political protesters with hippie mystics.”

They wanted to break the law—the law of gravity—by levitating the Pentagon 100 feet

makers—we all drove across the freeways to Virginia and attacked.”

Occult ideas played a role in the 1960s counterculture—much like how Spiritualism was associated with feminism, abolitionism and other “progressive” causes of the nineteenth century. Unlike the Spiritualists, the hippies’ interest was

more intellectual and aesthetic than deeply felt. The protest organizers were originally inspired by a passage from a book by the sociologist Lewis Mumford, who suggested that peace could only be achieved by eliminating the evil embodied in the Pentagon.

Ed Sanders—an influential literary figure in Beat-poet circles and another event organizer—recalled, “Someone came up with the idea

**The next year, this loose confederation of radicals formed the Youth International Party. “The Yippies themselves were kind of a massive hoax,” Krassner said.**

for exorcism and levitation modeled on the Catholic or Episcopalian exorcism, so we said, ‘Let’s do it.’” Sanders had studied linguistics in college, so he consulted a Hittite book, pulled some phrases from it, and cobbled together some “magical” incantations. When Abbie Hoffman got himself arrested measuring the sides of the Pentagon, he explained to journalists that he was “finding out how many witches we would need.”

Before the pranksters could perform their exorcism, they had to take care of some administrative paperwork. “We applied for permits to raise the Pentagon 100 feet,” Abbie Hoffman said. Bemused officials initially rejected their request, but all parties eventually agreed on a compromise: they could only raise it three feet high. Providing the rally’s music was the Fugs, an anarchic band formed by Ed Sanders and Tuli Kupferberg in 1964 that wrapped biting political messages in a cloak of satirical humor. “Kill for Peace,” performed at that 1967 rally, is positively Swiftian in spirit. The Fugs played on a flatbed truck, shouting

Abbie Hoffman wrote in *Steal This Book*, his subversive how-to guide, “If you don’t like the news, why not go out and make your own? ... Guerrilla news events are always good news items and if done right, people will remember them *forever*.” Well, maybe not forever, but pranks do allow citizens with few monetary resources to use news media as their own personal megaphone.

Hoffman’s first great prank targeted the United States Stock Exchange, where he and some friends dropped cash from the visitor’s gallery. Yippie co-founder and *Realist* publisher Paul Krassner recalls that street theater performer and gay rights activist Jim Fouratt came up with the original idea, but it was Hoffman who ran with it. “Stockbrokers weren’t used to seeing real money there,”

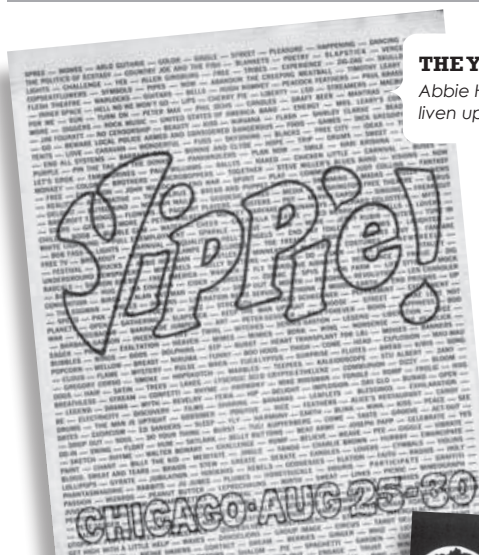
**On the heels of the Stock Exchange prank, the two plotted ever-larger spectacles, such as, as Paul Krassner put it, “an event in the nation’s capitol that would publicly cross-fertilize political protesters with hippie mystics.”**

Krassner says, “and they immediately switched from screaming ‘Pork Bellies!’ to diving for dollars.”

At first, the police wouldn’t let the crazies into the Stock Exchange building. There was a lot of press outside, so Hoffman and his friend

in the air. This 1967 event brought together the politicized anti-war wing of the counterculture and the spiritual descendents of Ken Kesey’s Merry Pranksters, who often were more interested in cultural revolution than revolutionary politics. “October 21, 1967—you had to have *been there*,” Hoffman says, describing the psychic assault on the Pentagon. “There were 50,000 warlocks in costumes with noise-





# THE YIPPIES ARE COMING

Abbie Hoffman and friends help  
liven up the 1968 DNC in Chicago

worked backwards to construct a kind of acronym. They were Young, they saw their movement as International and it was a Party, *man*. “Hippies are dead,” Hoffman said, recalling their brainstorm session. “Youth International Party—Y.I.P.—YIP—YIPPIE! We’re all jumping around the room, Paul Krassner, Jerry Rubin and I.”

*The Realist* and other underground newspapers helped spread the word about the Yippie’s plans for a massive protest at the 1968 Democratic

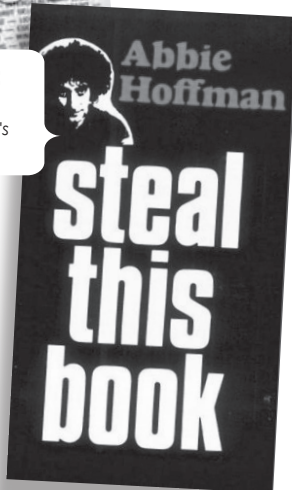
National Convention in Chicago. Soon mainstream newspapers ran headlines like, “Yipes! The Yippies are Coming! Rather than building a sustainable political party, they sought to craft a compelling narrative that would move people to action. “We are faced with this task of getting huge numbers of people to come to Chicago along with hundreds of performers, artists, theater groups,

engineers,” Hoffman recalled.

“How do you do this starting from scratch,” Abbie asked, “with no organization, no money, no nothing? Well, the answer is that you create a myth. Something that people can play a role in, relate to.” That, and they had an awesome

## COUNTERCULTURE CATCHES ON

Hoffman’s book was 1971’s most reluctant best-seller



a series of invocations: “Out, demons, out—back to darkness, ye servants of Satan—out, demons, out!”

To advertise the exorcism/anti-war demonstration, the Yippies held a sensational press conference where they demonstrated a new drug that would allegedly be used on D.C. police officers. “So we invented a drug called *Lace*,” which, Hoffman said, “would make you take your clothes off and fuck! We had it in water guns. We held a Press Conference and demonstrated this with live hippies who fucked in front of all the press. It was a good put-on.”

The *New York Post*, *Time* magazine and plenty of other news outlets published stories

**Rather than building a sustainable political party, they sought to craft a compelling narrative that would move people to action.**

about this fictitious drug. Krassner was to play the reporter who accidentally got sprayed, but to his dismay he was scheduled to speak at a literary conference at The University of Iowa. (While in Iowa City, Krassner procured a bag of cornmeal that they used to encircle the Pentagon as part of a supposed magical rite.)

The next year, this loose confederation of radicals formed the Youth International Party. “The Yippies themselves were kind of a massive hoax,” Krassner said. “I came up with the name, although all I did was give a name to a phenomenon that already existed.” He started with the exclamation “yippee”—an

musical lineup. Most notably, the batcrap crazy Detroit proto-punk group MC5 was the only headlining act brave enough to take the stage at the Yippie-planned concert timed for the Chicago convention. As the band’s lead singer must have shouted through the tear gas, KICK OUT THE JAMS, MOTHERFUCKERS! **lv**

*This column, along with the previous two months’ installments of Prairie Pop, was excerpted from Kembrew McLeod’s upcoming book Making Mischievous: How Pranks, Hoaxes, Trickery and Fantasy Shaped the Modern World, to be published in 2012.*

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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](mailto: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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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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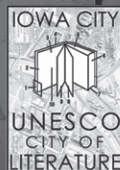
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# SOFT SPOT

It was late May and school was out. Em was on the porch steps watching her dog. She had been watching the dog for some time. The dog had stopped moving as much as usual, and now stopped altogether. Tufts of fur had been falling away from its body. This had gone on for weeks. One morning Em went to look at the dog lying by the clothesline pole where the grass and flowers were starting to turn green and bloom all around it. The bare patches on its hide were covered with maggots, and Em jumped back at the sight of them. After that she just sat on the porch steps and watched from a distance.

Her father came out of the house. He sat on the steps beside Em and put his work boots on, lacing them up one at a time.

"Em, we're going to bury Heidi today."

Em looked over at the heap of black and white. "Ok," she said.

Her father got up and walked slowly into the garage. Em stood up from the steps and moved forward, but not too far. She heard a racket from her father clamoring around. He reappeared with a wheelbarrow and a shovel. Em took a step back.

He rolled the wheelbarrow over to the dog. Bending down he enclosed the dog in his arms. It wobbled around, and he adjusted his grip to handle the limp body. The dog's head flopped over at his elbow, and its tongue hung loose from its mouth. Em's father laid it inside the wheelbarrow so its head was propped up on the sloped end of the bucket. He walked around and took hold of the handles, lifted it, and set off rolling the dog. Em followed a few paces behind.

First they walked across the driveway. The sharp gravel was uneven and bounced the

procession along. They headed down the driveway to where Em waited for the bus in the mornings. It was peaceful and bright, sprigs of everything forcing up through the earth all at once.

They took a sharp left at the garden, halfway down the driveway, and began to go up a small incline. Em's father had just tilled the

*The bare patches on its hide were covered with maggots, and Em jumped back at the sight of them. After that she just sat on the porch steps and watched from a distance.*

soil under, making it soft and warm. It receded from their feet with each step, and from the weight on the tire in front of them. Her father struggled with the load as he hit soft spots and ruts on the way.

They reached the end of the garden and walked further until they came to a thick grove of trees. The wheelbarrow stopped and was parked just outside the barbed wire fence. The fence was tired and sagging, and did not take much to climb over. Em's father took the shovel and went over the fence. Em moved closer to see. He walked into the trees where it was dark and quiet. She heard the shovel hit the dirt, over and over, until the sound came to a halt. Then she saw her dad come back.

Em backed up as her father stepped over the fence. He took the dog out of the wheelbarrow and returned to the grove. She watched him for a few seconds, and climbed over herself. Her eyes grew wide as she followed him to the hole.

"Heidi was a good dog."

Em nodded, transfixed on the shallow grave at the edge of her feet. Her father bent down and unloaded the animal. He moved it slightly so it would fit better. Then he took the shovel and started to fill in the dirt.

Em's eyes were on Heidi's face as the dirt hit her body and spread into her fur. Em stared

harder and harder until she thought she saw a twitch in the dog's face. She grabbed her father's arm.

"She moved, Dad. I saw her move."

Em's dad didn't stop. He was halfway done.

"Dad, did you hear me?"

"Go back to the house."

"But I saw her move."

"Em, go to the house right now."

"But Dad..."

Em took one last glance as the dirt began to cover Heidi's face. She hopped the fence and ran back—falling in the depressions they had left in the garden. She hit the gravel and kept going, across the front yard to the clothesline pole where the grass and flowers were starting to turn green and bloom all around it. **lv**

*Krissy Dallmann grew up on a farm in Iowa. She currently lives and writes in Iowa City.*



Photos by Alicia Streefer

# Planting change in Iowa City

**“Y**ou’ve GOT to be kidding me,” I mutter in disbelief as I watch a wandering adolescent drop an empty Doritos bag on top of a newly planted tulip.

“Seriously?” I yell at his back. He turns around, confused. I look down at the bag then back up at a pimply face. He can’t be more than 13. “Seriously.”

I don’t have to explain. He’s been watching me pick cigarette butts and plastic wrappers out of the pedestrian mall planters for about half an hour now. “Oh sorry,” he says, now flustered, “I didn’t know you saw that.”

Somehow I feel pretty sure that yelling at children was not part of my mission today.

I slouch ashamedly back to Linda Schreiber, the director of my labor this afternoon. Unsurprisingly, she has managed to find more productive uses of her time than littering showdowns.

Linda cradles a transplanted hosta with one hand, sweeping in dirt to cover the roots with the other. She’s been landscaping the downtown for three years now. She’s planted, cleaned and organized the planters and forgotten areas in the pedestrian mall and surrounding areas.

Yet for all that work, she hasn’t charged anybody a dime. She doesn’t work for the city or a private landscaper. She’s not even volunteering for some sort of environmental group. She’s just Linda. And she likes to garden.

She doesn’t work for the city or a private landscaper. She’s not even volunteering for some sort of environmental group. She’s just Linda.

Back in 2008, Linda noticed that downtown landscaping was starting to wane. She had unsuccessfully sought permission to plant downtown once before, but she went back for a second appeal. This time city officials agreed, though Linda reports that they did have one unexpected concern:

“I just don’t want you to be disappointed,” said Dale Helling, Iowa City’s assistant city manager.

The city had tried to plant in high-traffic areas downtown, like the ped mall. But one way or another, their work often got trampled.

“They had plans,” says Linda, “but over time the focus downtown became less horticultural and more custodial.”

Linda wanted to change that. “Well,” she replied to Helling on that day in 2008, “We’ll just keep trying and see if downtown is ready for this experiment.”

With approval from the city, Linda started planting hostas and other hearty plants from her own garden with the help of a few friends. Her initial work on Washington Street was an immediate success. She wound up putting in 400 plants the first year.

The next year she stepped it up, getting volunteers from Hope House and expanding onto Clinton and Gilbert streets. They kicked

**“Iowa City has a great downtown and we all need to protect it.”**

off the season planting more than 500 plants in two days. Now, three years after she started, Linda estimates she’s responsible for more than 2,000 plants in the downtown area.

It hasn’t all gone perfectly. Though the majority of her efforts have been successful, a few places have been trampled. “In one location we had to replant four times,” Linda said.

This might be discouraging to some people—like me for instance. When Linda



**EXTRA HELP**

A passerby stops to help Linda with planting



Linda doesn't think this way. "Iowa City has a great downtown and we all need to protect it," she said. Instead of sitting around hoping someone else would do the protecting, she made it happen herself.

"I just did it," she said. "I said, 'I think this is doable.' If others see the change, they'll begin to take more pride in this place too. I wanted everyone to own downtown."

invited me to join her for an afternoon of planting and cleaning on the ped mall, I was optimistic. But after a few hours I was feeling pretty indignant, as evidenced by my close encounter with the Dorito-dropping 13-year-old. Why am I sitting here like a chump cleaning up garbage, when nobody else seems to care? This is not my job, I want to tell the passersby. Shouldn't somebody else be doing this?

right track. People have started to take notice of what Linda is doing and jumped on board. Local landscapers like Quality Care started donating plants, while downtown businesses like Soap Opera and Revival donated money for the cause. This year, students in a West High environmental club want to "adopt" Linda and her project. The City, the Downtown Association,

the Chamber of Commerce and the University of Iowa have all endorsed the project. City officials even provide support with volunteer coordination for some bigger planting days.

**"I think this is doable. If others see the change, they'll begin to take more pride in this place too. I wanted everyone to own downtown."**

Others help in more subtle ways. "A lot of people thank me," Linda said. A few jump in to help. On a recent planting day, a random passerby stopped to plant for a while.

Linda plans to keep her project going, and encourages others to follow her lead. "You could do the same thing I'm doing," Linda said of her enterprising community improvement project. There is a lot of potential for significant changes in the downtown, she says, if people take the initiative.

The effects of Linda's efforts are becoming more and more obvious as plants sprout each spring. Looking around at her work, I can see why she keeps going. She's made the downtown a more beautiful, lively place. And perhaps *most* impressive, she's done it all without assaulting any litter-happy pre-teens. **IV**

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

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# NO RATING POINTS FOR TRYING

*Looks like America's sweetheart won't get to be America's anchorwoman.*

When CBS president Les Moonves hired Katie Couric for a \$15 million-a-year anchor gig at the *Evening News* back in 2006, he was riding a mandate from the Corporate Board and loving every minute of it. His primetime lineup was a star-studded Nielsen #1. Local affiliates were showing record profits. CBS News, with all those pesky pre-Les lifers, was vulnerable in the wake of Dan Rather's ethics scandal. Moonves seized the opportunity to take longtime CBS News producer Jeff Fager down a notch. He brought in an A-list celebrity from outside Fager's jurisdiction, betting on blockbuster ratings and a whole new direction for his third-place news division. Instead, he set up Katie Couric for the worst five years of her life.

To her colleagues she was an overachieving nuisance, Tracy Flick with a Teleprompter, stomping high-heeled across Murrow's portrait in the CBS newsroom. Moonves guaranteed her a set number of *Sixty Minutes* segments in her contract and Fager wasn't happy about it. He threw her only human-interest stories, like that of hero pilot Chesley Sullenberger, and kept her away from politicians and scandal-ridden CFOs. An "unnamed staffer" even complained that CBS News had become "all about hair and makeup." *Jesus.*

Didn't anyone ever tell these guys that, in broadcasting, "integrity" is often the opponent to innovation? Every time Couric

interviewed a guest on the *Evening News* or filmed an online commentary for the network website, the hard-bitten boys at CBS would leak their umbrage to the newspapers and reign her in. She was America's highest-paid intern, fitted with Dan Rather's suit jacket and still crucified when she couldn't improve his ratings.

It's too bad. Couric represented something fresh and original in network news, and it wasn't because of her hair or makeup; she looked like she was *trying*. Evening news anchors are supposed to portray cool, effortless objectivity, as they did during the age of Rather and Tom Brokaw (whose vapidity William Hurt mimicked so well in *Broadcast News*). Couric, on the other hand, was straining, desperate to gain credibility in

her with a sledgehammer: "What newspapers and magazines do you read?" Couric knew that Sarah Palin didn't read a damn thing. How? Because Katie Couric doesn't read, either. Most Americans don't. Reading offers

She was America's highest-paid intern, fitted with Dan Rather's suit jacket and still crucified when she couldn't improve his ratings.

no immediate benefit to one's lifestyle or income level and it takes time away from careerist ladder-climbing. Couric knew that you don't rise to Palin's level these days by virtue of your library card. It was an

To her colleagues Katie Couric was an overachieving nuisance, Tracy Flick with a Teleprompter, stomping high-heeled across Murrow's portrait in the CBS newsroom.

spite of her morning show resume. What she lacked in IQ points or journalistic pedigree she made up in sheer pathological willpower, the kind unchecked by wisdom, unhindered by taste and endemic to modern Americans.

While a more seasoned journalist would have grilled Sarah Palin on the issues and allowed her to fall back into memorized jargon, Couric, in that 2008 landmark interview, hit

unpretentious insight on Couric's part, and an indicator of how relevant an anchor she could have been.

Katie Couric drove to work in the morning like a suburban mom hauling her kids from Latin class to violin, read the news as if rehearsing for a scholarship interview and tackled important issues the same way I tutored innercity children back in high school



("Colleges love that stuff," I would say). Katie Couric doubts her own intelligence and so she works extra hard in her own self-interest. Just like we all do. For the past five years, CBS had a news anchor with a pulse and a visible set of concerns similar to our own.

Instead of merely reciting facts into a camera, she reflected our own image back in the mirror. If CBS had given her a chance to be herself, she could have built an audience

She could have been America's blandly attractive, less-than-brilliant, workaholic newswoman for the post-Hope era.

and changed the entire personality of network news. She could have been America's blandly attractive, less-than-brilliant, workaholic newswoman for the upcoming post-Hope Era. It would have been fitting.

Moonves, meanwhile, conceded defeat on the Couric issue and gave Fager more control over CBS News. They're plucking some good sport named Scott Pelley from *Sixty Minutes* to babysit the anchor desk. Of their divorce, Moonves bemoaned out-of-control anchor salaries and Couric discussed the "freedom" that syndication would afford her, in contrast to network news. I doubt they'll keep in touch.

Moonves should have known, when he hired her, that he was setting Couric up for a beating. He didn't do enough to protect her. Fager and Co. walked all over the poor woman, abused her, and Moonves barely even monitored the situation. The brunt of Couric's failure rests with Moonves. His big-spend, star-courting strategies might work well in primetime, but they're now 0-for-1 in news. The age-old rap on Moonves rings true: *Great dealmaker. Apathetic manager.* It's a shame. For Couric's sake, he could have at least tried. **lv**

Patrick Howley is a UI English major.

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# a Legacy at WORK


Photos by Ofer Sivan

## ICONS AND MUSES

Tomás Lasansky's new monograph will be available this May

This month, Iowa City artist Tomás Lasansky releases his monograph, *Icons and Muses*. To flip through its pages is to be brought back to an experience many Iowa Citians will relate to: huddling in the Java House for hours (years), pretending to read, pretending to write, caffeinating yourself into a paranoid belief that you are actually being watched by the striking portraits on the wall.

I've been stared down by Geronimo to my left, given the cold shoulder by honest Abe to my right, mocked by an unimpressed man-mountain of an Iowa farmer straight ahead, all while Einstein gently watches, exhausted by my dereliction of academic duty. Then there are the taunts of the wild-haired

 What he does care about is his community of family and friends, his heroes and his craft. That's what his work is about and that's what his new book celebrates.

classical beauties, stuck in a French villa, in some timeless world, reveling in sun and music and drink. Thanks, art. Thanks for making my homework seem so. very. boring.

Tomás Lasansky has had a career as a printmaker for more than thirty years, has galleries in several states and is collected publicly and privately around the world. Yet, he may be best known locally for his continuously rotating collection of work on display at the Java House. This might be a bit lowbrow, especially for an artist of his caliber, but Tomás doesn't really care about that. What he does care about is his community of family and friends, his heroes and his craft. That's what his work is about and that's what his new book celebrates.

Tomás was born with one of the heaviest last names in Iowa City history: *Lasansky*. His father, Mauricio Lasansky, 97, came to The University of Iowa from Stanley William Hayter's Atelier 17, the "New York School" to be exact, where he helped develop the techniques that would define printmaking in the twentieth century. He founded the UI print workshop in the 1940s and eventually became, in so many words, one of the most famous printmakers in the world.

Many men have crumbled under less paternal baggage, but Tomás is the youngest of six Lasanskys who grew up in Iowa City under



## Tomás Lasansky: Icons and Muses

(Four Peaks Press, Available May 2011)

The book will be released at the Lasansky Gallery & Studio's Spring Show, opening May 5, 2011, 5-8 p.m. (703 S. Clinton Street, Iowa City)

In this celebration of Lasansky's community, the artists at the right will have work on display.

✿ Featuring a performance by Mimum Wage Jazz Quartet

their parents' tutelage—mother Emilia also came from a prominent family of Spanish artists—and went on to build distinctive careers of their own. The oldest, William, became a highly regarded sculptor, Rocio a writer (see: Nina Barragan), Leo a printmaker and instructor and Jimena a professional dancer. The second youngest, Phil, chose to pursue the business end: He manages the Lasansky Corporation from its headquarters—the gallery at 216 East Washington.


Mauricio Lasansky won five Guggenheims in his life, which is more than any scholar, in any discipline. This underscores an emphasis on research and pedagogy that remains visible at the Lasansky Studio & Gallery on South Clinton, which Tomás runs with his wife and collaborator, artist Charlie Emmert Lasansky.

"There are no secrets here," says Tomás of their space, abuzz with family, friends and artists-in-residence from sun up to sun down.

The Lasansky tradition is not one of creating great art by being bull-headed and self-centered. That's not to say there is no stubbornness at all to the process, but Tomás, like his father, couples his passion for invention with a knack for strengthening the creative confidence of those around him. Each maintains a studious relationship with their materials and each spends a *ton* of time in a collective, workshop environment.

Tomás approaches the canvas lovingly, creating portraits that summon the dignity of his subjects. UI Printmaking Associate Professor Anita Jung, who must have seen more than her fair share of corny art romanticizing Native Americans when she was a student at Arizona State, says she is struck by the way Tomás

forces you to consider subjects like Geronimo and Crazy Horse—figures that are practically (maybe literally) brands in the year 2011. She credits Tomás for a unique ability to bring historical icons into the present, observing that he does this both symbolically, by pairing his subjects with modern accoutrement and through his materials, using colors and textures that speak to a contemporary aesthetic. He presents his heroes in full regalia,

 Tomás, like his father, couples his passion for invention with a knack for strengthening the creative confidence of those around him.

facing forward, looking you in the eye. She says his visual language "reminds us of the way our history stays with us."

*Icons and Muses* chronicles the evolution of Tomás Lasansky's career in terms of subject matter and, especially, he and Charlie's search for the new frontier of texture. It is a reminder



- » F. Blair
- » Christopher Burd
- » Craig Carman
- » Jon Fasanelli-Cawalti
- » Dave Heffner
- » Charlie Lasansky
- » Diego Lasansky
- » Richie Lasansky
- » Tomás Lasansky
- » James Ochs
- » Polly Pagliai
- » Adam Rake
- » Lloyd Schermer
- » William Webster
- » Lucas Underwood

## Get Artsy

This month, all you have to do is get outside.

Forget about the basement art galleries around town, at Public Space 1 or Arts Iowa City. Don't worry about what's on the walls at Chait, Art Mission or Times Club. It's spring! The weather is warming up and the best place to see art is on the street around town. Here are a few "exhibitions" not to be missed:

### Stop #1

The yarn-bomb at the corner of Market & Governor. It may take you a moment and a re-circling of the block to realize street posts don't wear sweaters. The fuzzy hearts on this lovely and generous (anonymous) creative gesture promotes a subtle readjustment of the everyday. But really, why are you reading about it when you could be seeking it out?



### Stop #2

That wall outside the liquor store on the ped mall (Sauce). Art? Well, that'd be rather bold to claim, but really, who cares? "The Tick" expresses something funny, fitting and free to view without any structured time commitment or hoity-toity social engagement. And it's only just a little illegal. See similar hits here: flickr.com/groups/1152529@N22/pool/



### Stop #3

Walnut Farms (1517 N. Dubuque Rd). Come wander (and wonder about) the defunct brick factory and witness the warming weather in the presence of The Vehicle of Marriage and the ruined Paintallica Boli figure. Mmmm... I can already smell the vats of Walnut paint curing in the sun.

### Stop #4

Flowers. Where? Everywhere. Stop and smell the flowers. Nature's performance art. Sweet, sexy and abundant this time of year. Believe.

# LOCAL PLAYWRIGHTS DEBUT

First things first: The winner of last month's contest is Rachael Carlson, who not only came up with a reference to urine in Shakespeare but also came up with one that I did not even know, from *Measure for Measure*: "It is certain that when he makes water, his urine is congealed ice." Congratulations to Rachael!

The season for Shakespeare in Iowa City has not yet rolled around, but despite what might seem like a theatrical dry spell in May, in the lull between spring and summer, there are indeed plays being produced. Brand new plays!

When people think "writing" and "Iowa," their minds are drawn, with unfailing, compass-like precision, to the Iowa Writers' Workshop. But in fact there are other writers and other writing programs in town, not the least of which is the playwrights workshop in the Theatre Department. Like other MFA candidates in the university's writing programs, these playwrights produce written work that

ends up in green bound volumes on the shelves of the third floor of the UI Main Library.

Unlike those works, however, the plays are meant not to sit on shelves, or even to be read by solitary readers. They are meant to be produced. This May, area residents will have the chance to see five of these works produced at the Iowa New Play Festival, running May 1-5.

Recently, I talked—or emailed—with three of the writers whose work will be produced in May.

Jen Silverman's play may want to make you see it for the title alone: *And Humbaba Came from His Great House of Cedar*. The play concerns Gilgamesh, hero of the fertile crescent's earliest eponymous pop hit, and Enkidu who is, in contemporary terms, his sidekick. Silverman has always loved the story of Gilgamesh, but she reread it in full just last summer. "The part that made the biggest impression on me," she wrote via email,

After all, the plays are not meant to sit on shelves, they are meant to be produced.

"was the part where the monster Humbaba asks the hero Gilgamesh not to kill him, and Gilgamesh hesitates, and then his friend and side-kick Enkidu tells him to kill—and he does—and the whole world unravels from that point. That moment of choice and of violence became the basis for ... *Humbaba*."

In the play, Gilgamesh and Enkidu travel through time, encountering the monster over and over again as history, perhaps inevitably, repeats itself.







Find theatre reviews/previews throughout the month online: [www.LittleVillageMag.com/theatre](http://www.LittleVillageMag.com/theatre)

Jessica Foster's play, by contrast, all takes place in the same place, and in the present time. But the issues it deals with are no less complex or important. *Proficient* concerns three main characters: Ms. Delaney, a teacher; Craig, an educational salesman; and Rodney, who works with Craig. There's also a chorus of children—the number can be determined by the director. The salesmen want Ms. Delaney to buy their product, which promises significant financial rewards for the school. Ms. Delaney accepts, only to learn that the program actually programs children, making them into test-taking robots.

Why the school setting? "Last spring," Foster writes, "I found out that three of my favorite teachers were retiring. When I wrote them to express my gratitude and congratulations one responded telling me that the decision was not of her own volition, but strongly

who sacrifice so much in what seems to be a broken system. In other words, I started my play *Proficient* with the dedication page."

It might seem odd to imagine a three-character play that takes place in two rooms in a school as containing much in the way of dramatic tension and, indeed, Foster worried about that. She let the idea for a play about education incubate for awhile until the characters started to come to her. "Once I was better able to grasp them and their relationship, the absurdity of the actual situation also seemed to be an obvious element to dramatize."

Andrew Saito was born and raised in the United States but he's always felt a slight disconnect or displacement from it. His grandparents were interred for part of their youth in Mansanar, one of the "relocation camps" where Japanese-Americans were sent during World War II. "Japanese Americans are the most acculturated Asian group in the US," he said to me when we met in the lobby of the Theatre Building one afternoon. "We didn't really pass on language or culture.

Jessica Foster let the idea for a play about education incubate for awhile until the characters started to come to her. "Once I was better able to grasp them and their relationship, the absurdity of the actual situation also seemed to be an obvious element to dramatize."

encouraged by the administration. Knowing what a naturally talented teacher she was and also having been greatly influenced by her, I felt the effects of No Child Left Behind on a more personal level and I knew it was about time I spoke for my family and friends

I feel this sense of rootlessness which is the issue at the center of the play—I am disconnected from my own ancestors."

His play is called *Landless*, a title he said he doesn't like but one which seems to get at the root of both his problem and that of his

While there's still a chill in the air in the evening, step inside a few more times and check out some of the work being made right here.

main character, a young woman named Six. She's called Six because her whole family—mother, father and three siblings—all burned to death in a fire. She thus carries six people with her wherever she goes. In *Landless*, she is traveling: traveling with the five people inside her, with those around her, who are part of a sharecroppers' strike in southeastern Missouri in 1939, and traveling alongside the ghosts who have trod that same trail—for the road where she walks was part of the Trail of Tears—one hundred years before.

The idea for the play came initially from a photograph Saito saw of the sharecroppers on strike, with all their belongings, lining a road. The more he read, the more he learned not only about their plight but also about the plight of those who had traveled the trail all those years before. His play comes from that research, but it is his own creation.

Summer, and its accompanying outdoor festivities, are on the way. But while there's still a chill in the air in the evening, step inside a few more times and check out some of the work being made right here.

Details on the plays in the festival are available at [www.uiowa.edu/~theatre](http://www.uiowa.edu/~theatre). **IV**

*Laura Crossett is a writer, a librarian and an Iowa City native. She has been a theatre-goer since she was tall enough to climb on a seat.*

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**THERE WILL BE BLOOD**

Mélanie Laurent  
in *Inglourious Basterds* (2009)

# IS QUENTIN TARANTINO OVERRATED?

The featured director this month in the Englert's American Filmmakers Series is Quentin Tarantino. *True Romance*, which he wrote but didn't direct, is showing Tuesday, May 10, and *Pulp Fiction*, his dubious masterpiece, plays the following Thursday. Does the director of *Kill Bill: Vol. 2* and *Inglourious Basterds* deserve to be ranked alongside John Cassavettes, Terence Malick, Woody Allen, Jim Jarmusch and the other contemporary masters featured in the series?

Tarantino is an *auteur* of our times. The pretentiousness of that word *auteur* suits him. He was among the first to evoke on screen the aesthetic of our extended adolescence, in which comic-book violence and teenage cool are transformed into gruesome adult spectacles. When they came out, *Reservoir Dogs* and especially *Pulp Fiction* were revelations. They were *so cool*, at least to a cadre of mostly young, disaffected men of slightly above-normal intelligence.

His movies portray in a deeply ironic manner a world of random violence, world-weariness, drugs, Japanese swords and savvy mixtures of high and low culture—mostly low. A director

like Sam Peckinpah in *Straw Dogs* explores the various meanings of violence and lapses into its gratuitous portrayal. With Tarantino there's no pretension of exploring the meaning of anything. It's all gratuitous, which is even more pretentious. For Tarantino, there's nothing outside the movie.

Spike Lee once criticized Tarantino for his obsession with the word "nigger." Tarantino blasted back that as an artist he had the absolute right to use whatever word he wanted, whenever he wanted. Right on cue, he accused Lee of reverse racism. But there's a difference between the freedom of the artist who must use such a word to speak truthfully about their world (for instance, Mark Twain in *Huckleberry Finn* or Spike Lee in *Do the Right Thing*) and an artist like Tarantino who just wants to draw on the powerful charges of that word for purely aesthetic effects.

To deal with the Holocaust, the most traumatic event of the last century, Tarantino invents a story of a team of Jewish Allied soldiers, led by Brad Pitt, who carve swastikas into Nazis. In one sense, a movie like *Inglourious Basterds* is immensely fun. It's satisfying to enact a fantastic revenge drama. It feels good to be relieved of all the pieties of

**WITH TARANTINO THERE'S NO PRETENSION OF EXPLORING THE MEANING OF ANYTHING. IT'S ALL GRATUITOUS, WHICH IS EVEN MORE PRETENTIOUS.**

## Now Showing

Add these selections to your May to-do list.

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Bijou | April 29–May 5

The Iranian master Abbas Kiarostami's new movie features Juliette Binoche and takes place in Tuscany. What more could you possibly ask for?

**Their Eyes Were Dry**

Sycamore Cinema 12 | May 9

Brandon Assanti's documentary tells of the Ma'alot Massacre. In 1974, Palestinian terrorists stormed a school and used Israeli schoolchildren as pawns after their teachers had abandoned them. This special screening of *Their Eyes Were Dry* will also showcase the all-star Cantor Assembly singing songs commemorating the massacre as well as celebrating Israel's Independence Day.





### C'MON, LET'S TWIST AGAIN

Tarantino leaves viewers longing for more tender moments.

life, like the official remorse and pity we're supposed to feel about the Holocaust. But within minutes of leaving *Inglourious Basterds*, I felt physically ill that this was the equipment we'd forged to deal with our history. Anthony Lane once compared a Tarantino movie to fast food: It tastes good going down but leaves you undernourished and queasy.

It was inevitable that a director would eventually serve up empty art as entertainment. But I'm not even totally convinced of Tarantino's artistic prowess. He's certainly capable of crafting taut, distinctive, exciting scenes, like the opening sequence of *Inglourious Basterds* or the final Mexican standoff in *Reservoir Dogs*. But his movies as a whole tend to sprawl. Does it really require significantly more time to tell the story of *Kill Bill* than *Seven Samurai*?

My hunch is that Tarantino's career peaked shortly after it began. In the nineties, that pleasant wasteland between the fall of the Berlin Wall and 9/11, his movies felt bracing and free of illusions. In our age of terrorism and infinite war, his artsy treatments of violence ought to come across as juvenile rather than witty, though I fear that we still long to be encased in fantasies like his.

Tarantino's most enthralling movie is *Reservoir Dogs*, but the quintessential expression of his art is *Pulp Fiction*, in large part due to the nonchalant performance of John Travolta. The one unforgettable scene of the movie takes place in a fifties-style diner called Jack Rabbit Slim's, where Travolta orders a "Douglas Sirk steak" and a vanilla coke from a Buddy Holly look-alike played



### BOYS' CLUB

The all-star cast of *Reservoir Dogs* (1992)

**IN OUR AGE OF TERRORISM AND INFINITE WAR, HIS ARTSY TREATMENTS OF VIOLENCE OUGHT TO COME ACROSS AS JUVENILE RATHER THAN WITTY, THOUGH I FEAR THAT WE STILL LONG TO BE ENCASED IN FANTASIES LIKE HIS.**

by Steve Buscemi. The place is kitschy, but it's filmed with genuine love. The achingly beautiful Uma Thurman chats leisurely with John Travolta. It may be the only scene in all of Tarantino's work that isn't frantic, blood-soaked, or intentionally superficial. You know how it ends, with Uma and John winning the twist contest. For that moment, Quentin Tarantino ranks among our best. **lv**

*Scott Samuelson teaches philosophy at Kirkwood Community College and blogs about music with his eight year-old son at [billyanddad.wordpress.com](http://billyanddad.wordpress.com).*

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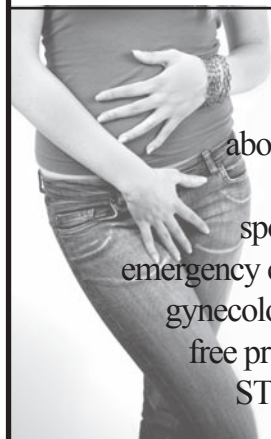
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## &gt;&gt; ART SCENE CONTINUED FROM 21

**A COLLABORATIVE DANCE**

Charlie Lasansky's ballerinas mingle with Lincoln & Sitting Bull.

**PAUSING FOR REFLECTION**


With the completion of Lasansky's book, a new chapter is sure to begin.

that, aside from the UI print department, a parallel studio environment was created at the same time—with most of the same equipment and, also, under the Lasansky's care.

No doubt the spirit of invention (and, perhaps, love for wild-haired, classical beauties?) that characterized Atelier 17 was also in the air of the Lasansky family's basement studio, on South Summit Street, where a young Tomás learned from his siblings and created his first works.

He gestures around his current space, "Take a look! You can't get anything done here after 8 a.m., there's just too many people around."



 Anita Jung credits Tomás for a unique ability to bring historical icons into the present, observing that he does this both symbolically, by pairing his subjects with modern accoutrement and through his materials, using colors and textures that speak to a contemporary aesthetic.

By rising at 3 a.m. each day, Lasansky avoids the chaos of the post-8 a.m. collective.

Tomás and Charlie's studio attracts artists from far and wide, though there's only space for a few of them at a time. They come to find new ways to bring ink to paper, or, in their words, "to work." His nephew, Diego, 16, glues the corner of a frame for one of his prints

(he'll have four in Lasansky's Spring Show).

Artist Lucas Underwood hangs around the kitchen, about to enjoy some omelets made by fellow artist-in-residence Adam Rake. Underwood tries to explain to me that he is experimenting with photosensitive acetate—he's emulsifying black and white images onto copper plates that are to be acid-etched, inked

and rolled through a press. The explanation wears me out, but it can only be a fraction as exhausting as the process itself.

Perhaps it is Hayter's mandate—that artists leaving Atelier 17 set up workshops of their own, teach the techniques they've learned and continue to develop new ones—that drives Tomás to rise before the sun each day.

I asked him what it is that gets him out of bed so early—we're all haunted by something, right? "At 3 a.m., what's it about?"

"At 3 a.m.?" He answers bluntly: "It's about coffee." **lv**

*Matthew Steele will get his homework done eventually, Einstein.*



# NORTH LIBERTY'S BLUES & BBQ MAKES SUMMER OFFICIAL

When I was a kid growing up in Chicago, summer's actual arrival seldom coincided with what we considered the official beginning of summer—Memorial Day weekend.

Standing at the flower cart I manned during high school summers at the corner of Randolph and Michigan I'd watch the bank clock on the corner with a resentful eye—and bluish toes, as the temperature never even broke the 60 degree barrier—sometimes well into June.

This didn't stop me from wearing shorts and sandals, though. Since it was past Memorial Day, summer had begun in my eyes, and if summer didn't get the message, well, that wasn't my problem.

In Chicago, the truest sign that summer had arrived was the delicious aroma of grilled meat wafting through the air all along the lakefront as the thousands of folks who had been held hostage by winter for entirely too long gathered to grill up some barbecue with their friends and family and offer up thanks for having made it through another long and gloomy winter.

Along with the warm laughs and cold beers that usually accompanied these feasts, there was almost always someone strumming on a blues guitar or playing some blues music on a portable radio or cassette player.

Blues and barbecue are as intertwined to me as coffee and cigarettes and, like them, each one only makes the other one better.

Closer to home, just across I-80 in North Liberty, the Liberty Centre Blues & BBQ Festival has been celebrating summer's arrival in just the same way for five years now, bringing people together who've also been cooped up indoors too long to enjoy each other's company along with some delicious lip-smacking barbecue enjoyed while listening to some toe-tapping and butt-shaking blues musicians.

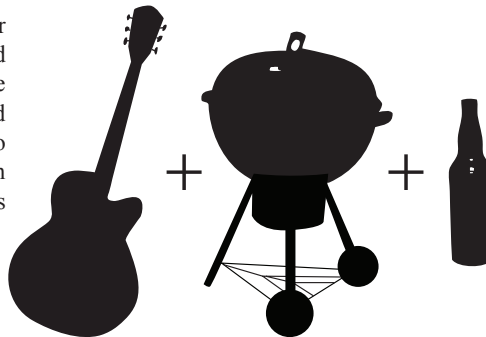
Started in 2006 as a way for North Liberty to showcase its new Liberty Centre Park and give the citizens of that community a chance to come out and meet one another while enjoying this new space, the fest had only around a thousand attendees at its inaugural event.

It's grown in size with each passing year as word spread about what an amazing, family-

friendly and inexpensive local Memorial Day event it is, with over six thousand people attending last year.

Sponsored by local businesses, community organizations and individual private donations, the festival has grown beyond a mere showcase for the area's best bluesmen and barbecue masters to become a truly family-oriented event featuring face-painting, a tug of war, a dunk tank, a bouncy-house and a slew of other kid-friendly games and activities sure to make the day a fun one for anyone bringing children, their own or otherwise.

The most popular activity for children has consistently been the "Fishing for Kids" activity, where children in attendance are



## LIBERTY CENTRE BLUES & BBQ

Sunday, May 29 | 12 p.m. - 10 p.m. | FREE

more info at [northlibertyiowa.org/bluesandbbq](http://northlibertyiowa.org/bluesandbbq)

given rods and reels from the North Liberty Recreation Department and are allowed to fish for crappies and bluegills in the stocked pond there on the park grounds.

For the grown-ups, in addition to the Blues and barbecue, there is a beer garden usually featuring local micro-brews as well as a chance to get to talk with your friends and neighbors about something other than how lousy the weather has been. You may or may not recognize some of them without the parkas, scarves and boots that had been their standard attire the last time you saw them but what better environment could there be for seeing them again—or maybe even meeting some folks you've never met before—than with a beer in one hand and some ribs in the other while swaying to some meaty blues guitar riffs?

Past musical acts have included several members of the Iowa Blues Hall of fame

and this year's line-up promises to be the best one yet with a once-in-a-lifetime pairing of Ernie Peniston and Dave Zollo playing under the name "Temporary Blues," as well as the Avey Brothers, Kevin "BF" Burt and the Instigators and Bob Dorr and the Blue Band, celebrating their thirtieth anniversary as one of Iowa's most beloved blues acts.

*It's grown in size with each passing year as word spread about what an amazing, family-friendly and inexpensive local Memorial Day event it is, with over six thousand people attending last year.*

The barbecue part of this Blues & BBQ event has gotten bigger and better—and more serious—each year as well, with a panel of experienced-pallet judges now assembled to judge the entries provided by the participants. Based on the judging rules and regulations established in some of the most renowned barbecue towns in America, like Chicago, Kansas City and Dallas, the quality of barbecue provided at the event has gotten only better with each passing year as the grill men and women jockey for the coveted first place award.

While it may be hard to believe that summer and all its wonders are just around the corner—especially with the completely uncalled for snowfall that came days after our temperatures spiked up into the 80s just a few weeks ago—by the time you're reading this that kind of capricious and vindictive weather should be but a distant memory as we focus on the many great outdoor events that make the Iowa City area such a fantastic place to be, all summer long.

Iowa City's Summer of the Arts programming—Arts Fest, Jazz Fest, Friday and Saturday Night Concert Series—will be kicking off in just over a month, but why wait for that when just a short trip to North Liberty can give you a head start on celebrating the season this Memorial Day Weekend?

The festival's motto is "One Day. One Party. One Cool Time" and from everything I've heard about it from people who've gone in years past I know for certain I'll be there—wearing a bib, covered in barbecue sauce, dancing to the blues and grinning from ear to ear, just like back home. **lv**

*Yale Cohn has a very funny story about eating rib tips in the dark that he'll tell you if you ask him.*

**THE SEA AND CAKE**

May 20 | \$12 | 19+ | 8 p.m.  
Blue Moose Tap House



On May 1, 1965, at an annual celebration in Prague, Allen Ginsberg was crowned the King of May. The tradition of May Day and its royalty was founded back in who-knows-when for reasons of who-knows-what (pagans or something), but on this particular May Day, '60s counterculture and communist oppression met head-on. After Ginsberg was paraded through the streets, the police got suspicious; he was followed; notebooks containing his poems "disappeared." Next thing you know, he's expelled from the country and put on a plane to London. It's on this plane ride that he composes "Kraj Majales (King of May)." It's classic Ginsberg: "I am the King of May who sleeps with teenagers laughing." A recording of Ginsberg reading the poem was released some thirty years later, on the compilation *Holy Soul Jelly Roll*.

Flashforward to 1997: Ginsberg passes away and '90s folk goddess Natalie Merchant composes "King of May" in his honor. Appearing on her wildly uneven album *Ophelia*, "King of May" is fantastic, and not just because it has the same chord progression and vocal melody as Enrique Iglesias's "Hero"

(G, Em, C, D). Like Iglesias's pop gem, "King of May" is equal parts sentimentality and bombast, filled with organs and violins, and by the end Merchant's voice is working so hard to cut through it all it sounds like she's shouting. In truth, I think Ginsberg would have hated it ("Lift your voices up / drink your loving cups"), but it's so embarrassing that I find it weirdly touching. And that voice.

The song about May perhaps more fitting to Ginsberg's legacy was also written by a '90s folk goddess: Liz Phair. Her "May Queen" is a critique of the life of a "rock and roll Ken doll," all about drugs and mind expansion and older people having sex with younger ones. And at only 2 minutes long, the song itself is an exercise in fleeting pleasures. The point is this: May is a time to let your hair down and your beard grow, spread oats and seeds, fight oppression and explore, in Ginsberg's words, "the power of sexual youth." And if all of that kind of grosses you out, then do all those things vicariously, through the raw power of live rock and roll.

Whew! Is this column even about live music anymore!? Who cares! Well, actually, I do, so let's get to it.

I've used the phrase "indie rock royalty" far too much on these pages, but this month five (!)

*Quick Hits*

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

> **JOHN VANDERSLICE**

w/ Damien Jurado | May 1 | The Mill  
\$10/\$12 | 8 p.m.

> **KAWABATA AND PIKACUY (MEMBERS OF ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE)**

May 5 | Wherehouse | \$5 | 9:30 p.m.

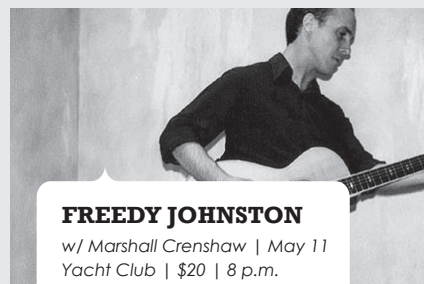


**WET HAIR RECORD RELEASE**

May 7 | Wherehouse | \$5 | 10 p.m.

> **TED LEO (SOLO)**

w/ The Poison Control Center, The Color Pharmacy | May 7 | Gabe's | \$12 | 8 p.m.



**FREEDY JOHNSTON**

w/ Marshall Crenshaw | May 11  
Yacht Club | \$20 | 8 p.m.

> **SHAME TRAIN**

w/ Mike Mangione, Amelia White  
May 14 | Gabe's | \$10 | 9 p.m.



**RADIO MOSCOW**

w/ Brutus, Tribal Momentum  
May 21 | Yacht Club | \$7 | 9 p.m.





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extremely talented songwriters are passing through town on the legends circuit. The Pharmacists frontman Ted Leo is rescheduling his cancelled January gig, which I wrote about at the time. He's at Gabe's on May 7. John Vanderslice, a man revered as much for his work behind the mixing board as his work in front of it, comes to The Mill on May 1. Having worked closely with The Mountain Goats on their last several albums and tours, Vanderslice has a robust back catalog of his own, including the best song ever written about a pet rabbit ("Angela," from 2005's *Pixel Revolt*). His most recent album is this year's *White Wilderness*.

The Sea and Cake will be at the Blue Moose on May 20, led as always by Sam Prekop. Prekop fronted one of the best bands of the '90s, Shrimp Boat—1993's *Cavale* is a masterpiece—but once they broke up The Sea and Cake emerged from the rubble, retaining the heavily jazz-influenced rock sound. Their music is "difficult," in a sense that it's "smart," but it's in no way stuffy. I think, at their best, they make beautiful, delicate songs. We'll see what happens; I've never seen this band live and this is probably my most anticipated show of the month.

Also coming to town is Freedy Johnston, whose hit song "Bad Reputation" earned him a good one way back in 1994. That song was produced by Butch Vig, who was also the mastermind behind Nirvana's *Nevermind*. Vig has been known to tour as a part of Johnston's band, so you might have a chance to meet a recording legend. Johnston has been steadily making albums since and he will be touring

## THE POINT IS THIS: MAY IS A TIME TO LET YOUR HAIR DOWN AND YOUR BEARD GROW, SPREAD OATS AND SEEDS, FIGHT OPPRESSION AND EXPLORE, IN GINSBERG'S WORDS, "THE POWER OF SEXUAL YOUTH."

behind last year's *Rain on the City*. I saw him a while back in Davenport; he's a fun and gracious performer. He'll be with the incredibly gifted power-pop songsmith Marshall Crenshaw at the Yacht Club on May 11.

In local news this month, internationally respected noise-psych trio Wet Hair will be having a record release party at the Wherehouse on May 7, with Broken Water. The album, *In Vogue Spirit*, was recorded right here in town by Luke Tweedy and will be out on Minneapolis-based Destijl Records.

Now, notoriously this column has ignored or, on occasion, ridiculed cover bands, but the local writers' workshop folks who comprise The Dads are in a more refined tradition of cover musicians, like, say Three Dog Night. The Dads are playing after Talk Art at the Mill on May 4, and they'll bring with them a slew of songs you know by heart. I already know them by heart, since they practice next door to me, so trust me on this one.

Also of note this month: Kawabata and Pikacuy (members of Acid Mothers Temple) at the Wherehouse on May 5; S. Carey (member of Bon Iver) at the Mill on May 13; D. Charles Speer and The Helix at the Wherehouse on May 18. **IV**

*Craig Eley is a living human.*

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- MAY 12 } CAPTURED BY ROBOTS
- MAY 13 } S. CAREY (OF BON IVER)
- JUNE 1 } JOY KILLS SORROW
- JUNE 3 } SIMON JOYNER
- JUNE 4 } THE DODOS

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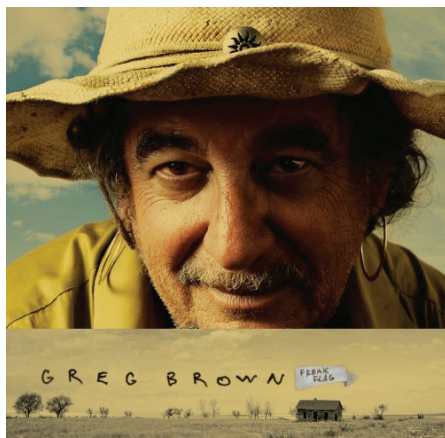
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## Greg Brown

*Freak Flag*

gregbrown.org

My first time in a bar, underage, was for a Bo Ramsey and the Sliders show at Potter's Mill in Bellevue, IA. From then on, I caught as many shows as I could until I moved to Minnesota for work. When I later moved back to Iowa, one reason I was excited to return was

## BROWN BRINGS HIS CHARACTERISTIC HOMESPUN WISDOM AND HUMOR TO A CLASSIC RAMSEY TICK-TOCK COUNTRY BLUES PRODUCTION.

the rich folk and blues scene I grew up with, which included Greg Brown.

When Brown started work on what would be his 24th album, it was with some trepidation. "I wasn't sure for a while that I would do any more recording," he confessed in a recent interview, "the business is in shambles. But I thought well, hey—maybe it would be good to put another one out—tender songs for these harsh times." He entered the studio with long-time production and touring partner Bo Ramsey to record his first all-digital album.

As fate would have it, a lightning strike destroyed most of the recordings before they could be backed up. Around the same time, Bob Feldman, Brown's long time partner at Red House Records died, precipitating a move

to a new record label. *Freak Flag* (out May 10 on Yep Roc) seemed in peril because of the unusual chaos surrounding it. Undeterred, Brown moved to former Stax recording studio Ardent, in Memphis, and started over—this time to trusty old tape.

On *Freak Flag*, Brown brings his characteristic homespun wisdom and humor to a classic Ramsey tick-tock country blues production. It sits comfortably next to their other successful efforts together, which include personal favorite *Slant 6 Mind*. When Brown sings "The muskrat and the bullfrog / The rabbit and the skunk / Old barns full of blue sky / Backyards full of junk" on a new recording of "Flat Stuff," it's not just the images, but also the slow and slightly out-of-key (should I say "flat"?) vocal delivery that conveys Iowa's uneventful terrain. Surprise guest Mark Knopfler (Dire Straits) delivers a deliciously familiar guitar solo on this song as well.

At the time of this writing I find myself facing life circumstances that could take me away from Iowa again. With bittersweet memories of my time here, *Freak Flag* is my soundtrack for change.

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## Kerosene Circuit

EP

kerosenecircuit.bandcamp.com

The romance of the long-haul trucker is born in the dust and roar of the engine and the kerosene smell of diesel fuel. The bleary hypnosis from the engine's roaring road song, the buzzy florescent refuge of the 24-hour truckstop, faded coffee rings on the driver's daily log books, permanent grease lodged in the cracks of the hands and under the nails—they're all part of driving tens of tons of hurtling steel and rubber down the highway to deliver the parcel and complete the wheel of commerce.

Touring these same interstates and truckstops are our nation's hard-working bar bands. The buzz and feedback, broken strings and lost guitar picks become part of delivering anthems of drinking and lost love—often in midweek shows for half-empty dancefloors.

On the debut EP from Dubuque band Kerosene Circuit, the distorted guitars light the well-worn highway that has been traveled down before by bands like Screaming Trees, Blackfoot, Uncle Tupelo, Skynyrd and what is probably the band's closest comparison: The Drive-By Truckers. Those bands traveled far and worked hard to bring their music to the bars and earn their place in rock history.

With lyrics that possess the wizened perspective of experience and bluesy, grungy powerchords, Kerosene Circuit delivers a new spin on this proven formula. My favorite track on the EP, "Road Test," is the latest anthem covering the topic of touring bands most famously exemplified by Bob Seger's "Turn the Page." When Aaron Hefel sings "it goes on and on and on just like a wheel / with a difference you can feel when you put it on the road" he's talking about the gamble of taking a song he wrote to the stage, but also the measure of success of a band.

WITH LYRICS THAT POSSESS THE WIZENED PERSPECTIVE OF EXPERIENCE AND BLUESY, GRUNGY POWERCHORDS, KEROSENE CIRCUIT DELIVERS A NEW SPIN ON THIS PROVEN FORMULA.

The potent mix of great lyrics and muscular guitars help propel this truckload of song from Kerosene Circuit much like the blend of stimulants and fuel that propel the deliveries that keep this country moving.

*Michael Roeder is a self-proclaimed "music savant." When he's not writing for Little Village, he blogs at [www.playbsides.com](http://www.playbsides.com).*



## Alex Body

*Cutting Down Camelot*  
self-released

alexbody.bandcamp.com

Since emerging in January 2010, from Twelve Canons' indefinite hiatus with a self-released CD-r called *Just Say Yes*, Alex Body has quickly carved out a new shiny identity for himself. His sixth release in under 18 months, *Cutting Down Camelot*, finds Body heir-apparent to Iowa City's lo-fi pop throne—watch your back Samuel Locke Ward.

*Camelot* is not proposing a seismic shift for Body, but a continued exploration of his spaced-out, glitchy, psychedelic, electronic folk. Once the hurdle of opening cut, "Punishment and Separation" is cleared, Body puts together one of the finest four-song streaks you're liable to hear all year. It kicks off with the tribal pulses and sexy, pseudo-P-Funk bass line of "Easy Money." Before "I'm Not So Sure I'm Glad I Waited" comes to a cacophonous close, Body gets in the sunny-sounding

earworm "Goner" and the dark plod of "The Savior is the Culprit."

This set finds Body's using his overdubbed vocals to greater effect. The tight choruses and harmonies in "Easy Money" and "Goner" give the almost confectionery nature of those two songs even more sweetness, where "The Savior is the Culprit" and "I'm Not So Sure

CAMELOT IS NOT PROPOSING A SEISMIC SHIFT FOR BODY, BUT A CONTINUED EXPLORATION OF HIS SPACED-OUT, GLITCHY, PSYCHEDELIC, ELECTRONIC FOLK.

"I'm Glad I Waited" gain more uncertainty and eventually spiral into total entropy on the discordant vocal layers.

But the real revelation on *Camelot* is the sixth cut, "That Can Change." The playful sixth song could just as likely be the next indie-pop hit as soundtrack playtime at a daycare. Body's coos dance atop a beatbox-led shuffle, with light plucks from guitar, and a Tinker Bell tiptoed synth line; it's easily one of his most accomplished compositions. "Change" is dense, even a bit overstuffed, but it's never too busy; all the kitchen sink effects which enter the mix as the song expands in the closing minutes, play off one another perfectly. It's a blissful din.

*John C. Schlotfeld is spending too much money on food and spending too much time in the kitchen.*

**CORRECTION:** In LV 102, April 2011, a review of Samuel Locke Ward & Toby Goodshank's split 7" was incorrectly attributed to Kent Williams. The actual author was John C. Schlotfeld. Kent helped with this release and so recused himself from all writing and editing with its regard. Many apologies to all concerned!

## ART/EXHIBITIONS

### Akar

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Recent work by Shawn Ireland, featuring Nick Joerling, April 27 thru May 17

### Amana Heritage Museum

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Craft Demonstrations, Saturdays thru Sept. starting May 28

### BS Gallery

220 West Benton St., Iowa City

BLACKOUT: New work by Josh Black, May 6, 6 p.m.

### Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids  
[www.crma.org](http://www.crma.org)

Wizards of Pop: Sabuda & Reinhart, May 1, 12 p.m. • Art Bites "Grant Wood Lives Here" with CRMA Curator, Sean Ulmer, May 4, 12:15 p.m. • Martini Mad...Mad...Madness!, May 6, 7 p.m. • Iowa Museum Day, May 14, 10 a.m. • Exhibition Opening: Shout Freedom! Photo League Selections from the Columbus Museum of Art, May 21, 10 a.m.

### Figge Art Museum

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

Celebrating Ideas: Bridging Communities with Augustana's Liberal Arts Through the Ages, thru May 29 • Young Artists at the Figge, thru May 15 • The John Deere Art Collection, thru June 12

### Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

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[www.nps.gov/heho](http://www.nps.gov/heho)

Cedar County, Iowa: A Door to Freedom, thru May 4 • Our Sisters' Many Hats, May 6 thru Sept 7

### Old Capitol Museum

Pentacrest, Iowa City  
[www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap](http://www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap)

See website for locations

Chaos and Creation on the Pentacrest, thru May 22

### Public Space One

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Opening: Cody Gieselman's PLANETARIUM ad infinitum, Erin Thurlow's (OH WHY DID I DID IT MY WAY), May 6, 7 p.m.

### University of Iowa Museum of Natural History

10 Macbride Hall, Iowa City, IA  
[www.uiowa.edu/~nathist](http://www.uiowa.edu/~nathist)

U.I. Explorers Lecture Series:

Greg Carmichael, Department of Chemical and Biochemical Engineering, May 19, 7 p.m.

## MUSIC

### Blue Moose Tap House

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Groovy Katz Hair Show, May 1, 4 p.m. • Joe Pug and The Hundred Mile Band with Strand of Oaks, May 2, 7 p.m. • Air Sex World Champions, May 3, 8 p.m. • Title Tracks with The War I Survived, May 4, 8 p.m. • Burning Halos with The Sullivan Gang and Feed My Piranha, May 5, 9 p.m. • Chasing Shade with Bermuda Report and Drew Witter, May 6, 7 p.m. • It Prevails with Life On Repeat, We Are Defiance, Affiance, Stand Your Ground, May 10, 5 p.m. • Go Radio with Sparks the Rescue, This Century, Select Start, May 11, 6 p.m. • Delyis with The Whines, May 13, 9 p.m. • The Sea and Cake with TBA, May 20, 8 p.m. • Secondhand Serenade, May 21, 5 p.m. • Curren\$y, May 25, 7 p.m.

### Englert

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The Elixir Of Love, comedy opera, April 29 thru May 1 • UI School Of Music Benefit Concert With Eugene Rousseau, May 3, 7:30 p.m. • David Church, May 5, 7 p.m. • Rock 4 The Roof benefit concert with The Recliners, Dick Prall, OSG, & Daddy's Brother Band, May 7, 7 p.m. • Todd Snider, May 8, 8 p.m. • Roger McGuinn, May 20, 8 p.m. • Icaria, May 26-28

### Gabe's

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March Fourth Marching Band, May 4, 8 p.m. • Ted Leo with The Poison Control Center, The Color Pharmacy, May 7, 8 p.m. • Face Candy with Old Man's War, Kristoff Kane, Sadistik, May 26, 8 p.m. • Aktar Aktar and Dastardly, May 28, 8 p.m.

### Hancher Auditorium

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Circa, 61 Circus Acts in 60 Minutes, May 14, 2 p.m. • Note: Hancher 2011-12 season begins in June

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

Tuesday Night Social Club, Tuesdays, 9 p.m.

John Vanderslice and Damien Jurado, May 1, 8 p.m. • Benefit for Generando with Kol Shira and Bossa Major, May 3, 7 p.m. • Talk Art with The Dads, May 4, 8 p.m. • Daniel and the Lion with Safe Words, John Paul Roney and The Boom Forest, May 5 • The Pines with Seth Winger, May 6 • Dave Moore with New Broom, May 7, 8 p.m. • Burlington Street Bluegrass Band, May 11, 7 p.m. • Captured! By Robots, May 12 • Jazz After Five with Equilateral, May 13, 5 p.m. • S. Carey with Other Lives and more TBA, May 13 •



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# A-List



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**Happy Hollow Park  
(Brown & Lucas, Iowa City)**

If by sheer will-power alone, we are going to get some days in the sun this month. The most glorious of them all (we checked), will be on May 21, when we all get to put on our gypsy best and bum around catching rays with the Carnival Hearts & Arts Collective at Happy Hollow Park.

Local bands shall play, local writers shall read, local crafters shall pedal their wares in sweet, sweet sunshine.

Hear the children laughing on the playground. See the flowers forming on the branches. Visualize money in your bank account. Give that money to an artist for something beautiful that will make your life more happy. Feel the happiness. Be the spring you wish to see in the world. Join us in the park, and don't forget to wear your carnival heart on your sleeve.

\* For an updated list of vendors, writers, musicians and other performers, check [carnivalheartsartscollective.blogspot.com](http://carnivalheartsartscollective.blogspot.com)

Catfish Keith, May 14, 8 p.m. • Jazz After Five featuring Equilateral, May 20, 5 p.m. • Benefit for TJ Brietbach, May 21, 7:30 p.m. • Burlington Street Bluegrass Band, May 25, 7 p.m.

### Orchestra Iowa

[www.orchestraiowa.org](http://www.orchestraiowa.org)

*See website for locations*

Orchestra Iowa Chamber Players, May 7, 7:30 p.m. • Popular Series: Music of Blood Sweat Tears, Earth Wind Fire, Chicago, May 28, 4 p.m.

### Red Cedar Chamber Music

[www.redcedar.org](http://www.redcedar.org)

*See website for event locations*

Jan Boland, flute and John Dowdall, guitar, May 5, 7 p.m. • Special Concert featuring Jan Boland, John Dowdall, Miera Kim and others, May 11, 1 p.m. • Open Rehearsal, May 18, 10 a.m. • Rural Outreach Concert, May 18, 7 p.m. • Music for Seniors, May 19, 1:30 p.m. • Rural Outreach Concert, May 19, 7 p.m. • Music for Seniors, May 20, 2 p.m. • Rural Outreach Concert, May 20, 7 p.m. • Setting Sun to Rising Moon, May 21, 8 p.m. • Perhaps Gilead, May 22, 2 p.m.

### Riverside Casino

**3184 Highway 22, Riverside**

[www.riversidecasinoandresort.com](http://www.riversidecasinoandresort.com)

Rodney Carrington, May 20-21, 8 p.m.

### Uptown Bill's

**401 South Gilbert Street**

[www.uptownbills.org](http://www.uptownbills.org)

*Open Words, Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.*

*Arts & Music, Thursdays, 6 p.m.*

*Open Mic, Fridays, 7 p.m.*

### Yacht Club

**13 S. Linn St., Iowa City**

[www.iowacityyachtclub.org](http://www.iowacityyachtclub.org)

*Shows at 9 p.m. unless otherwise noted*

Operation S.O.S. Japan, May 1, 8 p.m. • Cindo De Spanko and Spankalicious, May 5, times TBA • Evergreen Grass Band, May 6 • Dennis McMurrin and The Demolition Band, May 7, 10 p.m. • Bad Intentions, May 7, 7 p.m. • Marshall Crenshaw and Freedy Johnston, May 11, 8 p.m. • Deadman Flats, May 12 • Gglitch'd and Dead Winter's Carpenters, May 13 • Dr. Z's Experiment and Matt Skinner, May 14 • Smokestack and The Foothill Fury with Matt Skinner, May 19 • Spiritual Rez, May 20 • Radio Moscow with Brutus and Tribal Momentum, May 21 • Euforquestra and Holding Space, May 26 • Mad Monks with Brutus and The Psychedelic Explosions, May 27 • J-Trey and Skool'd, May 28

## THEATER/DANCE/PERFORMANCE

### Englert

**221 E. Washington St., Iowa City**

[www.englert.org](http://www.englert.org)

The Elixir Of Love, April 29 thru May 1 • Circa, 61  
Circus Acts In 60 Minutes, May 14, 2 p.m.

### Iowa Theatre Artists Company

**4709 220th Trail, Amana**

[www.iowatheatreartists.org](http://www.iowatheatreartists.org)

*See website for showtimes*

Sister Robert Anne's Cabaret Class, thru May 22 • Remain True-Stories of Old Amana, May 18 thru July 2

### Penguin's Comedy Club

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

[www.penguinscomedyclub.com](http://www.penguinscomedyclub.com)

*Check website for showtimes*

Axis of Awesome, May 6-7 • David Koechner, May 13-14 • Tim Walkoe, May 20-21

### Performing Arts at Iowa

[performingarts.uiowa.edu](http://performingarts.uiowa.edu)

*See website for times and locations*

Undergraduate Concert, UI Dance Department, May 5-7 • Electronic Music Studio, May 1 • Iowa New Play Festival, May 1-7 • UI Chamber and All-University String Orchestra, William LaRue Jones, conductor, May 1 • Rachel Joselson, soprano, May 2 • School of Music Benefit Concert with Eugene Rousseau, May 3 • University and Concert Bands, Mark Heidel, director, May 4 • Jazz Repertory Ensemble, Brent Sandy, director, May 5 • Camerata and Women's Chorale, Timothy Stalter, director, May 6 • Jeffrey Agrell, horn, May 7 • University Choir and Kantorei, May 7 • Center for New Music: New Music Ensemble, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, May 8 • Center for New Music, Composer's Workshop, David Gompper, director, May 8 • Iowa Percussion Semi-Annual Last Chance Alumni Concert, Dan Moore, director, May 8 • Tricia Park, violin; Conor Hanick, piano, May 14 • Dance Forum/UI Youth Ballet Spring Concert, May 14-15 • Thomas L. Davis Biennial Percussion Alumni Concert, May 15

### Riverside Theater

[www.riversidetheatre.org](http://www.riversidetheatre.org)

*See website for showtimes*

Under Construction, May 1 • Shakespeare Cabaret, May 7-8

### Theatre Cedar Rapids

**4444 1st Ave NE, Cedar Rapids**

[www.theatreocr.org](http://www.theatreocr.org)

*See website for showtimes*

The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe, May 13-14, 20-22, 27-28 • Auditions for Guys and Dolls, May 15-16

## CINEMA

### Bijou Theatre

**IMU, UI Campus, Iowa City**

[www.uiowa.edu/~bijou/](http://www.uiowa.edu/~bijou/)

*See website for showtimes*

Certified Copy, thru May 5 • Even the Rain, thru May 5

## Englert

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City

[www.englert.org](http://www.englert.org)

American Filmmakers: Quentin Tarantino: True Romance, May 10, 8 p.m. • American Filmmakers: Quentin Tarantino: Pulp Fiction, May 12, 8 p.m.

## University of Iowa Museum of Natural History

10 Macbride Hall, Iowa City

[www.uiowa.edu/~nathist](http://www.uiowa.edu/~nathist)

Movies@MNH: Four-Winged Dinosaur, May 8, 2 p.m.

## KIDS

### Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids

[www.crma.org](http://www.crma.org)

Doodlebugs Preschool Program at the Cedar Rapids Public Library: Pop Star!, May 6, 10:30 a.m. • SmArties, May 7, 1 p.m. • Doodlebugs Preschool Program at the Hiawatha Public Library: Ta Dah! It's a Dada!, May 27, 10:30 am

### Iowa City Public Library

123 South Linn St. Iowa City

[www.icpl.org](http://www.icpl.org)

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

### Old Capitol Museum

Pentacrest, Iowa City

[www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap](http://www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap)

See website for locations

HiStory Time for kids!, May 7, 1:30 p.m.

### UI Museum of Natural History

[www.uiowa.edu/~nathist](http://www.uiowa.edu/~nathist)

See website for locations

Storytime Adventures: Peacocks, May 15, 3 p.m. • Night at the Museum: "Be An Archaeologist," May 20, 6 p.m.

## MISC

### Amana Heritage Museum

705 44th Ave, Village of Amana

[www.amanaheritage.org](http://www.amanaheritage.org)

Passport to History: GPS Adventure, Saturdays thru Oct.

### G Spot Hair Design

[www.gspothairdesign.com](http://www.gspothairdesign.com)

See website for details

G Spot Hair Design's 2011 Hair Show, located at the Blue Moose Tap House, May 14, 8 p.m.

### Iowa City Green Drinks

[www.greendrinks.org/IA/IowaCity](http://www.greendrinks.org/IA/IowaCity)

Monthly gathering of environmentally-minded people

May Gathering at The Red Avocado, May 12, 5:30 p.m.

### Old Capitol City Roller Girls

[www.oldcapitolcityrollergirls.com](http://www.oldcapitolcityrollergirls.com)

See website for locations

Versus the Cedar Valley Push-Up Brawlers, AWAY, May 21 • Versus Sioux City Roller Dames, May 28

### Old Capitol Museum

Pentacrest, Iowa City

[www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap](http://www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap)

See website for locations

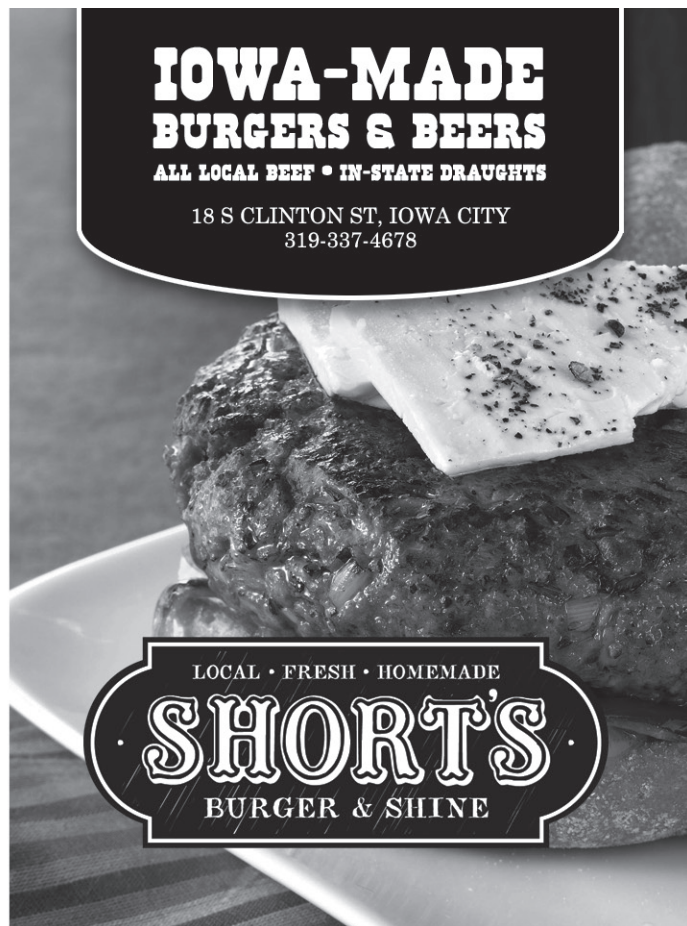
World Canvass with host Joan Kjaer: Italian Art & Culture, May 6, 5 p.m.

### Red Cedar Chamber Music

[www.redcedar.org](http://www.redcedar.org)

See website for event locations

Kentucky Derby Party, May 7, 3 p.m.





## Other Than That, Mrs. Lincoln, How Was the Play?

After its Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico last year, killing 11 workers and causing the largest offshore spill in U.S. history, Transocean Ltd. awarded bonuses to its executives for making 2010 the “best year in safety performance in our company’s history.” The payout contrasts with 2009, when the company withheld all executive bonuses after incurring four fatalities that year “to underscore the company’s commitment to safety.” In its filing on executive pay, Transocean declared, “Notwithstanding the tragic loss of life in the Gulf of Mexico, we achieved an exemplary statistical safety record.” (*The Wall Street Journal*)

WAY  
TO GO!

### Curses, Foiled Again

- A taxi driver in Springfield, Ill., picked up a fare who hadn’t even closed the door before he pulled a handgun and demanded money. The driver told police he noticed the car was still in gear, so he stepped on the gas and jerked the steering wheel back and forth, causing the gunman to fly out of the open passenger door and flee empty handed. (Springfield’s *The State Journal-Register*)
- Two people in York, Pa., tried to sell stolen tools to Andrew Hamilton, who recognized the toolbox as his own. After verifying that his tools had been stolen, he notified police, who arrested Cody Lee Littrell, 34, and Rebecca Erinn Dice, 32. (*The York Dispatch*)

### Second-Amendment Follies

- Authorities said Ryan Martin, 29, and Erica Clayburn, 20, were playing a variation of Marco Polo with a handgun when she shot him in the face, breaking his jaw. “She would close her eyes with a pistol in her hand,” Dauphin County, Pa., prosecutor Fran Chardo explained. “He would go somewhere in the room, say ‘gun,’ and she would have to open her eyes and dry fire the pistol.” This time, however, the weapon was loaded. Calling the game “incredibly dangerous,” Chardo noted that Martin and Clayburn admitted having played it before. (Harrisburg’s WHTM-TV)
- RadioShack and Dish Network partnered to offer free guns to first-time subscribers of satellite TV services in western Montana and southwest Idaho. “I might not even consider such a program if I were in Detroit city, but we have a different demographic out here,” said Steve Strand, owner of a RadioShack

store in Montana’s Bitterroot Valley, who came up with the guns-for-subscriptions offer. “All I can tell you is, grandma is packing a gun in Montana.” (Reuters)

- Virginia’s attorney general said state residents may bring guns to church for personal protection during services.

Clarifying a state law that requires persons to have a “good and sufficient reason” to “carry any gun, pistol, bowie knife, dagger or other dangerous weapon” into churches and other worship houses while a religious meeting is under way, Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli II said that the “right of self-defense lies at the heart of the right to keep

and bear arms.” Therefore, he concluded, “carrying a weapon for personal protection constitutes a good and sufficient reason under the statute.” (*The Washington Post*)

### How’s It Go with Bacon?

Scientists said that a species of sea cucumber living off the British coast might have a future as haute cuisine. *Holothuria forskali*, which are animals, not plants, breathe through their anus, can liquefy their body and feed on waste from the sea bottom. A research team from Newcastle University is investigating the possibility of cultivating vast “herds” of sea cucumbers to consume waste from fish farms while allowing the harvest of commercial quantities of the earthworm-like species, which, at 10 inches, sea cucumber specialist Matt Slater noted “would fit on a plate.” Although some cultures, notably the Chinese, consider sea cucumbers a delicacy and an aphrodisiac, one western diner rated their flavor “slightly lower than phlegm, the texture of which it closely resembles.” (Britain’s *The Independent* and the *New Zealand Herald*)

### Trouble Under Their Noses

- After budget cuts forced Chillicothe, Ohio, to close two of its three fire stations, the state cited the third station as a potential fire hazard and ordered the department to assign a firefighter to patrol the firehouse to make sure it isn’t on fire. The firefighter on patrol can perform no other duties, according to the state fire marshal’s office. Until a costly fire-detection and alarm system is installed and the existing sprinkler system passes inspection, the state said that

whenever 10 or more firefighters are on duty, one must be assigned to stand “fire watch.” When only nine — the minimum required staffing — are on duty, the city will pay an additional firefighter overtime to repeatedly walk from the basement to the second floor and back. (*The Columbus Dispatch*)

- Burglars broke into a police station in Uddington, near Glasgow, Scotland, during the night when the office was closed and stole uniforms and radios. “At no time has the safety of the public or any officer been jeopardized as a result of this break-in,” insisted a Strathclyde Police official. (Reuters)

### News Anywhere but Chicago

After Marc Baum lost a village election in Manlius, N.Y., by one vote, election officials admitted that one of the absentee ballots for village trustee shouldn’t have counted because the voter died three weeks before the election. A state supreme court judge ruled that the results stood, however, because any challenge should have been filed before Arnold Ferguson’s ballot was removed from its envelope and added to the tally. (Associated Press)

### Drinking-Class Heroes

Objecting to drunken-driving reform proposals, Montana lawmaker Alan Hale declared that tough DUI laws “are destroying a way of life that has been in Montana for years and years.” Referring to the long drives in rural areas to get to bars, which he called “the center of the communities,” Hale, who owns a bar in Basin, insisted, “These DUI laws are not doing our small businesses in our state any good at all. They are destroying them.”

Another opponent of DUI reform, Sen. Jonathan Windy Boy, took issue with a proposal to revoke the licenses of teens caught drinking, even if they aren’t driving. He declared that DUI reform puts the Legislature on “the path of criminalizing everyone in Montana.” (*The Billings Gazette*)

### More Trouble for Richard Kimble

A new Maine law lets people with one arm carry switchblade knives, becoming the first state to make an exception to laws that ban the use of the spring-action knives. Backers of the measure declared the measure saves one-armed people having to force open folding knives with their teeth in emergencies. (Reuters)

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

# Is there a Planet X after all?

**Your 1996 column on the mysterious giant Planet X some astronomers thought might lurk beyond Pluto is in need of an update. In particular, you should tell the story of the dwarf planet Eris, whose discovery was directly responsible for the demotion of Pluto from planet to dwarf planet.**

—VoronX

Thanks for reminding us of our sacred mission, Voron. Ordinary bloggers and journalists are fine for staying current on nuclear meltdowns, Middle East upheavals, and other passing phenomena. But it's up to The Straight Dope to keep the planets straight.

Here's where things stood as of 1996. Planet X was the name astronomer Percival Lowell gave in the early 20th century to the hypothetical celestial body that would account for apparent irregularities in the orbit of Neptune, the outermost planet then known. In 1930, what we now call Pluto was discovered in the approximate location Lowell had predicted for Planet X. But this discovery was coincidence, made possible by sheer doggedness on the part of Clyde Tombaugh, the astronomer who found the new planet—Pluto, it turned out, was far too small to budge Neptune.

The search for Planet X continued.

In 1972 astronomer Joseph Brady predicted it'd be a massive body with an orbit at a steep angle to those of most other planets that took 464 years to revolve around the sun. Brady's conjecture was never widely accepted, and more precise observations during the 1989 *Voyager 2* flyby established that the supposed anomalies in Neptune's orbit were, in fact, nonexistent. In short, there was no Planet X.

End of story? Naturally not. In 2005 astronomers poring over telescopic images discovered another largish object out past Neptune. Initially called 2003 UB313 (the 2003 part identifies the year the crucial photos were taken), it bore several distinctive traits: first, it was the most distant object known to orbit the

sun other than a few comets. Second, it was pretty big, with a diameter roughly a fifth of Earth's, although it was only a quarter of one percent as massive. Third, and here we get to the interesting part, it takes 557 years to circle the sun, and its orbit is at a steep angle to those of the other planets, much as Joseph Brady in 1972 had predicted for Planet X.

Again, however, it was just coincidence. Eris was nowhere near as massive as Brady's hypothetical giant. Nonetheless, 2003 UB313's

The problem wasn't just Eris. Pluto is located in a remote section of the solar system beyond Neptune's orbit known as the Kuiper Belt. (Eris is in an even more distant zone called the scattered disk.) For a long time astronomers thought there wasn't much in the Kuiper Belt other than Pluto and its moons, dust, and the occasional comet. Then starting in 1992 they discovered the first of what are now more than 1,000 known Kuiper Belt objects, or KBOs. Some think the KBO count could eventually reach 70,000. The Kuiper Belt, in other words, was like the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter—that is, a region of crud, little if any of it worthy of planetary designation.

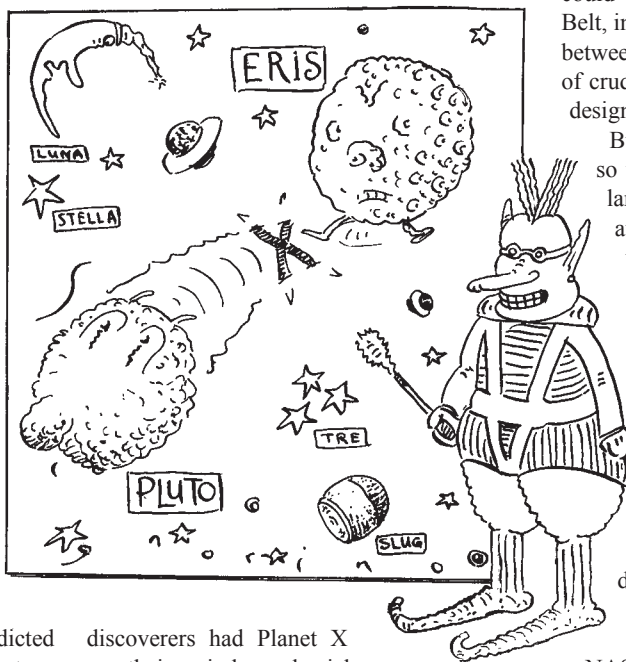
But there was no way to define *planet* so that Pluto stayed in the club while the largest of the crud was kept out. One attempt to preserve Pluto's planethood wound up elevating several other miscellaneous objects to planetary status as well, including the asteroid Ceres and Pluto's moon Charon. This will never do, the International Astronomical Union decided. In 2006 it demoted Pluto to dwarf planet.

You'd think that would mean the end of the Planet X saga, too. Not so. "Planet X" has now become the default term for any large orbiting item of interest on the solar system's fringe.

To learn more about what's out there, NASA has launched the New Horizons space probe, which will fly past Pluto in 2014 and later, it's hoped, past some KBOs. The space agency doesn't expect to spot any new mystery objects, project scientist Harold Weaver told my assistant Una. But at least speculation about future Planet Xs (in the Kuiper Belt, anyway) won't be so wildly off the mark.

—CECIL ADAMS

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



discoverers had Planet X on their minds and nicknamed their find Xena, after TV's warrior princess. Wiser heads prevailed, and ultimately the thing was named Eris.

The discovery of Eris proved to be the downfall of Pluto. The two objects were about the same size; if Pluto was a planet, so was Eris. Astronomers were now faced with the prospect of a planetary roster consisting of eight large to really large planets plus two relatively dinky ones. Pluto's status as a planet had always struck some people as dubious, not only because of its size but also its funky orbit, which is itself sharply angled and at times brings Pluto closer to the sun than Neptune. The arrival of Eris on the scene revived the argument.



## ASTROLOGY FORECAST FOR MAY 2011

**FOR EVERYONE**—Cascade. A lot of things will happen very fast in May. Many of these things will be important and many will be irreversible. Luck will frequently step in and take a hand. But many will be tempted by the chance to make a power play or a shady move. May will be complicated, eventful and fateful, but it's only the prelude to still more complicated and fateful months just ahead. So take advantage of whatever good May brings; deal with the changes, good, bad and indifferent. And hold something in reserve for as yet unforeseen challenges. Try to keep commitments flexible.



**ARIES**—Simple and straightforward. This is a very Aries month. The vibe is energetic, forward looking and adventuresome. Aries is in a commanding position, too. There's resistance to be overcome and many are in a bind and can't help much. Money is tight. But there's magic in the air. A little effort will often bring unexpectedly generous results. You do need to be careful. Keep dealings simple and open. There's trouble to be gotten into otherwise. Some are willing to take the shady route or force issues that deserve careful negotiation.



**TAURUS**—Introspection. April brings an awareness of all you might have left undone or the important goals you might not have achieved. The price of any omissions or oversights will be very clear. The clock is ticking, the pressure is on and quick fixes are unlikely. The next few months will provide lots of helpful insight about where you might have gone wrong and how you might do better in the future. Use this insight to your advantage when a whole new cycle of personal and financial growth begins in June.



**GEMINI**—Proxy fight. Events point to change as far as the mind's eye can see. Those in charge are depending heavily on you. Your reach in the community will let you shape events in ways they cannot. Things are complicated and confusing and there's plenty of room for mischief and manipulation by self-serving people. So you'll need to exercise independent judgment and use your initiative often to keep important priorities on track. There are surprisingly positive, constructive forces at work. They will reward your efforts more generously than you might think.



**CANCER**—Pause. There is an awful lot going on and it's important to you, but there isn't much you can do to directly affect the outcome. It's all too complicated; it's all too big; there are too many people involved. Too much depends on what you've done—and left undone—in the past. But there's a lot of reason to believe that the outcome will favor you. Behind-the-scenes maneuvers will benefit you, too. Next month, finances will improve noticeably. You will also experience some dramatic and positive inner changes.



**LEO**—Proceed with caution. Events have definitely reached a tipping point and momentum is still building. Some confidence is justified. However, in all the excitement, there's a strong possibility of double

dealing and other kinds of mischief. There is a lot of uncertainty, too, especially about finances. Fate could soon deal everyone a wild card or two. Your cooperation is needed and, realistically, you have to participate. You'd best hedge your bets, though. Protect against unexpected consequences where investments are concerned. Watch out for shady deals and power plays.



**VIRGO**—Check ID's. The speed and complexity of change will increase dramatically and so will your involvement. Your whole life will be affected. A seductive and mysterious influence is also drawing attractive and fascinating people to you. Many won't be what they seem. You could also be drawn to unconventional ideas. This is being caused by a powerful, long-term influence. Your life is becoming more interesting, but more risky. Keep your B.S. detector on high. Re-enforce personal boundaries. Listen, be helpful, but don't take on other people's burdens. Safeguard assets.



**LIBRA**—Threshold. Many Librans are experiencing both a profound personal transformation and a complicated career transition. A rapid sequence of events will soon accelerate these transformations. The past will slip further behind you. Increasingly, you will find yourself among reformers and innovators. Amidst this change, you need to maintain a stable base of operations and, in the face of complicated events, keep your life on track. Remember that you need to achieve and maintain a steady income throughout. Exert as much control as possible over vital details. Financial pressures ease this summer.



**SCORPIO**—Diplomacy. Irritations and disappointments have been piling up. In May, some people will finally let their feelings be known. You, too, might finally put your foot down. Things are going to start happening fast. Some good will come of all this. But May is only the beginning of a period of rapid, confusing and often unexpected change. Firm up support networks and helpful alliances. Proceed cautiously and calmly. An impulsive response might put you at a disadvantage as events continue to unfold. Financially, the upcoming cycle favors consolidation, not expansion.



**SAGITTARIUS**—Ripple effects. May brings a cascade of economic changes. They will move through the lives of your entire social circle, including professional and work friends. You are favorably positioned and the forces

of change will flow smoothly through your affairs. Your ideas about change will be of interest to higher ups, too. But use whatever benefits May brings in a self-protective way. More complicated, difficult changes are coming; you'll need options in the months ahead. Explore relationships with change-minded people. Learn what change means to those who must live through it.



**CAPRICORN**—Deliberation. You've turned a corner, but it will take time to achieve a new, stable status quo. Temperamentally, you're out of harmony with the forces of change. It could also be tricky to establish and maintain the alliances you'll need going forward. That leaves you with bridges to build. Whatever progress you make, you should avoid set commitments. Next month's events will bring clarity to many situations where confusion now reigns. It will help you understand better what's ahead. You'll be glad you kept things flexible. Financial conditions will soon ease noticeably.



**AQUARIUS**—Resolute. Lots of Aquarian stuff is starting to happen. The Aquarian spirit is spreading and growing, however gradually, and you are an unavoidable part of that. You are also beginning the next big phase of your personal existence now. Don't compromise your goals out of impatience or frustration. Don't be bullied into compromise, either. May is advising you to lay a good financial foundation. A seductive, spendy influence is affecting your personal finances, long-term. Get a handle on this influence now: keep finances simple and straightforward. Stick to your budget.



**PISCES**—A strong tailwind. Events are pushing you to explore new horizons, intellectually, spiritually and/or geographically. Your own ambitions are reinforcing this trend. Complex and powerful forces are affecting your personal finances, also. Financial trends are complicated, but basically positive. Necessity, personal motivation and irresistible changes are shaping decisions for you. Optimism is justified. However, it could be hard to do anything but ride the waves and trust that they will take you where you need to go. Next month will show you more clearly what you must do. A restless, nervous-making planetary influence will fade, making it easier to cope, generally. Keep a lid on spending.

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