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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

THE AMAZING MITT DRAKE THE MAGICIAN

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NO, WAIT-- THAT WAS MY OLD ACT!

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the prairie on the Leopold shack grounds and debarking some trees. The Leopolds planted about 30,000 trees on the land, and the Leopold Foundation—which now owns the land and has built the Leopold Center (much of which was constructed from “Leopold trees”) down the road a mile or so—is selectively culling these now-mature trees due to overcrowding. The garage at the Center needed some new ceiling log trusses, so our job was to debark some of the red pines for that purpose.

After some hand-tool peeling of half of a twenty-foot log, my shift was done. But before I wandered off to pull goldenrod from the Leopold prairie, I collected several of my bark shavings and tucked them away to take home. Great, just what I need—more old pieces of wood to add to my odd collection of mementos.

Except for books, I’m not that much of a pack-

Objects of My Admiration

rat. I don’t save napkins from weddings or collect spoons emblazoned with pictures of cities I’ve visited. But now and then, I connect with some objects that resonate with significance to me, and I squirrel them away for my collection of Tom’s Important Oddities and Objects of Admiration.

Among my most prized possessions is an old wooden roof shingle from Sigurd Olson’s Listening Point cabin near Ely, Minnesota. Sigurd Olson is another of my naturalist/con-

“A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”

—Aldo Leopold

I went to Wisconsin, and all I brought back were a bunch of bark shavings from a red pine tree.

This fall, I attended a “Land Ethic Leader” workshop at the Aldo Leopold Center near Baraboo, Wisconsin. If you don’t know, Aldo Leopold—born and raised in Burlington, Iowa—is arguably the twentieth century’s greatest conservationist. He authored the classic *A Sand County Almanac*, the book that introduced the most fundamental principle of ecology and environmentalism, the land ethic. In Leopold’s own words, “All ethics evolved so far rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. . . . The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to

include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land. . . . A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”

Leopold also virtually invented ecological restoration, masterminding the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum, the first and still largest restored ecosystem in the United States. The second-oldest ecological restoration is on the old farm on which Leopold’s shack (an old chicken coop) sits—the place where he and his family spent nearly fifteen years in the 1930s and 1940s planting native prairie and woodland plants.

That’s where my bark shavings came from. As part of our workshop, we engaged in a work project—pulling invasive goldenrod from

versationist heroes. He is of about the same generation as Aldo Leopold and was one of the guiding lights in establishing what is now the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness as well as such other prominent wilderness areas as Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. He also served as president of the Wilderness Society and helped draft the Wilderness Act of 1964. Olson owned a cabin on Burntside Lake near Ely that was his local refuge. He named the land it stood on Listening Point, which became the subject of one of his several beautifully written books about the wilderness. The land and cabin are now owned by the Listening Point Foundation, and when I visited there several years ago, Chuck Wick (the vice president of the LPF) asked if I would like to take one of the original roof shingles home

with me, which had been removed because they were reroofing the cabin. My thanks and acceptance were unhesitating.

I have some local meaningful objects of place, too. When the Old Capitol dome tragically burned in 2001, I went out onto the Pentacrest the next day and picked up a few small charred pieces of wood off the lawn. When the Shambaugh House—in which I worked for a year for the University of Iowa Honors Program, my office being Bertha Shambaugh's studio—was moved down Clinton Street ten years ago, I scooted on over to the site before it was bulldozed and picked up a couple of foundation bricks.

In her book *True Wealth*, Juliet Schor calls for a "true materialism." She says we should not become less materialistic but more so—that is, we must understand, appreciate and value the material of our consumer products in a much deeper way so that we actually consume less. My objects of admiration are not consumer products, but my acquisitive tendency flows from a powerful connection to

the material that resonates with Schor's idea of "true materialism." My connection with these material items is literally palpable. I am touching the cabin roof under which Sigurd Olson rested, dreamed, and thought. I am touching the wood touched by the workmen of more than 160 years ago who built the dome under which the state of Iowa was created. I am touching the foundation of the home of two of our great-



FOR THE LOVE OF LEOPOLD

The author stands (second from left) with the rest of his class of Land Ethic Leaders

Wisconsin. These were from the trees touched, nurtured, and grown by the Leopolds—maybe Aldo himself—in one of the most important

These objects erase time through their material reality. They allow me to literally touch the people and moments of history that are important to me.



est local historical figures, and who, within those walls, entertained the likes of Amelia Earhart, Thornton Wilder, Jane Addams and Hamlin Garland above these very same Amana red bricks.

For me, these objects erase time through their material reality. They allow me to literally touch the people and moments of history that are important to me. They are not mementos in the sense of merely sparking memory, but, in my pidgin Latin, metactos, touching history.

So it's no wonder that I brought home some fragrant red pine bark shavings from

ecological restorations in history. For me to sit on a log from one of those trees, to peel bark with my own hands and sweat, and to have a little bit of my work added to the Leopold Center itself was and is a signal honor and privilege. And whenever I rub my fingers gently over one of those thin, delicate peels of bark that I brought home, I will touch the greatness of Aldo Leopold in the most palpable way I possibly can. **IV**

As a newly minted Leopold Center Land Ethic Leader, Thomas Dean has the screening rights to show the new documentary Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time. If you would like to schedule a screening and discussion of this film for your group or organization, let Tom know at thomaskdean@mchsi.com. He might even bring his bark shavings.

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BACK TO THE HOMELAND

Chuck Geertz will never forget the weekday afternoon he pulled up to his hunting cabin and saw a friend's truck parked on the gravel drive. This friend—we'll call him Kenny to protect his privacy—frequently hunted on Geertz's property but always called first. Geertz knew something was wrong.

He found Kenny sitting by a creek. He told Geertz he'd sat for hours listening to the water and watching animals play. Then he shared a secret.

"He told me that his intention that day was to go out into the woods and commit suicide but that once he was out there so close to nature, he couldn't do it," Geertz said.

Kenny is an Army Veteran of Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, as many as one in five veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Veterans make up 20 percent of suicides in the United States with ex-soldiers 24 and under taking their own lives at four times the rate of other veterans. Few people understand this as

well as Geertz, a retired United States Marine Corps Infantryman and a retired Iowa Army National Guard combat engineer who admits to experiencing his share of psychological issues when he returned to civilian life.

"When you're in [the service] there is a lot of anxiety, you don't get much sleep and you're always running on adrenaline," Geertz said. "Then you come home and all of that is gone. You go from moving at 110 miles per hour to five miles per hour."

A lifelong hunter and fisherman, Geertz returned to these activities as a way to connect with life again. If it worked for him, he thought, it could work for others, so in 2006 Geertz began developing a plan for an organization to help veterans reenter civilian life through hunting and fishing trips. In 2008, English River Outfitters (ERO) was officially launched as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The organization was named after the river that snakes its way through

Washington County, where Geertz's hunting lodge is located.

The quiet, wooded calm of Geertz's Washington hunting grounds is a far cry from the metallic rattling of a Humvee's engine or

"When we come home, we see life as very fragile and we see people without a passion for their freedoms. We don't expect them to understand the terror of combat, but we do want to see everyone reach out a hand to help their neighbor."

--Aaron Olson, Keota, Iowa

the blast of machine gun fire across an early morning sky. That's precisely why veterans like Kenny go there.

"If you ever go out into the world really early in the morning, before even the birds wake up, and you watch the squirrels running around playing tag, and you wait for the sun to come up, you forget about everything else," Geertz said.

Most, if not all, of the veterans Geertz takes on his hunting and fishing expeditions have PTSD. Until recently, Aaron Olson, a 37-year-old resident of Keota, was so depressed and anxious that he could not work. Sometimes

he couldn't even leave the house. Three years ago, a friend introduced him to Geertz and Olson attended a goose hunt. Now he helps Geertz lead trips for other veterans.

Kent Savage, 41, of Washington, Iowa is also a member of ERO. Savage is a retired combat engineer who served in Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom until he suffered a brain injury and was medically discharged. Returning to civilian life was challenging.

"All I ever wanted to be was a soldier and then I had to figure out what to do with my

longish (albeit well-groomed) goatee who is most comfortable in jeans and camo. Timmel is a young comedian with a two-month-old daughter who spends his afternoons in the corner booth at Panera Bread writing.

But Timmel once donned fatigues as a member of a consortium of talent from the U.S.—singers, comedians, musicians, etc.—



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Bobby Ray Bunch (Pictured)

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life if I couldn't do that," Savage said. "I was really depressed. I didn't know what to do."

Like Olson, Savage has found friendship with Geertz and the other veterans.

"It's been really good for me and for the other guys too," Savage said. "We can just sit around a campfire and talk to one another without feeling like we're under a microscope. We aren't being judged. These are just our peers."

Geertz currently offers approximately three hunting trips per season. He hopes to expand, but before he can do that he needs more donors, businesses and individuals. ERO's trips are free to veterans. It costs \$500 to take one veteran away for the weekend.

Enter Nathan Timmel. At first glance, Timmel and Geertz couldn't be more different. Geertz is a seasoned military man with a

who performed for the troops overseas. He has been doing comedy for 14 years but few performances have been as memorable as the ones he did for military audiences.

In 2004, he traveled to Camp Anaconda, the revamped site of an old Saddam Hussein air force base, to do stand-up. After the show one of the audience members came up to him and shook his hand to thank him.

"She told me that she laughed so hard she almost forgot where she was," Timmel said.

He also performed for soldiers at a base that

had just suffered the loss of many of their own. Timmel wasn't sure how they'd react to attending his show at 10 a.m. the morning after, but the commanding officer of the base made attendance mandatory.

"He told me that he wanted them to remember that it's okay to laugh," Timmel said.

Timmel is hosting his fourth Comedy for Charity event, this one to raise funds for ERO. He and approximately a dozen comedians will perform at The Mill on Veteran's Day, Sunday, Nov. 11 at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5.

One of the performing comedians will be Bobby Rae Bunch, a former member of the United States Air Force and an Iowa City resident. Bunch was stationed at Andrews' Air Force Base, at an Iraqi prison and in Qatar, where he worked security for the USO Tour. That was the first time two of his passions—the military and comedy—intersected.

"I made Drew Carey laugh," he said. "That made me feel pretty good."

For Bunch, comedy has eased the transition from military to civilian life, whereas others like Olson, Savage and Geertz are still trying to straddle that line. War and comedy may seem an unlikely pairing, but comedy provides a rare common ground for civilians and veterans, when common ground can seem hard to come by.

"We've seen the breakdown of society and how horrible it can be," Olson said. "When we come home, we see life as very fragile and we see people without a passion for their freedoms. We don't expect them to understand the terror of combat, but we do want to see everyone reach out a hand to help their neighbor instead of just protecting themselves."

Comedy for Charity seeks to begin that understanding with a little bit of laughter. **lv**

Jill Bodach is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop. She is an adjunct professor of English at Kirkwood Community College.



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If You Give a Frog a Cookie

Arnold Lobel's storybook characters Frog and Toad are two of the literary giants from my childhood that have enjoyed second, third and (currently) fourth revivals for me as I've shared their stories with each of my children. Although I still enjoy these funny and sweet stories, by the 20th or 30th read (that's a weekly count, not a lifetime count) I'm not on the edge of my seat wondering what will happen next. I begin to wonder things like: Where do they get their cute little coats? How can they sew with those crazy, squishy bipedal hand-feet? Why are Frog and Toad anthropomorphized, but the birds aren't? And then of course the navel gazing begins—ghosts of my little girl responses to these stories flit through me and I wonder just how much this single set of stories has left a lifelong imprint on my thoughts and habits, even on my deeper sense of my self. And, in turn, how do they affect my daughter who also wants to read these stories over and over again? I am a believer in the power of books to transform their readers. So what transformations are taking place in her?

I need to tell you something about my daughter—we'll call her Iz. Iz is not fond of any food that is remotely healthy. The tomato sauce on her spaghetti must give her the

nutrients she needs because everything else is starch and cheese—and sometimes even "cheez." But I have this voice in me that says: Don't make big issues around food! Don't make food into reward or punishment, don't make her feel bad about wanting something that tastes good to her. I know what Toad would say: "Blah."

So, when in doubt, I look to books. "Cookies" is one of my and Iz's

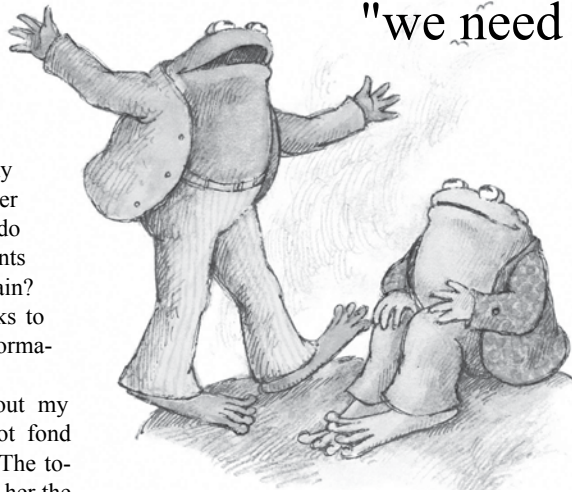
favorite Frog and Toad stories. For those unfamiliar or who haven't read the story 100-odd times, here's my 41 year-old self's retelling: "Cookies" opens with Toad baking a batch of cookies. Toad finds these cookies so delicious he must immediately take them to share with his best friend, Frog, who lives in a quaint woodland cottage not far away. Frog partakes, stating: "These are the best cookies I've ever eaten!" and the two of them proceed to eat more and more of Toad's cookies. Frog, ever the voice of reason, suggests that they should stop eating, or they will soon be sick. Toad agrees. And...they keep eating and eating, exclaiming "just one more!" with each cookie. Recognizing where this is going, Frog explains to Toad that they just need willpower! Frog then helps out their willpower by putting the cookies in a box and making them progressively more and more difficult to reach at each

"We must stop eating!"

"Yes," cried Toad as he ate another.

said Frog, reaching for a cookie,

"we need willpower."



turn of the page. He smiles, sure that they can exercise their collective will and avoid stomach aches. But Toad frowns, sad and worried more than angry or frustrated, not at all sure he likes how this is unfolding. Finally, in order to save himself and his friend from the threat of cookie-induced tummy ache, Frog takes the cookies outside, puts them on the ground, and calls for the birds to come and eat the cookies.

In the final illustration, Frog is pleased with himself, smiling as he lays a magnanimous hand on Toad's shoulder. But Toad

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is crestfallen, reaching a helpless hand out towards the cookies even as the birds pick up every last one. The story ends as Frog notes with pride that they now have “lots and lots of willpower.” To which Toad replies: “You may keep it all, Frog. I am going home now to bake a cake.” (Toad always has the best lines.)

When I read “Cookies” now I can still viscerally feel my little-girl-responses to the dilemma facing Frog and Toad, with my mom-response and academic-critical-response layered across the top. The little girl identified immediately with Toad, who simply wants to share and enjoy his cookies. She was somewhat puzzled by Frog’s admonitions about “willpower” (a “power” which can’t be all that strong, she thought, if it can’t even stand up to a box of cookies tied up and sitting on a high shelf). The mom and academic in me doesn’t want her children growing up with anxieties about food, and analyzes each turn of phrase looking for signs of an “unhealthy relationship with food.” (Again, I say: “Blah.”) But honestly, these “adult” responses all feel artificial to me. Maybe it’s seeing my open and trusting Iz juxtaposed with the perspective I’ve gained from living in a culture steeped in support groups, focus groups, political agendas, target markets and diagnoses that do everything to set us apart from others and little to bring us together. Whatever the impetus, if I step back from identifying myself with any of these roles, I can see that Lobel simply has Frog and Toad present two different ways of responding to a dilemma, all the while poking fun at how seriously these amphibian bipeds are about their cookies and the choices before them. More than anything, *Lobel trusts children*—something rarely seen in today’s world of children’s edutainment. He gives them the chance to ponder a few of the big issues around food in this simple, sweet and funny story: the concept that food may be good for us or bad for us, that our appetites may defy our brain and its logic making us desire something that we’re told is bad for us and posits that our flimsy human will can’t stand up to the temptation of a delicious chocolate chip cookie anyway. There is thankfully no moral. I think my literary friends Frog and Toad let me and Iz know that the childish instinct to trust life not fear, and to trust friends not ideologies, is a good instinct to hold onto. **lv**

Kate Hess lives and works and plays in Iowa City under the titles of mother, librarian, writer, reader, learner and doer. She invites discussion on play at learninglikechildren.wordpress.com.

Founders Brewing Company - Grand Rapids, MI

Breakfast Stout

BREW OF THE MONTH: NOVEMBER

My plan to recommend a tasty and potent weizenbock this month fell through, so I have decided to suggest a stout that is so good I drank it for breakfast while camping in September: Breakfast Stout, brewed by the Founders Brewing Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Though it may not provide the important nutrition to win six NBA championships, Breakfast Stout was a tasty treat to begin the day. Brewed with Sumatra and Kona coffee, it provided a boost to accompany the fresh sunlight and chirping of birds. (It truly was “the best part of waking up.”) It’s relatively high gravity warmed me on the crisp morning—and also eased my hungry nerves after learning that raccoons had eaten our peanuts and English muffins.

To serve, a pint glass will do (especially if you are camping) but I suggest using a tulip glass or snifter to get the full aromatic effect. The color is opaque black; no light passes through when held to a lamp. One finger of tan head will leave a cappuccino-like lacing and ring around the edge. A couple strong swirls creates a frothy, brown ring that eventually fades to tan again.

It smells like a convenience store or coffee shop on Sunday morning: coffee and hot pastries. The aroma offers a dose of roasted malts reminiscent of espresso, though in no way does it dominate the aroma as it does with other coffee-infused stouts. Dark chocolate and smooth oatmeal provide a nice balance. The taste is a heavenly mélange of roasted malts, dark chocolate and oatmeal. At first the espresso bitterness is balanced by the other flavors, but as the beer continues to warm the espresso kick begins to dominate from sip to swallow. **lv**

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 8.3 percent ABV

SERVING TEMPERATURE: 50-55° F.

FOOD PAIRINGS: BeerAdvocate recommends buttery cheeses like Brie, Gouda, Havarti, Swiss; chocolate (perhaps Halloween leftovers); and smoked and grilled meat.

WHERE TO BUY: Most area beer retailers will sell it. Breakfast Stout is Founders’ fall and winter seasonal, available from September to February.

PRICE: \$3 per 12-ounce bottle, \$10-12 per four-pack.

—Casey Wagner



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Photos by Adrienne Behning



Tis the season! The season of giving. The season of warm drinks. The season of giving warm drinks (to your cold friends). Try out this project for crafting your own tea bags to steep and share all winter long.

SUPPLIES

- **COFFEE FILTERS**
- **SEWING MACHINE OR NEEDLE AND THREAD**
- **STAPLER**
- **PAPER**
- **LOOSE TEAS (AVAILABLE IN THE BULK BINS OF MOST GROCERIES)**
- **OPTIONAL: SPICES, DRIED EDIBLE FLOWERS OR FRUIT PEELS, CANDIED FRUIT**

TEA MIXOLOGY

In a bowl, combine your loose tea with any fun additions you plan on using. Feeling flowery? Throw in some culinary lavender. Want a taste of the holidays? Mix in some pumpkin or apple pie spice. Create your own perfect blend or give these combos a try:

CHAI PUMPKIN PIE: 2 parts chai tea + 1 part pumpkin pie spice + 1 part candied ginger

MINT CHOCOLATE CHIP: 1 part peppermint tea + 1 part hot chocolate mix

SWEET DREAMS: Equal parts rooibos tea, chamomile tea, mint tea and dried orange peel



**BAG IT**

To construct your tea bags, lay one coffee filter on top of another and cut out two identical rectangles. Using a sewing machine or a needle and thread, sew three sides of your rectangle together. Fill about $\frac{3}{4}$ full with loose leaf tea. Fold your top two corners inward, then fold over to seal the bag. Place the end of a piece of string under the flap and staple to seal.

**TAG IT**

Use your creativi-tea to come up with some names for your tea mixes. If you're gifting your tea bags, try making your tags from funky papers or writing out quotes your tea receiver might enjoy. Thread or staple your tags to the loose ends of string and raise your mugs (pinky up!) to tea time. **lv**

Megan Ranegar will be enjoying a balanced diet of hot toddies and gingerbread cookies until April.

Helping Yourself By Helping Others

Ah, November. Fall is everywhere around us—the leaves, the air, the harvest feasts. And, toward the end of the month, that time when we gather together with our friends and family and give thanks that we have exactly one month to pull our collective holiday shit together as we begin our mad dash into the New Year.

The unfortunate part of Thanksgiving is that we often forget to actually give thanks, so I thought this month I would take a moment to remind us all that giving thanks can and should extend throughout the year—and might even benefit our health along the way.

Let me explain.

One of the best ways that we can give thanks is through altruism, or just doing good deeds for the sake of doing them. For example, sometimes, even when I'm in a huge rush at the grocery store, when I see that mom with a baby, a heaping cart full of diapers, formula, food and that look in her eyes—you know the one that says, "Jesus, I need out of here!"—I insist she cuts in front of me. I'm sure that most anyone would do the same.

Well, it turns out that those simple things that we do have a huge impact on our mental health.

In fact, a recent article in *Psychosomatic Medicine* found that not only is helping others associated with higher levels of mental health, but that these benefits outweigh any benefits of receiving help as well as other known psychospiritual, stress and demographic factors.

When comparing altruism to prayer, concerted stress-reduction strategies, income, age, gender, physical health and actually being on the receiving end of an altruistic gesture, altruism is quite possibly the best thing for mental health since SSRI's.

But the benefits don't end there. In a follow up study, researchers found that all-cause mortality—meaning death for any reason whatsoever—is 28 percent lower in conscientious and altruistic individuals.

There are veritable hundreds upon hundreds of articles that have been published looking at this from just about every angle, and the common finding is very simple: The more we give, the happier and healthier we are.

So, remember during this season of thanks to be helpful, kind, nice and giving—the personal payoffs are huge.

And, as always, until next time, Be Well. **lv**

When Dr. Jason Bradley isn't selflessly posting about his good deeds on Facebook, he can be found practicing Metabolic and Nutritional Medicine at Washington Street Wellness Center in Iowa City, Iowa.

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INSIDE OUT

Funniest puke story I have took place in icy winter, a woman asking that I halt the taxi and let her blow out. I stopped where we were, which happened to be a slick hilltop. She scrambled out and hit that ice collapsing to her knees in the headlights. The slope of the hill took her from there and she went sliding down the ice on all fours, rotating and zukiing. She was a good sport though, before and afterward.

This one isn't like that.

I should have caught it by his green stare and bilious breath. I should have heard the warbling in his throat. Given that he's been drinking heavily, any movement on his part has been restricted to an abrupt wheeling of the arms.

The gagging I've missed but the arms I see in my rearview. He's pointing at something outside of the taxi, perhaps the curb. My foot comes off the gas.

Dude says something like, "Waaighh."

Jamming brakes soft as I can stomp them, I drift to curbside as dude brings it up for a vote, slapping hand over mouth just in time to fire auxiliary gouts of regurgated chunder out from his nostrils, and this as he tips back wildly, the other paw snatching for something to grab onto but catching his girl in the maw as he hoses the ceiling, which you will presently notice has been rattle-canned black to obscure that its fabric has come down. No matter, no matter—pressing business.

Stopping the rig, I throw on the lights.

But dude seems to have kept most of it to himself. He drops the hand from his mouth and sucks in a deep breath. Water streams from his blooded eyes. He groans, "Ah jeez."

"I thought you might've blown full out," I say in a complimentary fashion while passing the flashlight over affairs.

His girl laughs like she doesn't know much else. She yells out to where dude has tumbled in the grass, cheering him to say, "Negative chug, whisky-dick!"

I want to ask what she finds so funny.

Instead I say: "Another hundred bucks poorly spent."

"It's a hundred dollars to puke in here?! Nuh-uh!"

"Uh-huh—it's right there on my rate sheet."

"Give me a break, right on the where? What's on a rate sheet?"

I am ever the bubble-popper, always the fellow rapping on the door to inquire about your firstborn. I pluck the rate sheet off the dashboard and give her the show.

"See under 'BODILY FLUIDS'? A hundred bucks to hork in the cab. Two hundred if you hork on me."

"I did not hork on you."

"I am not disputing that, ma'am. But you can likewise

not dispute that your companion has horked in the taxicab. And the pleasure of that indulgence costs a hundred bucks."

The taxi reeks like rotting gingko and I'm gasping through my mouth. Yet girl refuses to return the rate sheet without a full perusal. She asks: "So that's, like, the inside, right?"

"If the inside comes outside, then yah—that's a hundred bucks."

"No I mean inside like inside the taxicab."

"This is the inside of the inside of the taxicab."



Next he bends and sends everything from his asshole forward roaring onto the carpet in three good heaves, what on later inspection proves to be an indiscriminate muddle of dark beer happy hour nachos two kinds of red sauce white liquor hot wings bite-shaped bits of dough, and a margarita, all of which he has fanned onto the backs of both front seats, and into the door pocket, and over the window crank as I'm hollering that he take it out of the cab.

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Said bodily fluids had been inside of your man but they came out inside the taxicab.”

“And that’s a hundred bucks,” we say together like a church refrain.

Flopping with a start against the passenger-side windows, dude growls like a zombie while figuring out the door handle. Succeeding, he flops in the rear beside the girl whose eyes are burning at me like coal cinders.

Dude closes his own eyes and his teeth are chattering.

I ask: “You all cleaned out, dude?”

Girl says, “You’re a asshole [sic].”

“Tell it to the beef whistler, honey—I still need a hundred bucks or we’re not moving.”

“I’m not talking to you,” she snaps, still pushing her eyes on me, “I’m talking to you.”

She slugs her man in the shoulder and dude says something like, “Awassamahlagh?”

“This is a hundred dollars and you have to pay him right now! Did you hear me?”

Dude lays his head back, shuts his eyes tight, gurgles.

“Fuck it,” she says, shoving him over to extract his wallet, whereupon he lets rip a great fart and causes himself to laugh.

She sighs exaggeratedly and climbs into the front seat to hand me his credit card.

Next, she’s leaning into the back to slug him some more, railing: “Three hours ago I told you to quit drinking—I’m going home, tonight was a date.”

At dude’s place I run his card for the meter plus a hundred, plus a few bucks more to take girl her separate way, and we leave dude in the street hollering fuck yous but not before I tell him he should throw out his clothes. Next stop, I hump the curb rolling into girl’s driveway and immediately gear to R, ready to back out and haul ass for the car wash. My jaw hurts from mouth-breathing. I want to shower, and to brush my teeth.

But girl is putting to me those hot coals she’s got for eyes.

“So how much do you charge for other bodily fluids?”

I’m obtuse with chicks so I ask her to spell it out.

“He shouldn’t’ve turned me away hot. You want to plug in?”

I tell her: “One time, a different time from this, I had a guy’s colostomy bag rupture where you’re sitting.”

She slams the door with terrific force, yelling at the sky, “God, why are dude’s all such assholes!” **TV**

Vic Pasternak likes to help people enjoy the consequences of their actions.

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WHAT'S THAT SOUND?

This fall's Dirty Three show at Gabe's inspired at least one intergenerational noise-rock collaboration.

Pink Floyd's late-1960s extended guitar freak-outs? *Check*. The droning Krautrock experiments of Neu!, Can and Faust, along with the post-rock bands they inspired, like Mogwai, Tortoise and Stereolab? *Double-Check*. DJ Shadow's or J Dilla's spaced-out instrumental hip hop, the dubbly-bubbly electronica of The Orb, or Yoko Ono's wordless vocal sheets of sound? *Triple-Check*. And let's not forget Isaac Hayes' funk-rock masterpiece "Do Your Thing," a twenty-minute slice of psychedelic blaxploitation from the *Shaft* soundtrack. *Awww Yeeeeaaaaaaah, Check Baby!*

All of these artists put the "mental" back in instrumental music, even if some are known for their singing. Vocals may sometimes creep into an Instru-Mental song, but for the most part they are incomprehensible,

PUTTING THE MENTAL BACK IN INSTRUMENTAL

My son Alasdair turns two next month, and lately he has been immersing himself in the wild world of sound. If mom walks up the creaky wooden stairs to his bedroom, he'll say, "Mommy sound!" Or, when I crack open a PBR, Alasdair points to the can and blurts out, "Daddy sound!" A train whistle from outside always prompts, "Faraway train sound!" However, there are plenty of times when something that he can't identify reverberates through the air, which causes Alasdair to anxiously ask, "Sound? Sound?"

He says that a lot when I play music in the house, because lately I've been spinning records loaded with all sorts of strange noises. I blame all this on Dirty Three, an Australian group whose sprawling songs can stretch far out into outer space. This trio—which consists of drummer Jim White, bassist/guitarist Mick Turner and multi-instrumentalist Warren Ellis—counterbalance the lack of vocals with lysergic layers of ethereal atmosphere. Ever since I saw them perform at Gabe's this past September, I have been rediscovering all the awesome Instru-Mental

music scattered throughout my record collection. "Instru-Mental?," you might be asking yourself, "What in the world is Instru-Mental music? Why have I never heard of this genre?" The answer is simple: I just coined the term during that Dirty Three show, which is why you won't find it in any music encyclopedias (yet). As for a definition of my newly invented genre, here's the simplest one I could come up with: mind-expanding music without words. It's more of a meta-genre, because Instru-Mental music spans all sorts of styles, from rock and jazz to hip hop and electronic dance music. I have yet to find an example from Christmas or country music, though in an ideal alternate universe Taylor Swift has already collaborated with Dirty Three on a holiday record.

I humbly offer you a few nominations for inclusion in the Instru-Mental music canon:

buried in the mix, or make up only a fraction of a track. Sure, Hayes' "Do Your Thing" has a couple minutes of singing, but it also con-



tains a full *eighteen minutes* of fuzztone-laced spacefunk jams. Other artists who fall within my Instru-Mental genre, like Sigur Rós and the Cocteau Twins, feature vocalists—but they tend to sing in made-up tongues. Instead

of being about words, or text, their vocals are more about texture; the singing is just another tactile element in the sound recording.

Dirty Three first landed on America's shores in the mid-1990s riding shimmering sound waves of oceanic ecstasy. They were part of a long, slow exhale after years of the sort of hyperventilating angst that defined the grunge era. "Post-rock," as the genre came to be known, helped make fashionable music that had previously been lumped in with the self-indulgent gaucheness of progressive rock. Twenty minute songs became hip again. This new wave of bands was different than the likes of Yes and Emerson, Lake and Palmer because they weren't obsessed with showing off their technical proficiency (even though many of these musicians, like Dirty Three and Tortoise, are very gifted).

Rather than cramming thirty notes into ten seconds, post-rock groups might play only *three notes* in the span of *ten minutes*—over and over, hypnotically, with subtle variations. They don't gulp down an entire meal in every musical measure, opting instead for a long evening of multiple courses made of simple ingredients. The same minimalist-yet-expansive impulse can be heard across several styles of music, whether we are discussing Steve Reich and other "new music" composers or surrealist studio wizards like dub reggae producer Lee "Scratch" Perry. To paraphrase P.M. Dawn, they set you adrift on sensory bliss. As for Dirty Three, particularly on their latest release, *Toward the Low Sun*, their musical universe gravitates towards in-the-moment improvisation. Three brains and thirty fingers become one as they move from understated intimacy to a grand, cinematic scale. (This allusion to film music is appropriate, given that Warren Ellis has collaborated with Nick Cave on scores, and is also a member of Cave's groups the Bad Seeds and Grinderman.)

Next month I will be picking up where I'm leaving off by providing an extensive field guide to Instru-Mental music. A mixtape that contains some of my favorite mind-expanding wordless classics, downloadable from the *Little Village* website, will accompany my December Prairie Pop column. Think of it as an early holiday gift from me to you. In the meantime, Lil' Alasdair and I will be developing our Krautrock-inspired side project, RoboBaby and the Drones. Our first song title? "Pooping Sound!" **lv**

When he's not keepin' it real, or changing diapers, Kembrew teaches in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Iowa.



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Repeat after me: Gary Gygax. Again: Gary Gygax. If you know who Gygax is, you're probably smiling; if not, here's a clue: Dungeons & Dragons (D&D), the fantasy role-playing game that rocked the gaming scene in the 1970s and '80s. You know, best board game e-v-e-r: nerds impersonating elves and dwarves stranded in a dungeon in the quest for loot and experience points. Gygax created it in 1974 and became

invisible rules created a long time ago to drive interactive drama.

Mark Zuckerberg's online social network is the ultimate dungeon. Now, there is an epic journey that needs to be told to connect Gygax and Zuckerberg, one of paranoia and advertising in the era of the Internet. It goes something like this: Once upon a time there was the character sheet, a piece of paper filled with the stats of your mighty warrior: name, race, class, level, abilities, skills. This was a way of describing identity: I'm a level 5 warrior dwarf with a +5 bonus when attacking with an axe, for instance. Every attribute was quantified, even the personality. Gygax named the latter the "alignment" of the character, a categorization of the ethical and moral values that constituted the axis of your impersonation—that is, who you were and what decisions were you able to make in order to be coherent. Needless to say, you needed a huge amount of time, not only to play but just to read the core rulebook and fill out the character sheet. You also needed friends to join you, especially someone to play Dungeon Master, the person who created the adventures you and your friends would play out. Pencils, paper, time, friends and dice—that's all you needed. Oh, and a calculator: there were a lot of bonuses and charts to apply whenever you wanted to do anything in the game.

Computer RPG's saved a lot of time for players. You didn't need to throw dice and calculate all the variables of an action anymore. An Apple II would do that tiresome calculation for you. Popular video-game series such as Ultima, created by Richard Garriott (a.k.a. Lord British), managed to introduce the alignment of a character as a key gameplay feature of the game, too. This is the case with *Ultima*

IV: Quest of the Avatar (1985), in which the player struggled with ethical conundrums that branched the plot in different tracks.


Wait, did I say Avatar? Mind you, this is one of the first times the word was used to refer to a virtual character. Now, in the Internet era, we use avatars constantly; it is a common term, although

Facebook is the most massive computer role-playing game ever created.

one of the most prominent figures of a fandom ("fan kingdom") made of acne and escapism, devoted to comic books, video games, choose your own adventure books, polyhedral dice, wargames and Marauder miniatures.

Having said that, please accept my condolences if you were not a child at the time. If you are still lost, let's drop some more terms (raise your hand if you get one). How about Interactive Fiction (IF), Multi-User Dungeon (MUD), Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game (MMORPG)? Nothing yet? How about Facebook? Oh yes, now we are talking, aren't we?

Then let's start from the end: Facebook is the most massive computer role-playing game ever created. In it, you don't impersonate a badass dark elf warrior named Drizzt Do'Urden anymore; instead, you just impersonate yourself. But, you still do it according to a set of


facebook.com/zuck

About Mark: I'm trying to make the world a more open place.

Birthday: May 14, 1984

Sex: Male

Languages: English and Mandarin Chinese

Networks: Harvard, Facebook

Favorite Quotations:

"Fortune favors the bold."
- Virgil, Aeneid X.284

"All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once you grow up."
- Pablo Picasso

"Make things as simple as possible but no simpler."
- Albert Einstein

most people don't know that it originally referred to the terrestrial incarnation of a god. Lord British put theology into play by calling Avatar the character of his game: the incarnation of the player in a virtual scenario. Avatar's quest for virtue and the balance of the world would be the intersection where gaming, impersonation and media ran into each other. It was the mid-'80s, way before the Internet arrived in every suburban home. All the pieces of the puzzle were just waiting for something big to happen. And boy, did it: Advertising happened.

That has always been the game: to create an accurate Avatar, your perfect incarnation in a virtual world.

Pablo R. Balbontin studied Philosophy and Literary Theory in Spain, then moved to the U.S. to write a dissertation on Spanish literature and media.

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FALL CLOTHING DRIVE

Start cleaning out your closet now for United Action for Youth's annual clothing drive.



STYLE *to* SPARE

You're as good as you feel. Style is everything. If you live and breathe in the gasoline-and-French-Fries-scented eddy of freedom we call America, undoubtedly you've heard some variation on these messages revolving through our collective consciousness like shopping mall doors equating looking stylish with self esteem. But who can't relate to those teenage days when looks really were about more—about developing a sense of self, an identity, a way of navigating changing, often uncomfortable times? But in some cases, it's about simply having wearable, clean clothes. Iowa City's United Action for Youth (355 Iowa Avenue) knows that many of us take the latest looks for granted while there are teens right here in Johnson County, right on our streets and in our schools, wearing dingy, torn attire simply because they don't have other options. For the fourth year in a row, they are doing something about it, and it's making a difference for the young people of our community.

United Action For Youth has been here in Iowa City since 1970. "When I graduated, I came back and was working at a Mexican restaurant. I have always had some aspect of my life, wherever I've lived, involved with giving back to my community, and I heard about UAY I felt like I needed to be more productive in my life," says Elena Rodriguez, a mid-20's Iowa City native and Stanford graduate with a Masters in Sociology. "I got in touch with them and started volunteering. They have a lot of opportunities for young people and adults. People in general should be getting involved, doing something positive," she says, smiling. "It feels good to do because it IS good to do!"

Elena works with the Transitional Living Program. It's for young people ages 16-21 who are homeless or in unstable living situations, offering a residential program—the UAY has several houses with apartments—and assistance connecting youths to important services, like job preparedness training and food assistance.

But Elena is most excited, now, for the fourth-annual Fall Clothing Drive. Started in 2009 after UAY volunteers heard from a wide range of kids about not wanting to go to school because they were ashamed of their ill-fitted or out of style clothes. "Too many didn't want to go because they just didn't want to be seen," Elena says. "[UAY volunteers] thought, 'we can do something about this.' So we're taking appropriate teenaged clothing and hygiene items. Cool clothes, name brands, or even a variety so they aren't wearing the same thing all the time. Teens are impressionable and making an impression counts at that age—no



MOST NEEDED ITEMS: Lightly worn coats and jackets, sweaters, unopened hygiene items
DROP-OFF DATES: Dec. 1, 3 and 4 at United Action for Youth (355 Iowa Ave.)

Images from last year's selection courtesy of United Action for Youth

kid shouldn't want to go to school to learn because of something like clothes."

There's a clothing drive in Spring, too, but the Fall one is more important, Elena says. "At this time it's so important because Winter's coming up. I know I've never had to think about whether or not I'll have a coat that fits me. So we like name brand things, unopened hygiene items, but coats are most important at this time. Those have the most impact."

But the UAY can't do it all themselves. It takes help from the Iowa City and greater Johnson County community to make the drive a success. "We've put boxes in the fraternities, sororities, and have volunteers working to get them in the University dorms as well that will be there between now and Dec. 5, when the actual Clothing Drive event happens for the teens," says Elena. "We have a good relationship with the University and the Greek community—it's nice for them because it's a way to give back, it's not a lot of time or effort, and they're glad to give back."

But you don't have to be University affiliated to donate to the Clothing Drive. For the

rest of us, volunteers will be waiting with open arms at UAY to receive all donations during the following hours: Dec. 1 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Dec. 3 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., and Dec. 4 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m..

The main event for teens interested in "shopping" the (free) styles is Dec. 5, 3 p.m.-7:30 p.m. the UAY will be set up as a store-like environment, with clothes available on racks in a first-come-first-served basis, for all Johnson County teens ages 12-19. "They can choose a certain number items based on how much we get," Elena explains. "Last year it was 15 items. The more we get, the more we can give back. It's super fun for them. I wasn't here last year for the clothing drive, but I've heard so many stories about how excited the kids get for their new clothes. One of my co-worker's volunteers is close with a girl who came to one of her programs. She held some donated clothes

for her that she thought she'd like because she couldn't make it until the very end of the Drive—the next day, she was wearing three of the pieces. Just decked out in them and ecstatic about it! I'm excited to see their reactions this year!"

Want to get involved? "We're always looking for volunteers—you can connect with our volunteer coordinator through our website (unitedactionforyouth.org)," Elena says. "It's nice to see people around this time of year giving back. It's a way to make your little corner of the world a little better." And maybe even to look—and feel—a lot better. **lv**

Russell Jaffe is a Little Village arts columnist and publisher of Strange Cage poetry press.

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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. 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 are 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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PARENTHOOD & FRIENDSHIP

After seven years of watching “Gilmore Girls,” the series finale was bittersweet. I went through high school and college during the same time as the main character, Rory. I identified with her nerdy awkwardness and feeling like she didn’t quite fit in. It was like not seeing those characters anymore was akin to losing some long-time friends. Never knowing if Rory would become the next Christiane Amanpour or whether Luke and Lorelai would ever be together was painful. It may sound weird, or childish even, but it’s honest. And “Gilmore Girls” isn’t the only finished show that translated into feelings of loss for me, many have, including “Friday Night Lights,” “Sex and the City,” and “The Wire.”

In an article, titled “TV Binge” (found at FlowTV.org), media scholar Michael Z. Newman writes that we come to know the characters on the screen with such intimacy that they become like friends. He argues, “Sometimes we know them better than our real-life friends, because we get so much insight into their psychology, their secrets, their hopes and fears and dreams. Spending years with characters, they become regular visitors to our living rooms.” The ongoing, serialized nature of television is precisely what builds these TV friendships and strong emotional investments. I’ve never felt like I was losing a friend, or that there was a void in my life, after finishing a film or playing a video game. Probably because I’ve never spent seven-plus

and Matt Lauria (among others) from “Friday Night Lights,” and John Corbett from “Sex and the City.” Not to mention the patriarch of the Braverman clan, Craig T. Nelson, who will never not be Coach after nine seasons on “Coach,” and the recent addition of Ray Romano from “Everybody Loves Raymond.” While none of these characters have memories from their past diegetic worlds, just seeing their faces again, especially in interaction with one another, is comforting.

Reconnecting with TV friends is what initially drew me to “Parenthood,” and ultimately what kept me around despite a somewhat mediocre first season. “Parenthood” is like an adult “7th Heaven.” “7th Heaven” was a family-centered drama that lasted eleven years on the WB (and then CW). Each episode explored a different topic, from cheating at school to peer pressure, and ended with a moral lesson and strengthening of the familial bond.

While “Parenthood” isn’t nearly as preachy, it is just as optimistic. There really are no villains or “bad” characters, only good people who sometimes make bad decisions or who find themselves in troublesome situations regardless of their actions. Any antagonists that do emerge come from outside of the family itself. Because of this, the show borders on being sickeningly sweet at times, and

Crosby and Jasmine navigate interracial relationships. Julia and Joel explore contemporary gender roles (Julia works as a lawyer and Joel is a stay-at-home dad), and also depict the emotional rollercoaster that characterizes the adoption process. The heads of the family, Zeek and Camille, work through infidelity, aging and, more recently, issues concerning returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

“Parenthood” navigates these issues in a decidedly progressive way, but does so without alienating audiences who may not agree with its politics by otherwise showcasing the cen-

“Parenthood” navigates social issues in a decidedly progressive way, but does so without alienating audiences who may not agree with its politics.

trality of the traditional, American family. Of course, the Bravermans are a far cry from the Cleavers, the Nelsons, the Andersons, or the Stones because their lives are much messier than their late 50s/early 60s TV counterparts (and we unfortunately never got to see Ward Cleaver smoke a joint). At the same time, and despite the fact that this modern family looks quite different, “Parenthood” maintains that the family is still the heart of American society. The Braverman family motto seems to be that family is the only thing you can ever truly depend on, and the first line of defense against the ills of the world.

While the show sometimes privileges family solidarity at the expense of potentially more compelling or realistic narratives (would you ever tear up a \$2 million dollar check to prove that you care about your sibling?), their bonds with each other are enviable. And watching as those bonds are tested and reaffirmed can be emotional. In fact, my episode to cry ratio is nearing one to one.

Some say that friends often become our families of choice. In the case of “Parenthood,” our television friends of past morphed into a television family that we, as viewers, choose to be part of. The result is perhaps not the highest quality program currently on television, but I look forward to reconnecting with these friends each week. **IV**

Melissa Zimdars is a doctoral student in Communication Studies at The University of Iowa, specializing in media and critical cultural studies.

While it’s sad to see TV friends go, there is always the possibility that new TV friends can be made, or that old ones will come back into our lives.

years of my life learning about the characters depicted in them.

While it’s sad to see TV friends go, there is always the possibility that new TV friends can be made, or that old ones will come back into our lives in interesting ways. Such is the case with “Parenthood” (2010-present), which is now in its fourth season on NBC. “Parenthood” is a drama that depicts multiple levels of the Braverman family tree by exploring the dynamic between parents and their adult children, and their children’s children. This ensemble cast of “Parenthood” includes such recognizable TV friends as Lauren Graham from “Gilmore Girls,” Peter Krause from “Six Feet Under,” Michael B. Jordan

I find myself craving a little more provocation or rebelliousness from the program. Yet, oddly, I’d rather that than see anything irreparably bad happen to these TV friends I’ve grown to care about.

The show has mastered the creation of non-controversial controversy by planing most of the contentious edges from its narratives. However, no topic is off limits, and it seems like all the characters of “Parenthood,” at some point or another, will deal with every major personal and social issue fathomable. The son of Adam and Kristina, Max, has Asperger’s syndrome. Sarah deals with single-parenthood and an ex-husband who suffers from alcohol and drug problems.

Photos by Brian Prugh



A GESTURE TOWARD PAINTING

Gaia Nardie-Warner's "Limelight"
at Public Space One

IN THE LIMELIGHT

I stopped by Public Space One the day after the opening of Gaia Nardie-Warner's "Limelight," and the gallery space had its fluorescent lights on. These had been turned off during the opening, so that track lighting provided the paintings' only illumination. I therefore experienced them under both flattering and unflattering lights, and was struck by the degree to which the harsh light transformed the paintings, reducing surfaces that had seemed so luminous and effortless under the track lights to dusty, humdrum affairs beneath the fluorescent ones.

This encounter reinforced for me the razor-sharp edge the paintings are walking in presenting themselves as gestural abstractions—an edge that demands acknowledging the very real possibility of failure and fraudulence. I could not help but think, when seeing the work a second time, of dressing rooms in high-end stores, where theatrical lighting and specially curved mirrors create a dreamy stage-set in which the shopper appears ever-so-slightly more attractive than he does on the street. The paintings echo this precarious state: They require the right kind of light (and the right kind of looking) to hold together—and when I see them in this way, I believe they have the answers to all of my problems. When distracted, or otherwise unable to view them in the right way, I cannot see anything at all. One might say that this is painting on the edge

of meaning; one could also say that it is a matter of cobbling together the raw materials for a meaningful experience that is activated, when the conditions are right, by the right viewer—but that, if pressed in an interrogation, the artist would retain plausible deniability that she had meant anything at all.

There is a distinction worth dwelling on here: it is the case that with some art, a viewer can see it without the proper attention and visual sensitivity and still recognize it as meaningful. The Egyptian wall paintings might have been this way for western viewers before the discovery of the Rosetta stone: these marks clearly meant something: it was simply unclear what that 'something' was. The long list of art that has caused scandals in the 20th century has a different relationship to meaning: if one cannot immediately see it, it becomes puzzling that there could be anything there at all. The danger inherent in this kind of work is, of course, that there is in fact nothing there—the Emperor's clothes aren't clothes after all.

I believe there is something in Nardie-Warner's work, and that to better identify what that is, it will prove helpful to discuss the change the paintings underwent with the shifting lighting conditions. It was wholly related to their material character: in the right light, the layers of paint capture and hold light. The hues are in perfect relation to each other and the surfaces are jewel-like because of that captured light. The paintings feel effortless. The interaction between the effortlessness of the marks and the luminosity of the color is their source of tension.

In fluorescent light, all of works' luminosity is shut down, and the effortlessness reads as sloppiness. The lines and marks pregnant with meaning degrade into mere smudges and smears.

The fragility of this work is an essential part of its specific poetry, and the poetry is particularly related to the fragility of the gestural mark. If Abstract Expressionism made the gestural mark the supreme expression of human existence in an industrial world, it has been argued to have exhausted the possibilities of that mark. Artists who choose to engage



with it now are embarking upon a fraught enterprise. The result is that painting that deploys that kind of mark must acknowledge the potential impotence of gesture itself.

Painting that falls under Raphael Rubenstein's rubric of "provisional painting" acknowledges this fraughtness by threatening, always, to fall apart. There is more self-consciousness in this use of the intuitively drawn line than in Pollock's or de Kooning's. It seems to proclaim: "This might be nothing. But then again, it might be something." These newer gestural paintings re-open an investigation into certain possibilities in abstract painting by inviting the viewer to explore the possibilities in the marks without too much commitment. This gives them the opportunity to breathe again precisely by working on the margins or fringe of what was once hallowed ground.

Nardie-Warner's work situates itself on that fringe by referencing fashion and cultural ephemera (which it does by the presentation of a fashion show on opening night, through the elaborately painted space in which the work is presented, and explicitly in the statement), operating in a realm where personal expression still has some street value, and where the stakes are low enough that the work can escape the charge of taking itself too seriously. Within that narrowly circumscribed sphere, the luminous color, the inventive and whimsical structures, the vibrant transparencies burst out of that constricted space and breathe as legitimate descendants of fauvist landscapes and Kandinsky's abstraction, legitimate as human monuments because of their lack of ambition, and the degree to which they overwhelmingly surpass the expectation that the frame sets.

The play of shimmering color against the easy mark gives the paintings a sense of having come from a source of pure poetry—neither angst nor error make any sense within this world. But the structure of meaning in this world is incredibly perilous, always threatening to crumble. It makes one want to cradle the paintings—to place them in a protected space where the world will not be able to harm them.

The purity of their making makes me think of a child, whose purity of invention must be protected from the more sinister forces in the world, but whose purity recalls us, their custodians, back to our own humanity. This is potent medicine, and dangerous. That it must be hidden in a dilapidated structure seems entirely prudent. **lv**

Brian Prugh is a graduate student studying painting at the University of Iowa. He also writes art criticism for the Iowa City Arts Review, found online at iowacityartsreview.com.

WORKS IN PROGRESS: AN ARTIST'S VIEW

The main idea behind art fairs is to make accessible a wide variety of work in a concentrated space, so that fairgoers can see a lot of art in a relatively short time. Art fairs in major cities around the globe (New York, Miami, Basel—Chicago closer to home) create mini-cities where a slice of the art world congregates to take in a kind of survey of art trends of the moment. Smaller art fairs (like the Iowa Arts Festival) take up this model on a smaller scale.

But Works in Progress, which took place in Iowa City Oct. 18-21, is different: Instead of a program that displays a map of booths, the festival is broken into time blocks, where artists perform, propose projects, collaborate and, in general, discuss what they are thinking about. It is structured more like an academic conference than a summer festival. Instead of technical wizardry, secret formulas and closed, finished work, Works in Progress emphasizes feedback, testing new ideas and pushing one's own work forward. Importantly, also, it showcases work that falls outside of the easily saleable: performance, temporary installations or conceptual projects that do not hang easily above the sofa.

WiP is designed, primarily, to offer insight into the nature of artistic work, for fairgoers to think alongside artists about their projects and to make contributions to their work. At WiP, the artist gets ideas (instead of money) from the participants. My own presentation, which was more like a booth (I had a table at the Friday night event) involved inviting the audience to help me make some paintings.

I have, in my work, arrived at a set of rules and conditions that govern the way that I am making the current batch of paintings that I am working on. I wanted to see what other people would do with the restrictions—how they would interpret them and what kinds of decisions they would make. I wanted to escape the confines of my habitual marks and imagine different ways of approaching the image. A particularly fruitful contribution came from a poet, who approached the text that is part of these paintings in a wholly unexpected way. It is this kind of cross-pollination that makes the festival rewarding for an artist.

The goal of WiP is for the work to begin a conversation. On my end, I have much to think about, and am grateful for the feedback.

—B.P.



>>> A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

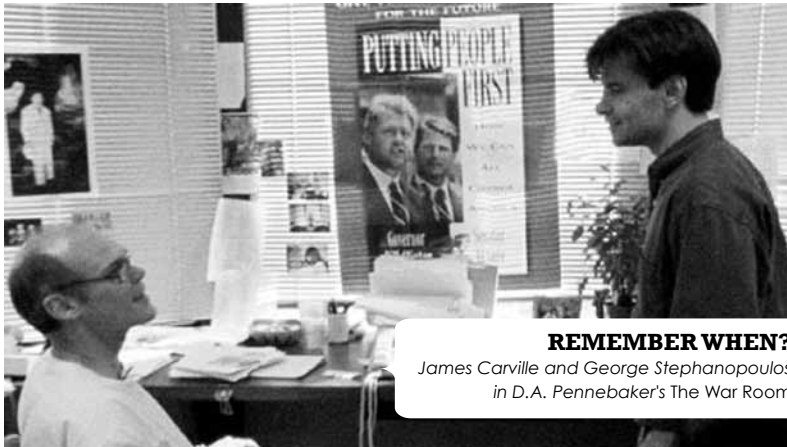
WiP 2012 festivalgoers assist with new work by Little Village visual arts columnist (and painter) Brian Prugh.

IT'S THE PAST, STUPID!

It took 190 years of American political history and all the creative capabilities of the 1980 Reagan campaign to distill, finally, the fundamental question facing every American electorate: Are you really better off than you were four years ago? If yes, vote for the incumbent; if no, throw the bum out. We are seeing shades and flashbacks of this same sentiment throughout the current election season, whether in the Democrat's résumé-polishing or in Paul Ryan's harping on the rising unemployment rate in Biden's hometown.

of the epic and the nostalgic; the bonus features now include reflections by the main players, George Stephanopoulos and James Carville, on how their political careers have changed since the '92 campaign and how, inevitably, campaigning has changed as well.

It would be easy to cynically see this documentary as one big career move for everyone in-



REMEMBER WHEN?

James Carville and George Stephanopoulos in D.A. Pennebaker's *The War Room*

Bill Clinton, the Gipper's Democratic counterpart, is also haunting the current campaign. Despite their blatant and sometimes shocking shortcomings as leaders and as people, Reagan and Clinton are enshrined as political game-changers of their respective eras. Clinton's re-introduction as campaigner-extraordinaire at this summer's Democratic convention underscores this fact. Even Newt Gingrich is afraid to criticize him, so entrenched is his reputation as bringer of prosperity and scion of bipartisanship. We did not hear a promo for Clinton's first movie in his convention address, but Criterion's timing of its recent re-release of D.A. Pennebaker's *The War Room*, a documentary about the run-up to the '92 presidential election, surely had the current election season in mind.

This documentary in many ways established the standard tropes of all subsequent political filmmaking. The flawed but righteous candidate, the hyper-active staff of eccentric geniuses, the constant time in front of various video screens: all are components of every political campaign and every campaign film since 1992—just ask Ryan Gosling or Philip Seymour Hoffman. The new edition of this film only adds to this sense

involved, but what transcends both the mercantilism of the film's protagonists and the 20 years of political history since its original release is the undeniable sincerity and humanness of many of the moments Pennebaker captures. The best may be at the end of the film, when Carville gives a heartfelt thanks to all the war room staff; he very tearfully explains that "the only thing you can give to a cause that is bigger than your love, is your labor," and he sincerely thanks the canvassers, fact checkers and sign painters for their individual roles in the Clinton victory.

Pennebaker may always be best known for his 1967 documentary of Bob Dylan's British tour, but he may also be the American filmmaker who most convincingly reminds us that good politicians are themselves rock stars.

Americans are surely not alone in our nostalgia for a calmer,

Now Showing

When I Close My Eyes I See Shapes

Mediablast (2012)

Legion Arts (CSPS) | Thru. Nov. 10

Those of you who oppose state funding of the visual arts will be glad to learn that Nov. 10 marks the close of *When I Close My Eyes I See Shapes* at Cedar Rapids' CSPS. This program is a series of short works ranging from brief narrative films to video installations to animated shorts, all largely underwritten by the state film school of the Czech Republic. It features many Czech artists you've never heard of and highlights both the unique nature of visual arts coming out of the Czech Republic and the continuing connection of Eastern Iowa with Czech culture, not only as a historical legacy, but as a continuing affiliation and, in some cases, partnership. The half-hour program shows in the Media Room throughout gallery hours.



Joan Rivers: A Piece of Work

Ricki Stern, Anne Sundberg (2010)

Bijou | Nov. 12-18

Joan Rivers is not really very funny, but her career trajectory sort of is. Sort of. The question this film will leave you asking is, "should I be laughing at this, even though the comedian clearly wants me to?" Just as Phyllis Diller was a not particularly funny trailblazer for a jokes-that-women-don't-usually-do sort of comedy, Rivers is similarly progressive in her willingness to satirize her own career as an example of why Hollywood is so absurd. She rightly channels Kathy Griffin in this context. If you view *Entourage* as an effective satire of the Hollywood lifestyle, you will appreciate this film. If you see it as a 21st century series about bro-mance, you will be less impressed. *Joan Rivers: A Piece of Work* is playing as part of the Department of Cinema and Comparative Literature film series; all screenings are free and open to the public.

simpler political past. Greece, one would imagine, has a lot of longing for the past right now: the good old days of unemployment rates below 50 percent, of the 35(ish) hour work week, the comprehensive welfare services and optional taxation.

Though Giorgos Lanthimos' new feature film *Alps* does not deal with Greece's economic difficulties directly, it certainly addresses the more general issues of loss, longing and nostalgia. Lanthimos, here as in his previous work, explores the way in which life-altering experiences—education, sexuality, death itself—are flattened and integrated into day-to-day existence.

In the case of *Alps*, this exploration centers around a small business in which clients are offered substitutes for their lost loved ones in order to help them cope with the pain of their recent loss. (Mitt Romney will be pleased that the entrepreneurial spirit in Greece seems alive and well.) The Alps take on the form of lost husbands, daughters and girlfriends, approximating clothes, voice, hairstyles and mannerisms in order to give the client a chance to re-live parts of the relationship they had with the deceased.

Cinema Scope has described this film as a "masterpiece of contemporary existentialism," and it indeed forces the viewer to ask some pretty unsettling questions about whether life's relationships—romantic, familial, or just friendly—have true and unique human meaning, or whether they are simply a set of social rituals and interactions that can be approximated by other, non-specific characters who may enter to fill the required role. The members of the Alps group themselves are unsure about their response to this question, and over the course of the film at least one of them attempts to take on clients outside the group as a way to explore more personally the individual emotions surrounding death and loss. One member hopefully suggests that "death is not the end. On the contrary, it can be a new and often better beginning."

Lanthimos is also not without humor, ironic though it may be; he gives the Alps a list of fifteen rules for their organization, the tenth of which is that "Alps should always be smart, clean, punctual and in complete control." His grief counselors, in their weird and creepy way, may be asking a similar question as our political leaders: Were we truly better off in the past? Or do we just imagine that we were?

Alps is showing at the Bijou Theater Nov 3-8. *The War Room* is available from the Criterion Collection, 2012. **lv**

Warren Sprouse likes movies and is outraged by the new MLB playoff system.



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BreachLeft: Craig Quintero, *Insomnia*, 2012, color photograph. © Craig Quintero.

Right: © Andrew Kaufman

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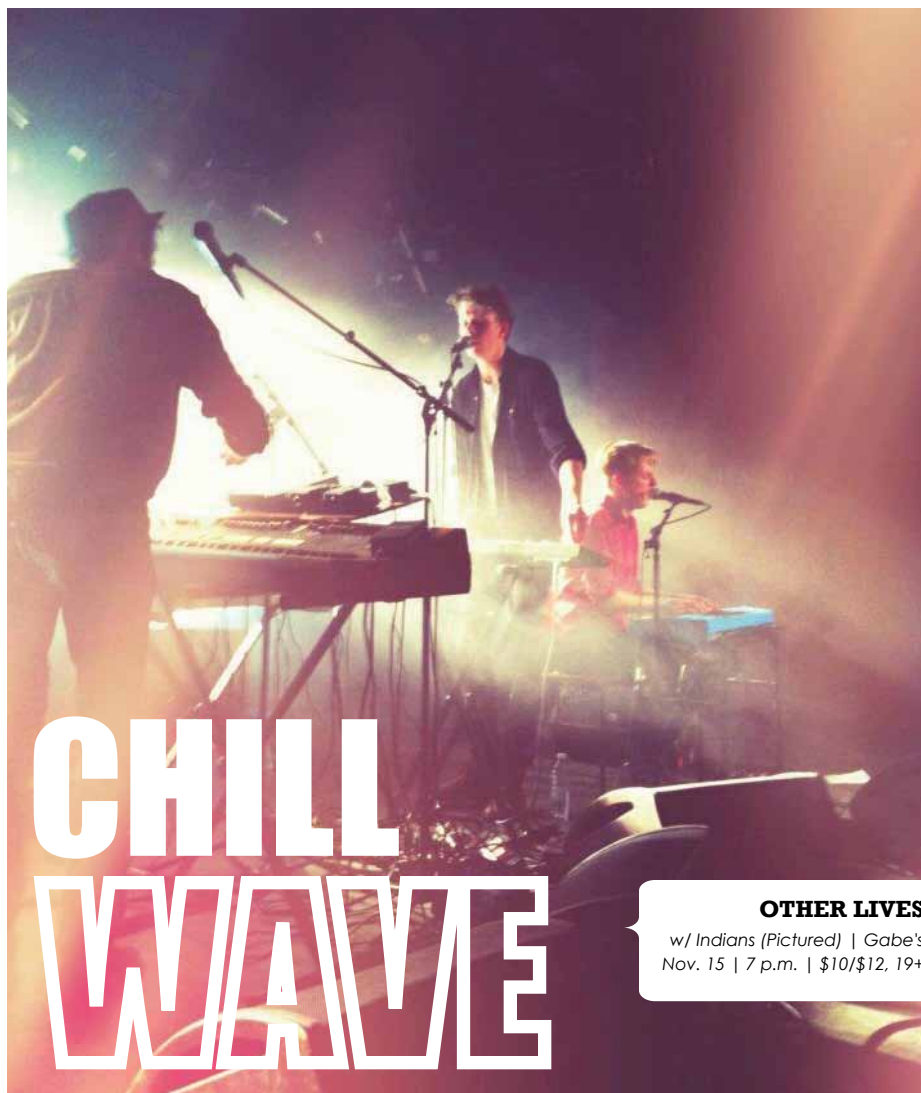
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OTHER LIVES

w/ Indians (Pictured) | Gabe's
Nov. 15 | 7 p.m. | \$10/\$12, 19+

If one thing becomes clear in November, it is that the winter is not too far away. The trees have lost most (if not all) of their leaves. The days have become shorter while the nights have gotten colder. The natural reflex is to stay at home, watch movies and wear sweatpants. While that is fine, contemplate taking those sweatpants off—I'm talking to you, undergrad who think it's appropriate to traipse around in them all day—and coming out to a show or two. There are plenty of shows happening that are worth putting on your calendar.

Although they have only recently come to gain more attention thanks to their switch to Sub Pop from Cavity Search, The Helio Sequence have been a band for over a decade now. When they started in 1999, the duo of Brandon Summers and Benjamin Weikel started off writing pop songs that swirled through seas of reverb and echo in the vein of My Bloody Valentine and Mercury Rev. When they made their switch to Sub Pop,

they switched into a folksier mode and pushed Summers' vocals to the forefront. This led to Summers damaging his vocal chords and the band producing *Love and Distance*, a thoroughly disappointing album. After that experience, Summers and Weikel got back on track.

Their newest release, *Negotiations*, is a full return to the form shown on *Com Plex* and *Young Effectuals*. While the album lacks the sonic fury of those albums, the band has figured out its own sound, building upon past elements like the swirling keyboards and folksy lyrics while adding new, subtle details to the mix. *Negotiations*

has the sound of a band that has both matured and found its stride. I have seen The Helio Sequence before, and they put on a very good live show. It's intriguing to see the two of them make their very complicated sounding songs come to life in a live space.

Speaking of complicated, Stillwater, Oklahoma's Other Lives are a band that puzzles people who write about music like myself. Their music has a cinematic presence yet does not have quite the grandeur that such language would suggest. On the contrary, their music is very intimate, inviting the listener into its space. You could say Other Lives is Americana, but to stop there would fail to acknowledge its baroque pop tendencies. Leader Jesse Tabish writes music that is both immediate and so detailed that multiple listens will reveal new things each time.

While they are hard to write about, the talent of the band is plain for all to see, especially on record. The strength of their 2011 album *Tamer Animals* is that it is fully absorbing. It holds the listener in its grasp and transports them to another world of Tabish's creation. This album is as absorbing as Low's *Things We Lost in the Fire*, another beautifully subdued album. I've heard Low live before, and it was one of the most beautiful, hypnotic shows that I have ever attended. I would expect similar from Other Lives.

When searching for Minneapolis-based emcee Prof on Youtube, the first images that one sees are him fondling the breasts of a video dancer, wearing a yellow hoodie at a party, and escorting a pregnant lady in a bikini into somewhere. Being the person that I



THE HELIO SEQUENCE

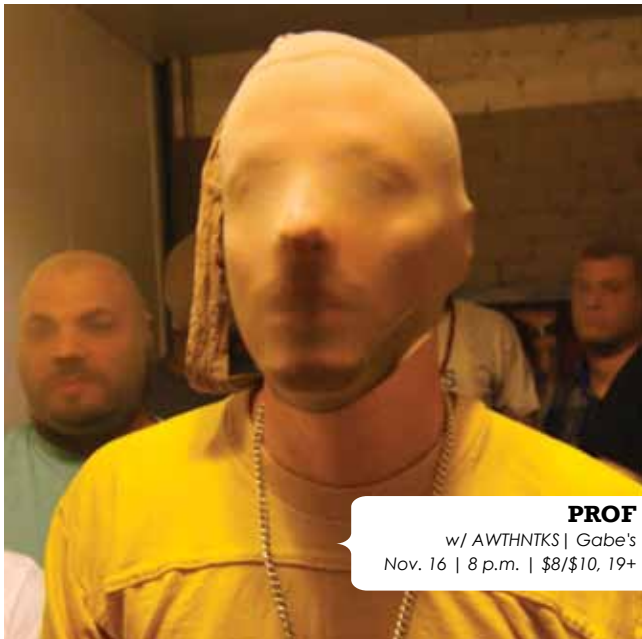
w/ Ramona Falls | The Mill | Nov. 7
9 p.m. | \$12/\$15, 19+

Photo by Pavlina Summers

**THE BE GOOD TANYAS**

w. Phil Cook | Englert | Nov. 12
8 p.m. | \$25/\$27, All Ages

Photo by Erin Stanfield

**PROF**

w/ AWTHTKS | Gabe's
Nov. 16 | 8 p.m. | \$8/\$10, 19+

am, I clicked on the last image. What I found was a video of the rapper spitting in front of a Minneapolis Planned Parenthood, destroying an office, and punching out dudes while a bass heavy Southern-style beat plays in the background. To explain the pregnant bikini lady, Prof was dropping off a trio of pregnant ladies at a hospital in a Mustang 5.0 while drinking

Jameson straight out the bottle. Obviously, this dude is totally normal.

The first person who comes to mind when seeing such shocking, outlandish, and plainly random visuals is Kool Keith a/k/a Keith Thornton. Much like Mr. Thornton, Prof's lyrical content can be unsavory—Prof does rap about getting sodomized by a water slide on one of his tracks. If one looks past the filth, Prof's sheer talent comes to the fore. He possesses a massive vocabulary, has an excellent ear for production and frequently varies his delivery up. While he does share some of the overly emotional tenden-

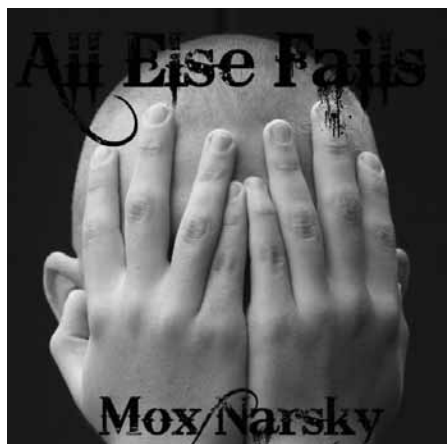
cies of his Minneapolis brethren, he also has considerable swagger and doesn't take himself too seriously. Most importantly, Prof gained his devoted following through crazy live shows where he only goes varying levels of hard.

The alt-country trio The Be Good Tanyas started modestly, playing in front of a Lilith

Fair concert in their hometown of Vancouver, BC. At that point in time, they were a quartet featuring Jolie Holland, Sam Parton, Frazey Ford and Trish Klein. After recording their first album, *Blue Horse*, Holland moved to San Francisco to start her solo career. Since her departure, the rest of The Be Good Tanyas have developed an international reputation on their own, applying pop sensibility to their reverence for folk, country, bluegrass and Americana.

The addition of pop influences adds a bit of pep as well as a personal touch to old traditional songs. While the music still maintains the darker edges that surround all of the aforementioned genres of music, Parton, Ford and Klein's harmonies and gently beautiful voices bring a lightness to the affair. Given that they have kept the traditional sounds at the core through their intricate musicianship, The Be Good Tanyas appeal to those who long for an old-time sound as well as those who came to Americana from the alt-country road. **IV**

A.C. Hawley has been listening to inordinate amounts of rap from the Gulf and West Coasts. He believes the best DJ working right now is Swisha House's DJ Michael '5000' Watts.



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All Else Fails

purevolume.com/moxnarsky

Michael Bednarsky was born in 1991, twelve or thirteen years after the rise of hip hop in the national consciousness, part of a generation who don't know a world without hip hop. Mox Narsky's fluency in the idiom reflects this history. The originators of hip hop were making it up as they went along. A guy like Mox Narsky—while he still has to do the hard work of writing and practicing his art—just has to breathe in and out to access the spirit of hip hop. It's in the air.

He escapes the 'Eminem curse' by not affecting an 'urban' accent or fabricating a hard life; he does live in Iowa, after all. At his best, his precise cadence and imagery really snap the listener to attention. On "TwTch," he rocks an up-tempo beat with a manic rhyme: "... if you see one of my seizers, leave, 'cause it's artistic procedure." "27 Club Contender" is both disturbing and riveting, as he fantasizes about being one of the famous musicians who die at age 27. "I'm on a quest to try every drug in existence, so I can just lie on the rug with my wrists slit."

All Else Fails is a good first effort, but Mox Narsky needs to come up with deeper beats. There's nothing wrong with the ones he uses, but they don't really pop out as exceptional. I'm also not down with the casual way he drops 'bitch,' 'slut,' and 'faggot.' They might just be the exposed id of the persona he projects, but they feel like uncomfortably real misogyny and homophobia. I don't think he should censor himself, but I think he needs to go deeper to find his real art. But he's young yet, so I think his further efforts will be worth watching.



Big Box

Die Now

bigbox.bandcamp.com

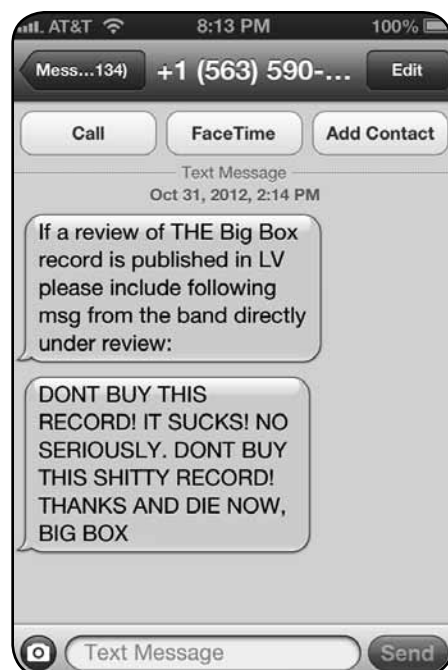
There's a whole world of Metal music, and it's a messy place. The last time there was a unitary 'Metal' genre was around the time Black Sabbath made *Paranoid*. These days, Metal shades off into Indie (Pearl Jam & Soundgarden were basically flannel-wearing Metal), Emo, Screamo, Punk and who knows what else—no doubt a Metal/Dubstep Mashup is minutes away. Big Box' *Die Now* is somewhere in there, wandering around in Iowa City's unique metal micro-climate, which has produced some fantastic music while minimizing the bone-headed attitudes and pretensions that plague commercial Metal.

The opener, "Disease Is Crawling," begins with the slowed down sludginess of the Melvins before switching gears to triple time scream punk. "Cut Up" follows with more riffy speed-punk sounds—a bit like Black Flag with a fuller guitar roar. "When It's Easy" is actually kind of funky, for loud, distorted guitar music—there's kind of a swing to the thrashing. Each of these songs races to peg the VU meter, but the variety and range of songwriting is surprising, which is a long way around to saying they're not boring, and I can tell the songs apart. That isn't a sure thing with a lot of Metal.

This was recorded at Luke Tweedy's Flat Black Studio and reflects Luke's unique sympathy for music that's fast, loud and hard. Listening to *Die Now*, there's a distinct pleasure I get from the sonic texture—tight guitar-bass riffing that grinds away like a belt sander (in a good way), and pummeling drums. Lyrically, I have no idea what the poor guy is yelling about, but it doesn't really matter, it's just another instrument in the mix. I really don't care what *Die Now* is about, it's just good

clean brutal fun, like getting slapped in the face when you're numbed up with Novacaine.

Kent Williams has too many pairs of shoes, some dating back to the mid-1970s.



Error

Error

erroria.bandcamp.com/

The debut EP from Iowa City's Error is ear-piercingly awesome. It's doubtful there is

a fifteen-minute experience your mom would hate more. The hardcore trio's self-titled recording kicks off with a few ominous, droning strums of a guitar, when the drum kit joins in, they ratchet up the speed and almost never look back.

The album's first cut, "Spectral Hand," lays the groundwork for the remaining seven tracks on the EP. The track rocks back and forth between breakneck sprints that must take instruments and vocal chords to their absolute limit before laying into thick, sludgy grooves with heaps of splashing crash cymbals.

Even though Error only seem to have two speeds—blazing Kamakazi or Earth-shattering dirge, the two extremes play out perfectly over the short run time. Vocalist John Nagel vacillates between vocal-chord-shredding wails and hellhound howls. And, though neither really makes lyrics that perceptible, the angst and rage in his performance coupled with

Hymns is an observational quilt, a patchwork of wry wisdom with frayed edges, melancholy, but laced with acerbic wit and occasional joy.

track titles like "Negative Space," "Money Still Stinks" and "Crude Mode" make the attitude pretty clear.

But the interplay between guitarist J.D. Woodell and drummer Joe Milik is the real star of the EP. Woodell and Milik inflict such intense torture on their respective instruments over the course of *Error*, it's a wonder there wasn't a Kickstarter campaign for them to get new ones. Even if, at any given time, the Iowa City hardcore scene is only about 50 punks deep, you don't need a whole lot when a band like Error throws down this hard.

John Schlotfeldt will be reading *Crime and Punishment* for the next four-six weeks. *Unknown Component*

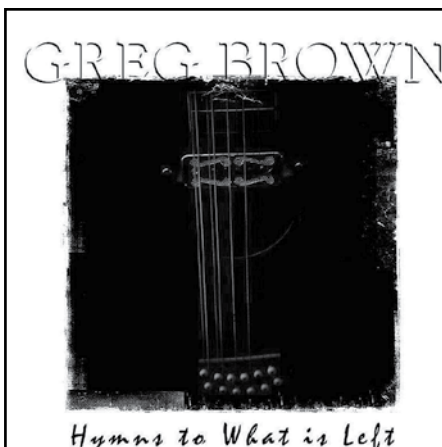
Greg Brown

Hymns to What is Left

gregbrownmusic.org

Following a nearly-aborted album in 2011 (*Freak Flag*, which I reviewed in *LV* issue #103) Greg Brown was quoted as saying, "I enjoyed it; even though it was a bitch—what with the lightning, mixing problems, etc.," he admitted, "it got me interested in recording again, and I hope to put out a few more low-key, small pressings... smaller and smaller is my goal."

Just over a year later, Brown fulfills that desire by recording and self-releasing *Hymns to*



What is Left—an album stripped to the bare essentials—no drums or bass. The album continues the winning formula of Brown on acoustic guitar and signature gravelly baritone (except for the surprising falsetto in "Beshams

Bokarie"), and long-time sideman and producer Bo Ramsey providing his trademark atmospheric guitar tones. Helping fill out the sound are Bob Black on banjo, Al Murphy on fiddle and longtime friend Dave Moore on button accordion. Brown taps in his family as well, with daughters Constie and Pieta and wife Iris DeMent all contributing vocals.

Brown takes the opportunity to present his version of "Brand New Angel" which he wrote for Jeff Bridges to sing in *Crazy Heart*. I get a self-conscious chuckle out of his ode to weight gain "Fatboy Blues." (My pants keep getting tighter, but it's not because I'm aroused / I can't fish out my lighter or loose change / now, I guess I'll get a fanny pack—if they come in size 52.)

"All of Those Things" has taken the place of "In The Dark With You" as my favorite Greg Brown song. Its uncomplicated, circular lyric of contrasts—I'm a poet, I'm mute / I'm ugly, I'm cute / I'm rich, destitute and I'm all of those things with my baby—and melody delivered with passion and reflection makes this one of the standout tracks.

Greg Brown's ability to return to the creative well for 25 albums is impressive, but *Hymns to What is Left* is quickly becoming my favorite. It's an observational quilt, a patchwork of wry wisdom with frayed edges, melancholy, but laced with acerbic wit and occasional joy. The perfect wrap for the coming colder months. **lv**

Michael Roeder is a self-proclaimed "music savant." When he's not writing for Little Village he blogs at <http://www.playbsides.com>.

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Are women better at multitasking than men?

All the women I know take it as gospel that females are better multitaskers, implying they get more done than men. In my experience working with women, they're at best only equally productive as the guys. More commonly, they're doing two jobs at once, each at about 40 percent efficiency. Adding insult to injury, invariably one of those "jobs" is talking on the phone. So help settle this battle of the sexes—do women multitask more often and more effectively than men? Are females more productive or is the whole thing a scam to justify gabbing with their friends instead of doing their fair share of the work?

—Scott Terraciano-Spence

I detect some attitude here, Scott, so tell me which is better: a woman operating at 40 percent effectiveness while talking on the phone, or her male counterparts making zero percent progress while rehashing last night's game?

It's not just women who think they excel at multitasking. A lot of men agree—for example, me, based on close observation of Ms. Adams. While I'm doggedly drilling into the history of two-by-fours or some other crucial subject, she's doing laundry, taping up care packages for the little researchers away at college, and reorganizing a client's finance department.

Is she good at this? Yes. Is she *innately* good at it? That's not so clear. On the contrary, I have to think if it were all that effortless she'd be less inclined to bitch about how I'm not holding up my end. Hoping to get to the bottom of this, we turn as usual to science and find the usual jumble of conflicting data. Let's see if with a little manly singleness of purpose we can get things sorted out:

1. No one disputes that men and women have genuine cognitive differences. Tests show that, generally speaking, men have superior spatial orientation (navigational) skills, while women are better at "object-location memory," that is, remembering landmarks. A leading explanation for this in the academic journals is that in primitive times male hunters needed to be able to find their way on long trips in search of game, while female foragers needed to be able to recall good spots to gather food.

2. The popular assumption, happily perpetuated in the media, is that women are inherently better at

multitasking than men, and the hunters-vs.-foragers theory has been customized accordingly: here the claim is that males had to focus single-mindedly on bagging their quarry, while females did their foraging while simultaneously minding the kids and watching out for threats. However, there's little research to back this up, and what there is frankly sucks. Two of the more widely cited papers on this question were written by undergraduates.

3. What we do know is that women multitask much more often than men. A study of 500 mostly affluent two-income families found that both parents spent a lot of time multitasking, but the women multitasked more, 48 hours per week vs. 39 for the men. Unsurprisingly, the women's multitasking mostly involved housework and childcare.

4. A distinction must be drawn between alternating between tasks, or task switching, and performing two tasks simultaneously, which I'll call simultasking. A sizable body of research suggests that trying to perform two intellectually demanding chores at the same time is a sure way to do one or both of them poorly, the prime example being talking on your phone while driving a car.

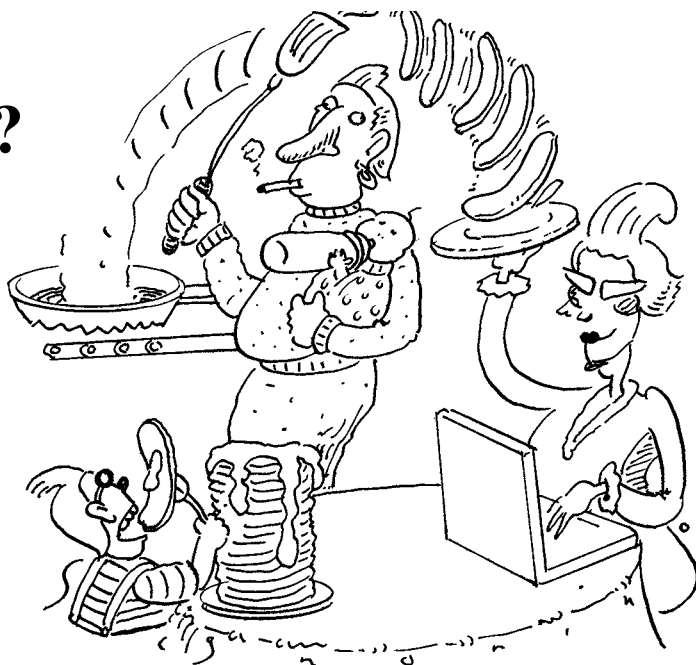
5. A lot of the cognitive research on sex differences in multitasking, unfortunately, has fixated on simultasking. The results have been all over the place—some showing that men do better, some women, some neither. Few of the studies I've seen compare the results of simultasking against a control group of unitaskers, that is, people doing just one thing. My guess is that, for intellectually demanding work, unitaskers do way better than simultaskers of either sex.

6. Research and common sense suggest that the only way to do two tasks competently at the same time is to make sure at least one of them requires minimal brainpower, for example folding laundry while on the phone. A reasonable surmise is that women's reputation as superior multitaskers stems partly from the fact that they're disproportionately burdened with mindless household chores that can readily be done simultaneously.

7. As for task switching, one recent study (Buser and Peter, 2011) compared the performance of men and women alternating between two relatively demanding tasks, namely solving sudoku and word-search puzzles. The researchers found no significant difference between the two sexes.

Putting all this together, Scott, we formulate the following two-part hypothesis. First, women multitask more not because they're naturally better at it but because the need to juggle work and family compels them to. Second, the myth of an innate female gift for multitasking serves two socially useful purposes: it enables women to rationalize having gotten stuck with the scutwork, while for you it's an excuse to avoid helping out.

—CECIL ADAMS



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

Curses, Foiled Again

- After responding to a call that two men were carrying items from a house before dawn, sheriff's deputies in Manatee County, Fla., spotted the men driving by the crime scene. They had returned, the sheriff's report noted, because "they were lost in the neighborhood and trying to find their way out." Deputies who stopped the car noticed the stolen items and arrested Darien A. Caruso, 19, and James Hardy, 19. (*Bradenton Herald*)
- After a man demanded \$20,000 at a bank in Syracuse, N.Y., the teller handed him money, and he left. When the robber discovered that the teller hadn't given him the full \$20,000, he returned to the bank to get the rest. Investigators noticed him standing at the front door, trying to get back in. They arrested Arthur Bundrage, 28. (Syracuse's *The Post-Standard*)



Mensa Reject of the Week

Police said a 14-year-old boy in Manchester, Conn., removed the brakes from his bicycle and rode off an hour after sunset without wearing a helmet. Moments later, he ran through a stop sign and crashed into a 2005 Chrysler 300. He was taken to the hospital for treatment. (*The Hartford Courant*)

Slightest Provocation

- Sheriff's deputies in Sumter County, S.C. charged John Scott, 32, with stabbing a 23-year-old man while they were watching football and argued over how long Scott's girlfriend had been in the shower. (Sumter's *The Item*)
- Police charged Mahmoud Yousef Hindi, 55, with killing one man and critically wounding another when he opened fire at a homeowners association meeting in Louisville, Ky., during a dispute about the height and direction of a fence around his house, as well as a recently constructed driveway. (*Associated Press*)
- Eric Brian Pauly, 50, pleaded guilty to shooting his girlfriend to death at their mobile home in Winfield, W.Va., because she woke him up "in the middle of the night." (*The Charleston Gazette*)
- Police in Winter Park, Fla., charged restaurant owner Quoc Trong Tran with shooting at a car occupied by two customers who complained about their meals. (Orlando's *WKMG-TV*)

Inventive Minds

- Computer engineer Anirudh Sharma, 24, has invented a device to guide blind people to their destination. Dubbed "Le Chal" ("take me along" in Hindi), it links a smartphone app with a small actuator sewn inside the sole of a shoe via Bluetooth. The user tells the phone the desired destination, and voice-recognition software translates the request into electronic commands. The phone's GPS directs the actuator when to turn, causing the shoe to vibrate on the side of the direction of the turn. The shoe also alerts the wearer of any obstacles in the path and guides the wearer around them. (*The Economist*)
- Martin Gustafson, inventor of the BioDome, promises that the device "can protect anyone from dangerous chemical/biological agents, in the event of a terrorist attack, accidental chemical spill or biological emergency." BioDome comes in two 60-pound cans and inflates itself in 10 minutes into a 10-foot-square room that can accommodate six adults for "up to several days." (*Time*)

Chutzpah

While burglarizing a home in Greenbrae, Calif., Samuel Cutrufelli, 31, shot the homeowner, 90-year-old Jay Leone, in the face, according to authorities, who said Leone returned fire, hitting Cutrufelli several times. Both men were hospitalized for an extended period. During Cutrufelli's trial for attempted murder, his father and his defense attorney filed a lawsuit on Cutrufelli's behalf, claiming Leone "negligently shot" Cutrufelli, causing him "great bodily injury, and other financial damage, including loss of Mr. Cutrufelli's home, and also the dissolution of Mr. Cutrufelli's marriage." (*Marin Independent Journal*)

Bullish on Safety

When Virgin America submitted a pre-takeoff safety video to the Federal Aviation Administration for review, the video showed a dog fumbling with its seat belt, with the voice-over, "For the 0.0001 percent of you who've never operated a seat belt before, it works like this." Expressing concern that passengers would think dogs on flights had to wear seat belts, the FAA made the airline change the dog to a bull because bulls aren't allowed on planes, whereas dogs sometimes are. (*The New York Times*)

Homeland Insecurity

- Aviation blogger John Butler alerted travelers to security flaws in airline boarding passes that could allow terrorists or smugglers to discover in advance which security measures they will be subjected to. Butler said the bar

codes of boarding passes are unencrypted, allowing anyone with a smartphone to discover any vulnerability and even modify the coded information. (*The Washington Post*)

- The number of guns found at airport security checkpoints has been rising for the past couple of years, from 1,123 in 2010 to 1,320 in 2011 to 1,105 through September of this year. Security experts attributed the trend to two factors: an increase in gun sales and the spread of right-to-carry laws, which lead to more people showing up with weapons at checkpoints because they're used to carrying them all the time. (*The New York Times*)

• Despite Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano's assurance that advances in scanning technology would soon allow all air travelers to keep their shoes on, the Transportation Security Administration has rejected four different scanning devices aimed at letting passengers keep their shoes on after spending millions of dollars to test them. All four failed to detect explosives and metal weapons, according to TSA official Lisa Farbstein, who said removing shoes "is going to be a part of air travel for the foreseeable future." (*The New York Times*)

- The TSA's first collective bargaining agreement allows the agency's 45,000 screeners to wear uniform shorts in hot weather, as well as athletic shoes and other footwear alternatives, and reduces tattoo restrictions. (Virginia's *Federal Times*)

Wrong Rites

- Germany's Roman Catholic bishops warned believers who decline to earmark 8 percent of their income tax for the church that they won't be able to receive the Eucharist, become godparents or receive a church burial. The religious tax option, which affects all religions, renders more than \$4 billion a year unto Germany's Catholic and Protestant churches. (*BBC News*)

• Thousands of public officials throughout Europe see the Catholic Church as a source of revenue to solve their financial crises. Local governments in Spain, Italy, Ireland and England have proposed taxing church property used for non-religious purposes and eliminating subsidies that support church commercial and educational efforts. "The costs of the crisis should be borne equally by every person and institution," said Richardo Rubio, 36, a city councilor in Alcalá de Henares, Spain. (*The Washington Post*)

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

MUSIC

Tues. Nov. 6

Band Extravaganza Carver Hawkeye Arena, UI campus, \$5-10, 7:30 p.m.

Wed. Nov. 7

Craig Owens, Bearcat, Final Alibi, Hello Ramona Blue Moose Tap House, \$12/\$14, 6:30 p.m. **Giant Giant Sand, The Old Ceremony** Gabe's, \$16, 9 p.m. **Istvan Szabo, viola; Narae Joo, piano** Recital Hall, University Capitol Centre, UI campus, Free, 6 p.m. **Trombone Choir** Riverside Recital Hall, UI campus, Free, 7:30 p.m. **Mission Creek Presents: The Helio Sequence, Ramona Falls** The Mill, \$12/\$15, 9 p.m.

Thurs. Nov. 8

Kid Ink, Betty White, Shakes, I.D.K. Blue Moose Tap House, \$20/\$22, 7 p.m. **The Klezmatics** Englert \$30/\$32 8 p.m. **Educational Lecture/Demo with The Klezmatics** Englert, Free (RSVP w/ Englert), 3:30 p.m. **Josh Sazon and Kate Thompson** Mendoza Wine Bar, Free, 7 p.m. **The Goddamn Gallows, Jayke Orvis & The Broken Band** Redstone Room, River Music Experience, \$10, 8:30 p.m. **Johnson County Landmark with Roberto Sion** Riverside Recital Hall, UI campus, Free, 7:30 p.m. **Haley Bonar, Rachel Marie** The Mill, \$12, 9 p.m. **Unnamed Acoustic** Yacht Club, \$5, 10 p.m.

Fri. Nov. 9

Attila, Make Me Famous, issues, Ice Nine Kills, Adestria, Moral Belief, Noah Blue Moose Tap House, \$13/\$15, 5:30 p.m. **Slip Silo** Gabe's, \$6, 10 p.m. **Manchester Orchestra** Iowa Memorial Union, UI campus, \$23, 8 p.m. **Daniel Rieppel, piano** Recital Hall, University Capitol Centre, UI campus, Free, 7:30 p.m. **Savoy Brown** Redstone Room, River Music Experience, \$20, 8:30 p.m. **Aaron Kamm & The One Drops** Yacht Club, \$6, 10 p.m.

Sat. Nov. 10

James & Tee Jay, VP, Hustle, Shwitz Blue Moose Tap House, \$10, 7 p.m. **Pentatonix** Englert, Sold Out, 8 p.m. **Chance the Rapper** Gabe's, \$5, 10 p.m. **DJ 007** Gabe's, Free, 10 p.m. **Collectible Boys** Mendoza Wine Bar, Free, 7 p.m. **Flatfoot 56** Redstone Room, River Music Experience, \$10, 8 p.m. **"Back to Bach," Christine Rutledge, baroque viola** Riverside Recital Hall, UI campus, Free, 7:30 p.m. **Tyvek, Wet Hair** The Mill, \$7, 9 p.m. **Signal Path** Yacht Club, \$6, 10 p.m.

Sun. Nov. 11

Aseethe, Before the Eyewall Gabe's, \$5, 9 p.m. **Lucy Kaplansky** Legion Arts, \$17/\$21, 7 p.m. **Wolfgang David, violin; David Gompper, piano** Old Capitol, Senate Chamber, UI campus, Free, 2

p.m. **Latin Jazz Ensemble** Riverside Recital Hall, UI campus, Free, 3 p.m.

Mon., Nov. 12

The Be Good Tanyas Englert, \$25/\$27.50, 8 p.m. **Open Mic with J. Knight** The Mill, Free, 8 p.m.

Wed., Nov. 14

Mike Stud, I.D.K. Blue Moose Tap House, \$15, 7 p.m. **West Music Conservatory Super Stars** Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$5 suggested donation, 6:30 p.m. **Katie Wolfe, violin; Adrienne Kim, piano** Riverside Recital Hall, UI campus, Free, 7:30 p.m. **Pieta Brown and The Sawdust Collective** RME Hall, River Music Experience, \$10, 8 p.m. **Burlington Street Bluegrass Band** The Mill, \$5, 7 p.m. **Joe Pug, Denison Witmer** The Mill, \$12, 10 p.m.

Thurs., Nov. 15

Other Lives, Indians Gabe's, \$10/\$12, 7:30 p.m. **Symphony Band** Iowa Memorial Union, UI campus, Free, 7:30 p.m. **Duncan Sheik, Alpha Rev** Legion Arts, \$20/\$25, 7 p.m. **Carolyn Matousek** Mendoza Wine Bar, Free, 5 p.m. **Jef Spradley Band** Redstone Room, River Music Experience, \$5, 7 p.m. **Guitar Ensemble and UI Jazz Faculty with Roberto Sion** The Mill, \$3-\$5, 6 p.m. **Pert Near Sandstone** Yacht Club, \$7, 9 p.m.

Fri., Nov. 16

Sonny Landreth Englert, \$25, 8 p.m. **Prof, Awthntkts** Gabe's, \$8/\$10, 9 p.m. **St. Lawrence String Quartet** Hancher Auditorium (at Riverside Recital Hall) \$10-\$37, 7:30 p.m. **Kris Delmhorst** Legion Arts, \$14/\$17, 8 p.m. **Family Groove Company** Redstone Room, River Music Experience, \$10, 9:30 p.m.

Sat., Nov. 17

Lorie Line & Her Fab Five: The 2012 Holiday Extravaganza "Immanuel" Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$48, 7:30 p.m. **Juno What?!, Soap** Gabe's, \$10, 9 p.m. **Three Years Hallow** Redstone Room, River Music Experience, \$8, 7:30 p.m.

Wed., Nov. 21

Funkma\$ter Gabe's, \$6, 10 p.m. **Saturdays: Saturday Night Music** Uptown Bill's, 7 p.m. **Thursdays: Mixology** Gabe's, Free, 10 p.m. **Open Mic** Uptown Bill's, Free 7 p.m. **Tuesdays: Flight School Dance Party** Yacht Club, 10 p.m. **Wednesdays: Little Village Live** Public Space One Free, 5 p.m. **Jam Session** Yacht Club, \$3, 10 p.m.

ART/EXHIBITIONS

November: Joe Pankowski Public Space One

A-List

Working Group Theatre Presents: "Rust"

Nov. 9-18 | Riverside Theatre

In the summer of 2009, playwright Austin Bunn began compiling local newspaper articles and interviewing former employees of a closing automobile plant in Michigan. His purpose was to create a "documentary play"—a relatively new and rising genre in the theatre world. The idea is to develop a script using only content from source materials such as interviews, news media, etc.

Bunn teamed up with Iowa City's own Sean Christopher Lewis to write *Rust*, the theatrical representation of the very real story about the closing of a General Motors plant in Grand Rapids. In the play, Bunn plays a version of himself, interacting with the community of folks who worked at the plant and/or had a longstanding family history there. The project has been in the making for over three years, and great measures have been taken to ensure that everything represented in the production is as accurate as possible. For example, many of the props were taken from the actual plant itself.

Rust follows the local/personal struggles of mass lay-offs, but also comments on the broader cultural and economic impact of a changing industry. In an interview with wakegreatlakes.org, Bunn explains, "I think *Rust* attempts to humanize the transformations in American manufacturing...in ways that go beyond the sound bite or op-ed piece. An enormous change is happening in the economy, as we shift from manufacturing jobs to service-industry jobs, and the toll is just beginning to get measured."

More Information:

www.workinggrouptheatre.org

Fri., Nov. 9: Staff Show & Sale Opening Reception (Music with Bill Hook) Beadology Iowa, Free, 6 p.m. **Glass Harbor Trunk Show** Englert, Free, 5 p.m.

Nov. 9 - 11: Trunk Show - Stone, stone, and more stone Beadology Iowa, Free, 6 p.m.

Sat. Nov. 10: Fossil Guy: "When Mammoths Roamed Iowa" Museum of Natural History, UI campus, Free, 2 p.m.

Nov. 10 - Dec. 31: Handmade for the Holidays Iowa Artisans Gallery

Sun. Nov. 11: Remembering World War II National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, Free, 2 p.m.

Nov. 12 - 16: Yang Meng, Graphic Design Art Building West, UI campus, Free

Wed., Nov. 14: Jane Gilmore - Artist Talk/Book Signing Legion Arts

Venues

Akar 257 East Iowa Ave., Iowa City, (319) 351-1227, akardesign.com

Beadology 220 East Washington St., Iowa City, (319) 338-1566, beadologyiowa.com

Bijou Cinema The University of Iowa, 166-B Iowa Memorial Union, Iowa City, (319) 335-3041, bijou.uiowa.edu

Blue Moose Tap House 211 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, (319) 358-9206, bluemooseic.com

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art 410 3rd Ave.

Southeast, Cedar Rapids, (319) 366-7503, crma.org
Coralville Center for the Performing Arts 1301 5th St., Coralville, (319) 248-9370, coralvillearts.org

Coralville Public Library 1401 5th St., Coralville, (319) 248-1850, coralvillepubliclibrary.org

Englert 221 East Washington Street, Iowa City, (319) 688-2653, englert.org

Figge Art Museum 225 West Second St., Davenport, (563) 326-7804, figgeart.org

FilmScene Starlite Cinema - Festival Stage, City Park, Iowa City, icfilmscene.org

First Avenue Club 1550 South First Ave., Iowa City, (319) 337-5527, firstavenueclub.com

Frank Conroy Reading Room The University of Iowa, Dey House, 507 N. Clinton, Iowa City

Gabe's 330 East Washington St., Iowa City (319) 351-9175, icgabes.com

Hancher Auditorium (Space Place Theater) The University of Iowa, North Hall, 20 W. Davenport St., Iowa City, (319) 335-1160, hancher.uiowa.edu

Iowa Artisans Gallery 207 East Washington St., Iowa City (319) 351-8686, iowa-artisans-gallery.com

Iowa City Public Library 123 South Linn Street, Iowa City, (319) 356-5200 icpl.org

Iowa Theatre Artists Company 4709 220th Trl, Amana, (319) 622-3222 iowatheatreartists.org

Johnson County Fairgrounds 4265 Oak Crest Hill Road Southeast, Iowa City, (319) 337-5865, johnsoncofair.com

Legion Arts (CSPS) 1103 3rd St. Southeast, Cedar Rapids, (319) 364-1580, legionarts.org

Mendoza Wine Bar 1301 5th St., Coralville,

(319) 333-1291, facebook.com/mendozawinebar

Penguin's Comedy Club 208 2nd Ave SE, Cedar Rapids, (319) 362-8133, penguinscomedyclub.com

Prairie Lights 15 South Dubuque St., Iowa City, (319) 337-2681, www.prairielights.com

ps-z 120 N Dubuque St, Iowa City, (319) 331-8893, pszc.com

Public Space One 129 East Washington St., Iowa City, (319) 331-8893, publicspaceone.com

Red Cedar Chamber Music (Ballantyne Auditorium, Kirkwood, Cedar Rapids) 1495 Douglas Ct., Marion, (319) 377-8028, www.redcedar.org

Redstone Room, River Music Experience 129 N Main St., Davenport, (563) 326-1333, rivermusicexperience.org

Riverside Theatre 213 N Gilbert St., Iowa City, (319) 338-7672, riversidetheatre.org

Rozz Tox 2108 3rd Ave, Rock Island, IL, (309) 200-0978, rozztox.com

The Mill 120 E Burlington St. Iowa City, (319) 351-9529, icmill.com

Theatre Cedar Rapids 102 3rd St. Southeast, Cedar Rapids, (319) 366-8591, theatrecrec.org

Theatre Building The University of Iowa, 200 North Riverside Dr., (319) 335-1160 theatre.uiowa.edu

University of Iowa Museum of Art 1375 Hwy 1 West, Iowa City, (319) 335-1727, uima.uiowa.edu

University of Iowa Museum of Natural History Macbride Hall, Iowa City, (319) 335-0480, uiowa.edu/mnh

Uptown Bill's 730 South Dubuque St., Iowa City, (319) 339-0804, uptownbills.org (Spoken Word Wednesdays at 6:30, Artvaark Thursdays at 6 p.m., Open Mic Thursdays at 7 p.m.)

Yacht Club 13 South Linn St., Iowa City, (319) 337-6464, iowacityyachtclub.org (Flight School Dance Party on Tuesdays, Jam Session on Wednesdays)

Submit venues and events:
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Calendar

Thurs., Nov. 15 - Art Lover's Book Club: Seven Days in the Art World Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free, 4 p.m.

Nov. 16 - Dec. 7: 30 x 5: The Dessert Akar, Free

Thursdays: Artvaark (Art Activities) Uptown Bill's, Free, 6 p.m.

Saturdays: Nooks and Crannies Tour Bruce more, \$12-\$15, 9:30 a.m.

Through Nov. 9: Leeyeon Yoo, Jewelry & Metal Arts Art Building West, UI campus, Free

Through Nov. 12: New Works by Stacy Snyder Akar, Free

Through Nov. 16: Unsinkable Stories: 100 Years Later Bruce more

Through Dec. 9: Midwest Matrix - Symposium & Exhibitions University of Iowa Museum of Art

Through Dec. 15: The Only One African American Museum of Iowa

Through Dec. 31: The Only One: Exploring the Experience of Being a Minority in Iowa Johnson County Historical Society Alphonse Mucha: Inspirations of Art Nouveau National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

Through Jan. 5, 2013: Charles Barth - A Kaleidoscope of Culture Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

Through Jan. 6, 2013: St. Nicholas - Discovering the Truth About Santa Claus National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

Through Jan. 20, 2013: Marvin Cone: An American Master Cedar Rapids Museum of Art Portrait of Maquoketa: The Dimensional View Figge Art Museum

Through Jan. 29, 2013: Napoleon and the Art of Propaganda University of Iowa Museum of Art

Through Jan. 31, 2013: Never Underestimate a Monochrome (online at neverunderestimateamono chrome.org) University of Iowa Museum of Art

Through Feb. 17, 2013: Clary Illian - A Potter's Potter Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

Through Mar. 3, 2013: Iowa City's Metropolitan Playhouse - Celebrating the Englert Theatre's 100th Anniversary Johnson County Historical Society

Through Mar. 18, 2013: Sculpting with Fiber Figge Art Museum

Through May 17, 2013: Gone to See the Elephant - The Civil War through the Eyes of Iowa Soldiers Old Capitol Museum, UI campus

THEATRE/ PERFORMANCE

Wed., Nov. 7 - The Last of the Haussmans - National Theatre Live Englert, \$15-\$18, 7 p.m.

Wed., Nov. 14 - Away in the Basement: A Church Basement Ladies Christmas Englert, \$25-\$30, 2 p.m. & 7 p.m.

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Thurs., Nov. 15 - "8" - Reading of new play by Dustin Lance Black Riverside Theatre w/ Working Group Theatre, \$15, 7:30 p.m.

Nov. 9 - Nov. 11: Junie B. Jones - Jingle Bells, Batman Smells Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$12-\$17

Nov. 9 - 17: The House of Yes Dreamwell Theatre (at Unitarian Universalist Society, Iowa City), \$10-\$13

Nov. 9-17: Spring Awakening UI Theatre Mainstage Theatre Building, UI campus, \$5-\$20

Nov. 9-18: Rust Working Group Theatre (at Riverside Theatre), \$12-\$20, 7:30 p.m. (Nov. 9, 10, 16, 17); 2 p.m. (Nov. 11, 18)

Through Nov. 11 - The 39 Steps The Old Creamery Theatre, Amana, \$16-\$25.50

Through Nov. 11 - Underground New Play Festival Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$10-\$15

Through Nov. 18 - Pump Boys And Dinettes Iowa Theatre Artists Company, Amana, \$10-\$22.50

CINEMA

Through Nov. 8 - Alps, Wuthering Heights Bijou Cinema

Thurs., Nov. 8 - Proseminar in Cinema and Culture Becker Communication Studies Building, UI campus, Free, 6:30 p.m.

Thurs., Nov. 15 - Proseminar in Cinema and Culture Becker Communication Studies Building, UI campus, Free, 6:30 p.m.

Nov. 9 - 15 Side by Side, Beauty is Embarassing Bijou Cinema

LITERATURE

Wed., Nov. 7 - Informational Meeting with Todd Bol, Little Libraries founder Iowa City Public Library, Free, 7 p.m. **Steven Erikson** Prairie Lights, Free, 7 p.m. **Jason Lewis** Prairie Lights, Free, 8:30 p.m.

Wed., Nov. 7 - David Sedaris Iowa Memorial Union, UI campus, \$39.50, 8 p.m.

Thurs., Nov. 8 - Ethel Kjaer Barker Prairie Lights, Free, 7 p.m. **Nick Twemlow and Joel Craig** Prairie Lights, Free, 8 p.m.

Fri., Nov. 9 - John Smollens Prairie Lights, Free, 7 p.m.

Sun., Nov. 11 - Iowa Youth Writing Project: "Women's Writes" Public Space One, Free, 1 p.m. **Veteran Voices Reading** The Mill, Free, 2 p.m.

Mon., Nov. 12 - Davy Rothbart Prairie Lights, Free, 7 p.m.

Tues., Nov. 13 - Regan Good Prairie Lights, Free, 7 p.m.

Wed., Nov. 14 - It's a Mystery (Book Group): A Trace of Smoke by Rebecca Cantrell Coralville Public Library, Free, 10 a.m. **Harry Brod** Prairie Lights, Free, 7 p.m.

Thurs. Nov. 15 - Paul's Book Club: The Secret Scripture, Sebastian Barry Iowa City Public Library, Free, 7 p.m.

Wednesdays - Spoken Word Uptown Bill's, Free, 7 p.m.

COMEDY

Wed., Nov. 8 - Cast from Impractical Jokers Penguin's Comedy Club, \$22.50, 7 p.m. & 9:30 p.m.

Thurs., Nov. 9 - C4: The Cross County Comedy Competition The Mill, \$5, 9 p.m.

Nov. 9 - 10 - Chick McGee, Jeff Bodart, Mike Head Penguin's Comedy Club, \$17.50, 7:30 p.m.

Sat., Nov. 11 - Nathan Timmel's 4th Annual Comedy for Charity The Mill, Silent Auction, 6 p.m.

Wed., Nov. 15 - Neil Hamburger The Mill, \$10, 9 p.m.

Thurs., Nov. 16 - C4: The Cross County Comedy Competition: Championship The Mill, \$10, 9 p.m.

Nov. 16 - 17 - Mike Vacchione Penguin's Comedy Club, \$12, 7:30 p.m.

Mondays - Catacombs of Comedy Yacht Club, \$3, 9 p.m.

KIDS

Fri., Nov. 16 - Night at the Museum: Creatures of the Night Museum of Natural History, UI campus, Free, 6 p.m.

Mondays & Tuesdays - Toddler Storytimes Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10:30 a.m.

Tuesdays - Pre-school Storytime Coralville Public Library, Free, 10:30 a.m.

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Wednesdays & Thursdays - Preschool Storytimes
Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10:30 a.m.

Thursdays Wee Read Coralville Public Library,
Free, 10:15 & 11:15 a.m. **Toddler Story Time at**
the CRMA Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free,
1:30 p.m.

Occasional Fridays Book Babies Iowa City Public
Library, Free, 10:30 a.m.

Saturdays - Family Storytime Coralville Public
Library, Free, 10:30 a.m. **Family Storytimes** Iowa
City Public Library, Free, 10:30 a.m.

Sundays - Family Storytimes Iowa City Public
Library, Free, 2 p.m.

DANCE

Nov. 9 - 10 EDGEWORKS Dance Theater, /
CLOSE/R Legion Arts, \$15/\$18, 8 p.m. **UI Dance**
Alumni Event Space Place Theater, UI campus,
Free, 8 p.m.

Nov. 13 - 14: Pilobolus Dance Theatre Hancher
Auditorium (at Space Place Theater), Sold Out, 7:30
p.m.

Thursdays - UI Swing Club Public Space One,
Free, 8 p.m.

MISC.

Sun., Nov. 12 - The Militancy of Gender and the
Making of Sexual Difference in Anglo-Saxon
Literature, by Professor Stacy Klein English
Philosophy Building, Gerber Lounge, UI campus,
Free, 5 p.m.

Wed., Nov. 15 - UI Explorers Seminar:
Christopher Brochu, UI Department of
Geoscience Museum of Natural History, UI campus,
Free, 7 p.m.



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ASTROLOGY FORECAST FOR NOVEMBER

FOR EVERYONE—High stakes, delicate maneuvers. Soon, we must all make some difficult choices and real risks in order to achieve an important goal. But things have changed. We can now negotiate where the answer used to be “take it or leave it.” If we are careful, respectful and brave enough to approach them, we will find those in power more flexible than in the past. Changing circumstances have given us leverage we did not have before. If you decide to use it, do so carefully.

♏ **SCORPIO** (Oct. 22 - Nov. 20) Scorpio unveiled. The planets are expecting you to meet difficult challenges with few resources. They are giving you subtle insight and meaningful leverage over matters that are causing considerable friction. You are expected to use this leverage and share your insight, despite the tensions at work in this situation. Don't let your own fears inhibit you and don't let others silence you. When you know what you really think, speak your mind. It will resonate with real power and help others find their way.

♐ **SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 21 - Dec. 20) The new Sagittarius. Sagittarians will undergo welcome inner changes. Pointless fears will slowly dissipate. Needless inhibitions and self-defeating attitudes will fall away. You'll find it increasingly easy to present a more capable, confident face to the world. Don't let the outdated expectations of partners or workmates slow the emergence of the new you. Sparks could fly over financial differences with a child or loved one. Don't get defensive, it is time to renegotiate. Evolving personal attitudes will help bring a resolution. Intuitive abilities are heightened.

♑ **CAPRICORN** (Dec. 21 - Jan. 18) Inflection point. Simmering conflicts with close family members may reach a climax. Tempers could flare. Outer events and psychological developments are all pushing you to change your desires and expectations for the future. You must make changes. Rapidly unfolding events can eventually lead to a career and a lifestyle that harmonize with your evolving expectations. You'll need to let go of some social and professional ties that are holding you back, including some you've depended on in the past. Sentimentality can trip you up.

♒ **AQUARIUS** (Jan. 19 - Feb. 17) Be patient. Conditions at home or relations with family could be a source of deep concern to you in November. Change, the failure to change, or the wrong kind of change, could be very upsetting and tensions could easily cause tempers to flare. However, underlying relationships and personal commitments are resilient enough to support a successful resolution of the issues. Be mindful that everyone's goals and aspirations are evolving rapidly. Others need time to sort things out, too. Unfolding events will suit your evolving needs.

♓ **PISCES** (Feb. 18 - Mar. 19) Pushing boundaries. Your present financial situation seems to be limiting your options to the point of blocking your most cherished dreams and ambitions. In November, impatience and friction with those in charge could reach extreme levels. Unexpected changes in distant places should work in your favor, but worsen your impatience with conditions at home. You'll have to change the outdated, restrictive attitudes of influential family members and close associates. A willingness to bargain hard, and compromise where necessary, will serve you well.

♈ **ARIES** (Mar. 20 - Apr. 18) New start. You can lock in recent progress in your efforts to establish fairness in key relationships. The old games will not work. They might even backfire on those who try to use them. Financial issues will remain, some of them thorny. It's time to make sure pension plans, insurance coverage and debt repayment are on track. Attitudes are shifting among those who control the purse strings. If you're willing to bargain, sometimes strenuously, you can settle many outstanding issues and create better options for yourself.

♉ **TAURUS** (Apr. 19 - May 19) Reboot. Taureans can expect improved energy levels, more resilient health and steadier nerves. You've passed a planetary stress test and can move on. With some time and effort, you can also resolve psychological and spiritual issues that have been gnawing at you. Your next challenge is to make some difficult and overdue changes in relationship areas. People need to change their ideas about and attitudes toward you. You aren't who they think you are and they need to understand that. Financial improvements continue apace.

♊ **GEMINI** (May 20 - June 19) Better deal. People should look at you differently, now. Outdated and self-limiting attitudes are fading. Friendship, romance and a spirit of play are returning to your life. On the downside, the burdens of work and relationships will weigh more heavily. Your health will be more sensitive. However, the present planetary arrangement gives you some leverage with the powers that be. If you make the effort, you can negotiate better working conditions for yourself. Just be mindful that higher ups have problems of their own.

♋ **CANCER** (June 20 - July 21) Restraint. Tension has been running through important relationships, at home, at work

and elsewhere. It's always there at some level. There's no mutual comfort zone. Sometimes subtle, sometimes obvious, it never goes away completely. Your unwillingness to tolerate it any longer, your sense of justice, and surprise events could all bring things to a head in November. Tempers could flare; power plays are possible. Circumstances provide some leverage. Use that leverage only to ensure fairness. Things are more complicated, and more delicate, than they look.

♌ **LEO** (July 22 - Aug. 21) Juggling tectonic plates. November's events, although long overdue, can catch you by surprise, bringing sudden shifts in your situation, professionally and at home. Psychological, social and other, less subtle, less easily evaded forces will be at work. Fortunately, you have a surprising degree of control over the pace and direction of events. Still, it will take considerable effort on your part to shape an outcome that everyone can accept. Where you stand at month's end is your new starting point. November's events cannot be reversed.

♍ **VIRGO** (Aug. 22 - Sept. 21) Being the messenger. Virgo must go along with a lot of things in November. They arise from difficult experiences and hard choices in which you were not directly involved. But the changes will work out well for you. Also, you can influence the ultimate outcome, albeit indirectly. However, you do have an immediate challenge. Your insights into recent events are important for everyone, right now. You need to make others understand and respect these insights without wearing yourself out or wearing out your welcome.

♎ **LIBRA** (Sept. 22 - Oct. 21) Best behavior. In terms of personal energy, influence, opportunity and resources, Librans are in a better place. But challenges remain. Tensions between yourself, close family members and key allies complicate your life. Mixing business and pleasure, or romance, could be fatal where your efforts to resolve conflicts are concerned. Keep things cordial but professional. A short-term, no-strings approach is best in all matters now. Playing favorites, or seeking romantic advantage will seriously aggravate already complex tensions. Avoid new debt if it's at all possible.

—Dr. Star



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