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## LITTLE VILLAGE

IOWA CITY'S NEWS & CULTURE MAGAZINE

VOL. 16 | ISSUE 154  
MAY 7 - 20, 2014

### WHO YOU CALLIN' A SISSY?

KINNICK'S PINK LOCKER ROOM HAS GOT TO GO.  
JOIN THE MILLION ROBOT MARCH ON FRY FEST.  
PULL-OUT POSTER PAGE 24

### ACHTUNG!

IS ICCSD'S DECISION TO CUT PROGRAMS LIKE  
GERMAN A SIGN OF BIGGER BUDGETARY  
PROBLEMS? PAGE 6

### PAJAMAS FOR YOUR FACE

KYLE KINANE BREAKS DOWN THE BEAUTY OF THE  
BEARD. INTERVIEW PAGE 14.

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# LITTLE VILLAGE

IOWA CITY'S NEWS & CULTURE MAGAZINE

**VOL. 16 | ISSUE 154**  
**MAY 7 - 20, 2014**

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Little Village is a free publication based in Iowa City. Distribution is available throughout Linn & Johnson counties, and in Des Moines. Founded in 2001, the entire archive is indexed at [ir.uiowa.edu/littlevillage](http://ir.uiowa.edu/littlevillage). Send letters and story ideas to [editor@littlevillagemag.com](mailto:editor@littlevillagemag.com), or call (319) 855-1474. Thanks for reading!

## COMMUNITY/NEWS

### 4 - UR Here

Cue the cake

### 6 - Education

Budget cuts 101

## FOOD & DRINK

### 8 - On the Table

Ricotta: Try this at home

### 9 - 12 oz. Curls

Confluence Brewing's Des Moines IPA

## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

### 12 - Lit Scene

*The Education of Nancy Adams*, Chapter 1

### 14 - Comedy

Interview with Kyle Kinane

### 20 - The Tube

TV's dirty dames

### 22 - Art City

IC bids Strange Cage adieu

## C O N T R I B U T O R S

## WRITERS

Cecil Adams, Alea Adigweme, Larry Baker, Rob Breznsy, Rob Cline, Barbara Davidson, Thomas Dean, Melody Dworak, A.C. Hawley, Max Johnson, Eric Kuehl, Kembrew McLeod, Lisa Roberts, Mike Roeder, Dan Savage, Frankie Schneckloth, Arashdeep Singh, Jorie Slodki, Warren Sprouse, Roland Sweet, Michael Tilley, Casey Wagner, Kent Williams, Melissa Zimdars



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INTERACTIVE CONTENT**

### 24 - Prairie Pop

Binary code, yes. Gender binaries, no.

## REVIEWS

### 10 - Comics

The Sinister Six make a charming mix

### 40 - Local Albums

Item 9 & the Mad Hatters, Paul Cary & the Small Scarys

## PLUS

## 26 - AREA EVENTS CALENDAR

## 30 - SAVAGE LOVE

## 32 - PRO-TIPS

## 34 - THE STRAIGHT DOPE

## 36 - NEWS QUIRKS

## 42 - ASTROLOGY

## EDITORS

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Illustration by Ben Mackey

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# LIFE SPRINGS ETERNAL

Commencement is here again, and with it a chance for all of us to feel renewed (and eat some cake). • **BY THOMAS DEAN**



**M**y daughter Sylvia's red polyester gown and graduation announcements lay on a table at home, ready for City High's commencement later this month.

We've been commencement-heavy in recent years, first with our son Nathaniel's high school graduation in 2011, then the commencement ceremony for his instrument repair program in Minnesota last year and now Sylvia's high school graduation. For several years now, with our kids' friends such a central part of our lives, we've attended plenty of graduation parties, consumed our share of sheet cake and potluck dishes and slipped a lot of cards with checks for \$25 into baskets toward the end of May.

**DESPITE THE HOARY CHESTNUTS ABOUT NEW RESPONSIBILITIES TO CHANGE THE WORLD, COMMENCEMENT DOES BRING US RENEWAL AND HOPE, AS DOES SPRING.**

This is certainly a very special era for my family, but I'm realizing how commencement has been a constant in my spring rituals every year for a long, long time. Since my own high school graduation (mmbmle-frmmble) years

## PERENNIAL GROWTH

*Spring commencement represents life's new turns.*

*Photo by Adam Burke*

ago, I have been part of spring commencement more years than not.

I double-majored in music and English as an undergrad at Northern Illinois University where students could earn a cool 50 bucks for each ceremony we played as part of the ad hoc commencement band. I probably still have Edward Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance" March No. 1 under my fingers if I gave it a whirl on my clarinet.

Including high school, college and then grad school, I've gone through five of my own graduation ceremonies. Once I embarked on an academic career, I couldn't escape the spring mortar boards and tassels. My first job after earning my doctorate was at a small liberal arts college, and all faculty members were required to participate in all commencements. That was fine, since, as it was a small school, a number of my students were graduating each year. But I did get tired of the college president's annual entreaty at the end of her remarks to these so-very-special students—as she would put it so earnestly and with such heartfelt ardor—to “remember, please come home.” After two or three times, the predictable supplication grew a bit treacly.

Little did I know that not so many years later, I would be drafting university presidential commencement speeches and charges to the graduates each year as part of my job, which I continue to do to this day. Yes, there have been some repeated incantations in my commencement speech drafts, I must admit, but I try to keep the message fresh and relevant each time. No closing one door and opening another. No “you are the future,” which “is in your hands.” No education “that is just beginning.” Not even any “being true to yourself” or “following your passions.”

Of course, there is always some truth in cliché. The fact is, commencement is about new beginnings, and spring is obviously a perfect time to celebrate them, especially here in our Midwestern home when we emerge into warmth, beauty and new life from the cold sterility of winter. Despite the hoary chestnuts about new responsibilities to change the world, commencement does bring us renewal and hope, as does spring.

But it's not the future-focused nature of commencement that I appreciate these days as much as its cyclical return. Just as vernal warm breezes, budding flowers and rising birdsongs place me in the newness of May each year, caps and gowns, stately marches, sheet cakes and even speeches about new hope center me in the rhythms of return rather than launching me into bright-eyed vistas of future possibility. At my age, I've graduated beyond “my whole life ahead of me.” For me, commencement has become a ground note rather than a downbeat.

Soon, we'll head to Carver Hawkeye Arena and applaud our daughter along with so many of those kids—sorry, young adults—we've known since kindergarten, as they march across the stage, shake hands with City High Principal John Bacon and receive their diploma covers. We'll hear the band play “Pomp and Circumstance” once again, listen to some repetitive words of future optimism and probably shed a tear or two. And we'll eat a lot of sheet cake. But for me, commencement will come back around, one way or another, next spring. And I'm grateful for that predictable return of new life before us. **IV**

*Thomas Dean says, “Wear sunscreen.”*



# LETTER

**Y**ou can't buy social capital, but you can build it. You can't sell social capital, but you can experience it.

Over the past four years, I have conducted an experiment. I have had to make withdrawals on the fund of social capital that is Iowa City's, and I am happy to report that the account balance is positive.

I have early onset Parkinson's disease. As a complication, I have dystonia, a cramping of the muscles of the feet and legs. It comes without warning: One foot curls into a ball, and the right foot hyperextends. I cannot walk; I am at risk of falling and sustaining a head injury or limb fracture.

There is no medical intervention that works for me. What I need is to get to a safe place to sit until the dystonia passes. But typically I can't manage this by myself. I need a person willing to give me their arm for 10 or 20 or 50 feet.

Because it can happen at any time or any place, I am usually confronted with asking for help from a stranger. Because I am small, white, female and conventionally dressed, I don't present a stereotypical threat, but I am asking for physical contact with a stranger, the breaking of a strong social barrier. Given that I started to have serious difficulty with dystonia more than three years ago, I have had to ask for this kind of assistance many dozens of times. Here's the surprise: No one has ever said "No," and no one has ever walked away.

An EMT trainee went into Starbucks and got me a chair to sit on in the parking lot; an Indian doctor went and got his car and drove me to CVS and let me sit in his car until the episode passed; two homeless men walked me half the length of the Ped Mall to get me to the library. Most improbably, a slight young woman with a baby on her chest and two book bags helped me cross the street by the library.

No one has said no.

—Barbara Davidson

## THIS MODERN WORLD

**JUSTICE IN AMERICA**  
with special guest host  
**McGRUFF THE CRIME DOG**



YOU SEE, SOMETIMES A CRIMINAL DOES SOMETHING *SO BAD*, OUR FAIR AND IMPARTIAL JUSTICE SYSTEM HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO IMPOSE THE *ULTIMATE PENALTY*.



by TOM TOMORROW

BUT SOMETIMES ONE OF THE DRUGS USED TO ADMINISTER THAT PENALTY BECOMES UNAVAILABLE--AND STATES LIKE OKLAHOMA HAVE TO SCRAMBLE TO FIND AN *UNTESTED ALTERNATIVE*.



AND THEN SOMETIMES, THINGS GO HORRIBLY WRONG AND THE PRISONER BEING EXECUTED REMAINS CONSCIOUS, CONVULSING ON THE GURNY UNTIL HE ULTIMATELY DIES OF A *MASSIVE HEART ATTACK* FORTY MINUTES LATER.



AND THEN SOCIETY COLLECTIVELY RECOILS IN DISGUST AND REPEALS THE DEATH PENALTY ENTIRELY?



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## ICCSB BUDGET CUTS: A PRIMER

Will the Iowa City Community School District's budget cuts solve its deficit woes? • BY MICHAEL TILLEY



On May 13, 2014, the Iowa City Community School District Board will meet to discuss budget cuts that will result in, among other reductions, eliminating fourth grade orchestra, phasing out all German instruction over the next several years and ending seventh grade football.

Parents have been asking why these cuts are necessary, especially given that the district's Facilities Master Plan is slated to spend almost \$260 million to renovate and expand older buildings while opening four new ones. Others are asking whether there are other programs that should be cut instead of those selected by the administration. My biggest concern is whether the budget cuts will actually address the long-term root cause of the deficit, that, if left unaddressed, may result in history repeating itself.

### HOW CAN WE MAKE BUDGET CUTS WHILE SPENDING MILLIONS OF DOLLARS ON THE FACILITIES MASTER PLAN?

To clarify the budget cuts and their relationship to the Facilities Master Plan, it is helpful to understand how school funding works in Iowa. The State of Iowa limits the amount of money per student—called *spending authority*—that school districts can use to fund annual operations and programming. The purpose

of the limit on spending authority is noble: It ensures a wealthier area does not have more educational opportunities than a poorer area simply because of its flush tax base.

Spending authority is the pot of funds used for annual programming and operations. The almost \$260 million for the Facilities Master Plan comes from a different pot of funds and doesn't count against spending authority. The state does not limit one-time funds used for new buildings, athletic fields or maintenance. Thus, the funds allocated for the Facilities Master Plan have no bearing on the proposed budget cuts.

In addition to spending authority, most years, the state will give a supplemental state allocation, called *allowable growth*, as a percentage increase on the amount allocated the prior year. Unfortunately, the average allowable growth over the past five years was 2.1 percent.

### THE REASON BEHIND THE BUDGET CUTS

Still, it does not explain how we got into this mess. That story is a bit more complicated.

By December 2013, the board and administration were aware of coming financial challenges. Based on our current programming levels, including the annual cost-of-living raises already contractually agreed upon for the 2014-2015 school year and beyond, and the expiration of almost \$5.6 million in federal

funding from stimulus education funding, the district was slated to use all of its accrued spending authority and have a shortfall of almost \$1.4 million dollars by June 2016. To prevent this and establish better sustainability, in early April the administration presented a series of budget cuts to the school board totaling approximately \$3.5 million.

The financial situation we find ourselves in has two root causes: First, the district has consistently been giving raises to administrators, teachers and staff that significantly exceed al-

ICCSB IN FOCUS | Photo by Adam Burke

lowable growth. Let's call this the *allowable growth deficit*.

As indicated in the budget blueprint—a document explaining the budget predicament found on the district website—\$0.81 of every ICCSD dollar goes to employees of the school district. When you increase the pay of personnel at a rate exceeding increases in revenue, you will eventually have to pay up. Personally, I believe teachers, staff and our administrators deserve raises at least as generous of what we'd expect in the private sector. Unfortunately, the State of Iowa has not seen fit to increase allowable growth by the same percentage.

The second root cause is we have relied on grants to protect us from the allowable growth deficit. So, as long as we had federal stimulus funds, this solution worked effectively. Unfortunately, those grants have expired and there are no grants to replace them this year. Other school districts such as Des Moines and Cedar Rapids are using the State of Iowa's Teacher Leadership Grant to offset some of the cuts they would have had to make otherwise. Our district is planning to apply for the grant next year, since the administration was overtaxed this year because of a state accreditation site visit and an investigation by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights with regard to our special education program. In light of the uncertain nature of grants, is it good practice for the district to rely on them to fund basic academic programming?

## So, WHAT NOW?

Like many of you, I believe mismanagement by the board and administration and the low allowable growth rate are to blame for our current predicament. But I also recognize casting blame will not make our budget better. Should we put off making the cuts now in hopes that the state legislature will see the light next year and give a higher allowable growth rate? That may work, but given the unwillingness of the state legislature to consistently set higher allowable growth rates, I certainly wouldn't count on it. If we make cuts now, how should we go about doing it? Do we let the loudest and most powerful voices protect their interests?

Personally, I hate that these cuts are financially necessary, but I simply don't see a strong alternative suggestion that could save \$3.5 million. In fact, I worry the cuts will only delay even greater cuts. The school district's budget blueprint assumes a 3 percent across-the-board increase in costs. But if personnel raises are set at 4.5 percent as they are for the next year, then the assumed 3 percent increase may be too small. We need to recognize that even if there is a temporary stay for one or more of these programs, they will all, along with many other programs, be cut if something more fundamental isn't done.

I believe the only way to sustainably address the budget problems in the long-term is to tie annual raises to the allowable growth rate. Doing so would erase the allowable growth deficit, and it would prevent us from the uncertain situation of basing key academic programming on grant funding. We can be creative in how we go about this so that teachers and staff receive a greater percentage raise than high-level central administrators, but we need to think seriously about what it will take to grow in a sustainable fashion. **lv**

*Michael Tilley is a philosopher, test writer and the father of four current and future ICCSD students.*



**MR. AUTOMATIC |** Hawkeye Football legend turned entrepreneur Nate Kaeding will give a keynote address at EntreFEST, May 16 at 2:20 p.m. | Photo by Adam Burke

## 7th Annual EntreFEST Downtown Iowa City—May 14-16 (\$189)

EntreFEST—Iowa's annual celebration of entrepreneurship—will take place in Iowa City for the first time this year. As the state's biggest entrepreneur conference, the event is part summit, part festival and part resource hub. It aims to bring Iowa innovators together to celebrate and foster entrepreneurship. The University of Northern Iowa is the event's primary sponsor (the UNI Regional Business Center Entrepreneurship Outreach team was responsible for developing the idea and getting the festival off the ground in 2008), but for the second year running Cedar Rapids-based Seed Here Studio has been contracted to take the lead on managing the event.

The organizers have stacked the three-day lineup with over 40 speakers as well as exhibits, interactive discussions, resource consultations and parties. Hawkeye legend, former NFL kicker and current owner of Short's Burgers and Shine, Nate Kaeding is one of the festival's keynote speakers. Along with Kaeding, Templeton Rye Founder and President Scott Bush will be speaking, as well as Carl Blake, an Iowa farmer who has been featured in the *The New York Times* and on *The Colbert Report* for creating "The World's Perfect Pig." Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds will emcee the 2014 Dream Big Grow Here Finals, a statewide grant contest for current and future business owners.

EntreFEST will be held at various venues downtown, including the Sheraton Hotel, hotelVetro, Iowa City Public Library, FilmScene and the Englert Theatre.

For more information visit [entrefest.com](http://entrefest.com).

—Eric Kuehl



## FOR YOUR INFORMAGGIO

You gotta try this simple recipe for homemade ricotta.  
BY FRANKIE SCHNECKLOTH



### CH-EASY AS ONE, TWO, THREE

Whole milk, lemon and kosher salt are all you need to make ricotta. Photos by Frankie Schneckloth

### SUPPLIES:

- 1/2 GALLON WHOLE MILK
- 1/3 CUP FRESH SQUEEZED LEMON JUICE (PLUS A FEW EXTRA TABLESPOONS IF NECESSARY)
- 1/2 TEASPOON KOSHER SALT
- FINE MESH SIEVE
- CHEESECLOTH

I'm going to take a guess here: You probably haven't ever made your own cheese before. It's ok, you're not alone. Up until a few weeks ago, I had never even considered venturing into the unknown territory of amateur cheesemaking. But then, over happy hour drinks, a friend mentioned her interest in trying her hand at it, and my ears perked up. Later that night, as I flipped through the pages of my latest *Bon Appetit*, I serendipitously happened to see a recipe for ricotta—the editors vowed it was a breeze and totally worth it. With two mentions of homemade cheese in



just one day, I felt it was necessary to at least attempt a batch.

Following a super simple recipe, my first attempt yielded a delicious batch of fresh ricotta, and I couldn't help but ask myself what the hell I've been doing all this time. While buying from the store is ultimately more convenient than making it at home, I will definitely be whipping up a batch for any recipe that has ricotta as a key ingredient.

**STEP ONE** | Pour milk into large saucepan. Slowly heat to just below a boil. If you want, you can use an instant read thermometer—aim for 200 degrees. If you don't have a thermometer, look for that almost rolling boil stage where gentle bubbles form across the surface of the milk. Once it reaches this point, remove the milk from heat

**STEP TWO** | Add lemon juice and kosher salt to the milk and stir gently to combine.

**STEP THREE** | Let milk/lemon juice mixture sit for 10 minutes undisturbed. You'll notice separation happening at this point. You should see clumps of white curds and watery yellow liquid (this is the whey). If you aren't sure about whether curds are forming, dip a slotted spoon into the mixture. If after 10 minutes you still see a lot of unseparated milk, add another tablespoon of lemon juice. I added one extra dose to mine.

**STEP FOUR** | Now you will separate the curds from the whey. First, line your fine mesh sieve with a double layer of cheesecloth and place over a large bowl. Before you pour the whole pot over the strainer, you might want to scoop out any large cheese curds first and place them in the sieve in order to prevent crazy splashes and a messy kitchen. If you don't care, then pour away!

**STEP FIVE** | Allow the curds to drain for 20 minutes. If they get too dry for your liking, stir a bit of the whey back into the curds.

Then your ricotta is ready! You can use the cheese immediately, or you can store in your fridge in an airtight container for a few days. **iv**

*Recipe adapted from thekitchn.com. According to her Cheese Horoscope, Frankie Schneckloth has blue cheese in her future.*

## BREW OF THE MONTH: MAY

### DES MOINES IPA

Confluence Brewing Company | Des Moines



**M**ay's beer of the month is the well-balanced, Iowa-brewed IPA from Confluence Brewing Company: Des Moines IPA.

Though some IPAs are overwhelmingly dry and bitter, John Martin, the head brewer at Confluence, proudly admits that he wants his IPA to have a balance of malt and hop characteristics.

Instead of going overboard with abrasive hop bitterness, Martin brews Des Moines IPA to showcase the "brightness" of the citrusy and piney Pacific Northwest hops, and accentuate their aroma and flavor. He uses two-row barley and medium crystal malts to counterbalance the hops. "[Our IPA] is a little heartier, a little richer, but we spend a lot of money on hops for that beer. We hold nothing back," said Martin with a laugh.

According to Martin, Des Moines IPA is Confluence's best-selling beer. In fact, Eric Selander, Confluence's sales and distribution manager, says that Des Moines IPA is so popular there's a waiting list for bars, restaurants and grocers hoping to add it to their shelves and tap lines. It only takes a couple sips to know why there's such demand.

Pour Des Moines IPA into your favorite pint glass. The color is light amber with a slight haze. One finger of white, fluffy head will dissipate evenly to leave a bubbly skim and ring around the edge. A big dose of tangerine, grapefruit, mango, pineapple and pine greets the nose, and underneath is a solid caramel base. The first sip is smooth, creamy and pleasantly bitter. Flavors include tangerine, orange, a little grapefruit and pine resin, which lingers on the taste buds long after each sip. Though the bitterness turns up a notch as the beer begins to warm, it is never overpowering. Caramel counterbalances the citrus, but the bitterness and pine remain prominent. **iv**

**SERVING TEMPERATURE:** 45–50°F.

**ALCOHOL CONTENT:** 7.1 percent ABV.

**FOOD PAIRINGS:** Along with the usual spicy pairings, such as Indian and Thai cuisine, Selander recommends sushi. Since sushi tends to have a "softer mouthfeel," Selander says the sharpness of Des Moines IPA enhances the rice and vegetable ingredients that accentuate the fish. His favorite sushi/Des Moines IPA pairing is spicy yellow tail.

**WHERE TO BUY:** Des Moines IPA is available at John's, New Pioneer Food Co-op, Bread Garden, Hy-Vee and Barzini's. It is also on tap at bars and restaurants in the Iowa City area.

**PRICE:** \$10/per 32-ounce bottle.

*Casey Wagner lives in Iowa City*

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## THE SUPERIOR SINISTER SIX

In *The Superior Foes of Spider-Man*, five goofy villains believe they are more than the sum of their parts. • BY ROB CLINE



**T**he Spider-titles were proliferating around my house. I figured I needed to squish a few.

First, I had started buying my son *Ultimate Spider-Man*. Then, I added *The Amazing Spider-Man*. Soon enough, I was also buying *Scarlet Spider*. And then *The Amazing Spider-Man* became *The Superior Spider-Man* (and suddenly and shockingly Peter Parker was apparently absent from both the Ultimate universe and the standard Marvel continuity), and that meant spinoff titles. I let *Superior Spider-Man Team-Up* slide, but ended up with *The Superior Foes of Spider-Man*.

I considered dropping *Superior Foes* from my pull list. My son couldn't possibly keep up with all these titles, and with *Scarlet Spider* coming to an end, I figured we'd get back to basics with just *Ultimate* and *Superior*. But the fellows at Daydreams Comics encouraged me to give *Superior Foes* a look. They went so far as to suggest it was the best Spider-Man title going, even though Spider-Man himself rarely made an appearance.

Intrigued, I gathered up my son's issues and dove in. Since I haven't been reading the other Spider-titles, I can't confirm that *Superior*

*Foes* is the best of them, but I can say that it's a fairly solid book with a lot of potential. Which is why it's unfortunate that it appears to be coming to an end.

*The Superior Foes of Spider-Man* is, by and large, a comedy, a fact signaled early on when we discover that the gang calling itself the Sinister Six only has five members. The leader is Boomerang, also known as Fred Myers, a largely inept villain trying to lead—but also double-cross—a crew of second-stringers. Shocker, Overdrive, Speed Demon and a new incarnation of Beetle round out the team.

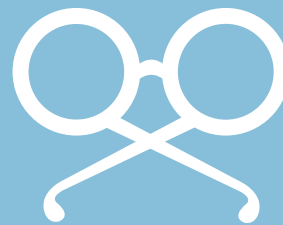
Speaking of teams, the creative team for the book includes writer Nick Spencer, artist Steve Lieber, colorist Rachelle Rosenberg and letterer Joe Caramagna. Spencer does a particularly good job bringing Boomerang to life,

**KEYSTONE CRIMINALS** | *The Sinister Six* bungle their way through *The Superior Foes of Spider-Man*.

aided in large part by the fact that the villain provides the book's narration. Boomerang is a striver, frustrated by his inability to best Spider-Man or make a true name for himself. As he tells his tale, letting us in bit by bit on his feints and follies, we come to like him more and more—in much the same way the potential romantic interest in the story warms to him over time.

The other members of the Sinister Six don't come into nearly as sharp of focus in the early issues. One of Lieber's strengths is the physical portrayal of characters, and he particularly excels at transmitting Shocker's full range of emotions despite the fact that his face is entirely covered by his mask. But while Spencer writes some witty dialogue for the rest of team, I had a hard time remembering their names and powers for quite a while. It is, of course, hard to give everyone in a multi-character story equal time when you're trying to keep your plot moving.

This problem is addressed in fits and starts. The seventh issue, with Rich Ellis subbing for Lieber and Lee Loughridge subbing for Rosenberg, provides a backstory for Beetle. The tenth issue, crafted by a full fill-in team of



## BOOK PLUG

**Heavenly Bodies: Cult Treasures and Spectacular Saints from the Catacombs** | By Paul Koudounaris

**The Oldest Living Things in the World**

By Rachel Sussman

Pictures aren't worth a thousand words unless they're accompanied by that critical context that allows us mortals to make sense of them. So, imagine the mortals who viewed thousand-year-old skeletons donning gold garb, bejeweled eye sockets and rib cages adorned with pearls—what sense did they make?

Art historian and photographer Paul Koudounaris explores this question in his latest book *Heavenly Bodies: Cult Treasures and Spectacular Saints from the Catacombs*. The skeletons themselves were discovered around the 16th century in Roman catacombs and were believed to be the bones of early Christian martyrs. Followers in the Catholic Reformation dressed them up in ornate costumes, ascribed divine myth to them and they became holy relics—the Catacomb Saints. Koudounaris calls these decked-out bones “the most eloquent kind of macabre beauty.” Flip through *Heavenly Bodies* and you'll see why.

Now imagine a picture worth 80,000 years. *The Oldest Living Things in the World*, by Rachel Sussman, documents living organisms that have clung to life despite human progress. Photographs of an 80,000-year-old clonal colony of quaking aspens; a 13,000-year-old underground forest; and an olive tree that germinated in the Greek Dark Ages all grace the pages of Sussman's extraordinary work. And life begets life: Sussman says the olive tree still bears fruit.

—Melody Dworak



writers and artists, gives us more insight into Overdrive, Beetle and Speed Demon as they recount their biggest (but spurious) victories over major league heroes. But the book loses much of its energy when Boomerang isn't at the fore, and that may have become a long-term issue for the title.

I say "may have" because it seems clear that *Superior Foes* is drawing to a close. *The Superior Spider-Man* is swinging back to *The Amazing Spider-Man* (to coincide with the movie *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*), and this would suggest that the Superior spinoffs are likely to be cut. There are other signs, too. The eleventh issue, like the tenth, was handled by a fill-in team—and oddly didn't feature the Foes at all (though Spidey was all over it). The second collected edition is scheduled to include issues 7-15, which is more issues than you generally find in a collection, suggesting that it may be the end of the line. It's too bad these guys won't have the opportunity to fully come into their own.

**THE SUPERIOR FOES OF SPIDER-MAN IS, BY AND LARGE, A COMEDY, A FACT SIGNALLED EARLY ON WHEN WE DISCOVER THAT THE NEW GANG CALLING ITSELF THE SINISTER SIX ONLY HAS FIVE MEMBERS.**

Marvel released the first six issues in *The Superior Foes of Spider-Man Vol. 1: Getting the Band Back Together*. The story arc is strong, with an engaging, often humorous storyline and good art. While some storylines are left open at the end of the arc, the subsequent issues have been uneven. I'm hopeful that things will come to a satisfying end over what may be the final four issues, but if you want to give the series a look, you might make a superior decision by focusing on the initial six issues featuring the inaccurately named Sinister Six. **lv**

*Born colorblind and therefore convinced he'd never enjoy graphic forms of storytelling, Rob Cline was first bitten by the comics bug in college. The resulting virus lay dormant for many years before it was activated by the inscrutable work of Grant Morrison. Now Cline seeks out the good and bad across the comics landscape as the Colorblind Comics Critic.*

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## CHAPTER ONE: THIRTY YEARS AGO

An excerpt from *The Education of Nancy Adams*, the latest novel from Iowa City author Larry Baker, out June 1 on Ice Cube Press.



I have perfect vision and low blood pressure, assets that make me a great shot. I can sit on the dock that slopes away from my house and finish a box of shells in an afternoon. I like to shoot things. That scares some men. A woman with a gun. Too bad it never scared the men it should have. My theory is that being educated and being armed ought to reinforce each other. Wrong.

I used to watch my father shoot from the same dock 30 years earlier. He was a lousy shot, and my mother had always insisted that he keep his gun pointed toward the water of the St. Johns. Odd, I always thought to myself, because daddy was much safer to be around than my mother. Frances Adams had a short fuse, and dishes were always breaking if she lost her temper. Dishes and cats and pictures on the wall, nothing was safe. I had seen her launch an empty coffee mug at my father, poor

hapless Charles, and then they laughed at each other. My parents were strange. PhDs or not, teachers or not, mother hot and father cool, but cool in a good way, two parents who adored their perfect only child, me, I could never make them as normal as my friends' parents.

Like my father, I'm not a hunter, and I don't shoot in front of other people. I've got no illusions about protecting myself with either the twenty-two rifle or my small gauge shotgun. They're always unloaded and locked away most of the time. If I can't talk a murdering raping flesh-eating burglar into leaving, I'm in big trouble. No, I just like the feel of the stock on my shoulder, the imaginary line down the top of the barrel as I aim, the jolt as I fire, the sight of the target exploding. I seldom miss. I wear ear plugs, but not so thick that the explosion is simply muffled into a mere whisper. And the smell, I really like the smell.

Daddy taught me to shoot, but he told me to never kill anything. Even ant hills were off limits. He was an ideal role model for gun safety, a liberal through and through, except for the time an alligator wandered into our yard. Me, I thought he was the bravest man in Florida that evening.

It was hot and humid, and the sunset had brought no relief. He and I had been shooting off the dock, and we hadn't seen the gator crawl out of the water behind us. When we turned around, the gator was between us and the house. Daddy fired a few shots into the ground around the gator, intent on scaring it back into the St. Johns, but the gator had an agenda and was headed for the house.

I had looked up at my father and wondered what he would do next. He had looked down and smiled, "You got any more bullets?" It was a moment I always use to explain him to others. I shook my head, terrified at the implication. He smiled again, "Well, I better make my last one good, right?" He quietly explained his plan, as if he had prepared all his life for that moment: Get the gator's attention,

**LARRY BAKER LIVE |** Author readings will take place in Monticello on May 8 and at Beaverdale Books in Des Moines on May 9.

Photo by Ofer Sivan

turn it to face us, make it come toward us and shoot it in the eye. A 22 shell would probably bounce off the gator's hide, and even a shot in the jelly eye wouldn't kill it, but it might scare him off. Daddy seemed confident. I was about to pee in my pants.

He had assigned me the key role, as if I had proven myself in a crisis a hundred times before. Run toward the house making as much noise as possible, and when the gator turned toward the noise I was to run back toward my father, remembering to stay out of the line of fire. That was my favorite part of the story to re-tell, because I always remembered my first thought: You want me to do what? But I did as I was told, and as I started running toward the house I wondered how mad my mother was going to be when she found out that daddy had put me in harm's way, and then an absurd thought made me laugh ... me and daddy were



doing the gator a favor by keeping it away from her.

The gator had snorted as it turned its head toward me. I screamed as I headed back toward my father, not seeing if the gator was after me or the house or him. All I heard was the single shot. When I opened my eyes again, clutching his legs as he was leaning down to kiss the top of my head, I looked out toward the orange ripply line that marked the setting

**MY THEORY IS THAT BEING EDUCATED AND BEING ARMED OUGHT TO REINFORCE EACH OTHER. WRONG.**

sun's reflection off the water. Daddy picked me up and carried me to the house, whispering in my ear, "He won't ever come back here, that's my guess." Ever since then, I've never been too sure.

Thousands of bullets and 30 years later, I'm still shooting Coca-Cola bottles. I like the eight ounce bottles with a cork in the top. I can throw them far away into the St. Johns. They're small, and they bob with the current, not an easy target. But when they're hit they make a satisfying shattering sound, and then the pieces disappear under the water. If I had had enough money, I'd shoot bottles everyday, but I was going broke last year. Facing the necessity of finally going to work full-time for the first time in my life, I had to decide if I was going to let Russell Parsons come to my rescue. **lv**

*Larry Baker is the author of five novels. He lives in Iowa City.*

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## COMICAL REALISM

Kyle Kinane's comedic storytelling is a refreshing approach to the craft of stand-up. • BY ARASHDEEP SINGH



Over the last few years, Kyle Kinane, a veteran Chicago comic, has seen his stand-up career take off, earning him appearances on television shows like *Workaholics* and *Drunken History*, as well as his own hour-long stand-up special on Comedy Central, *Whiskey Icarus*. His comedy act relies not on venting, but instead on spinning his various grievances into a larger story that exposes the absurdity that underlies them. Considering that among topics Kinane grumbles and muses on are crappy day jobs, overly supportive parents, lamentable-yet-awesome drunken behavior and the worthlessness of majoring in creative writing, I imagine he won't have too much trouble connecting with his audience at The Mill during his May 11 performance.

**Little Village: You just did a stand-up set at a comic book expo. How was it?**

Kyle Kinane: I am not a comic book guy. But other people are. So ... good for them. To make fun of them would be such a fish-in-a-barrel situation. Yeah, nerds dressing up like ... nerds. But, so what? Look, I think Halloween is the best holiday, and you just figured out a way to have Halloween whenever you want. Good for you. Right on, nerds.

**You seem to enjoy working hard at comedy, but a good chunk of your humor centers around getting shitfaced. Is this a Midwest contradiction you are dealing with, heavy drinking and a strong work ethic?**

Maybe it is a little of the "work hard, play hard" thing. Though nobody needs a comedian to work real hard. But I think that is Midwest too. "Nobody needs this, so I am going to do it for free because it makes me happy. And then I am going to have my day job." And it worked

out best this way for me. I didn't expect it. I expected to have a day job and have this thing I did at night that keeps me happy and also happens to be in bars most of the time, which ties into the drinking part of it. It doesn't have to be mutually exclusive.

**You're often described as a storyteller comic, and I was curious if you thought your background in creative writing plays into that at all.**

Well, I went to college because I thought I had to. It was the whole "oh you got to go to college," thing which I think is not bad, but it is a brainwashed mindset that people have: "You have to go." No. If you want to go to a technical school, people shouldn't look down on that. DeVry is a punchline. But people graduate from DeVry and go fix engines or whatever instead of sitting around with a college degree and a thumb up their ass.

I liked the creative writing classes, but looking back, I realize I was just trying to write

jokes. I was just trying to write funny stories and everybody stared at me for it because they didn't think I was taking anything seriously. And I was like, "Well, I am still in the class, I am still writing the stories." Just because I am trying to make them funny doesn't mean I am not taking them seriously.

**You've talked enthusiastically about unappreciated comedy scenes in the Midwest, places you're visiting on this tour like Bloomington, Ind. Is there anything that stands out to you about these scenes?**

It is just people who want to get really good at stand-up. They just want to be good at this thing as a craft. That is what is impressive. If stuff comes from it, cool, but it is coming not because they are seeking fame, but because

**THE INFLUX OF COMEDIANS IS INVERSELY PROPORTIONAL TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE. IF MORE PEOPLE ARE MISERABLE, THEY WANT TO GO OUT AND TELL SOMEBODY ABOUT IT.**

—KYLE KINANE

they are doing it so well. And that is how I think about Bloomington and Denver and all these spots. If the higher-ups take notice, and they want to work with them, good. But,

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Illustration by Jacob Yeates



they're still going to do it. They're going to do it for free because they want to get good at the skill.

**I wonder if the current economy plays into that, too. A lot of people are trapped in these very routinized, low wage jobs with little creative outlet. Maybe that is fueling the stand-up resurgence in a way.**

I never thought about that. If that's driving more and more people to open mics because everybody is just a cubicle dweller these days, I like that idea. The influx of comedians is inversely proportional to the quality of life. If more people are miserable, they want to go out and tell somebody about it.

**When I was listening to your album Death of the Party, the one with the cover that caricatures your beard, I was a bit surprised there was no material there about the whole fashion trend with beards. Around the same time, I was reading about these South Asian American comics who don't like to do any ethnic-based jokes because they feel it is**

**just a cheap laugh. So, it struck me, is that how you feel about beards?**

Yeah, absolutely! I grew it some years ago. It was just a depression beard. But now people do it as a prop. People are like, "oh, beard oil!" and they style it. They're dressing it up like they're taking it to prom. You grow a beard because it's less maintenance, not because you wanted to make more maintenance and have a little beauty parlor day with it. I'm scared to shave, but beards have definitely jumped the shark. Beards are just push-up bras for dude's faces.

I do respect people who don't rely on the easy laugh, but being of an ethnicity, that's not even an easy laugh, that's just you. With the beard, I've even felt guilty about it in the past. You go up schlubby with a beard, looking smelly and go, "Yeah!" That's your choice. You can change that. You can clean yourself up.

**There is something strange there. I've been congratulated so many times on my beard this year, probably more than for anything**

**else I've done, yet it's not like it's really an effort of any kind. If anything, cutting it off would involve effort.**

It is the opposite of an accomplishment. It's doing nothing. A commitment to laziness. It's stupid that it's a thing for people. That's what kills me. I grew a beard because it was like wearing pajamas on your face. I don't give a fuck. It was great. But now, to see people with their twirly mustaches, perfectly groomed ... I don't know. Anything smacking of effort puts me off. **lv**

*Arashdeep Singh regrets reporting all those bearded hipsters with knit caps to homeland security, but he wishes they would recognize that he was doing it ironically.*

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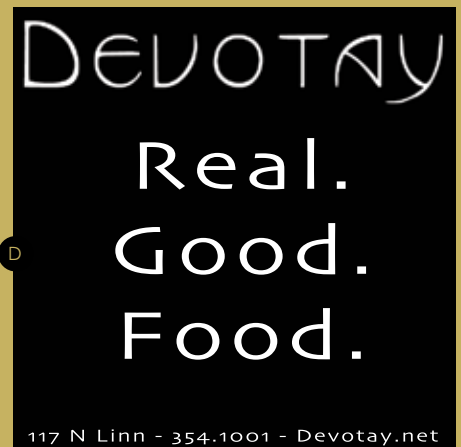
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## RAUNCHY BROADS

By embracing vulgarity, female-driven comedy challenges stereotypes of 'ladylike' behavior. • BY MELISSA ZIMDARS

**B**oner and boob jokes are now mainstays across numerous guy-centered, raunchy television comedies: *Workaholics*, *Two and a Half Men*, *Blue Mountain State*, *Manservants*, *The Kroll Show*, *Suits*, *Franklin & Bash*, *The League* and so on. While this kind of humor primarily permeates masculinized texts, we are starting to see more female-centered raunch comedy in both film and television, including *Bad Teacher* (women swear, too!), *Bridesmaids* (women shit their pants, too!) and the character of Dee on *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* (women smoke crack and have cannibalistic tendencies, too!).

*The Sarah Silverman Program* is one of the best examples of raunchy female-driven comedy on television; in one episode Silverman accidentally poops during a farting match and has a one-night-stand with God. But since its conclusion in 2010, there's been a comedic void that is just now being filled by Comedy Central's *Broad City*, which premiered in January and features *Upright Citizens Brigade* alums Abby Jacobson and Ilana Glazer.

The lack of female-driven raunch comedy is likely due to a lingering, broader hesitancy over associating vulgarity with certain ideas of womanhood. For some reason it's "okay" if women are objectified as part of masculinized raunch comedy, but there is often discomfort when women embrace vulgarity on their own terms. For example, *Variety* critic Brian Lowery panned Silverman's HBO special, *We Are Miracles*, arguing that she "limited herself by appearing determined to prove she can be as dirty and disastrous as the boys." Hilariously "dirty" topics ranged from smelly vaginas and female facial hair to gang bang humor mixed with cleverly crude non-segues: "Speaking of a bunch of men cumming on lady's face, my Mom's been sick." Lowery's critique reinforces long-standing essentialized sex roles that position women as being and having to be more pure, proper and virtuous than their male counterparts, making Silverman's humor seem like a constructed attempt, while male raunch comedy is naturalized. The fact that few people would condemn male comedians for being 'too dirty' demonstrates how anachronistic gender distinctions persist.

*Broad City* may not discuss (as Silverman does) the virtue of adopting only terminally ill babies to avoid ever caring for 10-year-olds, but the show's references to defecating in shoes, peeing out a condom or hiding marijuana in one's genitals is similarly scatological.

If you're unfamiliar with *Broad City*, the show is about Abby and Ilana, two BFFs navigating minimum wage jobs, dealing with obnoxious roommates masturbating in common areas and crushing on cute neighbors. Sex is, of course, a major theme of the show. Ilana even carries a second burner phone for her dick pics and other "sex media" because she's still on a family plan and can't risk dicks floating around in the cloud and making a surprise appearance on one of her parent's phones. The show not only revels both in having unshaven pubic hair and the joys of women receiving oral sex from their casual sexual partners, but it also frequently references sexual desire between female friends. Ilana proposes "parallel play," becomes jealous when she finds out Abby made out with another friend and fantasizes about experiencing cunnilingus at the same time (with their partners butt-to-butt forming a kind of "Arc de Triomphe").

This non-apologetic embrace and celebration of female sexuality—and all of the awkwardness and often unsexiness that goes along with it—are incredibly rare on television. *Sex and The City* went there sometimes in its recognition of the powerful bonds of female friendship and open discussions of sex, but the show's major dramatic moments always revolved around their relationships with the men in their lives.

*Broad City* stands out because it resists other conventional tropes of femininity or traditionally televised notions of what it means to be a woman. Abby and Ilana exhibit an unruliness, or an excess, that refuses to be quiet, clean or "small." Instead of shrinking into themselves, they take up space through sight gags, such as Abby literally rolling away to avoid answering an awkward question about how many children she has in a waiting room of a children's dentist (answer: zero), or Ilana dancing topless in Central Park during a cell phone recovery mission (only to be outdone by another woman hula-hooping topless for several hours).



In the episode "Working Girls," Ilana violates personal space by falling asleep on fellow subway passengers. On "Stolen Phone," Abby embodies the idea that women should be both seen and heard. In this episode, she stands on a bar stool and commands her fellow patrons to find her phone so she won't miss a call from a dude she wants to sleep with.

**THIS NON-APOLOGETIC EMBRACE AND CELEBRATION OF FEMALE SEXUALITY—AND ALL OF THE AWKWARDNESS AND OFTEN UNSEXINESS THAT GOES ALONG WITH IT—ARE INCREDIBLY RARE ON TELEVISION.**

Both girls are both regularly shown sitting on toilets, sleeping on toilets, defecating in toilets, plunging toilets and rubbing their faces with "fancy" toilet paper. Simply put, they fully embrace being two "dirty" and "morally loose" broads, further evidenced by Ilana saying to Abby in "The Last Supper," "So what you're a nasty bitch. Who cares? ... Let's go get high."

Speaking of two nasty bitches getting high, it should be noted that this kind of raunchtastic humor is also present on CBS's *2 Broke Girls*, but that show is ultimately a comedic train-wreck. It has similar, albeit innuendo-laden, "unladylike" dick jokes, but without any of the social or political bite troubling traditional ideas of gender performance and comedy. But perhaps the fact that vagina, porn and tampon talk appear on America's most geriatric broadcast network—in addition to *Broad City*—is a sign that there's more unruly, transgressive and hilarious female comedy to come. I sure hope so. **IV**

*Melissa Zimdars recently added owning an elliptical, hanging out with pugs at a pug farm and doing heroin under the Aurora Borealis to her bucket list.*

**GONE WILD |** The women of *Broad City* present femininity on their own terms. Illustration by Lev Cantoral







## FAREWELL, STRANGE CAGE

Iowa City bids goodbye to Russell Jaffe and his high-energy poetry reading series. • BY LISA ROBERTS



**F**or three years, *Little Village* art columnist Russell Jaffe has energized the poetry scene in Iowa City with his reading series Strange Cage. With his move to Chicago in June, Strange Cage 20, held at Fair Grounds on May 9, will be his last. I recently sat down with Jaffe to discuss what made Strange Cage a success and where he sees the reading series, and poetry, going in the future.

***Little Village:* Poets at Strange Cage 19 said that your emceeing makes the readings exciting. They described your style as PT Barnum meets a pro-wrestling announcer.**

Russell Jaffe: That's so nice. I want it to be very high energy. I think that the juxtaposition is very interesting, from a high energy announcer, who's not really there to put himself over. And I really like the idea, because I

### ELECTRIC EMCEE

*After 20 raucous Strange Cage performances, Russell Jaffe prepares to pass the mic. Photo by Adam Burke*

find poetry tremendously exciting—some of it crazy, crazy exciting—and I just thought, doing the high-energy thing in the style of those pro-wrestling announcers, and really making it feel like a big event was a natural fit for me ... My template for a successful reading is the same template I grew up watching on World Championship Wrestling pay-per-views, which would usually have eight matches. Here's how it should go: The first match of the night should be very high energy, they would usually put in what were called cruiser-weights, they're usually luchadors ... they fly around the ring and entertain you.



## A R T C I T Y



### MMMM CSPS—THROUGH JUNE 29 (FREE)

Blending the frontier history of America with a proposal to become the first solo adventurer to the red planet, "Manned Mock Mars Mission (MMMM)," is a show in the spirit of Jacques Cousteau or Buckminster Fuller by Ian Etter that explores the past, present and future of colonization. The project grew out of his curiosity about the similarities between the "Rocky Mountain School" of painting and contemporary satellite imagery. As research for his multi-media exhibit, the Kansas-born artist simulated life on Mars by camping in Utah and the Loess Hills of Iowa. MMMM is up at CSPS until June 29.



### DRAWINGS BY ANNA ULLERICH CSPS—THROUGH MAY 31 (FREE)

Anna Ullerich's interpretive landscapes on paper depict tiny biological spaces, large aerial perspectives, places she's invented. Viewers will find their own connections to the works, which can convey a palpable intimacy, cosmic serenity or a surreal intensity.

—Adam Burke



**So the luchadors are the undergraduates, then? The fast and hungry kids?**

Usually they're the undergraduates with a strong sense of performance, to get people excited—wow, what a big explosion! Then I think I want a bigger name, somebody who's possibly more established and going to put on a good show, before the break. And then the biggest name goes last ... A good example is David Trinidad, who was one of my professors and he's a legend of poetry, he's been around forever and he's doing amazing stuff, and he's got sort of a slow, dry tone, but he went last and you could hear a pin drop while he's reading. He's awesome.

**When did you start bringing in bigger name poets?**

I guess as with any business, it's like giant stone wheels: It takes a little time to start moving, but once they do, they start moving faster and faster. First, I had to really ask, does anyone want to read? I wanted diversity of the card as much as possible, ... so I would ask people. And now I've gotten to where I don't have to ask anybody: Tons of people ask me, which I love.

**How did Fair Grounds become your home base?**

Steve [Pernetti] is just so cool. He's been great to me, and he loves Iowa City. Steve lets me run it here, and I thought of it as a symbiotic relationship at first: I bring a lot of people in here and I get to run [Strange Cage] here for free. I actually think now that he's bending a little bit more because I don't know how extremely well business does on SC nights—it looks like it does fine—but really he's just doing this out of the goodness of his heart ...

**Has hosting Strange Cage influenced your own writing?**

Oh, god. Yes. To hear and read so much, there is no better way, and I don't care what kind of writer you are, [there's] no better way to improve your writing, than to read and listen to others read. To me, it's as simple as eating food. Like a plant getting water and sunlight. You don't just expect a plant to grow in a vacuum. Spoiler alert: it will die.

**STRANGE CAGE >> CONT. ON P. 39**

E. BURLINGTON

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# MILLION ROBOT\*

# MARCH

AUG. 29, 2014  
FRY FEST



## THE CHALLENGE

In 1979, University of Iowa football coach Hayden Fry had the visiting team's locker room walls painted pink. Fry said he did it because "pink is often found in girls' bedrooms, and because of that some consider it a sissy color." In 2005, UI doubled down by adding pink urinals, showers, floors and lockers. Many Hawkeye fans find it funny, while others see it as a leftover from a time when coaches motivated players by calling them "homo," "girl" and in Fry's own words, "sissy."

Amazingly, top administrators still defend this move; it's as if the university has sided with the jocks who used to beat up the "queers" in high school. Does a pink locker room directly lead to violence against women and gay people? No. But it does reinforce the repeated narratives about being a man that kids are exposed to from a very young age—which creates subtle and harmful ripple effect.

UI Chief Diversity Officer Georgina Dodge recently defended this archaic tradition, vehemently denying that it has anything to do with pushing masculine buttons. She claimed Fry was merely a "psychology buff" who believed pink was a "calming color." Even though UI's justifications are laughable, this is no laughing matter because homophobic and sexist insults are deeply ingrained in locker room culture. In the face of this institutional stubbornness, RoboProfessor has called for a Million\* Robot March to delete Kinnick Stadium's pink locker room forever.

## THE GOAL

Our robot-human coalition seeks to (a) change the color of the visiting team's locker room to another "calming color"—such as yellow—or (b) paint the Hawkeye locker room pink (given the team's mediocre performance of late, non-heteronormativity could be a winning tactic). Our broader goal is to erase the forms of bro culture that work against UI's efforts to reduce the epidemic of sexual assaults on and off campus.







## THE STRATEGY

We will use humor, media, satire and civil disobedience to shame the school into ending this stupid, outmoded football tradition.

## ABOUT THE MARCH

The Million Robot March will be held during Fry Fest, August 29, 2014. We call on all robots—and humans dressed as robots—to make our voices and/or voice boxes heard!

**For updated information visit:** [bit.ly/robotmarch](http://bit.ly/robotmarch).

## HOW TO JOIN THE ROBOTS

You just need a store-bought or homemade robot costume of some kind (though we certainly encourage DIY creations). It doesn't need to be metallic because we are an inclusive movement, and we realize that robots come in all colors, shapes, sizes and genders.

**SOME QUICK TIPS FOR MATERIALS:** Bicycle helmets, wraparound sunglasses, spray-painted cardboard boxes, silver fabric, thrift store vinyl records and old CDs, air duct tubing, other random parts from hardware stores, face paint and aluminum foil. Lastly, just be creative!

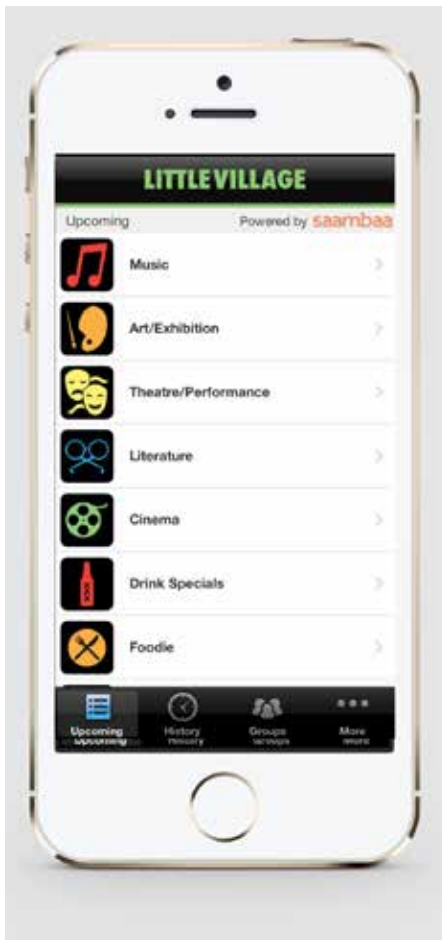


Illustration by Ben Mackey

# LITTLEVILLAGEMAG.COM/ROBOTMARCH

\*ROBOTS MAY VARY FROM ONE TO ONE MILLION

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## CALENDAR

### MUSIC

#### ONGOING:

**MONDAYS:** Open Mic with J. Knight *The Mill*, Free, 8 pm  
**TUESDAYS:** Lower Deck Dance Party *Iowa City Yacht Club*, \$2, 10 pm

**Live Jazz** *Motley Cow Cafe*, Free, 5:30 pm

**WEDNESDAYS:** Open Mic at Cafe Paradiso *Cafe Paradiso*, Free, 8 pm

**BSP's Open Jam Wednesdays** *Brady Street Pub*, Free, 9 pm  
**Karaoke with Emerald Johnson** *11th Street Precinct Bar & Grill*, Free, 9 pm

**Free Jam Session & Mug Night** *Iowa City Yacht Club*, Free, 10 pm

**THURSDAYS:** Open Mic *Uptown Bill's*, Free, 7 pm

**Daddy-O** *Parlor City*, Free, 7 pm

**Country Dancing** *Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon*, Free, 6 pm

**Karaoke** *Penguin's Comedy Club*, Free, 8 pm

**SATURDAYS:** Karaoke *Checkers Tavern*, Free, 9 pm

#### WED., MAY 7

**Drumming for Healing** *Prairiewoods*, Free, 6 pm

**UI School of Music Presents: Chamber Winds** *Riverside Recital Hall at UI*, Free, 7 pm

**Newman Choir** *Centennial Auditorium - Sterling High School*, Free, 7 pm

**Rob Lundberg** *Public Space ONE*, \$5, 7 pm

**Grinnell Symphony Orchestra** *Grinnell College-Bucksbaum*



**Timber Timbre w. Fiver I The Mill—May 7, 9 p.m.**

(\$10-\$15, 19+) Photo by Jeff Bierk

Hailing from the Great White North, Timber Timbre plays a type of folk music that is not beholden to the genre. Skewing more towards the Americana sound, the five-piece band heavily integrates blues, doo-wop, psychedelica, lounge music, soul and rockabilly into their music. This creates a dramatic, vaguely menacing melange of sounds—something that you would hear while sitting in the Black Lodge from *Twin Peaks*.—A.C. Hawley



**PERFECT PUSSY w. YAMANTAKA // SONIC TITAN, GREEN DREAMS GABE'S—MAY 8, 9 P.M. (\$8-\$10, 19+)**

Let's get this out of the way now: Yes, the band's name is Perfect Pussy. Yes, it is a questionable name and one that shocks. And, while it suggests ideas of cock rock and gross misogyny, it is misleading. Led by Meredith Graves, the music of Perfect Pussy is confident, aggressive and positive, which is evident in the band's debut album *Say Yes to Love*.

Released in March, *Say Yes to Love* is a collision of post-punk style, feedback and noise aesthetics that is all held together by the visceral wail of Graves, whose lyrics cover a range of topics like death, dating and self-esteem. The voice of the band and its position towards the world is clear and demonstrated by the riot-grrrrl mentality that is ever-present in these lyrics.

*Say Yes to Love* grabs the listener by the sensitive bits and does not let go; it is one of the strongest, most established debuts that I've heard from a band in a while. The band's sound fits in with the new wave of aggressive, feedback-driven punk bands like METZ and Iceage, making Gabe's the perfect place to see Perfect Pussy.—AH



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#### Iowa City Music Scene Showcase

**Gabe's & Yacht Club—May 9-10 (\$5-\$7 Each Day, 19+)**

*Photo by Sandra L. Dyas*

The Iowa City Music Scene Showcase is an annual event featuring many local bands. Once contained to the Yacht Club, the event has expanded to include Gabe's. This year's showcase will feature Item 9 & The Mad Hatters, OSG, Mad Monks and 15 more bands playing over the course of two nights. Additional acts to check out include David Zollo and Crystal City. In addition to being a great way to see many Iowa City bands, the \$5 cover gives you access to both venues. It's one of the best music bargains you'll get this year, and the importance of that can never be overstated.—AH

*Center for the Arts, Free, 7 pm*

**Nadia Sirota, Missy Mazzoli** *The Englert Theatre, \$16-\$18, 8 pm*

**Timber Timbre, Fiver** *The Mill, \$10-\$15, 9 pm*

### THURS., MAY 8

**Live Lunch with Roxi** *Copland River Music Experience, Free, 12 pm*

**University of Iowa Jazz Performances** *The Mill, \$3-\$5, 6 pm*

**CMS Orchestra** *Centennial Auditorium - Sterling High School, Free, 7 pm*

**Hancher Presents Niyaz featuring Azam Ali** *Old Brick, Free, 7 pm*

**Steve Grismore & Co. Live** *Clinton Street Social Club, Free, 8 pm*

**Jordan Danielson & Jef Spradly** *11th Street Precinct Bar & Grill, 9 pm*

**Perfect Pussy, Yamantaka // Sonic Titan, Green Dreams** *Gabe's, \$8-\$10, 10 pm*

**Diamond Jo Casino Dance Party** *Diamond Jo Casino, Free, 7 pm*

**Pressure Drop Dance Party** *Gabe's, Free, 10 pm*

**Low Ceilings** *Iowa City Yacht Club, \$5, 10 pm*

### FRI., MAY 9

**Java Blend Exclusive Hour With Natalie Brown** *Java House, Free, 2 pm*

**Jazz After Five with Dan Padley Group** *The Mill, Free, 5 pm*

**Pack the Place for Chase Potluck Cookout and Benefit Concert** *Bridge View Center, Donation, 5 pm*

**Jennifer Zoller & John Fokken** *Cedar Ridge Vineyards, Free, 6 pm*

**World Port Campbell Steele Gallery**, \$10-\$12, 7 pm

**The Steepwater Band & Edward David Anderson** *River Music Experience, \$8-\$10, 7 pm*

**Iowa City Music Scene Showcase (Mad Monks, David Zollo, The Feralings, Kevin Burt, Awful Purdies, Greg and Susan Dirks)** *Gabe's, \$7, 7 pm*

**John Boyle, Sam Locke Ward, Bob Bucko Jr.** *Public Space ONE, \$5 7:30 pm*

**Peter Yarrow** *The Englert Theatre, \$25-\$27.50, 8 pm*

**Silver Wings** *Parlor City, 8 pm*

**Kenny Rogers** *Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, \$39-\$59, 8 pm*

**Windjam** *Brothers Pub, 8 pm*

**Diplomats of Solid Sound, Ben Driscoll** *The Mill, \$7, 9 pm*

**Lipstick Slick** *Chrome Horse Saloon, 9 pm*

**Funktastic 5** *11th Street Precinct Bar & Grill, 9 pm*

**Iowa City Music Scene Showcase (Milk Duct Tape, The Treats, Velcro Moxie, Maiden Mars)** *Iowa City Yacht Club, \$7, 9 pm*

### SAT., MAY 10

**Sha Na Na** *Diamond Jo Casino, \$20, 4 pm*

**Dance Gavin Dance** *Blue Moose Tap House, \$15-\$17, 5 pm*

**Sha Na Na** *Diamond Jo Casino, \$20, 7 pm*

**UI School of Music Presents: Kantorei/University Choir** *Riverside Recital Hall at UI, Free, 7 pm*

**Kirkwood Concert Band** *Kirkwood Training and Outreach Services, \$10, 7 pm*

**Les Trompettes** *Bridge View Center, \$5-\$15, 7 pm*

**Jason Stuart's Cobalt** *Blue Brothers Pub, Free, 8 pm*

**The Agency** *Parlor City, 8 pm*

**Kenny Rogers** *Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, \$39-\$59, 8 pm*

**Iowa City Music Scene Showcase (OSG, Crystal City, Surrounded By Giants, Unnamed Acoustic, Juan Manbando)** *Gabe's, \$7, 7:30 pm*

**Almost Kiss Tribute** *Poopy's Pub n Grub, Free, 8 pm*

**8 Seconds** *Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon, \$5, 9 pm*

**Never the Less** *Chrome Horse Saloon, 9 pm*

**The Candymakers** *11th Street Precinct Bar & Grill, 9 pm*

**Iowa City Music Scene Showcase (Item 9 & the Mad Hatters, Zeta June, Oculus, Flannel Season, For Richer or Poorer)** *Iowa City Yacht Club, \$7, 8 pm*

### SUN., MAY 11

**Sunday Funday** *Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon, Free, 11 am*

**UI School of Music Presents: Opera Workshop Spring 2014 Scenes Program** *Riverside Recital Hall at UI, Free, 2 pm*

**Nicolas Bonamici, Clarinet** *Grinnell College-Bucksbaum Center for the Arts, 2 pm*

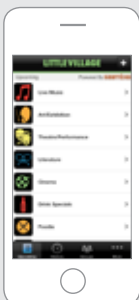
**Irish Jam with Tim Britton** *Cafe Paradiso, Free, 3 pm*

## ABOUT THE CALENDAR

THE *LITTLE VILLAGE* CALENDAR serves hundreds of area venues and reaches 150,000 readers per month. Listings are published free of charge at [littlevillagemag.com/calendar](http://littlevillagemag.com/calendar), on the free calendar app **Best of I.C.** (iOS, Android) and in *Little Village Magazine* (on a space-available basis).

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## MUSIC (CONT.)

**Marching Band Practice** *Public Space ONE, Free, 3 pm*  
**The Mississippi String Band** *Sutliff Cider Company, 3 pm*  
**Open Mic** *Charlie's Bar and Grill, Free, 4 pm*  
**Jumpship Astronaut** *Parlor City, Free, 6 pm*  
**Giant Questionmark, Juiceboxxx, DJ George Costanza, Ion Gabe's**, \$5, 10 pm

### MON., MAY 12

**Lipstick Homicide** *Gabe's, Free, 9 pm*

### TUES., MAY 13

**An Evening with Tommy Castro & The Painkillers** *River Music Experience, \$17-\$20, 7 pm*  
**The Dirty Bourbon River Show** *Legion Arts CSPA Hall, \$13-\$16, 7 pm*  
**Blues Jam** *Parlor City, Free, 8 pm*  
**Open Mic with Corey Wallace** *11th Street Precinct Bar & Grill, Free, 9 pm*

### WED., MAY 14

**The Icarus Account** *Blue Moose Tap House, \$8-\$10, 6 pm*  
**Burlington Street Bluegrass Band** *The Mill, \$5, 8 pm*  
**Heart of the Heart** *Gabe's, Free, 9 pm*

### THURS., MAY 15

**Siri Soul Storm** *11th Street Precinct Bar & Grill, 9 pm*  
**Gone South, Promiscuous School of Fish, Cedar County Cobras** *Iowa City Yacht Club, \$5, 10 pm*  
**Dueling Pianos** *Diamond Jo Casino, Free, 8 pm*

### FRI., MAY 16

**Java Blend Exclusive Hour With Dan Dimonte and the Bad Assettes** *Java House, Free, 2 pm*  
**Murder Death Kill, Leaders, Reformers** *Gabe's, \$10-\$12, 5 pm*  
**Duke Zecco** *Cedar Ridge Vineyards, Free, 6 pm*  
**Katrina Stonehart** *Public Space ONE, \$3, 6 pm*  
**Mickey Gilley** *Wild Rose Casino and Resort, \$15, 7 pm*  
**Minus Six** *Blue Moose Tap House, \$5, 8 pm*  
**Ian Moore** *Cafe Paradiso, Free, 8 pm*  
**Jam-E-Time** *Parlor City, 8 pm*  
**Jaiguru with Premasmile & The Effie Afton** *River Music Experience, \$5, 8 pm*  
**Phil Vassar** *Diamond Jo Casino, \$20, 8 pm*  
**Casey Donahew Band** *First Avenue Club, \$15, 8 pm*  
**The Sound Thoughts** *The Mill, \$5, 9 pm*  
**Well Lit** *Chrome Horse Saloon, 9 pm*  
**Playlist** *11th Street Precinct Bar & Grill, 9 pm*  
**Heatbox, Dead Larry** *Gabe's, \$10, 10 pm*  
**Friday Night Live at The Boogaloo Cafe** *Catfish Bend Casino, Free, 10 pm*  
**Winterland** *Iowa City Yacht Club, \$6, 10 pm*

### SAT., MAY 17

**Woodlawn Arts Academy Piano Recital** *Centennial*



**The Dream Center Presents Greg Brown | Englert Theatre—May 17, 8 p.m. (\$25-\$100) | Photo by Sandra L. Dyas**

Greg Brown is a folk legend. His 40-plus-year career is a monument to life in Iowa, and it's not just because one of his landmark albums is called *The Iowa Waltz*. Often described as one of the greatest songwriters of his generation, he is known for his intimate and wistful lyrics about small towns and farm-life, as well as his impassioned songs about politics and human dignity.

Whether it's because of his rich, relaxed voice or because of the simplicity of his writing style, there's also a layer of ennui to almost everything Brown sings. His warm, folksy sound harkens back to a quieter and simpler time, but Brown has been expertly reminding us for years that nostalgia can be painful.

It's fitting that he's playing a benefit show for The Dream Center, a local non-profit dedicated to helping fathers stay involved in the lives of their children. A father himself, music is the family business, it seems: One of Brown's daughters, Pieta, has received critical acclaim for her music, and all three of his daughters covered a song of his on *Going Driftless*, a 2002 tribute album which also featured country legends Gillian Welch and Lucinda Williams.

In addition to Brown's performance, the benefit show will feature performances by young artists, testimonies by Dream Center beneficiaries and a talk by Reverend Sam Mann.—*Max Johnson*



*Auditorium - Sterling High School, Free, 10 am*

**Live Lunch with Midwest & Dear Creek River Music Experience, Free, 12 pm**

**Woodlawn Arts Academy Piano Recital** Centennial Auditorium - Sterling High School, Free, 2 pm

**Ottumwa Symphony Orchestra Spring Gala** Bridge View Center, \$14, 5 pm

**Peder Eide Christian Rock Concert** First Lutheran Church, Free, 6 pm

**Girls Rock Benefit! w. Cone Trauma, Maiden Mars, Megan Buick** Public Space ONE, \$3, 6 pm

**David G. Smith CD Release Show** River Music Experience, \$5, 7 pm

**Jory Nash** Cafe Paradiso, Free, 8 pm

**Dave Chastain & the DC 3** Brothers Pub, Free, 8 pm

**Soul Fusion** Parlor City, 8 pm

**Mirah, Loamlands, Led to Sea** Gabe's, \$13-\$15, 8 pm

**Greg Brown (Dream Center benefit)** The Englert Theatre, \$25-\$100, 8 pm

**Lonesome Road** Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon, \$5, 9 pm

**Jake McVey** Chrome Horse Saloon, 9 pm

**Cobalt Blue** 11th Street Precinct Bar & Grill, 9 pm

**An Evening with Funkdaddies** Iowa City Yacht Club, \$7, 10 pm

**Graduation Dance PARTY** The Mill, 10 pm

**Club 84 Totally Awesome Dance Party** Diamond Jo Casino, Free, 9:30 pm

## SUN., MAY 18

**Sunday Funday** Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon, Free, 11 am

**Landscape: Ingelena Klenell and Beth Lipman** Figge Art Museum, Free-\$7, 12 pm

**Chamber Singers of Iowa City presents Durufle's Requiem** First United Methodist Church, \$5-\$17, 3 pm

**Irish Jam with Tim Britton** Cafe Paradiso, Free, 3 pm

**Marching Band Practice** Public Space ONE, Free, 3 pm

**The Swinging Doors** Sutliff Cider Company, 3 pm

**Open Mic** Charlie's Bar and Grill, Free, 4 pm

**Mirage: Jean Luc Ponty Project** Parlor City, Free, 6 pm  
Keir Neuringer, Public Space One, \$5, 7:30 pm

**Anomic** Gabe's, Free, 9 pm

**Karaoke with Emerald Johnson** 11th Street Precinct Bar & Grill, Free, 9 pm

## MON., MAY 19

**Clint Black** The Englert Theatre, \$40-\$70, 8 pm

## TUES., MAY 20

**Thomas Allen** Public Space ONE, \$3, 6 pm

**Student Music Recital** Woodlawn Arts Academy, 7 pm

**SHS Music Dept. Concert** Centennial Auditorium - Sterling High School, Free, 7 pm

**Blues Jam** Parlor City, Free, 8 pm

**Open Mic with Corey Wallace** 11th Street Precinct Bar & Grill, Free, 9 pm



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## ART/EXHIBITION

## ONGOING:

**THROUGH JUNE 15:** Landscape: Ingalena Klenell and Beth Lipman Figge Art Museum Free-\$7, 10 am

**THROUGH JUNE 8:** Corn Zone Figge Art Museum

**THROUGH MAY 25:** New Departures: Senior Art Show Augustana College Art Museum Free, 10 am

**THROUGH MAY 25:** Papier Francais Cedar Rapids Museum Of Art Free - \$5, 12 pm

**THROUGH NOVEMBER 2:** Marvin Cone on My Mind Cedar Rapids Museum Of Art Free - \$5, 12 pm

**THROUGH JUNE 5:** The Saint John's Bible Public Viewing Prairiewoods Free, 1 pm

**THROUGH MAY 11:** Conger Metcalf Cedar Rapids Museum Of Art \$0-\$5, All Day

**THROUGH MAY 25:** Poe: A wilderness of Mirrors Old Capitol Museum Free, All Day

**THROUGH MAY 16:** Art History Senior Exhibition: Whistler and His Contexts Augustana College Art Museum Free, All Day

**THROUGH JUNE 1:** Complex Conversations: Willie Cole Sculptures and Wall Works Faulconer Gallery, All Day

**THROUGH MAY 25:** People of the North Star Old Capitol Museum, All Day

**MAY 1 - SEPTEMBER 5:** Arbe Bareis & Crystal J.L. Hird Cedar Rapids Public Library-Ladd Library Free, All Day  
**THROUGH JUNE 1:** Jaroslava Sobiskova: Abstract Paintings Iowa Artisans Gallery free, All Day

**THROUGH JANUARY 2015:** Celebration! Rituals and Revelry of Life National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library \$3-\$10, All Day

**Images Gone With Time** National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library \$3-\$10, All Day (End date unknown. Check website for details)

**THROUGH MAY 25:** The Northwest Passage and Oceans Beyond: An Iowan Sails into History Old Capital Museum, Free, All Day

**May 2 - May 31:** Drawings by Anna Ullerich The Paper Nest, Free, All Day

**THROUGH JUNE 29:** Manned Mock Mars Mission (MMMM) CSPS Legion Arts, Free, All Day

**THROUGH JUNE 1:** Some Places on this Planet CSPS Legion Arts, Free, All Day

**THROUGH JUNE 1:** Ellen Wetmore CSPS Legion Arts, Free, All Day

## WED., MAY 7

**Art Bites** Cedar Rapids Museum Of Art, Free, 12 pm

## THURS., MAY 8

**Art Film: Exhibition on Screen: Munch 150** Figge Art Museum, Free, 7 pm

## FRI., MAY 9

**SEMBLANCE** opening reception Public Space ONE, Free, 5:30 pm

## SUN., MAY 11

**The Artist's Way** Prairiewoods, Free, 1 pm

## MON., MAY 12

**Mello** The Englert Theatre, \$12, 8 pm

## THURS., MAY 15

**Curator's Picks** Figge Art Museum, Free, 7 pm

## SAT., MAY 17

**Marion Arts Festival 2014** City Square Park, Free, 9 am

**Artists Respond to Community Challenges** Legion Arts CSPS Hall, Free, 9 am

**2014 Art at Heart Gala** Figge Art Museum, \$125+, 6 pm

**The Art Bar** Figge Art Museum, \$25-\$30, 8 pm

## SUN., MAY 18

**Art Museum Day** Cedar Rapids Museum Of Art, 12 pm

## SAVAGE LOVE

## BOUNDARY DISPUTES

When a partner's request crosses the line. • BY DAN SAVAGE

*I'm a 26-year-old lesbian 18 months out of an eight-year relationship. She was my first girlfriend. I do not want to be in another monogamous relationship. I want to have a couple of sex buddies or, preferably, a couple of friends with benefits. In the last 18 months, I have had three FWB "arrangements" with different girls. The problem is, about two or three months in, each girl developed serious like/love feelings and began talking about a future together and how they want to be with me exclusively. Each time, I had to reiterate my feelings about not getting into a relationship and wound up feeling like an asshole. I care about these women and don't want to hurt their feelings, but I told them the situation from the start. Am I a bad person? Or are FWB impossible?*

*Fears Wilting Boundaries*

Friends-with-benefits arrangements may not be committed relationships, but they are relationships. They're ongoing sexual relationships, and—you might want to sit down for this—people have been known to develop like/love feelings for folks they're fucking on a regular basis. So if "getting into a relationship" is something you want to avoid, and you don't want anyone developing feelings, you should have one-night stands and/or NSA sex instead. (Those are also relationships, in my opinion, but they're extremely short-term ones, and people rarely develop serious like/love feelings in a single sex session.) On to your questions: You are not a bad person. FWB are not impossible—there are a lot of successful FWB arrangements—and a desire for exclusivity or a future together is not proof someone entered into a FWB arrangement under false pretenses. And reiterating your disinterest in a committed relationship isn't asshole.





**Becky's New Car** | DREAMWELL THEATRE, UNIVERSAL UNITARIAN CHURCH | MAY 9-17 (\$10-\$13)

The name Steven Dietz may not come to mind when theatre-goers think of playwrights, but his plays are some of the most produced in America. In fact, according to the Theatre Communication Group, Dietz's plays are produced as much as (if not more than) those of Tennessee Williams, Edward Albee or George Bernard Shaw. So, why is he not as well known? Perhaps because he is a favorite among regional theatres instead of Broadway.

Dreamwell Theatre is producing Dietz's 2008 comedy *Becky's New Car*, a finalist for the American Theatre Critics Association's Steinberg New Play Award. Middle-aged Becky has a job at a car dealership that's stable but uninspiring. Her husband and son are loving but predictable. An encounter with a rich widower leads to an opportunity for excitement, but should Becky take the chance? Dietz uses a mixture of comedy and poignancy to examine the allure of "what if" that strikes when a woman thinks all of her big decisions are behind her.

Directed by Brian Tanner, *Becky's New Car* has audience participation built into the plot. If you attend a performance, you might have the opportunity to voice your opinion on Becky's predicament, or even help her along in her journey. —Jorie Slodki



*My question concerns my fiancé. He is 35 years old. Between the ages of 20 and 30, he was in and out of jail. He has admitted to me that while in prison, he had sex with a [trans woman]. I know he loves having sex with [cis] women, but I found out that he watches [a porn genre that features trans women who have penises]. He says he is just looking, but I know he masturbates to this [porn genre]. To be fair, he watches tons of porn featuring [cis] women. A lot. He loves watching [cis] women and having sex with [cis] women. My worry is that he wants to have sex with [trans women]. Is this a legitimate worry? He doesn't watch gay porn. I just want to make sure of everything if we are going to be married.*

*Fiancé Lusts After [Trans Women] Hottie*

You would be foolish to waste your time wondering whether your fiancé wants to have sex with trans women, FLATWH, as it's clear that your fiancé wants to have sex with trans women. The question you should concern yourself with is this: Can your fiancé be trusted to honor the monogamous commitment he's (presumably) about to make to you, or is he going to cheat on you with other trans and/or cis women? If you trust that he'll honor the

commitment he makes to you, then his taste in porn and his fantasies about other partners—trans or not—is irrelevant.

*I'm a married straight man. My wife and I have been married for five years. I thought my wife was GGG and open to new things, so six months ago I brought up my desire to wear lingerie—she did not react well. We struggled a bit but gradually got back to normal, with me just not mentioning it again. My birthday is in May, so I proposed a weekend of indulgence of my fetish as a birthday present. I thought that would be easy enough to accommodate. I was wrong and got totally and uncomfortably denied. I'm at a loss for what to do. I don't want to destroy a marriage over a small sexual interest, but I don't want to be locked into vanilla sex forever. Any advice on getting her to come around?*

*Partner Against Nighties That Intrigue Eager Spouse*

Someone can be "open to new things" without being "open to everything." So your wife might be up for exploring other sexual kinks, positions, and circumstances—hubby-in-lingerie isn't the only form of non-vanilla

sex out there—but seeing you in panties could be a "libido killer," a term coined by Emily "Dear Prudence" Yoffe. If that's the case, PANTIES, she may never come around. But if it's not a libido killer, if it's just something she hasn't had time to wrap her head around, your best course of action is to drop the subject for now. Let the wife see that your interest isn't all-consuming and you still enjoy vanilla sex in gender-conforming underpants, and indulging this particular kink may come to seem less threatening.

*Where can straight women find men who won't make odd sexual requests?*

*Dumped One Again*

*Graveyards.*

*On the Lovecast, Dan chats with graphic novelist Ellen Forney about dating when you're bipolar: savagelovecast.com. Contact: mail@savagelove.net; @fakedansavage on Twitter. Illustration by Joe Newton.*

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## THEATRE/ PERFORMANCE

### ONGOING:

**Mondays: Catacombs of Comedy** Iowa City Yacht Club, \$3, 10 pm

**Wednesdays: Open Mic - Comedy** Penguin's Comedy Club Free, 7 pm

### MAY 16 - 18

**UI Youth Ballet and School of Dance Spring Concert** Space Place Theater at UI, \$6-\$12, 7 pm

#### NEED DATES:

**THROUGH MAY 25: Ring of Fire: The Music of Johnny Cash** Old Creamery Theatre \$18.50-\$28, 2 pm

**THROUGH MAY 18: God of Carnage** Theatre Cedar Rapids \$10-\$15, 7 pm

**May 9 - May 11: Young Footliters Presents: Hansel & Gretel** Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$7-\$12

**Undergraduate Concert** Space Place Theater at UI \$6-\$12, 8 pm

**MAY 9 - 17: Becky's New Car** Dreamwell Theatre \$10-\$13, 7 pm

### WED., MAY 7

**Spoken Word** Uptown Bill's, Free, 7 pm

**West Side Story** Paramount Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$53-\$73, 7 pm

**Mark Poolos** Diamond Jo Casino, \$10, 8 pm

### THURS., MAY 8

**RTP Thursday Theatre Talk on Othello** Riverside Theatre Iowa City, Free, 7 pm

### FRI., MAY 9

**Introduction to Acting Showcase** Grinnell College-Bucksbaum Center for the Arts, 4 pm

**CAB Comedy Presents: Chris D'Elia** IMU Main Lounge, \$5-\$7, 10 pm

### SAT., MAY 10

**Shelly's Dance Studio Recital** Centennial Auditorium - Sterling High School, 1 pm, 7 pm

**Anthony Jeselnik** The Englert Theatre, \$29.50, 8 pm

### SUN., MAY 11

**Was the Word** The Englert Theatre, \$10, 7 pm

**Kyle Kinane** The Mill, \$12-\$15, 8 pm

### TUES., MAY 13

**Mike Birbiglia** The Englert Theatre, \$39, 7 pm

### WED., MAY 14

**David Dyer** Diamond Jo Casino, \$10, 8 pm

### FRI., MAY 16

**David Dyer** Penguin's Comedy Club, \$10, 7:30 pm

### SATURDAY, MAY 17

**UI Youth Ballet and School of Dance Spring Concert** Space Place Theater at UI, \$6-\$12, 7 pm

**David Dyer** Penguin's Comedy Club, \$10, 7:30 pm

### SUNDAY, MAY 18

**UI Youth Ballet and School of Dance Spring Concert** Space Place Theater at UI, \$6-\$12, 2 pm

## CINEMA

### ONGOING:

**Under the Skin** FilmScene, Through May 8, \$7-\$9

**Finding Vivian Maier** FilmScene, Through May 8, \$7-\$9

**Our Vinyl Weighs a Ton** FilmScene, \$7-\$9, (Opens May 9)

## PRO-TIPS

## FARTS AND OTHER PRESSING MATTERS

Welcome to *Pro-Tips with Wayne Diamante!* Do you have a nagging question or need advice from a celebrity accountant? Then look no further, because I am here to help. Maybe "help" is the wrong word, but make no mistake, I am definitely here! If you've got a question you need answered, then send it on over to askwaynediamante@gmail.com, and I'll do my best to weed it out of the staggering amount of emails I receive from the offices of the South African consulate asking for help with a financial pickle. They just need my social security number and bank account info! • BY WAYNE DIAMANTE

Dear Wayne,  
I like the smell of my own farts, is that weird?  
Sincerely,  
T-Bone

Dear T-Bone,  
There's nothing quite like the lusty vibrato and earthy aroma of a champion fart, is there? I'm talking about one of those meaty zingers that can clear out a church full of nuns. No it's not weird, and I commend you for your bravery in letting the world know about your weirdness. Sincerely,  
Wayne

Dear Wayne,  
My wife likes to hoard food. Not in a clinical-y sort of way, but let's just say she hangs on to shit. Know what I mean? I'm constantly finding jars and Tupperware full of science experiments gone horribly awry. Particularly disturbing is this one old carrot, limply flopping about the crisper, indiscreetly looking for a good time. How do I get her to throw this crap away?  
Sincerely,  
Tory



Dear Tory,

First, you should ask yourself why it bothers you so much. You see, Tory, maybe it's your problem. Just kidding—your wife is disgusting! My wife also hides a ton of ancient curiosities in the larder. The current champion so eclipsed the previous record holder that I can't even remember what it was. No recollection whatsoever.

Case in point: I was about to expand my daughter's culinary landscape with the introduction of "fish-sticks" during an awesome father/daughter night; however, my plan was foiled at the last by my wife, conveniently away on business. We'd gone and raced around the store, bought the least repulsive fish-sticks I could find, grabbed the tarter sauce and headed home for a taste of the high seas.

Fast forward: Everything is going smoothly, I bust out the t-sauce, the fish-sticks are hot



**Mistaken For Strangers** *FilmScene*, \$7-\$9, (Opens May 9)

**We Always Lie to Strangers** *FilmScene*, \$7-\$9, ( May 15 & 16)

**The Lunchbox** *FilmScene*, \$7-\$9, (Opens May 16)

**Blue Ruin** *FilmScene*, \$7-\$9, (Opens May 16)

### WED., MAY 7

**Movies Under the Dome: A Sea Change: Imagine a World Without Fish** *Old Capitol Museum*, 6 pm

### THURS., MAY 8

**Art Film** *Figge Art Museum*, Free, 7 pm

### SAT., MAY 10

**My Neighbor Totoro** *FilmScene*, \$7-\$9, 12 pm

**Bill Cunningham New York** *FilmScene*, \$7-\$9, 6 pm

### MON., MAY 12

**Spirited Away** *FilmScene*, \$7-\$9, 6:30 pm

**Mello** *The Englert Theatre*, \$12, 8 pm

### TUES., MAY 13

**Beer Hunter** *FilmScene*, Time/Price TBA, [icfilmscene.org](http://icfilmscene.org)

and ready to go and I open the cabinet for what I hope to be the coup de grâce: cocktail sauce. I'm trying to prepare her for fancy times. In any event, I locate the cocktail sauce I know is lurking in our cupboard and BOOM, my spider-sense explodes straight off the charts. Cocktail sauce is not supposed to be brown. This is in a factory-sealed jar, mind you.

Gingerly, I remove the jar—the label literally turning to dust in my hand—and I pop the top, only to find a black, goopy horror show that smells like the dark side of a fisherman's wharf. I take a gander at the stamped expiration date on the jar: July 2007. That's right, 2007. It's 2014. This fucking jar of cocktail sauce was expired by seven years. God knows when it was originally purchased. I bet it stays good in the jar for at least a year, or two.

The upshot here is that my wife has had a longer relationship with this condiment than she's had with me. Am I jealous? Yes, a little, of course. But what are you going to do? Apparently that's the lot in life we're resigned to my friend, forever one step behind expired foodstuffs and the women who love them.

Sadly,  
Wayne



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### FEATURING:

#### Thursday, May 15th

Opening Session:

**Lydia Brown**,  
Founder of Skywalk Group  
and Ascent

8:30am, Sheraton Iowa City

Lunch Keynote:

**Ben Gilbert**,  
Head of the Garage at Microsoft  
12pm, Englert Theatre

EntreFEST Street Festival  
featuring a Hog Roast with  
**Carl Blake**, creator of the  
World's Perfect Pig  
4-6PM, Iowa City Ped Mall

#### Dream Big, Grow Here Finals

6-9pm, Englert Theatre

#### Friday: May 16th

Morning Keynote:

**Scott Bush**,  
President of Templeton Rye  
8:30am, Sheraton Iowa City

Closing Keynote:

**Nate Kaeding**,  
Founder of Short's  
2:30pm, Sheraton Iowa City

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**Mistaken For Strangers** | FILMScene—OPENS MAY 9, VARIOUS TIMES (\$5-\$8.50)

One of the most well-established ways in which Capitalism defeats us is by finding increasingly devious ways to commodify nonconformity and general outsider-ism: Ask anyone who paid money for a Che Guevara T-shirt or considered being a rock star as a career move.

One of the more hilarious scenes in Tom Berninger's movie *Mistaken for Strangers* is when the director, in his film role as roadie for his brother Matt's band, The National, expresses disappointment at the lack of partying on tour. "You guys are so coffee house," he tells the drummer, "I thought it would be a little more metal."

The backstage, handheld, cinema verite footage leaves no doubt that for pretty much everyone except Tom, the band's tour is a job much more than an adventure. Shot between the tour to promote The National's fifth studio album, *High Violet*, and the initial songwriting sessions for *Trouble Will Find Me*, the film offers a good look into the day to day grind of being in an indie-rock band.

Berninger's main focus, however, is sibling rivalry, and he includes lots of hand wringing and self-analysis about his childhood with his soon-to-be-way-more-famous older brother, as well as extended interviews with their parents. The younger brother does not shy from self-deprecation. He presents himself much like Bart Simpson in the episode where Lisa becomes President and Bart begs his alpha sibling to make him the Secretary of Keepin' it Real. Berninger eventually gets fired from his roadie job for missing the bus and returns home for a period of somewhat tedious self-examination.

Despite the often depressive self-absorption, the film is very funny and substantially different from most behind-the-scenes 'rockumentaries'—most of the editing is done on Post-it notes, for example. If you approach this film wanting cool music videos of familiar National songs, you will be disappointed. But if you feel like you want to learn more about the indie rock industrial complex or want to know whether musicians in The National carry their IDs on stage when they perform, *Mistaken for Strangers* can help.—Warren Sprouse

## THE STRAIGHT DOPE

### IS DISEASE MUCH OF A PROBLEM IN THE U.S. NAVY?

*Just read of yet another cruise liner affected by norovirus. I served in the U.S. Navy for four years, crammed cheek to jowl with 3,000 other sailors, and we never once had any such problems. I never heard of any other naval vessels so afflicted either. What's the straight dope, Cecil? Does the Navy add some secret antiviral element to their coffee, or are those seagoing civilians just a bunch of pantywaists? Is there any record of any naval vessel being afflicted by norovirus? —A Cheshire County Shellback*

**A**ny naval vessel? That gives us a lot of leeway, Shelly. Assuming you'll also permit a little latitude in terms of gastrointestinal diagnosis, I give you the troop transport *Argentina*, which sailed from New York to Glasgow in the summer of 1943. Doctors never determined exactly what got into the men who embarked on that unfortunate voyage, but whatever it was, it lost no time getting out. Of more than 6,100 sailors and soldiers aboard, 3,000 reported sick with the trots (i.e., dysentery), and one died.

Despite the lack of a definite ID, the conditions that enabled the bug to flourish were obvious. The ship was severely overcrowded

and lacked adequate toilets, showers, and bunk space—the men had to sleep in shifts. The galleys and mess areas were in constant use and didn't have adequate equipment for washing and sterilizing dishes.

Four days out, a dysentery epidemic began, and the *Argentina* descended into chaos. The port physician who inspected the vessel on its arrival in Glasgow described a hellish scene. Stoves, tables, and nominally clean utensils were covered with rotting crud. Garbage was strewn everywhere and piled two or three inches deep around the filthy, overflowing trash cans. Troop quarters stank of vomit and diarrhea. "The latrines themselves were beyond description," the doctor wrote. "I can

## CALENDAR

### CINEMA (CONT.)

**THURS., MAY 15**

**Family Movie Night** Cedar Falls Library, Free, 6 pm

**SAT., MAY 17**

**Spirited Away** FilmScene, \$7-\$9, 12 pm

**SUN., MAY 18**

**Wet Hot American Summer** FilmScene, Time/Price TBA, [icfilmscene.org](http://icfilmscene.org)

**TUES., MAY 20**

**Howl's Moving Castle** FilmScene, \$7-\$9, 6:30 pm

### LITERATURE

**WED., MAY 7**

**Doctor Who Extravaganza** Cedar Rapids Public Library-Downtown, Free, 5 pm

**Kate Christenson** Prairie Lights Books, Free, 7 pm





**THURS., MAY 8**

**Bridges to Contemplative Living** with Thomas Merton  
*Prairiewoods*, \$5, 6 pm  
**Cheryl Strayed** *Prairie Lights Books*, Free, 7 pm

**FRI., MAY 9**

**Gabrielle Hamilton** *Prairie Lights Books*, Free, 7 pm

**SAT., MAY 10**

**Ladd Library Book Club** Cedar Rapids Public Library-Ladd Library, Free, 3 pm  
**Beth Howard** *Prairie Lights Books*, Free, 2 pm

**EDUCATION****ONGOING:**

**MAY 14 - 16: EntreFEST** various locations, \$119-189; See [entrefest.com](http://entrefest.com) for details

**THURS., MAY 8**

**Dream Big Finals** Englert Theatre, Free, 6 pm

**SAT., MAY 10**

**Chemists in the Library** Iowa City Public Library, Free, 1 pm

**SAT., MAY 17**

**Artists Respond to Community Challenges** Legion Arts  
 CSPA Hall, Free, 9 am

**FOODIE****ONGOING:**

**MONDAYS:** Coralville Farmers' Market Coralville  
 Community Aquatic Center Parking Lot, 3-6 pm

**TUESDAYS:** Iowa City Farmers' Market Iowa City  
 Marketplace, 3-6 pm

**WEDNESDAYS:** Iowa City Farmers' Market Ground level of  
 Chauncey Swan Ramp & Chauncey Swan Park Free, 5  
 pm

**Waits, Whiskey and ... Oysters?** Clinton Street Social Club  
 Free, 5 pm

**THURSDAYS:** Coralville Farmers' Market Coralville  
 Community Aquatic Center Parking Lot, 3-6 pm

**SATURDAYS:** Iowa City Farmers' Market Ground level of  
 Chauncey Swan Ramp & Chauncey Swan Park Free, 7 am

**SUNDAYS:** GLBTQ Community Pot Luck and Bingo Studio  
 13 Free, 6 pm

**MON., MAY 12**

**Sauvignon Blanc Wine Tasting** Devotay, \$30, 6 pm

**TUES., MAY 13**

**Chef at Play** with Chef Gianluca Baroncini *New Pioneer*  
 Food Co-op Coralville, \$25, 6 pm

**WED., MAY 14**

**Trivia Night** Mendoza Wine Bar, \$5, 8 pm

**THURS., MAY 15**

**EntreFEST: Street Festival** Downtown Iowa City, \$15, 4 pm

**TUES., MAY 20**

**Templeton Tasting** Devotay, \$30, 6 pm

**COMMUNITY****ONGOING:**

**MONDAYS:** Hatha Way Yoga *Prairiewoods* Free, 9 am

**TUESDAYS:** Seeing IS Believing, Visio Divina *Prairiewoods*  
 \$10, 10 am, 6 pm

**WEDNESDAYS:** Wednesday Women *Prairiewoods* Free, 10  
 am

**FRIDAYS:** *Prairiewoods* E.C.O. (Evolutionary Cosmic  
 Outing) Walking Group *Prairiewoods* Free, 12 pm

truly say I have never seen a United States transport in such deplorable sanitary condition.”

OK, exceptional case, thank God. Only a handful of other major dysentery outbreaks aboard U.S. naval vessels were reported during World War II. In fact, despite the scale and duration of the conflict, the overall incidence of disease in the U.S. military during the war was remarkably low.

Low compared to what? Why, all previous U.S. wars. *World War II was the first armed conflict in U.S. history where deaths of military personnel in combat exceeded deaths due to disease.* I make a point of this, Shelly, because you seem to think the Navy kept you and your fellow sailors out of sick bay with pixie dust. Not so—or anyway not entirely. Sure, antibiotics and vaccination helped enormously. But an equally important factor was the brass finally getting it through their heads to embrace basic principles of public health: Avoid contaminated food. Dispose of garbage. Keep the toilets clean.

Some statistics, drawn from *Two Faces of Death: Fatalities from Disease and Combat in America's Principal Wars, 1775 to Present*,

a 2008 paper by Vincent Cirillo:

- *Revolutionary War.* Disease deaths: 18,500. Combat deaths: 7,200. Ratio of disease to combat deaths: 2.6:1. Germs arguably were a factor in changing the course of U.S. history—the American invasion of Canada in 1775 was foiled by a smallpox outbreak.

- *World War II.* Disease deaths: 15,000. Combat deaths: 230,000. Ratio: 0.06:1. The tide turns.

Indeed, since then, U.S. military disease deaths in wartime have been minimal. That's not to say there's been no disease. Malaria was a major problem in Vietnam that was brought under control only after rigorous efforts to protect the troops from mosquitoes.

Which brings us back to the present, the U.S. Navy, and norovirus. Possibly up to this point you've been thinking: never mind the ancient history—today the Navy is the picture of healthy living. I call your attention to a medical journal article entitled “Epidemic Infectious Gastrointestinal Illness Aboard U.S. Navy Ships Deployed to the Middle East During Peacetime Operations—2000-2001.”

From this we learn as follows:

- During the two-year survey period, researchers identified 11 outbreaks of infectious gastrointestinal disease (IGI) on ten U.S. Navy vessels. “Our analyses indicate that IGI outbreaks are common occurrences aboard U.S. Navy ships in [the Persian Gulf],” they write. The most frequently encountered IGI: norovirus.

- During roughly the same era, IGI incidence on the cruise ships you speak of so disparagingly was about four outbreaks per 1,000 ship-weeks. In other words, Mr. Not-No-Norovirus-in-My-Navy, outbreaks of this icky condition on U.S. naval vessels (and having suffered through a bout of norovirus myself, I can testify that IGIs don't get much ickier) were about seven times worse.

—CECIL ADAMS

Send questions to Cecil via [straightdope.com](http://straightdope.com) or write him c/o Chicago Reader, 350 N. Orleans, Chicago 60654.



## COMMUNITY (CONT)

### WED., MAY 7

**Millhiser Smith Risk Management Institute** *Elmcrest Country Club, Free, 8 am*

### THURS., MAY 8

**Yoga in the Gallery with Jackie Hutchison** *Faulconer Gallery, 12 pm*

**Local Government Affairs** *Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce, Free, 7 am*

**Hired Help Tour** *Brucemore, Free, 6 pm*

## NEWS QUIRKS

### CURSES, FOILED AGAIN

• Authorities in Orange County, Calif., identified Franc Cano, 27, and Steven Dean Gordon, 45, as suspected serial killers because the two paroled sex offenders were wearing GPS trackers that placed them at the scene of four murders. “That was one of the investigative tools we used to put the case together,” Anaheim Police Chief Raul Quezada said. (Associated Press)

• Michael Briggs, 38, was convicted of murdering an 82-year-old retired nun in Albany, N.Y., based on fingerprints found at the scene after police Sgt. Darryl Mallard noticed the toilet seat had been left up in the bathroom. Since the victim lived alone, Mallard guessed the killer was a man who had used the toilet. Fingerprints from the toilet’s handle matched those of Briggs, who was on parole for robbery. (*Albany’s Times Union*)

### ODORIFIC NUPTIALS

A sewage treatment plant in Washington state is offering its facilities for weddings, touting its full catering kitchen, audiovisual equipment, dance floor and ample parking. The cost is \$2,000 for eight hours.

### FASHION WEEKEND *May 9-10—Downtown Iowa City, May 9-10*

For the first time ever, Iowa City Downtown District presents the first ever Fashion Weekend, a free two-day event that will bring fashion shows, trunk sales, styling lessons, cocktail parties and more to 27 businesses in the downtown and northside neighborhoods. Participating merchants will stay open until 8 p.m. on Friday for Fashion After Hours, and each store will offer live music, refreshments, talks with designers, art exhibits, mini spa experiences or sales. On Saturday, the event continues all day with The Party After the Party.

For Fashion Weekend, participating retailers will focus on trends for spring and offer shoppers treats, including coupons and free food. Other highlights include, a lipstick bar at Buzz and a champagne and nail bar at Revival, a palm reader at Textiles and a performance by Iowa City’s own Les Dames du Burlesque, also at Revival. See the Iowa City Downtown District website For a full list of participating retailers and more details on the event, visit [downtowniowacity.com](http://downtowniowacity.com).—*Alea Adigweme*

### FRI., MAY 9

**New Bo Open Coffee Club** *Brewed Cafe, Free, 8 am*

**BELL Biz Fair: End of Year Awards Ceremony** *Bedell Entrepreneurial Learning Laboratory, Free, 11 am*

### SAT., MAY 10

**Brucemore Plant Sale** *Brucemore, Free, 9 am*

**Shelly’s Dance Studio Recital** *Centennial Auditorium - Sterling High School, 1 pm, 7 pm*

### MON., MAY 12

**Yoga in the Gallery with Jackie Hutchison** *Faulconer Gallery, 12 pm*

### TUES., MAY 13

**Evening Centering Prayer** *Prairiewoods, Free, 5 pm*

**Mindfulness and Health** *Acupuncture of Iowa, Free, 7 pm*

**Two Wheels, Fifty Years Ago** *30th Century Bicycles, Free, 7 pm*

### WED., MAY 14

**Iowa City Open Coffee** *Iowa City Area Development Group, Free, 8 am*

**Old Pi to New Pi Family Ride** *New Pioneer Food Co-op Iowa City, Free, 5 pm*

Susan Tallarico, director of King County’s Brightwater Wastewater Treatment Center, explained that receptions would take place next to where raw sewage is processed but insisted there’s no odor because the process is contained. (*Seattle Times*)

### OPEN-DOOR POLICY

Officials in Vancouver, British Columbia, changed its building code to ban doorknobs on all new buildings. Instead, doors are required to have handles, making them more accessible to the elderly and disabled. Critics of the new rule note that handles also make doors easier for bears to open. In fact, knob advocates note that Pitkin County, Colo., has banned door levers on buildings specifically to prevent bears from entering buildings. Meanwhile, officials in Halifax and Pickering, east of Toronto, are asking their provincial governments to follow Vancouver’s example. (*The Economist*)

### SLIGHTEST PROVOCATION

• A woman celebrating her 30th birthday at a bar in Madison, Wis., attacked a disc jockey and broke his computer, headphones and microphone because she disliked his choice

of songs. “Partygoers were able to pull her away from the DJ’s table after the equipment was damaged, but she broke free and rushed the DJ, punching and scratching him on the face,” police official Joel DeSpain said, adding that the woman fled with her uncut birthday cake before police arrived. (United Press International)

### FORE, FIRE

Titanium-coated golf clubs used to hit balls out of the rough caused at least two fires in Southern California, including one that burned 25 acres, according to scientists at the University of California Irvine. Hoping to confirm the suspicions of fire investigators, the researchers re-created course conditions on the days of the fires. They found that clubs containing titanium can, if they strike a rock, produce sparks of up to 3,000 degrees that will burn for more than a second—“plenty of time” to ignite nearby dry vegetation, according to researcher James Earthman. Orange County Fire Authority Capt. Steve Concialdi advised golfers using titanium clubs who hit into rocks and dry vegetation to “improve their lie,” even if it means taking a penalty stroke. (Associated Press)



**Youth Human Rights Awards** *The Englert Theatre, Free, 7 pm*

## THURS., MAY 15

**Open Coffee Leadership Conversations** *ActionCOACH Heartland, Free, 7 am*

**RED-I Networking** *African American Museum of Iowa, 5 pm*

**Nooks and Crannies Tour** *Brucemore, Free, 6 pm*

**Men's Prayer Group: Getting Perspective on Life** *Prairiewoods, Free, 7 pm*

**Yoga in the Gallery with Jackie Hutchison** *Faulconer Gallery, 12 pm*

## FRI., MAY 16

**UI Youth Ballet and School of Dance Spring Concert** *Space Place Theater at UI, \$6-\$12, 7 pm*

## SAT., MAY 17

**Peder Eide Christian Rock Concert** *First Lutheran Church, Free, 6 pm*

## KIDS

### ONGOING:

**MONDAYS: Toddler Storytime** *Iowa City Public Library*

*Free, 10 am*

**Play & Learn at Ladd Library** *Cedar Rapids Public Library-Ladd Library Free, 10 am*

**TUESDAYS: Play & Learn at the Downtown Library** *Cedar Rapids Public Library-Downtown Free, 6 pm*

**WEDNESDAYS: Preschool Storytime** *Iowa City Public Library Free, 10 am*

**THURSDAYS: Story Time at Ladd Library** *Cedar Rapids Public Library-Ladd Library Free, 10 am*

**FRIDAYS: Play & Learn at the Downtown Library** *Cedar Rapids Public Library-Downtown Free, 6 pm*

**SATURDAYS: Family Storytime** *Iowa City Public Library Free, 10 am*

## FRI., MAY 16

**Playtime with Mimi** *Iowa Children's Museum, Free, 10:30 am*

## SUN., MAY 18

**Playtime with Mimi** *Iowa Children's Museum, Free, 1:30 pm*

## SCHOOL DAZE

Ray Moore, a candidate for lieutenant governor in South Carolina, said he favors replacing public schools with church-run schools because “we don’t see anything in the Bible about state education.” Moore said that if enough Christian families withdrew their children from public schools, which he calls “the Pharaoh’s schools,” and educate them at home or enroll them in religious schools, states would be compelled to hand over control of education to churches, families and private associations—“the way it was,” Moore declared, “for the first 200 years of American history.” (*The Raw Story*)

## FROM BAD TO WORSE

After Jerry D. Harlow, 47, reported that someone in a white vehicle stopped at his house in Richwood, W.Va., and shot him, police concluded that Harlow “shot himself in an attempt to avoid possible jail time for previously committed criminal activity.” Charges of being a felon in possession of a firearm and providing false information to police were added to his criminal activity. (*Beckley's The Register-Herald*)

## SUPPLY-AND-DEMAND FOLLIES

Hoping to resolve a nationwide condom shortage, Cuban health officials approved the sale of more than a million condoms that are past their expiration dates and ordered pharmacy workers to explain to buyers that the condoms are good and simply have the wrong expiration dates. The Communist Party newspaper Vanguardia reported that officials noticed erroneous expiration dates on the prophylactics imported from China and ordered them repackaged with the correct dates. But the state-run enterprise in charge of repackaging doesn’t have enough workers to handle the job, so the Public Health Ministry authorized their sale as is, noting the shelf life of condoms is very long. (*Miami Herald*)

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

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SHOW REVIEW: Bo Ramsey & Highway 12 at The Mill on April 19

The atmosphere at the Mill on Saturday night was one of joyous reunions, shouts of support and honest-to-goodness ass-shaking to celebrate the triumphant live return of Bo Ramsey—his first full-band show since 2009.

It's not that Bo hasn't been busy since then—he is the go-to producer for several artists, including opener Kelly Pardekooper who said Ramsey and his sideman-for-the-evening Dave Moore—another local legend—were his mentors when he lived in Iowa City as a struggling musician. Pardekooper lives in Indianapolis these days. “When Bo called to ask me to open for him, I said ‘Hell yeah!’” Ramsey is also a regular touring support for his wife Pieta Brown as well as Greg Brown.

Ramsey hit the stage along with an all-star lineup of Steve “The Chief” Hayes on drums, Marty Christensen on bass and Al Schares on lead guitar, reuniting one of the lineups of The Backsliders from the '90s. Joining them for percussion and general good vibes was Pieta Brown.

With no introductions, the band went from tuning directly into Ramsey's signature autobiographical song “Down to Bastrop,” the title track from a 1991 album that would establish the essential country blues sound that he is known for now. Aside from a couple of early “classics,” the setlist focused on his catalog beginning with Bastrop.

I overheard many conversations about seeing Ramsey back in the days when he played every little bar in Eastern Iowa. The crowd was hungry for a classic rockin' Backsliders show and they weren't disappointed. The set was punctuated with uptempo rockers like “Everything is Comin' Down,” which featured a fiery Mike Campbell-esque solo from Schares. By the time the band hit “Get Away,” a perennial fan favorite, the crowd overcame its initial shyness and quickly filled the floor with dancers, never letting up until the end of the show.

The room exploded with whoops and “oh HELL yeahs” when the band ripped into an unexpected cover of Led Zeppelin's “Rock and Roll” to wrap up the set. When the band encored with “Long Long Time,” the show seemed over too soon.

To paraphrase the opening lyric to that Zeppelin cover, it has been a long time since Ramsey rock and rolled. He was asked recently in an interview with [livegigshots.com](http://livegigshots.com) what inspired the reunion, and said “I haven't done a show with a band in a long, long time. And I thought it'd be a good time to do it. So, I called up my old mates and we are gonna do a gig and see what happens.” Here's hoping that it won't be so long before the next show.

—Mike Roeder



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## ART CITY

### >> STRANGE CAGE CONT. FROM P. 23

**Has your own style of poetry performance changed since running Strange Cage?**

For me, reading quietly off the paper was not to my strengths. For me, being authentic meant high energy, and I like these events, so it drives me even more. I have a book of Mad Libs poems, which are participatory and invite banter, and I can read it in a high energy way. And I have new poems now, and I'm very interested in the idea of bands I love, like Sonic Youth, that riff off on their own songs. In this new set of poems I'm writing, I improvise during them, so no two readings will be the same ...

**FOR ME, READING QUIETLY OFF THE PAPER WAS NOT TO MY STRENGTHS. FOR ME, BEING AUTHENTIC MEANT HIGH ENERGY ...**

—RUSSELL JAFFE

they design their own books, they make their own books, they do it all and they do it all for almost no money.

**So why are you moving to Chicago?**

I can't coast by on the adjunct money any more. When I met [my fiancée] Carleen, a lot of things changed, and a lot of things for me became clearer. Then we found out that we were having a baby, which was amazing, it just clicked ... Anyway, I want to be close to family who can help raise our child. I think it's time for new and exciting adventures.

**How are you feeling about hosting your last Strange Cage in Iowa City?**

The last one is important for me because Johannes Göransson and Joyelle McSweeney are not only two of my [favorite poets], but Johannes was the first real contemporary poet I read who really connected with me—he made a huge impact on me. I've been trying to get him since the second one, now finally at the last one he's going to be here reading. It's a full circle thing.

**What have been some Strange Cage high points?**

The biggest high point for me was when, over the summer 2013, we did Strange Cage 12 at the Englert, and I was on tour myself, and I had Chelsea Tadeyeske, and three poets who are on Write Bloody [Publishing]: Ben Clark, Josh Gaines and Stevie Edwards. They came through and crashed at my house, and for the first time I realized that we were at the forefront of contemporary American poetry. That the poet of 2013 is not just a poet but is a promoter, a traveler, a writer, a documentarian,

**Any other dreams for the future?**

My ultimate dream is an arena poetry reading, because it's never been done.

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*Lisa K. Roberts edits Iowa City Poetry and works with the Iowa Youth Writing Project to bring creative writing workshops to kids. She wants to interview you on the moon.*

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## ITEM 9 & THE MAD HATTERS

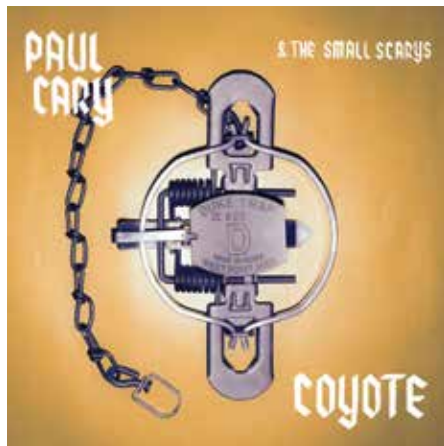
III  
item9andthemadhatters.com

Item 9 & The Mad Hatters was originally a cover band called Old Style, but in 2010 they added lead vocalist Adam Maxwell to the mix and made the transition to original tunes. The time spent honing their chops playing a variety of musical genres in Old Style paid off and is highlighted in the band's newest album, III, a funky stew of seemingly every rock and roll ingredient.

**AN ALBUM OF CONTRASTS, THE LAYERS OF NO DÉJÀ VU'S BIG GUITAR EFFECTS RECALL '90S ALTERNATIVE BANDS DINOSAUR JR. AND THE JESUS AND MARY CHAIN WHILE ALSO FEATURING FRAGILE, BEAUTIFUL STRINGS AND ACOUSTICS.**

The album is a sincere celebration of all of the music Item 9 clearly loves. It seems like a tribute, but at the same time it's a bit tongue-in-cheek with '70s prog rock leanings and references to Poseidon, Lord of the Rings' "Fall of Gondolin" and Alice in Wonderland.

On the album, Maxwell's powerhouse rock vocals remind me of a cross between Bret Michaels of Poison and Mike Patton of Faith No More. At times, he even brings to mind



Justin Hawkins' over-the-top screams of The Darkness. On "Don't Know Where to Go," Maxwell takes on a rap-singing style that reminds me of Red Hot Chili Peppers' loose and funky 1985 album Freaky Styley.

The energy that Item 9 & the Mad Hatters brings to their third album propels the elements of classic rock they've mined: The smudgy cloud of Sabbath guitars in "Poseidon's Wrath" gives way to a lighter, mellow mood change that brings context to the seemingly-disparate styles.

At the end of the day, rock and roll is never served best when it takes itself too seriously. Item 9 & The Mad Hatters brings on the rock party and has the skill to keep delivering.

—Mike Roeder

## PAUL CARY & THE SMALL SCARYS

Coyote  
paulcarymusic.com

Paul Cary's last album *Ghost Of A Man* was a go-for-broke alley brawl of a record: It was sparsely arranged, emphasizing Cary's voice and guitar. His newest album, *Coyote*, adds a full band that includes Russ Calderwood's bass and Adam Penly's greasy, distorted Farfisa filling much of the aural space left open on *Ghost*.

Up-tempo songs like "Daggers" and "Come Back Down" have the raw, driving sound of

Stooges or Yo La Tengo. But songs like "It's Alright" leave plenty of space for things to get spooky. Written about the disappearance of his grandfather, the first half of "It's Alright" pins Cary's wailing voice to single note lines from the guitar and organ. The spare beginning builds up to the savage entry of bass and drums in the middle of the song, and stretches out into an extended, drone-tinged instrumental groove.

"Lost Jump" has the garage-punk chug of Question Mark and the Mysterians. Layers of distortion nearly overwhelm the sound of every instrument; the drums sound like they're being played through speakers with ripped cones. You rarely hear dirty, overdriven production like this on a rock record; it's more

**"IT'S ALRIGHT" PINS CARY'S WAILING VOICE TO SINGLE NOTE LINES FROM THE GUITAR AND ORGAN. THE SPARE BEGINNING BUILDS UP TO THE SAVAGE ENTRY OF BASS AND DRUMS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SONG, AND STRETCHES OUT INTO AN EXTENDED, DRONE-TINGED INSTRUMENTAL GROOVE.**

the province of extreme industrial bands like Einstürzende Neubaten. Engineer/Producer Greg Norman is able to maintain some space and clarity in the songs despite the grunge and overload, which is a magic trick; in less experienced hands, these songs would collapse into mush.

Cary's dark, folk-tinged dirges would work fine as solo acoustic performances. Putting the Small Scarys to work on them adds a second (or third) dimension; you get great songs with weight that justifies the band stretching them out into trance-inducing kraut-rock-esque grooves.

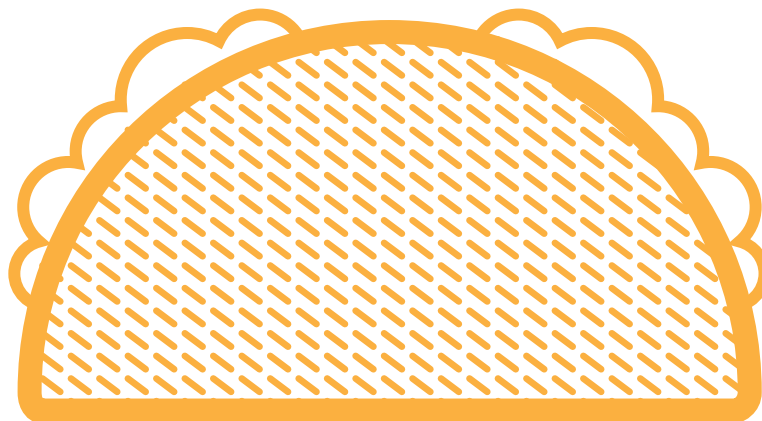
Every song on *Coyote* is about being lost, broken, in trouble, lonely and confused, and the damaged, gritty sound reflects that lyrical content. Cary's voice wails, breaks up and veers out of tune, his primary emotion is 'bereft.' He lives in a world where everything's dented, broken or shoved out of place. Something's wrong with Paul Cary, but sometimes wrong is right. **IV**

—Kent Williams



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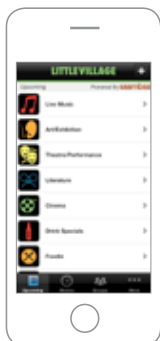
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**ARIES** (March 21-April 19): Fireworks displays excite the eyes and lift the spirit. But the smoke and dust they produce can harm the lungs with residues of heavy metals. The toxic chemicals they release may pollute streams and lakes and even groundwater. So is there any alternative? Not yet. No one has come up with a more benign variety of fireworks. But if it happens soon, I bet it will be due to the efforts of an enterprising Aries researcher. Your tribe is entering a phase when you will have good ideas about how to make risky fun safer, how to ensure vigorous adventures are healthy and how to maintain constructive relationships with exciting influences.



**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20): Free jazz is a type of music that emerged in the 1950s as a rebellion against jazz conventions. Its meter is fluid and its harmonies unfamiliar, sometimes atonal. Song structures may be experimental and unpredictable. A key element in free jazz is collective improvisation—riffing done not just by a featured soloist, but by the entire group of musicians playing together. To prepare for your adventures in the coming days, Taurus—which I suspect will have resemblances to free jazz—you might want to listen to music by its pioneers, like Ornette Coleman, Charles Mingus and Sun Ra. Whatever you do, don't fall prey to scapabodiddlywiddilydoobapaphobia, which is the fear of freestyle jazz.



**GEMINI** (May 21-June 20): Apple and Exxon are the most valuable companies in America. In third place, worth more than \$350 billion, is Google. Back in 1999, when the future Internet giant was less than a year old, Google's founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page tried to sell their baby for a mere million dollars. The potential buyer was Excite, an online service that was thriving at the time. But Excite's CEO turned down the offer, leaving Brin and Page to soldier onward by themselves. Lucky for them, right? Today they're rich and powerful. I foresee the possibility of a comparable development in your life, Gemini. An apparent "failure" may, in hindsight, turn out to be the seed of a future success.



**CANCER** (June 21-July 22): "You can't have your cake and eat it, too" is an English-language proverb. It means that you will no longer have your cake if you eat it all up. The Albanian version of the adage is "You can't go for a swim without getting wet." Hungarians say, "It's impossible to ride two horses with one butt." According to my analysis, Cancerian, you will soon disprove this folk wisdom. You will, in effect, be able to eat your cake and still have it. You will somehow stay dry as you take a dip. You will figure out a way to ride two horses with your one butt.



**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22): I know this might come as a shock, Leo, but . . . are you ready? . . . you are God! Or at least godlike. An influx of crazy yet useful magic from the Divine Wow is boosting your personal power way beyond normal levels. There's so much primal mojo flowing through you that it will be hard if not impossible for you to make mistakes. Don't fret, though. Your stint as the Wild Sublime Golden Master of Reality probably won't last for more than two weeks, three tops. I'm sure that won't be long enough for you to turn into a raving megalomaniac with 10,000 cult followers.



**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): In your imagination, take a trip many years into the future. See yourself as you are now, sitting next to the wise elder you will be then. The two of you are lounging on a beach and gazing at a lake. It's twilight. A warm breeze feels good. You turn to your older self and say, "Do you have any regrets? Is there anything you wish you had done but did not do?" Your older self tells you what that thing is. (Hear it now.) And you reply, "Tomorrow I will begin working to change all that."



**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Over a hundred years ago, the cattle industry pressured the U.S. government to kill off wolves in Yellowstone National Park. By 1926 the wolves had all but vanished. In the following decades, elk herds grew unnaturally big, no longer hunted by their natural predator. The elk decimated the berry bushes of Yellowstone, eating the wild fruit with such voracity that grizzly bears and many other species went hungry. In 1995, environmentalists and conservationists got clearance to re-introduce wolves to the area. Now the berry bushes are flourishing again. Grizzlies are thriving, as are other mammals that had been deprived. I regard this vignette as an allegory for your life in the coming months, Libra. It's time to do the equivalent of replenishing the wolf population. Correct the imbalance.



**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): I have no problem with you listening closely to the voices in your head. Although there might be some weird counsel flowing from some of them, it's also possible that one of those voices might have sparkling insights to offer. As for the voices that are delivering messages from your lower regions, in the vicinity of your reproductive organs: I'm not opposed to you hearing them out, either. But I hope you will be most attentive and receptive to the voices in your heart. While they are not infallible, they are likely to contain a higher percentage of useful truth than those other two sources.



**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Kangaroo rats live in the desert. They're at home there, having evolved over millennia to thrive in the arid conditions. So well-adapted are they that they can go a very long time without drinking water. While it's admirable to have achieved such a high level of accommodation to their environment, I don't recommend that you do something comparable. In fact, it's probably better if you don't adjust to some of the harsher aspects of your environment. Now might be a good time to acknowledge this fact and start planning an alternate solution.



**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): "Those who control their passions do so because their passions are weak enough to be controlled," said writer William Blake. I think you will challenge this theory in the coming weeks, Capricorn. Your passions will definitely not be weak. They may even verge on being volcanic. And yet I bet you will manage them fairly well. By that I mean you will express them with grace and power rather than allowing them to overwhelm you and cause a messy ruckus. You won't need to tamp them down and bottle them up because you will find a way to be both uninhibited and disciplined as you give them their chance to play.



**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Would you please go spend some quality time having non-goal-oriented fun? Can I convince you to lounge around in fantasyland as you empty your beautiful head of all compulsions to prove yourself and meet people's expectations? Will you listen to me if I suggest that you take off the mask that's stuck to your face and make funny faces in the mirror? You need a nice long nap, gorgeous. Two or three nice long naps. Bake some damn cookies, even if you've never done so. Soak your feet in epsom salts as you binge-watch a TV show that stimulates a thousand emotions. Lie in the grass and stare lovingly at the sky for as long as it takes to recharge your spiritual batteries.



**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20): Dear Pisceans: Your evil twins have asked me to speak to you on their behalf. They say they want to apologize for the misunderstandings that may have arisen from their innocent desire to show you what you had been missing. Their intent was not at all hostile or subversive. They simply wanted to fill in some gaps in your education. OK? Next your evil twins want to humbly request that you no longer refer to them as "Evil Twin," but instead pick a more affectionate name, like, say "Sweet Mess" or "Tough Lover." If you promise to treat them with more geniality, they will guarantee not to be so tricky and enigmatic.

—Rob Brezsny





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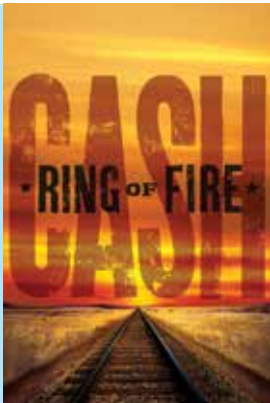
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