



LITTLE VILLAGE

IOWA CITY'S NEWS & CULTURE MAGAZINE

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TAXI TANGLE

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PROTECTING WHO?

Though SWAT teams are deployed relatively rarely in Johnson County, the encounters that ensue can destroy homes and leave residents feeling anything but safe. • BY ADAM B SULLIVAN

It was a late Tuesday morning last December, and Erin Sullivan had been home with her newborn baby for just a day. As she sat down in her front living room to feed her four-day-old son, there was a pounding on the door.

According to Sullivan's account of the story, she got up, baby in her arms, and walked toward the door. Just before she could reach for the knob, the house was rocked, the windows crashed in, shots were fired at the door and she heard two disorientingly loud bangs.

Sullivan says she ran to her nearby kitchen to squat behind a counter as Johnson County cops in SWAT gear stormed inside equipped with long guns, all-black clothes and headgear. Her repeated pleading, "I have a baby," was met with officers yelling at her to get on the ground. After what seemed like a full minute of chaos, an officer noticed the infant, announced it to his colleagues and Sullivan and her son were escorted out the back door to the unheated garage.

The young mother says she sat in the garage for nearly an hour as cops searched every inch of her home. They eventually brought her inside as they finished the search, asked her some questions and told her they were taking a few of her things, including her legally possessed firearm.

After the two-hour ordeal, Sullivan was left to piece together her ravaged home—no front door, no living room windows, burns on the carpet and belongings strewn about. It would take two months and roughly \$3,000 to get her home mostly back to normal.

"Everything in every cupboard, every closet, every drawer, was no longer in its place. They did a total search of the house," Sullivan said.

Sullivan learned that the raid was part of a Johnson County Drug Task Force investigation on the father of her son. He has a lengthy legal history and there are charges against him now, but Sullivan says he wasn't living in her home, there wasn't anything illegal going on at the home and no contraband was found there.

"I don't understand why they decided to come into my house the way they did and put me and my son in danger the way that they did," Sullivan said.

She wonders why police are going into family neighborhoods without caution for children. If cops were investigating the home, didn't they notice the pregnant woman or newborn baby?

The Iowa City Police Department uses a "risk matrix" to determine situations that require the department's Special Response Team. For instance, the team may be called in if a suspect or someone "associated with the address" has a history of violence.

Iowa City cops say they do take care to avoid harm to children or other innocent bystanders, but since they won't comment on open and pending cases like Sullivan's, it's not clear whether cops knew there was a baby in the home or whether they took specific precautions in this case.

"A significant amount of intelligence goes into that to determine when the least number

of people will be home, try to make sure kids aren't there, try to get people outside the residence," Iowa City Sgt. Scott Gaarde said.

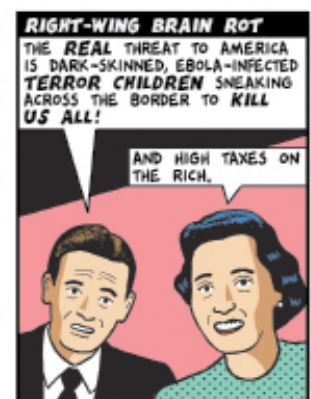
Special Response, or Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), teams are common across the country and have been around for a few decades. They began as a tool for responding to urgent threats like hostage situations and active shooters, but are now usually used for planned operations, like to serve search warrants, often for drugs.

Special Response Team officers carry much more powerful gear than a cop on the street: ballistic coverings, tactical weapons, breaching shotguns, chemical munitions and more. Local cops also have access to a mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles—military surplus from Kuwait, acquired as part of the federal government's 1033 program.

A report from the American Civil Liberties

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



Union earlier this year analyzed 800 domestic SWAT deployments between 2011 and 2012 (that's a lot, but not all, of the SWAT raids in those years, and it's unclear how the ACLU gathered the police department data). In the vast majority of cases the ACLU studied, 79 percent, special response teams were used to search homes rather than to respond to an imminent violent threat.

"What constitutes a 'high-risk' scenario depends largely on the subjective beliefs of the officers involved. This lack of clear and legitimate standards for deploying SWAT may result in the excessive and unnecessary use of SWAT deployments in drug cases," the authors of the ACLU report wrote.

Here in Iowa City, the SWAT team is used relatively rarely. Most recently, the Special Response Team was called in for a standoff situation in mid-October when a man allegedly made threats to hurt his neighbors. That situation was resolved without injury as the man exited the home after talking with crisis negotiators.

The local SWAT team was used just seven times over the course of 12 months in records obtained through an open records request. Between June 2013 and this past May, Iowa City used its Special Response Team in four drug searches and three potential weapons threats.

More attention has been paid to this style of policing since Ferguson, Missouri, cops drew criticism over the summer for their aggressive response to citizen protests. Sullivan said she's paid attention to the issue and she's hopeful more Americans are growing concerned too.

Still, the myriad law enforcement controversies swirling around have her questioning whether she feels safe raising her son here in Iowa City.

"If I'm at home and I see a police officer driving around the neighborhood, cars driving around slowly, especially at nighttime, it makes me very nervous," Sullivan said. "Unless there's something really big, I don't know if I would ever call the police and come assist me." **IV**

Adam B Sullivan is an activist and freelance journalist in Iowa City.

COLLATERAL DAMAGE | A fruitless SWAT deployment left the home of Johnson County resident Erin Sullivan torn apart. Photo courtesy of Erin Sullivan

AFTER THE TWO-HOUR ORDEAL, ERIN SULLIVAN WAS LEFT TO PIECE TOGETHER HER RAVAGED HOME—NO FRONT DOOR, NO LIVING ROOM WINDOWS, BURNS ON THE CARPET AND HER BELONGINGS STREWN ABOUT.



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RAVIOLI NIGHT

Butternut squash and sage give traditional pasta an autumnal edge.
BY FRANKIE SCHNECKLOTH

While there is nothing particularly difficult about the recipe itself—no fancy French techniques or special equipment—it does require a bit of time. You might feel slightly intimidated by the thought of making your own pasta, but trust me, it's pretty basic and beginner friendly.



STEP ONE: MAKE THE PASTA DOUGH

Start by mounding flour on a clean counter or in wide bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour and place eggs, salt and olive oil into the well. Use a fork to beat the eggs lightly. Gradually add flour to the eggs using your hands or a fork until all the flour is incorporated. Make sure the dough isn't too stiff or too sticky, and adjust to a smooth consistency by adding water or more flour as needed.

Knead the dough for 10 minutes until it is smooth and stretchy. Divide into four pieces, and wrap the individual dough balls loosely in

plastic wrap. Let rest at room temperature for an hour while you make the filling.

STEP TWO: PREP THE FILLING

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Peel squash and then cut into roughly one-inch by one-inch cubes. Place on a baking sheet and put in oven. After 30 minutes, flip the squash over and roast 10-15 more minutes. Then, take squash out of the oven and let cool for 10 minutes. Combine squash with sage, parmesan and salt in a food processor and puree until smooth. Set aside.

INGREDIENTS:

PASTA DOUGH:

- 2 CUPS UNBLEACHED, ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR**
- 3 LARGE EGGS**
- 1/2 TEASPOON SALT**
- 1 TEASPOON OLIVE OIL**

SQUASH FILLING:

- ONE MEDIUM BUTTERNUT SQUASH, HALVED WITH SEEDS REMOVED**
- 5-7 SAGE LEAVES**
- 1/2 CUP GRATED PARMESAN**
- SALT TO TASTE**

STEP THREE: ROLL THE DOUGH

Roll out pasta into very thin, 4-inch wide sheets. You can use a hand-crank pasta maker, an electric pasta roller or roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface. Cut the perimeter of the dough so that it is in the shape of a rectangle. Repeat with another piece of dough.

STEP FOUR: FILL AND SEAL

With your pasta sheets ready, it's time to make the ravioli. Using one sheet, make two rows of 1/2-teaspoon mounds of the squash filling spaced one inch apart. Use your finger to trace water around each piece of filling. Lay your second pasta sheet over top and press down so that the two sheets adhere around the squash mounds. Cut the sheet around each squash mound to make ravioli, being sure that each piece is sealed around the edges. Dust a



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Early morning tailgating before Hawkeye home games can be a challenge for us night owls. Groggy and perhaps a teensy bit hung over from Friday evening activities, when the 11 a.m. kickoff rolls around on Saturday morning, I thank god for coffee stout.

Steroid Stout, a coffee/chocolate stout brewed by Kalona Brewing Company, is tasty, roasted, espresso-like goodness that is highly drinkable and provides a little caffeine boost that is much appreciated at 9 a.m. on game days. Weighing it at 7.6 percent ABV and packaged in 32-ounce mini-growlers, it should be shared (or consumed over the course of the game).

Pour into a favorite pint glass. The color is opaque black and two fingers of dense, tan, buttery head will dissipate slowly, leaving a frothy cap, a thick ring around the edge and lacing stuck to the glass. Roasted malts are the most prominent aspect of Steroid Stout's aroma; they impart the pleasing and invigorating smell of espresso. Dark chocolate is also in the background, and oats give the aroma an enticing richness.

The mouthfeel of Steroid Stout is smooth and velvety, reminiscent of an oatmeal stout. "Coffee, coffee, coffee" is how the brewery describes the flavor, and it is a spot-on description. The flavor of roasted malt is most prominent, mirroring the espresso-like characteristics in the aroma, and a lasting bitterness coats the mouth after each sip. Dark chocolate, hints of dark fruit and a little caramel and toffee are also noticeable. Despite the higher ABV, the taste of alcohol is completely masked.

SERVING TEMPERATURE: 50-55°F

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 7.6 percent ABV

FOOD PAIRINGS: Match the robust roasted aroma and flavor with roasted, smoked or barbecued food. Steroid Stout also pairs well with chocolate truffles, brownies and coffee cake.

WHERE TO BUY: Steroid Stout is available at most major retailers. It can also be found on tap at Kalona Brewing Company (405 B Ave., Kalona) and a number of fine local establishments.

PRICE: \$10 per 32-ounce "gentleman's forty" **lv**

Casey Wagner works and lives in Iowa City.



baking sheet with flour and place ravioli on sheet so that the pieces don't touch. Use the remaining dough and filling to make another batch of ravioli.

STEP FIVE: BOIL AND SERVE

Cook the ravioli in boiling salted water. Fresh pasta will cook faster than dried, so after three to four minutes, check in as it should be ready (the thinner the pasta dough, the faster it will cook). When pasta is ready, drain. To serve, sprinkle ravioli with toasted hazelnuts and toss with olive oil that has been heated slightly in a pan with minced garlic. *Recipe adapted from Joy of Cooking. lv*

Frankie Schneckloth lives and works in Iowa City.

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IOWA CITY'S WILD TAXI TRIP

With taxis in Iowa City already highly unregulated, and impending newcomers like Uber, what does the future have in store for the local car service industry? • **BY SEAN PRECIADO GENELL**

On a typical weekend in downtown Iowa City, the streets are lined with taxi cabs of various color, make and model. A mosaic of logos and light-up displays stands idle in the center turning lanes, loading zones and alleyways—and they're all waiting for you.

But how does a relatively small town of about 70,000 residents come to support such an extensive network of car service companies? Does Iowa City have room for potential newcomers like Uber and Lyft, and will such companies disrupt the existing market for better or worse?

To better understand how car services in Iowa City got to its current state, and where they're heading in the future, we should consider the history of car services already available in the area.

A HISTORY OF THE IC TAXI INDUSTRY

For two decades there were only two major cab companies in town: Old Capitol Cab (OCC), opened in 1985 by Norb Schulte, and the outfit that became Yellow Cab of Iowa City.

Initially, growth was slow for both companies and their fleets were filled with raggedy cars. They didn't face much competition until late 2003 when Chris Griffin came to the helm of Black & Gold Cab Company.

Griffin's cabs stood out at once. They were town cars and a big van, not used cop cars or grocery getters. They were always clean, non-smoking and never banged up.

"That was one thing he was real proud of," said James Parsons, who began driving for Black & Gold in 2004. "He brought a sense of class and legitimacy to the job."

Black & Gold also accepted credit cards for payment, used digital walkies for communications and installed taximeters to clock fares. Griffin picked up lucrative local contracts that the other companies had fumbled.

In September 2005, higher demand had brought more cabs to the road than ever. Marco's Taxi opened on the first football weekend, joining upstarts Redline and Five Stars. Yellow Cab, meanwhile, began hiring drivers as independent contractors to offset rising costs; drivers began fleeing to the new

companies.

"What really opened the floodgates was OCC shutting down," said Parsons.

In late summer, Old Capitol Cab succumbed to insolvency. Veteran drivers fled to Marco's for work. Other outfits rushed to fill the vacuum with their own cabs.

By 2007, 15 taxi companies were operating 77 cabs in Iowa City, up from 2003's rough count of three competitors and 40 vehicles. Local demand for car services remains high today with nine companies representing 133 cars driven by 270 registered drivers.

While demand has steadily risen, Parsons says business has ever-dwindled as vehicles flooded the market over the last decade. He adds that the general morale of service-based professionalism has plummeted with the sense of decorum.

"Nothing says 'commitment' like ransom lettering in the windows," said Parsons, referring to companies that run unpainted cabs. "The difference is we want people to keep calling us. We don't expect people to take us once and never call again. Better business is built by providing proper service."

Parsons describes much competition as outsiders leeching off business at peak times. "Most don't know the town, and some don't even live here. And I mean in the state of Iowa. They just show up when it's busy."

He further estimates half the available cabs don't emerge until midnight.

"I'll see [competition] sit for three hours without moving," he said. "Their business comes at bar close. People wander out to find cabs that've been sitting for hours. And then they get ripped for a \$60 ride home to North Liberty."

Geoff Kacer, another industry veteran, contends the throng of cabs are unnecessary and don't accurately reflect demand.

"We handled the same business more efficiently with fewer cabs and fewer companies," which he equates with less confusion and less trouble.

Driving bar rush among only 40 cabs used to be an exhilarating, and outrageous, multi-hour experience for Iowa City cab drivers. But those are wild old times. Today, divided between 133 cabs, the curbs are clear in 20 minutes.



T H E U B E R T R U T H

The Perception:

Uber, posterboy for the "sharing economy," offers great part-time work for flexible individuals who can make money when they can, fitting in jobs like driving cars or delivering groceries into their busy, fulfilling lives.

The Reality:

- Uber is not a side gig for many drivers, but a full-time job they rely on to get by in a tough economy.
- Since launching, Uber has drastically cut its fares, so drivers across the country are reportedly working 12-hour days, some only making minimum wage.
- Uber takes at least 25 percent of all fares drivers collect.
- Uber doesn't pay for things like car maintenance and insurance.
- Uber drivers can be "de-activated" (read: fired) any time.
- Because Uber drivers are contract workers, they have few ways to have their grievances addressed.

Occupancy Uber:

- This summer, drivers in California launched the California App-based Drivers Association, or CADA, with the support of the Teamsters union to promote justice for Uber driver.
- Recently, Uber drivers in Santa Monica, San Francisco, Chicago, New York and London turned off their phones for three hours to protest their working conditions.

—Mara Kardas-Nelson



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THE ACCOUNTABILITY PROBLEM

Iowa City taxi regulations didn't change much during the 20 years of static competition between Yellow Cab and Old Capitol. But in 2004, Griffin began pushing the Iowa City City Council to strengthen regulations, notably in that all taxis should be equipped with working taximeters and non-smoking.

Major provisions since have been a mixed bag for both companies and drivers. A complete 2006 overhaul required the use of taximeters and a minimum number of drivers. Yet the single color scheme requirement was dropped.

Amendments in 2012 required a company to operate an office with 24-hour dispatch, yet shifted the issuing of driver identification badges from the city onto the hiring company.

A push to deregulate the minimum driver and 24/7 dispatch office requirements also emerged. Proponents argue such requirements prevent small, would-be innovators from entering the market.

Incremental deregulation has already led to bad business in Iowa City. Since the color scheme has been dropped, for example, American Taxi has in its fleet a yellow van in the exact shade of Yellow Cab.

Sheer taxi volume also no longer indicates the most dependable or important car services. And with so many options, riders don't always know with which company they're riding.

What cabdrivers want to see in Iowa City leadership falls directly in line with the changes that Iowa Police City Chief Samuel Hargadine recommended to the city council in August.

"The City needs to go back to issuing badges," says Norb Schulte.

As a fare, you'll notice this badge could well be a half-sheet of copy paper showing the driver's name and in-house driver number, as opposed to the number assigned by the city.

"There needs to be 24/7 dispatch in an office," says Parsons.

A lack of dispatch office indicates a taxi company hasn't much business to manage except for flags and "specials" calling on drivers' cell phones. Owners are taking short cuts when requiring drivers to dispatch from the taxi, creating an unnecessary and wholly avoidable danger.

Earlier this year, Chief Hargadine underlined the problem

of not having regulated cab company infrastructure when he told *The Gazette* that officers, due to cab company disorganization, had to spend more than 200 hours tracking down drivers and collecting information during a police investigation. At the time, Iowa City police were in pursuit of a cab driver facing allegations of sexual assault.

Manifest logs, which contain these details, could enter the chain of evidence in criminal investigations and should be at companies' fingertips. Further deregulations will lead to continued unaccountability.

But never mind what the law books say. The greatest problem with the local regulations has been the lack of enforcement of the existing rules.

As a dispatcher, I twice met with an officer making rounds to ensure the 2012 ruling that companies maintain a 24/7 dispatch office. To date, only Yellow Cab and Marco's Taxi abide that ruling.

"If [police] called Yellow Cab, they'd get an answer," says Schulte. "Most nights there is a manager on duty."

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

Relationships between local police and cab companies have suffered in ways that extend beyond mere disorganization, however.

"With fewer cabs and fewer companies, the rapport between cabbies and city police was stronger," said Schulte, owing to the fact that the industry was a much smaller community not so long ago.

Cops and cabbies see the same folks in their backseats, and once knew each other enough to chitchat and share war stories. Few crimes may have been prevented or solved, but it did lubricate the system of serving and protecting the community.

"This changed," adds Schulte.



“We had a rapport that’s not there anymore.”

Would it be any better if cabbies had a stronger rapport with the cops?

The old man shrugs.

“There’d be better understanding. But there’s too many knuckleheads.”

THE WOES OF OVERHEAD

Running a car service is expensive. First year estimates for a four car operation are pegged at \$91,000, which does not cover an in-house mechanic or farming repairs at market rate. This also doesn’t include the unseen and constant fees for fuel, fluids, mechanical parts and pleasurable configurations. The heavy cost is a central point for those calling for deregulation.

And at 200 miles per 12 hour shift, vehicles in public service start to fall apart within two years of regular use.

“Tires and alternators can kill a company,” says Geoff Kacer.

The cost of doing business has been a major force on the local market. Consider cabs left to bad repair; Old Capitol’s dissolution and Yellow Cab hiring drivers as independent contractors while the numbers of competition exploded. And consider too that in 2012 Marco’s Taxi was forced by the IRS to reclassify its drivers as employees, a move that coincided with a cut in driver’s wages.

Black & Gold petered out within a year of Old Capitol going under. Though Griffin got his wish that taximeters should be installed in all Iowa City taxis, he got squeezed out of business by lesser forces. His company’s presence was replaced by a dozen fledglings, each driving like a maniac to snatch up an increasingly narrow slice of pie.

THE FUTURE OF IC CAR SERVICES?

While conversations between cab companies and local authorities should offer some hope to solving some of the Iowa City taxi industry woes, there are rumors that—between the classified ads and emails targeting drivers in our area—Uber ride-share service is coming to town.

Uber markets itself as an efficient way to get around for the tech-savvy consumer (all business is conducted through a smart-phone app, from the hailing, to the payment), and an easy part-time gig where drivers abracadabra the family Prius into a part-time workhorse.

Should such a service come to Iowa City, there’s little doubt as to whether or not it

would have a disruptive effect on the local cab industry. Whether or not this will be a net-win for consumers is still unclear, however, and local cabbies have been understandably cool on the issue.

Perry Rasmussen, an 18-year veteran of taxi driving who resides in Iowa City, has a dark outlook on this business model.

“Uber is a corporation designed to funnel money upwards to owners and investors on the backs of workers who are asked to do more with less in an increasingly unregulated and under-insured system,” he said. “They cut out all the overhead by forcing their drivers to shoulder it all.”

He predicts that if Uber comes to Iowa City, two things will happen: “Uber will get worse,” said Rasmussen, “and existing taxi companies will get worse.”

The factors that favor the San Francisco-based ride-sharing service, such as widespread deregulation and limited legal liability, are exactly the issues that are trying to be solved within the Iowa City taxi industry. On its recruitment page, Uber highlights in all caps “NO OFFICE, NO BOSS” emphasizing the lack of oversight or dispatcher as a positive.

Questions also remain regarding the lasting appeal of Uber’s pitch to drivers. Some have argued that Uber will be hard-pressed to keep workers once drivers realize how quickly vehicles begin to fall apart under the strain of running fares. Uber’s answer to overhead is to displace all expenses squarely on its driver operating a personal vehicle. And considering the company’s rigorous vehicle standards, not to mention the impending toils of car maintenance already observed by the cab industry, Uber’s sales pitch starts to lose a bit of its luster.

Despite these concerns, there are no doubt those in Iowa City who look forward to Uber’s arrival. For some riders, the taxi they’ve called will never arrive quickly enough, and the next Uber will always be the best option.

For some, however—especially those with a certain amount of nostalgia for our city’s taxi industry—there will be time enough waiting for a preferred cab to yearn for those wild old times. **IV**

Sean Preciado Genell was 12 years a driver and dispatcher for two cab companies. He’s spun those experiences into the adventures of Vic Pasternak in the fictional series Haulin’ Ass and Business as Usual for Little Village. However, he no longer works in the industry and doesn’t stand to profit from anything written here.

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CLASSIC PUNK GOES ELECTRONIC

Before creating electronic music, Craig Leon produced records by legends like The Ramones and Blondie. Here's the secret history of punk's electronic-music innovator. • BY KEMBREW MCLEOD



Craig Leon made a name for himself producing the first New York punk records by The Ramones, Richard Hell & The Voidoids, Blondie and Suicide. But who knew he was also a groundbreaking electronic music artist?

In 1980, Leon's debut album *Nommos* was released on Takoma, an independent record label set up by avant-folk artist John Fahey. This hypnotic, droning work of space-aged psychedelia promptly sunk into obscurity, as did his 1982 follow up, *Visiting*.

They have since been recognized as innovative works that were well ahead of their time—or, perhaps, from another solar system. It's therefore fitting that the albums were reissued this fall as a double LP set titled *Anthology of Interplanetary Folk Music Vol. 1* (RVNG Intl.). A CD version of the same music was released by Aparte/Harmonia Mundi Worldwide under the name *Craig Leon: Early Electronic Works*.

Just how does one go from producing seminal 1970s punk records to making an album for a classical label like Harmonia Mundi? From Leon's point of view, his involvement in the New York music underground wasn't a random detour from his classical music roots. In fact, he viewed punk as an extension of the experimental art music tradition that appealed to him as a teen in the 1960s.

"Music was really esoteric back then," says Leon, who now primarily works as a classical

PRODUCTION PARTNERS | Leon performs with his wife Cassell Webb, pictured here in their U.K. studio. Photo courtesy of Craig Leon

music producer. "In pop music you could have a show that would have Terry Riley opening up for the Mothers of Invention as the second act, and Hugh Masekela as the headliner and nobody would think anything about it. Genres were crossed very easily."

This open-minded approach to music explains Leon's deep love for Suicide, an iconoclastic duo consisting of keyboardist Marty Rev and vocalist Alan Vega. Starting in 1970, they jettisoned the traditional bass-drum-guitar rock band lineup in favor of keyboards, drum machines and a confrontational attitude.

"In 1972 or '73," Leon says of a Suicide show at the downtown club Max's Kansas City, "I saw them and they were doing their whole performance art shtick. Alan was beating the tables in the front with chains. I thought they were fabulous."

Leon's passion for the group even ended up costing him a potential record company job (though soon after, he landed a position at Sire Records).

"I took the interview on a Friday and they said, 'This weekend, go out and see some bands and then give me your report on which ones you would sign on Monday.' I saw Suicide, and I said, 'Well, I'm gonna sign this band called Suicide.' And it was like, bang,



career over at that label before I even started.”

This was the mellow 1970s, when record buyers rode on horses with no names while smoking doobies with their brothers.

[LEON] VIEWED PUNK AS AN EXTENSION OF THE EXPERIMENTAL ART MUSIC TRADITION THAT APPEALED TO HIM AS A TEEN IN THE 1960s.

There was no way a label executive would even consider signing Suicide—a group whose very name unsettled the peaceful, easy feeling that was hegemonic throughout that decade. Record companies avoided Suicide like the plague until Leon finally got a chance to produce their 1977 debut for an indie label. Its minimalist, murky dubscares went on to be a huge influence on techno, synth pop and experimental electronic music.

Despite a very long list of production credits, Leon is perhaps best known for signing The Ramones to Sire and producing the band’s first record. Although they are largely remembered today as cartoon punk street hooligans, Leon places them squarely within the experimental art music tradition.

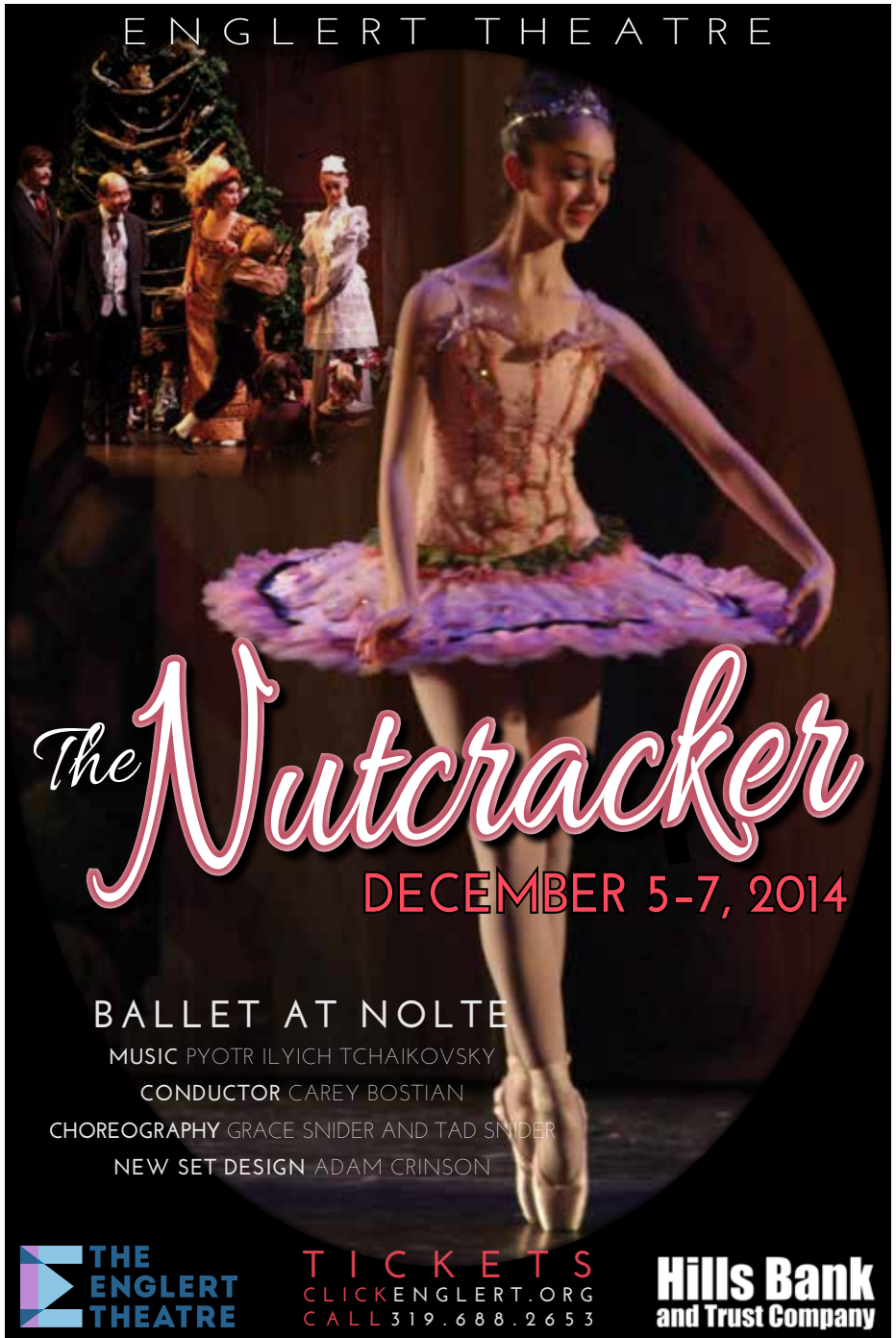
“The Ramones were like a performance art piece, in Tommy’s mind,” Leon says of drummer Tommy Ramone, the band’s mastermind. “He saw things in that visual sense,” he tells me, referring to their matching leather-jacket-and-jeans uniform and Warhol-esque deadpan personas. “They were like straight out of the New York art scene.”

Leon began working more seriously with electronics after assisting a DJ named Larry Fast record a series of classic synth albums under the name Synergy. “That was the first really hands-on stuff that I did,” he says, “and I started gathering up ideas for doing my own electronic work—which I didn’t really do till a few years later.”

Near the end of the 1970s, Leon jumped at the chance when the Takoma label approached

PRAIRIE POP >> CONT. ON P. 18

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CEREBERAL CONTEXT

In *Interstellar*, Christopher Nolan's new space epic, the director's influences can be felt as he further establishes himself as the blockbuster auteur.

BY PAT BROWN

Director Christopher Nolan has a knack for drawing people into the theater in an age when many can't be bothered. His latest film *Interstellar*, coming out Nov. 7, promises big-screen spectacle: As the Earth is dying, Matthew McConaughey leaves his family behind to seek out a new home for humankind. The film aims at something we don't often see at this budget level: Rather than a romping space opera, it sells itself as a dramatic confrontation of humanity with its own extinction, and with the vast and overwhelming non-humanness of outer space.

That Nolan's latest film has these heady ambitions is no surprise, as he has carefully established himself as the thinking person's action director. During the push for his last film, *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012), he emphasized in interviews that his major influences in conceiving the film were actually silent film directors, particularly Fritz Lang. The cynically disposed may have taken his name-dropping Lang as merely an appeal to see Nolan's Batman films as legitimate, intellectual works of art. But this professed connection to Lang's

silent films has legitimacy, and it can tell us something about Nolan's work and what we might expect from *Interstellar*.

The natural assumption is that Nolan was primarily referring to *Metropolis*, the Austrian director's most famous film, produced in Germany in 1927. But Lang's early crime films *The Spiders* (1919) and *Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler* (1922) and his later *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* (1933), as narratives and as puzzle-like films about master criminals, have much more in common with the Batman films, and with Nolan's cinema as a whole. And just as Lang's *Mabuse* films use popular crime fiction to allegorize the tumult of post-WWI mass society, *Dark Knight* uses the superhero film to grapple with questions of executive powers and surveillance in post-9/11 society.

By coincidence or design, Nolan's move to space exploration after his superhero/crime films mirrors that of Lang, who directed *Woman in the Moon* in 1929. But, more in the tradition of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1967), images from the *Interstellar* trailer of a lonely spaceship among empty space and nebulous space phenomena, of

astronauts beset by hostile alien environments and of Earth on the brink of ecological collapse, evoke as much dread as they do wonder.

The confrontation suggested here between humanity and the prospect of its absence from the cosmos is ripe terrain for social allegory. The allegory of *Interstellar* might ask important questions: How do we confront the possibility of our own disappearance, the vastness of a human-less universe and what can we do in the face of it? Such intellectual questions are for Nolan, as they were for Lang, the most compelling thing about his films; emotion often takes a backseat in both directors' works.

As Lang's films have been, Nolan can be accused of a certain, rational coldness. In his Batman films, he's clearly more interested in the events, in their puzzle-like coordination, and in the politics than in Bruce Wayne's (Christian Bale) personal drama. His *Inception* (2010) also runs more on sleight of hand and

EXISTENTIAL CRISIS | In *Interstellar*, with the destruction of their home planet, Earthlings search for meaning in the void of space.



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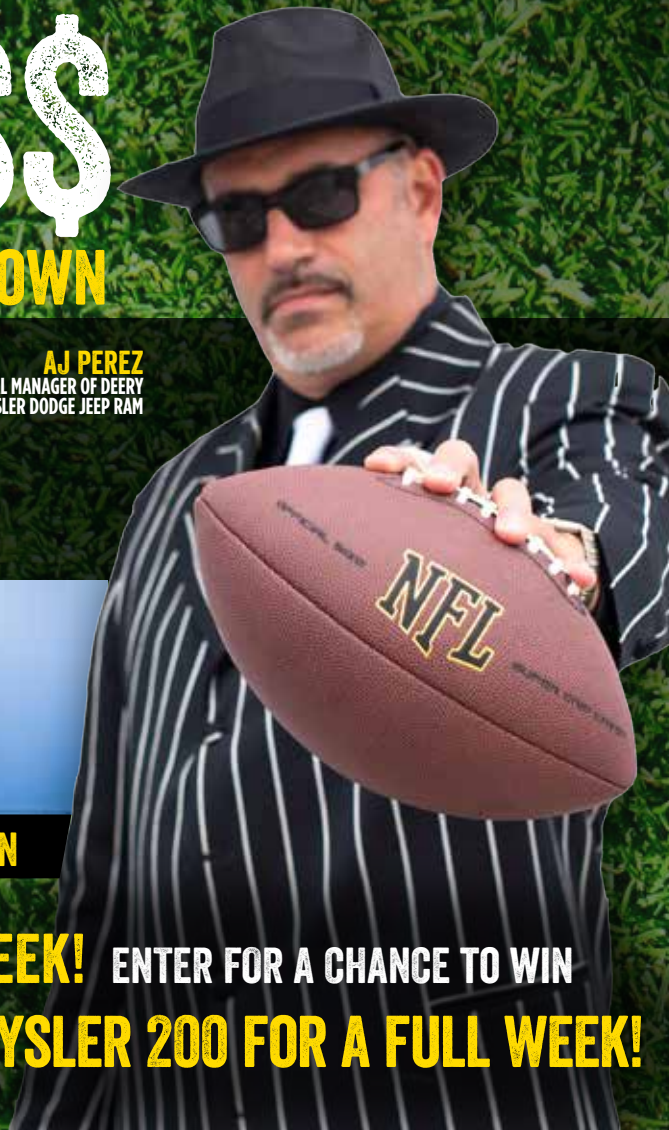
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the complexities of nestled worlds than it does on its thinly developed melodramatic plot. It seems there's one more lesson, then, that Nolan can learn from Fritz Lang. Particularly in his German films, Lang largely abandoned defining his heroes psychologically, or giving them compelling personal dramas. The director was interested in technological systems of surveillance and control, not individuals and their problems, and by *M* (1931) he had long since figured out how to make a thrilling film that needn't rely on romantic tropes of love and redemption.

THAT NOLAN'S LATEST FILM HAS THESE HEADY AMBITIONS IS NO SURPRISE, AS HE HAS CAREFULLY ESTABLISHED HIMSELF AS THE THINKING PERSON'S ACTION DIRECTOR.

But the push for *Interstellar* has included co-star Jessica Chastain and Nolan's co-producer (and wife) Emma Thomas emphasizing that this film has true emotional depth. The trailers promise us teary-eyed McConaughey grappling with his decision to leave his family behind. Besides the techno-pessimist Lang and the misanthrope Kubrick, a third influence on the film is clearly Steven Spielberg, whose films gracefully combine small-scale crises of the nuclear family with massive, mesmerizing spectacle. These seem to me like almost irreconcilable influences. (For evidence, I direct you to the tepid 2001 Spielberg/Kubrick collaboration *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence*.)

It's possible that *Interstellar* will include a compelling take on drama at the human level with its sublime non-human spectacle, but this is really Spielberg's trademark and great talent. It's more likely that the strongest parts of Nolan's film will be those that are interested in less emotional matters, and those of a larger scale. Like Lang's German films, *Interstellar* will probably be best if it tackles its broader concerns head-on and leaves the family melodrama for the Spielbergs. Regardless, Nolan's turn to ambitious, contemplative sci-fi is sure to get me into a theater seat on opening weekend. **IV**

Pat Brown is a graduate student at the University of Iowa.

>> PRAIRIE POP CONT. FROM P. 15

him to do a synthesizer album. "*Nommos* was originally supposed to be an orchestral album in my mind," he says. Unfortunately, he was working with a rock bottom budget that didn't allow for such luxuries.

If *Nommos* was born in 1980, you might say that the album died when its original master tapes were tragically lost years ago during the major label merger era. Fortunately, Leon was able to resurrect the project because, well, he had good notes.

"I kept notebooks of all my synth stuff," he says. "I still have the old Rolands that I actually did it on, and the old Moogs."

In addition to keeping his synthesizers, Leon also held on to the physical tape loops that formed the basis of the original *Nommos* recordings—which he transferred to digital. Through a combination of analog and digital technologies (and meticulous specs detailing synth patches, settings, and other technical stuff), he was able to recreate the album sound-for-sound.

This process encouraged Leon to begin performing *Nommos* live with a hybrid electronic-acoustic lineup that included himself, Leon's wife Cassell Webb, and a string quartet. This small ensemble appeared this year at Moogfest in Asheville, North Carolina, as well as several other events. These 2014 shows culminated in the realization of a lifelong goal—performing *Nommos* with a full orchestra—which finally happened on Oct. 15 at the Unsound Festival in Kraków, Poland.

"It was a thrilling experience," he tells me after the show. "This year's theme for the Unsound Festival is 'The Dream,' and it couldn't be more appropriate than in this case." His initial plan was to electronically treat some of the acoustic instruments, but Leon says he "didn't have enough rehearsal time to do treated work with the orchestra, so it was purely orchestral except for my synth playing."

"Having said that," Leon adds, "I am returning to Kraków next month to record the orchestral *Nommos* with the same ensemble, Sinfonietta Cracova, and I'll be recording the piece with processed orchestra only." The plan is to release the recording next year.

"My dream is to have a kind of a cyborg-orchestra synthesized fusion," Leon says.

All hail the cyborchestra! **IV**

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REINVENT & IMPROVISE: AN EVENING WITH HENRY ROLLINS

Englert Theatre, Nov. 15, 7:30 pm, \$30 • Q&A BY LUKE BENSON

Ask someone what their association with Henry Rollins is and you might get several different answers. Known to most as the lead singer for the atonal, anti-authoritarian punk band Black Flag, Rollins has also had an expansive career as an actor, activist, essayist, nomadic bad-ass and spoken-word performer.

If you haven't seen Rollins spoken word performances, they, like the man, are always in a state of change but are characteristically fierce, fast and uncompromising. Rollins will be performing at the Englert on Nov. 15.

How do you think your background influenced your artistic sensibilities and work habits?

I have no artistic sensibilities. I wish I did. It is probably really cool. I have work habits and work ethic. For me, all the things I do are jobs. I work pretty much every day. I can't really separate it from life, so I guess the work is my life.

My background is middle class, average city dweller. I lived with a full-time working mother in apartments and for a little while, a

small house in the Washington D.C. area. Both parents worked very hard, but neither one of them put that on me. I was never told to "Get up, get out there, get a job." I was already at three jobs. I always bought my own bike. It was never a thing either parent ever said I had to do. It was what I wanted to do. I think I was very interested in being away from them as much as possible. Employment was great for that.

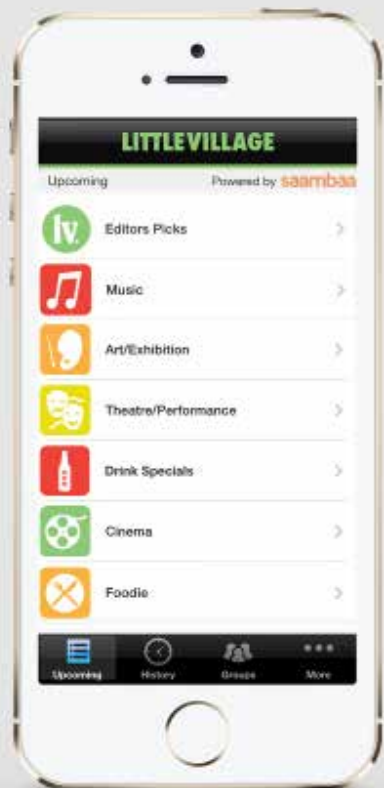
Was fame something you strove for or was

it more a byproduct of things you happened to do?

I guess I am famous in a way. I would rather consider it recognizable—I think that is more logical. I don't feel famous. Some people tell me that they like what I do, which is great, of course. The perfect irony and truth is that I need them much more than they need me. As far as being recognized, that happens to me all the time. As far as the pursuit of fame as a goal? I really don't know how you would go about that.

You recently wrote an article about Robin William's suicide that you quickly retracted. You've never been one to shy away from controversy or apologize for any beliefs you hold. So, I'm wondering if this is the first time you've officially retracted a public statement and why you decided to do so. Are there parts of your original statement you still stand behind?

I didn't retract it. That isn't possible. Once you say something, it stays said. I apologized to



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WED., NOV. 5

/MUSIC: Caravan of Thieves, Legion Arts CSPS Hall, \$15 - \$18, 7 pm | *High-intensity gypsy swing music.*

Iowa City's Free Improvised Art Series, Trumpet Blossom Cafe, Free, 7:30 pm | *Improvised drum, saxophone and bass music, along with improv art and dance.*

Sour Boy Bitter Girl, The Mill, \$6, 8 pm | *Folk-rock-Americana from Colorado.*

Gary Numan, Blue Moose Tap House, \$25, 9 pm | *'80s electronic pop music pioneer who penned the hit "Cars."*

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION: Art Bites: Lasansky's Lincolns, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free, 12:15 pm | *Phil Lasansky discusses the work of his father, Mauricio.*

THURS., NOV. 6

/MUSIC: The University of Iowa Jazz Performances w. Latin Jazz Ensemble, The Mill, \$3 - \$5, 6 pm | *Student ensembles and collaborations with professors from the jazz program.*

Namoli Brennet, Public Space One, Price TBD, 6 pm | *Acoustic singer-songwriter.*

Vishtën, Legion Arts CSPS Hall, \$17 - \$21, 7 pm | *Hodgepodge of French, Irish and Scottish styles of music from Eastern Canada.*

American Youth, Blue Moose Tap House, \$5, 9 pm | *Folky singer-songwriters focus on harmonies and emotion.*

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION: The Fall of the Wall: A Celebration of Freedom, University of Iowa Pentacrest Museums, Free 6 pm | *Celebrating the Berlin Wall destruction's 25th anniversary with refreshments and panel discussions.*

Around and Beyond Jackson Pollock's Mural, Art Building West at UI, Free, 7:30 pm | *David Anfam will lecture on Abstract Expressionism and the beginnings of the mural.*

/THEATER-AND-PERFORMANCE: The Consul, Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$10-\$20, 8 pm | *This politically charged opera portrays a young Freedom fighter fleeing his country, leaving behind his wife and child.*

Opening: thing with feathers, Theatre Building at UI, Free - \$5, 8 pm | *Half love story, half apocalyptic adventure, this play tells the story of three women falling in love as their country crumbles.*

/LITERATURE: Women's Studies Reading Group, Cedar Rapids Downtown Library, Free, 7 pm | *Discussion of The Lotus Eaters by Tatjana Soli.*

Lauren Haldeman and Bridgette Bates, Prairie Lights, Free, 7 pm | *Two Writers' Workshop grads read their poetry.*

MON., NOV. 7

/MUSIC: John McCutcheon, Legion Arts CSPS Hall, \$19 - \$23, 8 pm | *Beloved folksinger and master of more than a dozen instruments.*



anyone who may have been hurt by what I said, and I really meant it. I am absolutely not interested in hurting anyone, or being mean or insensitive. I am always interested in an opportunity to learn something.

"I HAVE BUILT MY LIFE TO PURSUE THE NEW. I DON'T HAVE FAMILY, DON'T KNOW MANY PEOPLE AND I AM USUALLY READY TO LEAVE WITHIN AN HOUR."

—HENRY ROLLINS

From the letters I got, I learned quite a bit. I'm still quite behind not hanging yourself at your friend's house so he can walk in and discover you and cut you down. I still find myself to be one of those, "Please don't jump, let's go for a walk and talk it out" types. However, a man with an excruciatingly painful condition

wrote me and told me that his doctor said that the only cure for what he has is death, and he might want to consider suicide. What do you say to him? I doubt the, "Hey let's go get some coffee and talk" thing is going to be at all helpful.

Speaking strictly in terms of artistic prowess, who are three performers or artists that you admire and what do you most admire about them?

David Bowie. His studio output from 1969 to 1980 is to me, freakishly amazing.

Miles Davis. It's almost impossible to believe that one man is on so many amazing and different records.

Ian MacKaye. He is a good man and a true visionary. I watched him start Dischord Records. We have been best friends for over 40 years.

Reinvention has clearly been a defining feature of your work. Do you have any one

recording, performance or song that you feel could be emblematic of your best work?

I don't have anything like that. Remotely. I just do the work. I don't ever do it so I can point to it and say, "See! This is what I have done ... behold!" I'm not interested in resting on laurels. Doing the work is good to go—hanging around to take the bow holds nothing for me.

Sometimes I see bands touring the "25th Anniversary of _____" and they go out and play the album live. I don't understand why you want to come back around like that. For me, if I am not, on a regular basis, going for something new, trying something out, trying to make it at a new job, going to a place I have never been, etc., life is flatline boring, sheer existential pantomime. It is getting up and occupying a rut. I have built my life to pursue the new. I don't have family, don't know many people and I am usually ready to leave within an hour. I have a house, I try to spend as little time in it as possible. Not always easy on the mind and body, but it's how I got myself to

Frank Sinatra Jr. Riverside Casino, \$45 - \$65, 8 pm | *The son of old blue eyes himself, Frank Sinatra Jr. performs his father's songs.*

Mike Stud, Iowa Memorial Union Main Lounge, \$32.85, 8 pm | *Hip hop. Made famous by his song "College Humor."*

Jack Lion w. Local on the 8's, Trumpet Blossom, \$5, 9 pm | *These IC natives connect jazz and electronic music.*

The Werks w. Zoogma, Blue Moose Tap House, \$12 - \$15, 9 pm | *Psychedelic-dance-rock group.*

Adam Keith, Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon, Free - \$10, 8 pm | *Country music.*

Seez Mics w. Crimson, Orikal Uno, AWTHNTKTS, Gabe's, \$8, 10 pm | *Dynamic lyricist whose style ranges from hip hop to spoken word.*

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION:

Small Works Show Reception, Chait Galleries Downtown, Free, 5 pm | *A showcase of mini-artwork in all mediums.*

First Friday UIMA Reception, FilmScene, Free, 5 pm | *University of Iowa Museum of Art presents artist Sylvia Schuster displaying her printmaking works.*

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: J.R. Brow, Penguin's Comedy Club, \$12, 7:30 pm | *The comedian grabs audiences with guitar and high-energy anecdotes.*

UI Dance Alumni Performance, Space Place Theatre, Free, 8 pm | *Alumni from the UI Department of Dance conclude a week of rehearsals with this performance.*

/LITERATURE: Joseph Dobrian, Prairie Lights, Free, 7 pm | *Local author reads from his latest work Ambitions.*

SAT., NOV. 8

/MUSIC: JOCELYN, Gabe's, \$10, 6 pm | *Iowa City-based pop/rock band.*

Slow Draws, Uptown Bills, \$5 - \$10, 7 pm | *Country music w. a fiddle, stand-up bass and plenty of guitar.*



Hancher Presents Roberta Flack, Riverside Casino, \$10 - \$45, 7:30 pm | *With such iconic hits as "Killing Me Softly With His Song" and*

"The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face," no one would question Roberta Flack if she choose to stick to the soul music she helped bring to fame. Yet, her latest project, Let It Be Roberta, an inspired collection of Beatles covers, speaks to a musical sensibility that refuses to be pigeonholed. —MJ

Old World Wonders, Paramount Theatre, \$19 - \$49, 7:30 pm | *The music of France, Germany and the Czech Republic are brought to the stage.*

The Jones Family Singers, Legion Arts CSPS Hall, \$16 - \$19, 8 pm | *Three generations of the Jones family sing gospel music to warm the soul.*

The Weathered Heads w. Flannel Season, Milk Duct Tape, Yacht Club, \$6, 9:30 pm | *Jam-pop-rock band.*

Govinda, Gabe's, \$10 - \$12, 10 pm | *Electronic music DJ and producer whose performances incorporate violin accompaniment, professional dancers and live video projections.*

Savoy, Blue Moose Tap House, \$13 - \$15, 10 pm | *Edgy electronic rock from Brooklyn.*

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION: Closing: Remembering Our Fallen Exhibition, Iowa City Public Library, Free, all day | *A photo exhibit telling stories of Iowans who have died in war since Sept. 11, 2001.*

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: J.R. Brow, Penguin's Comedy Club, \$12, 7:30 pm | *The comedian grabs audiences with guitar and high-energy anecdotes.*

/LITERATURE: Book Talk: Sandy Althomsons, Uptown Bill's, Free, 1 pm | *Epidemiologist Sandy Althomsons discusses Inside a refugee crisis: My time in South Sudan.*

/EDUCATIONAL: Words and Music: A Civil War Afternoon, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free, 1 pm | *Meet Abe Lincoln and hear some of his famous speeches between songs by the Liberty Band of Iowa.*

/KIDS: The Fossil Guy: The Survivor among the Mammals, Museum of Natural History at UI, Free, 2 pm | *Don Johnson's paleontology program for children will talk about prehistoric mammals.*

/COMMUNITY: The Food Run 5K, Coralville Ecumenical Food Pantry, \$25, 9 am | *A 5K run/walk benefiting the Coralville Ecumenical Food Pantry. Registration required.* King of the Runback, The Mill, Free - \$5, 2 pm | *Eat pizza and drink beer while competitively battling strangers in Smash Bros, Street Fighter, Mario Kart and more.*

80-plus countries. This kind of routine forces one to reinvent and improvise. The older I get, the more important this is to me.

Final thoughts: There is a longstanding tradition at the University of Iowa to have the opponents' locker room painted pink. Your thoughts?

It seems a bit juvenile and, in my opinion, has sexist/homophobic posture. Not how I would go about things. I would change it because it makes the home team seem lame. If you really want a true confrontation, you treat your opponent with respect, so when they are on the field, it is a true match. The pink locker room thing is just weak bordering on pathetic. **lv**

Luke Benson first saw Henry Rollins spoken word when he was 13 and it remains one of the most pivotal shows in his life. Strong endorsement to make it out to this one.

SUN., NOV. 9

/MUSIC: Natalia Zuckerman, Legion Arts CSPS Hall, \$14 - \$17, 7 pm | Singer-songwriter.

Dopapod, Gabe's, \$10, 10:30 pm | An electronic live showcase with genre-bending sound.

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION: Closing: 30 Years of Art and Artists Exhibition, Iowa Artisans Gallery, Free, all day | Showcase of artists who have contributed to the gallery since its opening 30 years ago.



/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Nov. 9: The Value of Glass, Dreamwell Theatre and Iowa Hillel, Free, 2 pm | In memory of the anniversary of Kristallnacht, actors will present a staged reading of minutes from a meeting between Nazi officials that took place after the night of coordinated attacks against German Jews. [Disclosure: This writer is involved with this production.] —Jorie Slodki

Closing: Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Iowa City Community Theatre \$8 - \$16, 2 pm | Tennessee Williams's best-known work, set in a southern home in Mississippi.

Closing: A Mighty Fortress is our Basement, Old Creamery Theatre, \$18.50 - \$28, 2 pm | A live production of religious stories.

Closing: Morning's at Seven, Iowa Theatre Artists Company, \$10 - \$22.50, 7:30 pm | Story of four sisters, dysfunctional families and the love that holds them together.

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Bolshoi Ballet: The Legend of Love, Englert Theatre, \$18, 2 pm | Tap your toes into the land of ballet with a behind-the-scenes view-
 ing from one of the world's oldest ballet companies, The Bolshoi Ballet. Rebroadcasted on the big screen, see an exclusive viewing of The Legend of Love. The story explores the conflict of a sister's love and a Queen's duty. —Courtney Callahan

/LITERATURE: Dannielle Owens-Reid and Kristin Russo, **Prairie Lights, Free, 4 pm** | Two authors discuss their book, This is a Book for Parents of Gay Kids.

/FOODIE: Palisades Café Dinner, Palisades Café, **\$30, 6 pm** | Part of "Celebrating Local: 10 Years of the New Englert."

MON., NOV. 10

/MUSIC: Charlie Siren w. Exit Emergency, Public Space One, Price TBD, 6 pm | Two midwest pop-punk bands.



Quintron and Miss Pussycat w. Babe's, Free Products, The Mill, \$10, 9 pm | Quintron and Miss Pussycat are frequent Iowa City visitors, having brought their trippy puppet show, electric-organ dance party to The Mill for the last two years in a row. Those shows were wild, but their third visit in three years could be the best yet as they bring fellow New Orleans natives Babe's to start the party. Babe's have been getting a lot of buzz recently; their spastic, swampy punk sound offering a refreshing weirdness to the current garage-rock landscape. — Max Johnson

TUES., NOV. 11

/MUSIC: Empty Moon w. Crystal City, The Mill, \$8, 9 pm | Former singer of Fourth of July, Brendan Hangauer's latest musical endeavor.

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: DiNO-Light, Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$12 - \$16, 6:30 pm | A Heartwarming story w. electroluminescent dino-like creatures.

An Irish Christmas, Englert Theatre, \$20 - \$35, 8 pm | Paint the scene of an Irish Christmas through storytelling, song and dance.

/EDUCATIONAL: Slovakia's Post-Communist Journey in a Shifting Europe, National Czech and Slovak Museum, Free, 7 pm | 25 years after the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia Dr. Pavol Demes will speak on how the state is changing.

/LITERATURE: Gillian Conoley, Prairie Lights, Free, 7 pm | Pushcart prize-winning poet to read from her latest work.

WED., NOV. 12

/MUSIC: Ty Dolla \$ign: In Too Deep Tour w. Lil Bibby, Joe Moses, Blue Moose Tap House, \$20, 7 pm | R&B music.

Burlington Street Bluegrass Band, The Mill, \$5, 7 pm | Rockin' bluegrass from Iowa City.

/LITERATURE: Talk Art, The Mill, Free, 10:30 pm | UI's Writers Workshop presents current works to attendees.

Jeffrey Copeland, Prairie Lights, Free, 7 pm | Dive into the world of abolitionist John Fairfield in a historical account told by author Jeffrey Copeland.

/EDUCATIONAL: Upholstery Class, Regeneration Factory, \$195, 10 am | Reupholster an antique chair.

THURS., NOV. 13

/MUSIC: Burton Cummings, Paramount Theatre, \$39 - \$59, 7:30 pm | Canadian musician formerly of The Guess Who heads to Cedar Rapids.

The O'My's w. Saba, Yacht Club, \$7, 10 pm | Two artists from Chicago play rock'n'soul and rap music.



Mr. Nasti & Seth Moore the Band, Brooks Strause and the Gory Details, Dana T., Gabe's, \$5, 9 pm

Fairfield's Mr. Nasti doesn't seem like the kind of artist who would largely focus his lyrical attention on the theme of self-doubt (his stage name is Mr. Nasti, after all), but his latest album, Truth Sound off of Maximum Ames Records, does just that. Buoyed by danceable beats and intense synths, Mr. Nasti's lyrics regularly appear to sabotage the party around them, often investigating the practical purpose of music in the world. It's a brave and ambitious approach, and one that needs to be seen to be understood. —MJ

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Opening: Hancher Presents: "Healing Wars" by Liz Lerman, Space Place Theater, North Hall, \$10 - \$40, 7:30 pm | Set during the Civil War, Healing Wars tells the story of medical workers during war through dance and multimedia.

Eleven Tiny Performances, Trumpet Blossom, \$50 for dinner, show, & complimentary wine or beer, \$20 show only, 7:30 pm | A multimedia and performing arts experience.



W. Kamau Bell (pictured), The Mill, \$12 - \$15, 9 pm | Best known for his critically acclaimed yet fleeting FX comedy series, Totally Biased

with W. Kamau Bell, this socio-political comedian has made quite an impression in the world of outspoken comedy. Combining racial commentary and sharp wit, an evening with Bell is sure to end in conversation. —CC

Comedian Pete Lee, Public Space One, Price TBD, 10 pm | A semi-finalist on Comedy Central's Last Comic Standing, Pete Lee has performed at over 500 colleges nationwide.

FRI., NOV. 14

/MUSIC: Java Blend Exclusive Hour w. Switchback, Java House, Free, 2 pm | Mixes American roots with Celtic soul.

Jazz After Five w. Robert Espe & Friends, The Mill, Free, 5 pm | Relax after a long week with jazz music for all ages.

Chris Webby, Blue Moose Tap House, \$15 - \$20, 6 pm | The Connecticut rapper makes his way back to Iowa City.

Chase Garrett's Piano Stomp, Englert Theatre, \$30 - \$45, 8 pm | Travel back to the 1930s with this blues and boogie-woogie inspired piano show.

Natty Nation w. Soul Phlegm, Yacht Club, \$8, 10 pm | A blend of hard roots, rock, reggae and dub.

Jeffrey Foucault, CSPS Hall, \$16 (advance) - \$19 (door), 8 pm | American country and blues performer.

Terravita & JPHELPZ, Blue Moose Tap House, \$15 - \$20, 9 pm | Get your dance on with drumstep and dubstep.

Steven Cooper w. PlanetRawk, Gabe's, \$8 - \$10, 10 pm | Midwest native fusing pop and hip-hop sounds.

Big Sandy & His Fly Rite Boys, CSPS Hall, \$16 (advance) - \$19 (door), 8 pm | Rockability Hall of Fame inductee and 25-year-old band to perform in Cedar Rapids.

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION: Closing: Elegance - New Work by Mary Merkel-Hess Exhibition, The Chait Galleries Downtown, Free, all day | Inspired by Iowa's fields of grass and corn.

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Great White Narcs, Public Space One, Price TBD, 6 pm | IC-based improv group.

Greg Hahn, Penguin's Comedy Club, \$25 - \$30, 7:30 pm | A regular on the Bob and Tom Radio Show, featured on Late Night with Conan O'Brien and Comedy Central.



W. Kamau Bell

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EDITORS' PICKS

NOW SHOWING



Dear White People

Directed by Justin Simien
FilmScene—Through Mid-November, icfilmscene.org

This critically acclaimed film by first-time director Justin Simien is a satire on race relations at an Ivy League school and, by extension, American college campuses in general. The film follows four college students in an exploration of racial identity today.



Dumb & Dumber To

Directed by Peter and Bobby Farrelly
Sycamore and Coral Ridge Cinemas—Opens Nov. 14

After a string of hits in the 1990s, the Farrelly Brothers have been delivering nothing but duds for about 15 years. So, banking on us all rediscovering our inexplicable love for Jim Carrey, they've made a sequel to one of their most popular films. It's the film that might just leave you thinking, "... How did this get off the ground before *Bill & Ted 3?*"

/LITERATURE: Lan Samantha Chang & Elizabeth Willis, Dey House, University of Iowa, Free, 8 pm | Writers' Workshop director and visiting Professor of Poetry read from their works.

/COMMUNITY /KIDS: Arts, Crafts, & Vendor Extravaganza, Old Capitol Town Center, 10 am - 5 pm | Shop from over 50 local vendors at this holiday market. Free pictures with santa from 12 pm - 4 pm.

/KIDS: Celebrate Play Gala 2014, Coralville Marriott Conference Center, \$100, 5:30 pm | Dress up in your favorite cowboy boots or evening gown (or both!) at this "Boots and Bling" themed celebration.

Your Living World Wolf Cub Workshop, Indian Creek Nature Center, \$3 - \$10, 6 pm | Learn about pollution and saving energy around the house.

SAT., NOV. 15



/MUSIC: Henry Rollins, Englert—Nov. 15, 7:30 pm (\$30, all ages) | Henry Rollins is the former lead singer of legendary hardcore punk band, Black Flag. Upon Black Flag's disbanding in 1986, Rollins began performing as a spoken word artist, and formed a new group, the Rollins Band, to help him perform his (mostly) spoken word pieces. Rollins Band went through several line-up changes, but since 2003, Rollins has largely quit making music, opting to work in television, radio and film, write several books, and continue to deliver his spoken-word performances, which have proven to be unpredictable affairs—sometimes funny and witty, sometimes dark and disturbing, but always compelling. —MJ

Mansions on the Moon, The Mill, \$12 - \$15, 9 pm | Alternative electro-pop from Los Angeles.

Heatbox, Yacht Club, \$10, 10 pm | Solo beatboxer.

The Olympics w. Dr. Manhattan, Gabe's, \$7, 10 pm | Energetic local indie rock band.

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION: Fall Arts & Crafts Show, Coralville Marriott Conference Center, Free, 9 am - 5 pm | One of Iowa's largest craft shows with over 150 exhibitors.

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: A Grateful Nation Riverside Theatre, \$18 - \$30, 2 pm | A script-in-hand performance about an Iowa community during WWII. Talkbacks after both performances.

Closing: Hancher Presents: "Healing Wars" by Liz Lerman, Space Place Theater, North Hall, \$10 - \$40, 7:30 pm | Set during the Civil War, Healing Wars tells the story of medical workers during war through dance and multimedia.

Greg Hahn, Penguin's Comedy Club, \$25 - \$30, 7:30 pm | This comedian has been featured on Late Night with Conan O'Brien and Comedy Central.

Friends of The BOB & TOM Show Comedy Tour, Paramount Theatre, \$29.50 - \$36, 8 pm | The Keystone Light Friends of The BOB & TOM Show Comedy Tour presents

a rotating ensemble of the world's best comedians to stages all across America.

/FOODIE: Vintner's Dinner, White Cross Cellars, \$55, 6 pm | Enjoy a night of unique dishes from your favorite food magazines. Reservations required.

SUN., NOV. 16

/MUSIC: Huey Mack w. Yonas, Blue Moose Tap House, \$15 - \$35, 7 pm | Hip-hop artist from West Virginia.



Photo by Julien Bourgeois



My Brightest Diamond w. Dosh, Ghost Band, The Mill, \$16, 8 pm | Shara Worden, the main creative drive behind My Brightest Diamond, is at the center of the baroque indie scene. Inspired by the likes of Antony and the Johnsons and Nina Nastasia, and informed by years of studying operatic singing, the My Brightest Diamond project began after Worden toured with Sufjan Stevens for his landmark album, *Illinoise*. My Brightest Diamond has released four records of beautifully ornate chamber-pop; her latest, *This Is My Hand*, shows Worden exploring harder, more industrial sounds, perhaps following in the footsteps of another former Sufjan-collaborator, St. Vincent. —MJ

Matt the Electrician, CSPS Hall, \$14- \$17, 7 pm | An electrician turned singer-songwriter.

UI Jazz Repertory Ensemble, Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, Free, 7:30 pm | Travel back in time with classical jazz music from the '60s, '70s and '80s.

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: A Grateful Nation Riverside Theatre, \$18 - \$30, 2 pm | A script-in-hand performance about an Iowa community during WWII. Talkbacks after both performances.

Closing: Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike Old Creamery Theatre, \$12 - \$28, 2 pm | This play tells the tale of comically dysfunctional siblings at a costume party.

Ole & Lena's 50th Wedding Anniversary and Vow Renewal, Paramount Theatre, \$28, 7 pm | A warm-hearted comedy about love, marriage, family and growing old together.

/CINEMA: Bijou Open Screen Night, FilmScene, \$2 suggested donation, 5 pm | Music video theme. Share a music video you made, a crazy clip you found, whatever you want—it's Open Screen!

/KIDS: Iowa Children's Museum 15th Birthday Party, Iowa Children's Museum, \$7 - \$8, 11 am - 6 pm | A city-wide birthday party featuring cake, facepaint and karaoke.



Photo by Dawn Frary

/FOODIE: 14th Annual Iowa Organic Conference, Nov. 16-17, University of Iowa Memorial Union, \$95-\$115, Schedule and registration at sustainability.uiowa.edu | This two-day conference invites established organic farmers and those interested in starting organic operations to learn about the latest techniques and resources. Speakers and breakout sessions will address organic agriculture, livestock, composting, pest management, entrepreneurship and conservation. On Monday, Nov. 17, Mary Berry from the Berry Center in Kentucky will give the keynote speech on the art of organic farming. —Celine Uhl

MON., NOV. 17

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Count This Penny, Englert Theatre, \$10 - \$12, 12 pm | Part of the Intimate at The Englert series, bringing both the audience and performers onstage together.

TUES., NOV. 18

/FOODIE: Pinot Noir and Thanksgiving Wines, Brix, \$30, 6 pm | Pinot Noir wine tasting. Reservations required.

MONDAYS:

Play & Learn at Ladd Library Cedar Rapids Ladd Library, Free, 9 am **Stories for Scooters Cedar Rapids Downtown Library, Free, 9 am** **Toddler Storytime Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10 am** **Alcoholics Anonymous Uptown Bill's, Free, 12 pm & 6 pm** **Starlight Story Time Cedar Rapids Downtown Library Free, 6 pm** **Open Mic The Mill, Free, 8 pm** **Catacombs of Comedy Yacht Club, \$5, 9 pm**

TUESDAYS:

Mother Goose on the Loose Cedar Rapids Downtown Library, Free, 9 am **Toddler Storytime Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10 am** **Alcoholics Anonymous Uptown Bill's, Free, 12 pm** **Play & Learn Cedar Rapids Downtown Library, Free, 6 pm** **Blues Jam Parlor City Pub and Eatery, Free, 7 pm** **Upper Deck Dance Party Yacht Club, Free, 10 pm** **Karaoke Studio 13, Free, 10 pm**

WEDNESDAYS:

Story Time Cedar Rapids Downtown Library, Free, 9 am **Preschool Storytime Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10 am** **Alcoholics Anonymous, Uptown Bill's, Free, 12 pm** **Theology Brewed, Journey Church, Free, 7 pm** **Open Jam and Mug Night, Yacht Club, \$5, 10 pm**

THURSDAYS:

Preschool Storytime Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10 am **Alcoholics Anonymous Uptown Bill's, Free, 12 pm** **Open Mic Uptown Bill's, Free, 7 pm** **Daddy-O Parlor City Pub and Eatery, Free, 7 pm** **Karaoke Penguin's Comedy Club, Free, 8 pm** **The Salt Company Englert Theatre, Free, 8 pm** **SOULSHAKE Gabe's, Free, 10 pm** **Mixology Gabe's, \$2, 10 pm** **Thursday Night Dance Party, Studio13, 10 pm**

FRIDAYS:

Book Babies, Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10:30 am, 1:30 pm **Alcoholics Anonymous Uptown Bill's, Free, 12 pm** **Weekend Comedy Showcase Penguin's Comedy Club, Price TBD, 7:30 pm**

SATURDAYS:

Community Folk Sing, Uptown Bill's, Free, 3 pm (Every other Saturday) **Ukulele Social Club, Uptown Bill's, Free, 4 pm (Every third Saturday)** **Saturday Night Music, Uptown Bill's, Free, 7 pm** **Weekend Comedy Showcase, Penguin's Comedy Club, Price TBD, 7:30 pm**

SUNDAYS:

***Winter Farmer's Market Johnson County Fairgrounds, Free, 11 am (every other Sunday)** **Community Worktime Public Space One, Free, 1 pm** **GLBTQ Community Pot Luck and Bingo Studio 13, Free, 6 pm** **Pub Quiz The Mill, \$1, 9 pm**

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION:

Remembering our Fallen Iowa City Public Library, Free (Through Nov. 8) **30 Years of Art and Artists Exhibition Iowa Artisans Gallery, Free (Through Nov. 9)** **Elegance by Mary Merkel-Hess, Chait Galleries Downtown, Free, (Through Nov. 14)** **Tea Time: Going Dutch Exhibition Iowa Memorial Union, Third Floor, Free (Through Dec. 7)** **A Wonderful Preserve: A Century of Recovery on Laysan Island, Museum of Natural History at UI, Free, (Through Dec. 31)** **Carl Van Vechten, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, \$0 - \$5, (Through Jan. 4)** **Celebration! Rituals and Revelries of Life, National Czech and Slovak Museum, \$0 - \$10** **Faces of Freedom: The Czech and Slovak Journey, National Czech and Slovak Museum, \$0 - \$10** **Peter Sis - Cartography of the Mind, National Czech and Slovak Museum, \$0 - \$10** **Shadows of History: Photographs of the Civil War, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, \$0 - \$5**

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE:

Nov. 6 - 9: thing with feathers, Theatre Building at UI, Free - \$5 Half love story, half apocalyptic adventure, this play tells the story of three women falling in love as their country crumbles. **Nov. 7 - 9: Morning's at Seven, Iowa Theatre Artists Company, \$10 - \$22.50** The story of four sisters, their dysfunctional families and the love that holds them together. **Nov. 6 - 9, Nov. 13 - 16: Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, Old Creamery Theatre, \$12 - \$28** This play takes references to Chekov's plays and "put them into a blender." Instead of a backwoods Russian estate, siblings Vanya and Sonia live in Pennsylvania, where their famous sister, Masha, financially supports them. Suddenly, their lives of ennui and cherry trees are interrupted when Masha comes to visit with her young lover, Spike. Masha plans to sell their house, leaving her unemployed siblings homeless and destitute. That description should ring a few bells for anyone familiar with Chekov's plays, but you don't need to have a graduate degree in Russian literature to find hilarity in the dynamics between these siblings. —JS **Nov. 13 - 15: Hancher Presents: Healing Wars by Liz Lerman, Space Place Theater, North Hall, \$10 - \$40** Set during the Civil War but reflecting on present-day conflicts, Healing Wars tells the story of medical workers during war through dance and multimedia. **Nov. 15-16: A Grateful Nation, Riverside Theatre \$20** Actors perform a staged reading of an original script by Ron Clark and Rick Williams. The material covers the experiences of a small Iowa town as they experience World War II at home and on the battlefield. Stay for talkbacks after each performance. —JS

/COMMUNITY:

Nov 13 - 16: Writing Dancing / Dancing Writing, Riverside Recital Hall at UI, See Website for Pricing, 8 am This conference focuses on narratives and storytelling through dance and writing.



JUCIFER | Gabe's, Oct. 18
Photo by Zak Neumann

IOWA CITY

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

Chait Galleries Downtown 218 E Washington St, (319) 338-4442, thegalleriesdowntown.com

Englert Theatre 221 E Washington St, (319) 688-2653, englert.org

FilmScene 118 E College St, (319) 358-2555, icfilmscene.org

First Avenue Club, 1550 S 1st Ave, (319) 337-5527, firstavenueclub.com

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

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

Iowa City Community Theatre 4261 Oak Crest Hill Rd SE, (319) 338-0443, iowacitycommunitytheatre.com

Iowa Memorial Union 125 N Madison St, (319) 335-3041, imu.uiowa.edu

Lasansky Corporation Gallery 216 E Washington St, (319) 337-9336, lasanskyart.com

M.C. Ginsberg Objects of Art 110 E Washington St, (319) 351-1700, mcginsberg.com

Old Capitol Museum 21 N Clinton St, (319) 335-0548, uiowa.edu/oldcap

Prairie Lights Bookstore 15 S Dubuque St, (319) 337-2681, prairielights.com

Public Space One 120 N Dubuque St, (319) 331-8893, publicspaceone.com

Riverside Theatre 213 N. Gilbert Street, Iowa City riverside-theatre.org

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CAN A SNAKE TIE ITSELF INTO A KNOT IT CAN'T GET OUT OF?

Not that I hope to ever need this information, but can a live snake be tied into a knot that it can't get out of? —Richard Payne

Well, I suppose you could do that, and then you'd have a snake that was either badly injured or dead. Fortunately, snakes themselves don't wriggle into knots they can't wriggle out of—at any rate healthy ones don't. (For unhealthy ones, see below.) On the contrary, many snakes and other legless critters have an extraordinary facility for self-knotting, and can tie and untie themselves with a dexterity that would leave a sailor or Boy Scout in awe.

The knot-tying abilities of snakes arise from the remarkable combination of flexibility and muscle control that makes snake locomotion possible. Besides the familiar undulating motion, snakes also move via sidewinding, a kind of diagonal self-flinging used on sand and other low-traction terrain, and "concertina movement," used in tunnels, where the snake gathers itself into a series of close-spaced bends (suggesting a concertina or accordion), then pushes forward as it straightens out.

Some snakes, notably constrictors and pythons, have more vertebrae per unit of body length than others, and as a result can tie themselves into knots and balls, a well-named case in point being the ball python. Normally they do this for defensive purposes,

sometimes hiding their heads in the middle of the tangle and remaining motionless until the predator (they hope) leaves them alone.

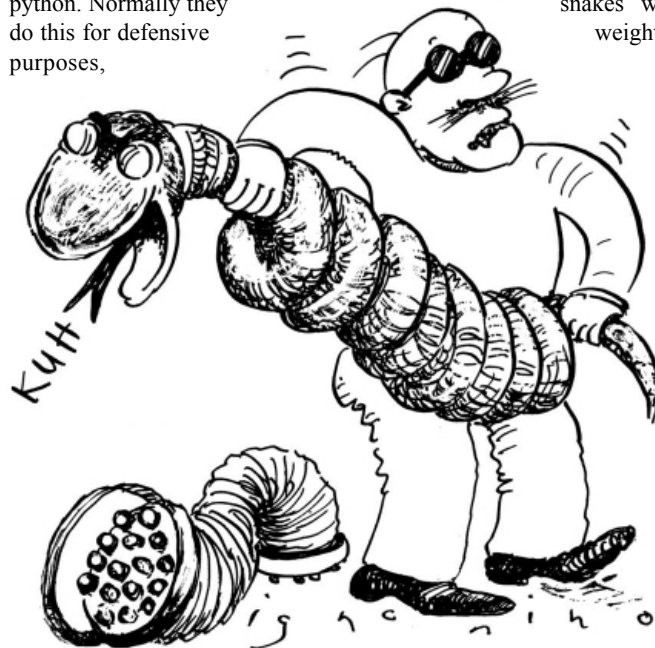
Other snakes tie themselves into knots to aid in shedding their skin. While some land snakes do this, it's apparently more common in sea snakes, no doubt due to the fact that they often lack a convenient source of friction to help them pull the old skin off. The snake ties itself into an overhand or figure-eight knot that it undulates down the length of its body.

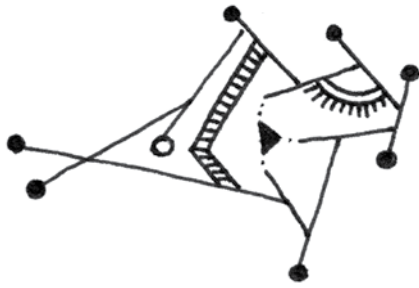
Sometimes a snake will form two or more knots at the same time, which may inspire the giddy to imagine a Snake Olympics (most knots! most twists! most artistic design!). Please. Self-knotting also helps snakes scrape off skin parasites. These are animals with more basic things on their minds.

Snake knotting isn't always a good thing—it may mean the snake has come down with inclusion body disease, a distant relative of Ebola. First recognized in the 1970s, IBD is a fatal viral disorder that causes a variety of neurological symptoms in snakes, including paralysis, disequilibrium, and a tendency for the afflicted snake to tie itself into knots, sometimes ones it can't undo.

Experiments have shown that snakes will knot themselves in a weightless environment. After

initial thrashing, the researchers observed, the snakes "became quiet upon self-embrace"—to put it another way, they calmed down once they'd tied the knot and (literally) gotten a grip on themselves. To you or me this might sound like a good thing. Not to the scientists, who thought it "suggests a failure to distinguish self from non-self." How dare you compose yourselves, you silly reptiles—don't you know the situation calls for





existential dread?

Snakes aren't the only animals with self-knotting capabilities. Several species of eel use knotting during feeding. If you're the type that gets irked by coarse table manners, make sure you never have dinner with an eel: after grabbing onto a fish with its jaws, the eel whips its body around to create a figure-eight knot, then rapidly pulls its head back through the knot. Result: swallowing, decapitation, or other dismemberment of the target fish.

Probably the most creative uses of animal knotting—and perhaps also the most disgusting, but one tries not to be judgmental—are seen in the hagfish, an eel-like critter that's surely in the running for ugliest life form on earth. The hagfish is so flexible it makes snakes look arthritic, a consequence of its not having a spine. It can easily tie itself in knots when circumstances warrant.

Hagfish can use their knots as a way to dig burrows. One will position itself perpendicularly over the sea-floor mud, fold its tail into an overhand knot, and spasm itself quickly to push the knot down its body length and drive its tail into the mud. They'll use a similar tactic during feeding, using the knots as leverage to extract prey from tight spaces after they bite hold of it.

But their most common use of knotting is to avoid being eaten themselves. Hagfish are notorious for exuding huge amounts of slime, which not only makes them extraordinarily slippery but can clog the gills of predators, causing them to choke and release the hagfish or, better yet, not bite it in the first place. If that doesn't suffice, the hagfish can form an overhand knot that it slides up or down its body, pumping out slime even more voluminously, which either forces the predator to release its grip or grosses it out of existence. Connoisseurs of ickiness can find videos of the hagfish in action on YouTube; if you like tentacle porn, you'll love this. **lv**

—CECIL ADAMS

Send questions to Cecil via straightdope.com or write him c/o Chicago Reader, 350 N. Orleans, Chicago 60654.

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CURSES, FOILED AGAIN

- Leslie Paul Ash, 39, broke into a recycling center in Somerset, England, and stole several scrap items. He remembered to wear a mask at the scene, but he put it on outside, directly in front of a surveillance camera. Investigators easily identified him. After Ash confessed, a magistrate sentenced him to pay 100 pounds (\$160): 60 pounds (\$96) of which was a “victim surcharge.” (Britain’s Cheddar Valley Gazette)
- Police in Panama, Okla., charged Brandon Lee Aaron, 27, with statutory rape after his 15-year-old victim identified him by a tattoo of his ex-girlfriend’s name on his penis. (Tulsa World)

EBOLAMANIA

- Ebola fears caused parents of dozens of students at Mississippi’s Hazelhurst Middle School to pull their children from classes after hearing a rumor that Principal Lee Wannik had traveled to Nigeria. International health officials have declared Nigeria Ebola-free, but Wannik actually had been in Zambia, which is on the other side of Africa. Parents told school officials they’d “rather be safe than sorry.” (Jackson’s WAPT-TV)
- Two Rwandan exchange students coming to Howard Yocum Elementary School, in Maple Shade, N.J., were voluntarily quarantined for 21 days after parents and teachers expressed concerns they “could be infected with Ebola,” one parent told Fox News. Maple Shade is 1,475 miles from the Texas hospital where Ebola patient Thomas Eric Duncan died, and East Africa’s Rwanda is 1,500 miles from the virus’s epicenter in West Africa. (AlterNet)
- Rwanda’s Ministry of Health began requiring all visitors from the United States to report their medical condition by telephone daily for up to 21 days, even if they aren’t experiencing symptoms of the Ebola virus. “Rwanda is wasting incredible resources screening for

something that doesn’t exist: an American traveler with Ebola,” said ABC News chief health and medical editor Dr. Richard Besser. (ABC News)

- Homeowners complained to police in Scottsdale, Ariz., after vandals spray painted “Ebola quarantine zone” on their community center. “It’s not a joke,” homeowners association president John Melling said, noting Ebola is in the forefront of the news. “It goes beyond vandalism.” He accused youths, noting, “People pay a lot of money to live in an area like this, and they’re destroying it.” (Phoenix’s Arizona Republic)

MISSING THE POINT

To avoid being confined to a prison cell for assault, Benjamin Louis Young, 52, hid out from police in the basement of his home in Onoway, Alberta, for 17 years. While his wife went to work, Young helped raise their two children, did household chores and dealt marijuana. “We had been looking for him for years,” RCMP Cpl. Colette Zazulak said after police, who never stopped looking for him, finally decided, for the first time, to visit his house. “I knew someday I’d have to give my pound of flesh,” Young said after pleading guilty to the original charge. He received a three-year prison sentence. (Edmonton Journal)

FIRST THINGS FIRST

After a 50-year-old shopper at a Philadelphia supermarket was stabbed in the face and neck in the produce aisle, other shoppers ignored police trying to clear them from the scene. They continued shopping, “standing on the blood, pushing their shopping carts over the blood,” police Chief Inspector Scott Small said. “Some people actually asked the police if they could reach on the shelf and grab some dairy products that were where most of the blood was because we had that area cordoned off.” (Philadelphia’s WTXF-TV)

CRISIS OF THE WEEK

Venezuela faces a breast-implant shortage, according to reports noting women are having to settle for implants that are the wrong size or made in China. Quality imported implants approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration are limited because Venezuela’s restrictive currency controls limit spending on foreign goods to \$300. Brand-name implants start at \$600. Chinese implants cost as little as \$200. According to the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, Venezuelan doctors performed 85,000 implants in 2013, ranking fifth worldwide, behind the United States, Brazil, Mexico and Germany. “It’s a culture of ‘I want to be more beautiful than you,’” plastic surgeon Daniel Slobodianik said. “That’s why even people who live in the slums get implants.” (Associated Press)

IRONY OF THE WEEK

Tobacco giant Reynolds America Inc. is banning smoking in all its Richmond, Va., offices and buildings. Company official David Howard said the new rule takes effect just as soon as the company builds indoor smoking areas for employees who don’t want to go outside to smoke. Workers may still use smokeless tobacco products. (Associated Press)

BAD TASTE

Anti-hazing activists Lianne and Brian Kowiak objected to Ben & Jerry’s new ice cream flavor “Hazed & Confused,” saying it “frankly just struck a nerve with us.” The Florida couple’s 19-year-old son died from hazing injuries while rushing a college fraternity six years ago. Since then, they travel to schools around their home state to raise awareness of hazing’s hazards. They suggested the Vermont company change the name of its ice cream to honor their son, to which Ben & Jerry’s official Sean Greenwood replied, no promises. He explained that the

comedian

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hazelnut-flavored brand's name is a pop reference to the 1990s cult movie "Dazed and Confused." (Burlington's WCAX-TV)

ALTERNATE THEORY OF THE CRIME

British magistrates cleared Thomas Clark, 28, of voyeurism, charges, even after he admitted hiding his phone in the unisex toilet where he worked with the intention of filming other workers at their office in Southgate. He denied taking pictures of women for sexual thrills, insisting he has an extreme phobia of diarrhea and vomit, so he wanted to make sure that no one using the toilet ahead of him had diarrhea or had vomited. "I try to keep the phobia to myself," Clark testified, saying it began when he was eight. "It got to such a severe stage where I felt completely trapped, with panic attacks, and could only get reassurance by putting my phone in the toilet." (Britain's Crawley News)

NATURE'S WAY

Organic food items may be popular, but the term "organic" has been extended to household cleaners, textiles, cosmetics, hand lotions, gardening products, clothing, sheets and mattresses, even organic dry cleaning — to the tune of \$2.8 billion last year, according to the Organic Trade Association. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's "USDA organic" seal covers only food and other agricultural products, Miles McEvoy, head of the department's National Organic Program, said, pointing out, "The areas that are outside of our scope could cause some confusion." (Associated Press) **lv**

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SPANK U

This week, Dan Savage turns to the media to answer questions on kinks.
BY DAN SAVAGE



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Is this even Dan? Probably not, probably an assistant, but maybe this will eventually get to him. I have a spanking fetish. I love to be spanked. I live in Oakland, California, so San Francisco is 10 minutes away. Seems like I'm in one of the best places in the country to have a kink, but I'm having a hard time figuring out where I can find a spanking community. I know there are BDSM clubs, but is there another way I can connect with spanking people? Any suggestions or resources?

Sincerely, Panicked And Needing Knowledgeable Mentorship, Edification

This is Dan, SPANKME. I read all my own mail. And I found someone for you—all by my lonesome—who is more qualified than I to answer your question.

“This lady sounds like she needs to be severely punished,” Jillian Keenan joked when she read your e-mail. “I’d love to help her get what she deserves!”

Keenan is a very serious journalist who writes about very serious subjects—climate change, economic policy, nuclear proliferation—but she’s also a very serious spanking fetishist. She came out about her kink in a Modern Love column in the *New York Times* (“Finding the Courage to Reveal a Fetish,” Nov. 9, 2012), and she’s written a series of pieces about kink, consent and stigma for Slate and other publications.

So, SPANKME, where can you find your kink community? Where everybody finds their kink communities these days: online. “FetLife.com has profiles of more than 300,000 spanking fetishists, including several groups specifically for people in the Bay Area,” said Keenan. “FetLife is a good way to chat with people online and ease into the scene. On FetLife, she can also learn about where local spanking enthusiasts go for parties and munches.”

Munches are informal get-togethers where kinksters meet to talk, not to play. You might connect with a potential playmate at a munch, but you won’t be pressured to play right away. “When she starts to meet potential playmates, the most important thing I can recommend is to be as detailed and honest as possible,” said Keenan. “What are her fantasies? Does she want to be spanked with a hand, hairbrush, belt, paddle or something else? Does she want to call her partner ‘sir’ or ‘ma’am’? Would she prefer a punitive dynamic, or does she fantasize about erotic spankings? Is she excited by any of our kink’s side dishes, like standing in a corner, writing lines, being scolded or getting her mouth washed out with soap? What implements, activities, words or pain thresholds are absolutely off-limits? Such specific details can feel embarrassing at first, but if she talks about them honestly with a potential partner, it’s much more likely that she’ll find a good match and have a great experience!”

A safe, responsible and trustworthy kinkster—the only kind of kinkster you ever want to play with—will agree to meet you in a public place to talk about your kinks and limits before setting up a playdate. If you find yourself talking with someone who refuses to meet prior to playing, SPANKME, they’re not a responsible or trustworthy kinkster.

“But great dominants are not rare,” said Keenan. “It won’t take long to find someone else—someone with whom she’ll feel safe. And no matter what she and a potential partner agree on before a scene, she can always change her mind later if something feels uncomfortable. And there is absolutely no shame in using a safe word. So pick a fun one!”

Follow Jillian Keenan on Twitter at @jillian-keenan.

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We have a new shorthand term for BDSM doms who are abusive assholes: Ghomeshi doms. Good guys into BDSM should stick this in their online profiles: "I'm a nice, non-Ghomeshi dom looking for a lady who is into..."

—Banish Abusive Doms

Jian Ghomeshi is the CBC radio host who was fired last week after three women leveled accusations of sexual assault against him. Eight women have now spoken to the press; two have allowed themselves to be named. Ghomeshi claims that he is into BDSM and

A SAFE, RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTWORTHY KINKSTER—THE ONLY KIND OF KINKSTER YOU EVER WANT TO PLAY WITH—WILL AGREE TO MEET YOU IN A PUBLIC PLACE TO TALK ABOUT YOUR KINKS AND LIMITS BEFORE SETTING UP A PLAYDATE.

that all of these encounters were consensual, BAD, but I don't believe that Ghomeshi is a consensual kinkster. I believe he's a serial abuser who leveraged his fame against the women he assaulted and who is now hiding behind the culture of consent that characterizes responsible BDSM communities and practitioners. So I think it would be a mistake for BDSMers to work his name—even in a negative sense—into their lingo/slang/shorthand, BAD. He's not one of you. He never was. (I wrote two long posts about Ghomeshi on my blog—google my name and his and they pop right up.) **lv**

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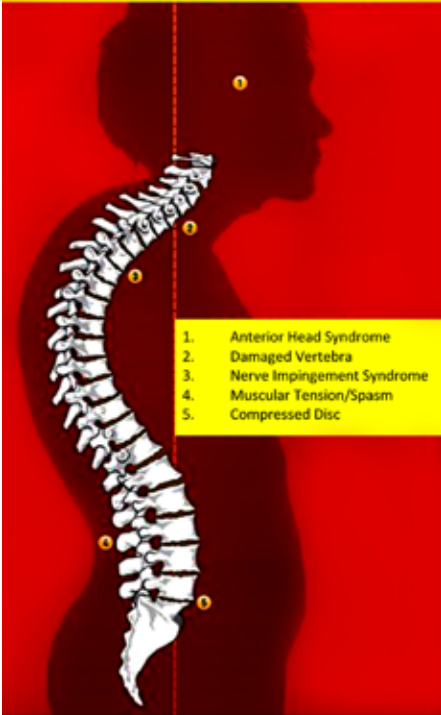
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FROM GRAY TO BLACK



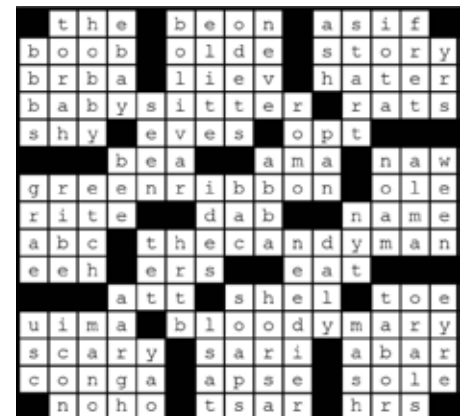
FANTASY TALK BY JULIA LIPPERT

ACROSS

1. A western Pennsylvania university, casually
5. Hail Mary, for example
9. Citizen _____
13. Person doing downward dog on the regular
14. Island 'hello' and 'goodbye'
16. Raptor's fan favorite, Johnson
17. Deafening home advantage (SEA) or the last of a jury
19. Renegade Time Lord
20. Vocal term that means both high and low
21. Go-to wide receiver (DET) or Evil Transformer Leader
23. Surrogate parents, around the dorms
26. _____ in show
27. Lady loving quarterback (NYJ) or Manhattan Theater guy
34. A very long time
35. "That's as good as money, sir. Those are _____." Lloyd Christmas
36. "_____ boy!"
40. "_____ for Pedro"
41. To hit hard
42. It furrows when angry
43. Money pit machine?
44. Early '90s Nickelodeon cartoon

45. Game or punishment?
46. 2012 league MVP (MIN) or religious store trinket
49. Home in Spain
52. Class for a person new to the country, on a sched.
53. NFC South Quarterback's nickname (ATL) or one letter off of a cheap beer
57. Verdi's opera turned Elton John's musical
61. "_____ in the name of love."
62. Running back who almost never fumbled or (CIN) multiple attorneys

OCTOBER ANSWERS:



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66. Sicilian mountain
67. Turn of the century Baseball Hall of Famer, Frank
68. Cut or clip
69. Amulet representing Isis
70. Authority figure (Russian origin)
71. Signed off on

DOWN

1. MJ sang about this girl
2. State that has a crucial midterm election
3. Dandruff shampoo
4. Arcade Warning
5. "It's time for androgyny. Here comes ____!"
6. Breast cancer pathology letters
7. Slang word for a wine expert
8. Tyrion's girlfriend
9. A la ____
10. Sharif and Epps
11. 7-Down's varietal
12. *The Office's* receptionist
15. Film director Lee
18. The headquarters are in Dearborn, Michigan
22. Honest ____
24. Response to a kitten video, perhaps
25. A "Red sky at night" is their delight
27. Total babes in the South
28. Donkey Kong's Crocodile villain
29. "____ the next one." —Jay Z
30. Collection of distinct objects
31. "I'm Hans. And I'm Franz. And we're here to pump ____!"
32. Upton Sinclair's *The* ____
33. Iconic children clothing brand on the NYSE
36. Ready and Willing's partner
37. Protagonist of the *Divergent* series
38. Blocked food?
39. Speechless responses
41. School named for the father of evolution
46. *Equal* ____ for equal work
47. Is in Spanish
48. Academy award winning actress to her fans
49. Gossipy
50. Make amends
51. We celebrate his day in March, familiar
53. Modern alien wife?
54. Often misused contraction
55. Country's Atkins
56. Iowa City's competitive swim team, with The
58. In that case
59. Acronym for an employed couple without dependents
63. *Glee's* Michele
64. Irish Lingus
65. Psychiatric disorder with alter egos, in the DSM

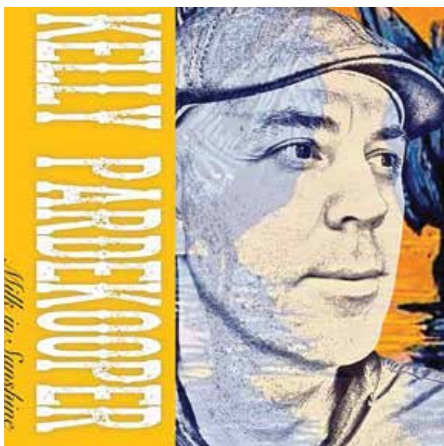
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LOCAL ALBUMS



KELLY PARDEKOOPER

Milk in Sunshine

kellypardekooper.com

The musician credits of Kelly Pardekooper's new album *Milk in Sunshine* is a who's who of Eastern Iowa country, folk and blues legends including Bo Ramsey, Dave Zollo, Dave Moore, Pieta Brown and Radoslav Lorkovic.

Milk in Sunshine is a massive 24-song CD and/or vinyl LP package encompassing 10

new songs with a bonus 16-song "greatest hits" of Kelly Pardekooper.

But, Pardekooper's signature barstool blues makes every song in his catalog essential. A

EVEN THOUGH *MILK IN SUNSHINE* SPANS HIS WHOLE RECORDED CAREER, THE ALBUM IS REMARKABLY BALANCED—NO DRAMATIC SWINGS IN PRODUCTION AND PERFORMANCE—A TESTAMENT TO THE FACT THAT HONESTY BEGETS TIMELESSNESS.

new song-like album opener "She Moves" shares the same blistering *Exile on Main St.*-style swagger that he brought to songs like "Fly on the Wall" from his 2000 album *Johnson County Snow* or the title track from his 2007 album *Brand New Bag*. The delicate strumming and quiet, high-pitched vocals on *Yonder's* "So Lovely" and "Where's The Love" evoke the style of Elliott Smith and will give listeners a satisfying sampling of his range.

Even though *Milk in Sunshine* spans his whole recorded career, the album is remarkably balanced without dramatic swings in production and performance. It's a testament to the fact that honesty begets timelessness.

In "Authentic," Pardekooper addresses the dismissive hipsters: "Yeah, I'm not young enough. Rich enough. Vinyl enough. Crazy enough for you ... Yeah this ain't no disco. And it ain't no folk show. It's just another dig at authentic. Just another dig."

For him, songwriting with an open, storytelling style and performances that are unvarnished by fancy studio techniques will always stand the test of time, even if it isn't always in vogue.

Kelly will be playing an album release show at The Mill on Nov. 29 with a backing band of John Svec, Eric Straumanis and Matt Winegardner. **I**

—Mike Roeder

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SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Near the end of the 19th century, an American named Annie Londonderry became the first woman to ride a bicycle around the world. It was a brave and brazen act for an era when women still couldn't vote and paved roads were rare. Her 15-month journey took her through countries that would be risky for a single woman on a bike to travel through today, like Egypt and Yemen. What made her adventure even more remarkable was that she didn't know how to ride a bike until two days before she departed. I'd love to see you plan a daring exploit like that, Scorpio—even if you do not yet have a certain skill you will need to succeed.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): P. G. Wodehouse wrote more than 90 books, as well as numerous plays, musical comedies, and film scripts. When he died at age 93, he was working on another novel. He did not suffer from writer's block. And yet his process was far from effortless. He rarely churned out perfection on his first attempt. "I have never written a novel," he testified, "without doing 40,000 words or more and finding they were all wrong and going back and starting again." The way I see your immediate future, Sagittarius, is that you will be creating your own version of those 40,000 wrong words. And that's OK. It's not a problem. You can't get to the really good stuff without sloggling through this practice run.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): It's a favorable time for you to meditate intensely on the subject of friendship. I urge you to take inventory of all the relevant issues. Here are a few questions to ask yourself. How good of a friend are you to the people you want to have as your friends? What capacities do you cultivate in your effort to build and maintain vigorous alliances? Do you have a clear sense of what qualities you seek in your cohorts and colleagues? Are you discerning in the way you choose your compatriots, or do you sometimes end up in associations with people you don't truly enjoy and don't have much in common with? If you discover any laziness or ignorance in your approach to the art of friendship, make the necessary fixes.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Before the invention of the printing press, books in Europe were handmade. Medieval monks spent long hours copying these texts, often adding illustrations in the margins. There's an odd scene that persistently appears in these illuminated manuscripts: knights fighting snails. Scholars don't agree on why this theme is so popular or what it means. One theory is that the snail symbolizes the "slow-moving tedium of daily life," which can be destructive to our hopes and dreams—similar to the way that literal snails may

devour garden plants. In accordance with the cosmic omens, I am bestowing a knighthood on you, Aquarius, so you will be inspired to rise up and defeat your own metaphorical version of the snail.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): To be in righteous alignment with cosmic forces, keep the Halloween spirit alive for a while. You have a license to play with your image and experiment with your identity. Interesting changes will unfold as you expand your notion of who you are and rebel cheerfully against your own status quo. To get started, try this exercise. Imagine that your gangsta name is Butt-Jugglin Smuggla. Your pirate name is Scallywagger Hornslasher. Your sex-worker name is Saucy Loaf. Your Mexican wrestler name is Ojo Último (Ultimate Eye). Your rock star-from-the-future name is Cashmere Hammer. Or make up your own variations.



ARIES (March 21-April 19): Shape-shifting is a common theme in fairy tales, says cultural historian Marina Warner in her book **From the Beast to the Blonde.** "A rusty lamp turns into an all-powerful talisman," for example. "A humble pestle and mortar become the winged vehicle of the fairy enchantress," or a slovenly beggar wearing a dirty donkeyskin transforms into a radiant princess. I foresee metaphorically similar events happening in your life sometime soon, Aries. Maybe they are already underway. Don't underestimate the magic that is possible.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20): The technical scientific term for what happens when you get a headache from eating too much ice cream too fast is **sphenopalatine ganglioneuralgia.** I urge you to be on guard against such an occurrence in the coming weeks. You should also watch out for other phenomena that fit the description of being too-much-and-too-fast-of-a-good-thing. On the other hand, you shouldn't worry at all about slowly getting just the right amount of a good thing. If you enjoy your pleasures with grace and moderation, you'll be fine.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20): "Pregreening" is a term for what impatient drivers do as they are waiting at a red light. They partly take their foot off the brake, allowing their car to creep forward, in the hope of establishing some momentum before the light changes to green. I advise you to avoid this type of behavior in the coming days, Gemini—both the literal and the metaphorical variety. Pregreening might make sense by, say, November 15 or 16. But for now, relax and abide.



CANCER (June 21-July 22): German composer Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

was one of the greats. His influence on the evolution of Western music has been titanic, and many of his best compositions are still played today. He was prodigious, too, producing over 350 works. One of the secrets to his high level of energy seems to have been his relationship with coffee. It was an indispensable part of his diet. He was fastidious in its preparation, counting out exactly 60 coffee beans for each cup. I recommend that you summon a similar attention to detail in the coming days. It will be an excellent time to marshal your creative energy and cultivate your lust for life. You will get the best results if you are precise and consistent and focused in your approach.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): By the time we have become young adults, most of us don't remember much about our lives from before the age of five. As we grow into middle age, more and more childhood memories drop away. Vague impressions and hazy feelings may remain. A few special moments keep burning brightly. But the early events that shaped us are mostly gone. Having said that, I want to alert you to the fact that you are in a phase when you could recover whole swaths of lost memories, both from your formative years and later. Take advantage of this rare window of opportunity to reconnect with your past.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Photographer Joel Leindecker can kick himself in the head 127 times in one minute. **Guinness World Records** affirms that his achievement is unmatched. I'm begging you not to try to top his mark any time soon. In fact, I'm pleading with you not to commit any act of mayhem, chaos, or unkindness against yourself—even if it's done for entertainment purposes. In my view, it's crucial for you to concentrate on caressing yourself, treating yourself nicely, and caring for yourself with ingenious tenderness in the coming weeks.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): The writing of letters is becoming a lost art. Few people have a long enough attention span to sit down and compose a relaxed, thoughtful report on what they have been doing and thinking. Meanwhile, the number of vigorous, far-reaching conversations is waning, too. Instead, many of us tend to emit and absorb short bursts of information at frequent intervals. But I invite you to rebel against this trend in the coming weeks. Judging from the astrological omens, I believe you would stir up some quietly revolutionary developments by slowing down and deepening the way you communicate with those you care about. You may be amazed by how much richer your experience of intimacy will become. **lv**

—Rob Breznsky

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