



LITTLEVILLAGE
IOWA CITY'S NEWS & CULTURE MAGAZINE

*VOL. 17 | ISSUE 170
FEB. 4 - 17, 2015*



**THE NEWSROOM
OF THE FUTURE**

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IOWA CITY COMMUNITY? PAGE 10*

PETITION AMBITIONS

*THE IOWA CITY CHARTER IS UP FOR REVIEW, AND WITH
IT COMES A CHANCE TO AMEND AN EXCLUSIVE PETITION
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HEADY HOME MOVIES

*THE HEADROOM EXPERIMENTAL FILM SERIES IS BACK.
PAGE 24*

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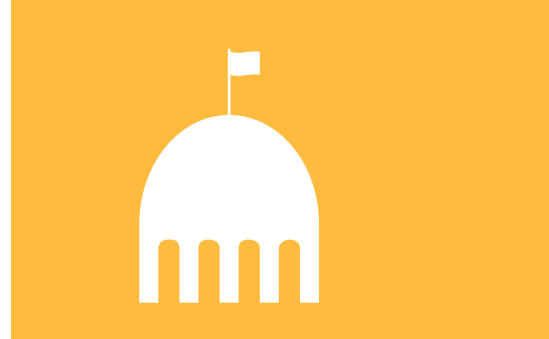
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WINTER'S JOURNEY

While Iowa's winter may be challenging, it contributes to the narrative of our lives and leaves us wiser and more appreciative of what we have.

BY THOMAS DEAN



Here in Iowa City, we haven't had the historic cold and snow this winter as we've had in recent years. But the early January snowstorm and cold snap brought out the predictable grumblings and the inevitable question: "Why, again, do we live here?"

I embrace winter fundamentally because it is part of the nature and experience of our home here in Iowa and the Midwest. I'm also a believer in storytelling, that stories shape our lives and help us understand truths of our

TWISTS AND TURNS | *Winter takes us on a journey—both predictable and unforeseen—that can be ennobling and exciting. Illustration by Tara Strait*

existence. The story of our life in our place is one of the most important.

Winter plays a crucial role in that story. The story of our annual journey around the sun—a story with a distinct beginning and ending—is marked by the four unique seasons here in Iowa. Our flora and fauna depend on and are made distinctive by these ever-returning

climatic dramas and comedies—including the time of dark and cold.

Even beyond being a chapter in the story of our place, winter tells perhaps the most dramatic story of all the seasons, and we are privileged to be part of that tale. A good story brings us into an experience: We encounter intensity, conflict, sometimes danger and, if the story is worth its salt, beauty, before we are brought back out of it wiser and, hopefully, changed.

Of all the seasons, I always think of winter as something we journey into and out of, and I am most satisfied when I am able to feel all the dimensions of this story deeply. The more cold and snow we have, the more that we know we are in deep, that we are in something very different that does not resemble where we entered and where we will exit. In Joseph Campbell's archetypal hero's journey, the hero must enter the abyss, the cave, the place like nothing else in the story, in order to transform and to return.

That's winter.

Even the most ardent winter lover has to admit that Midwestern winters can challenge us. As human animals, we cannot survive the cold temperatures without artificial means. Snow and ice can put up roadblocks to our easy navigation of even daily life. Sometimes, a monumental blizzard, ice storm or subzero Arctic blast can bring our movement and progress to a standstill, and we may wonder if we'll ever be able to do what we had planned or wanted to do while nature's fury overwhelms

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us. These are all manifestations of the types of narrative twists and turns that characters face in a good story.

When we reach the end of a good story, even when it has been harrowing or even frightening, we are satisfied, wiser and perhaps even a little triumphant along with our protagonist. A good winter should make us feel the same way come April.

I ALWAYS THINK OF WINTER AS SOMETHING WE JOURNEY INTO AND OUT OF, AND I AM MOST SATISFIED WHEN I AM ABLE TO FEEL ALL THE DIMENSIONS OF THIS STORY DEEPLY.

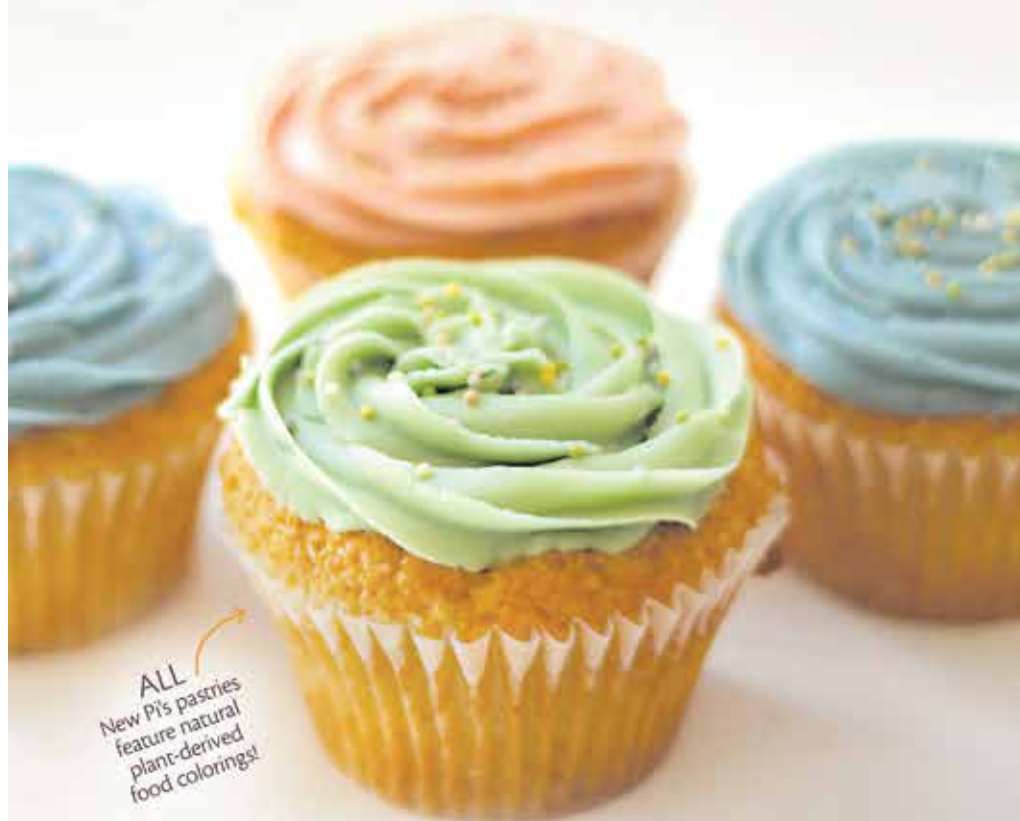
Winter is a beautiful and frightening abyss that is right here with us, not leagues away in geography or imagination—it is central to the meaning of how we know our home. We will emerge at the denouement, perhaps blinking our eyes a bit after the darkness or raising our arms toward the warmth, with a deepened understanding of home. **IV**

Thomas Dean got a new Stormy Kromer hat for Christmas for the winter.



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PETITION POLITICS

The Iowa City Charter allows residents to take a direct role in shaping our city's laws and government, but current policy leaves some community members excluded. • **BY ADAM B SULLIVAN**

Adam B Sullivan is a member of the Iowa City Charter Review Commission. The following viewpoints are his own.

Our founding fathers thought petitioning the government was such an important right, they put it right there in the First Amendment to the Constitution. It doesn't get as much exposure as the freedom of speech and religion, but it's still there—right at the top of the Bill of Rights.

The 'right to petition the government' is generally taken to mean that you can complain to your elected officials, but here in Iowa City, that right is underlined and bolded. Iowa City residents can organize legally binding petitions to adopt new ordinances or change existing ones. It's an exceptional democratic experiment, and for the most part, it's worked out well for our community.

But not everyone is allowed to participate in the petitioning process. If you're a tax-paying, law-abiding Iowa City resident but you haven't gotten around to filling out voter registration paperwork, our city charter says your signature doesn't count.

That charter—our city government's founding document—calls for its own review at least once per decade. The current Charter Review Commission—which consists of myself and eight other Iowa City residents appointed by the City Council—is considering changing the requirements for who can sign a petition.

Iowa City is one of just two places in the state where citizens can launch petitions to

change the city code or pass new ordinances, and if an initiative or referendum petition gets enough valid signatures, the council has to either adopt the proposal or send it to voters for a simple majority vote.

However, only signatures from so-called qualified electors—those who are currently registered to vote in Iowa City—are counted. Signatures from many so-called eligible electors—signatures from those who are eligible to register, but who aren't currently registered in Iowa City—are disregarded.

In one instance, a group of petitioners had 40 percent of their signatures are thrown out.

In 2013, a group of citizen-activists organized an effort to ban automated traffic enforcement devices. They thought they'd met the 2,500 signatures required to advance their proposal, but after the signatures were checked against voter registration rolls, they came up short.

They eventually met the requirement, but only after gathering around 4,300 signatures in total. Some 1,800 surplus signatures didn't count because they couldn't be verified as registered voters.

Some supporters of the current standards say that this encourages people to register, or that it's the least someone can do if they want their say. One local commentator was quoted in the *Press-Citizen* saying, "If a citizen doesn't care enough about their government to register to vote, why should I care what they want?"

It's along the same line of thinking as "you can't complain if you don't vote." It's a nice slogan, but it's not true. People who don't vote still have to pay taxes, can still be fined by

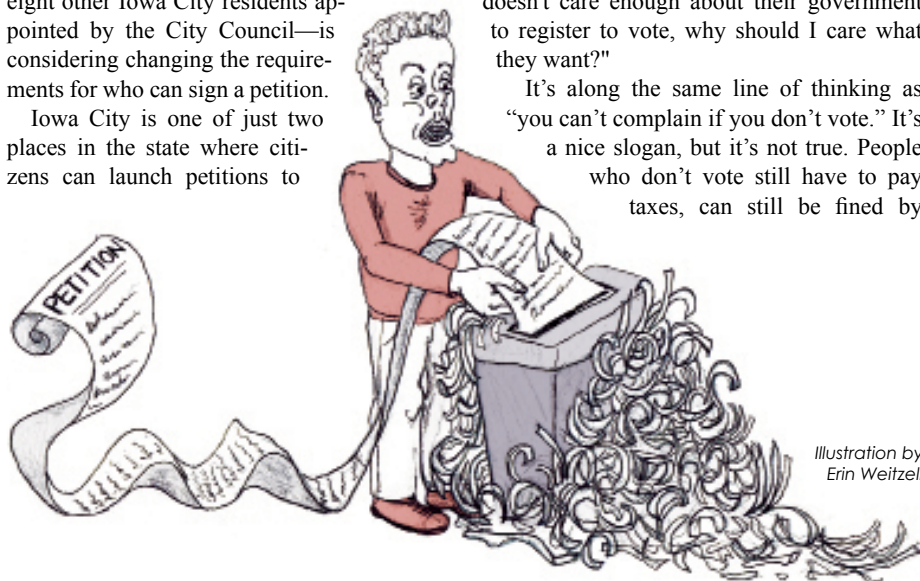


Illustration by
Erin Weitzell

YOUR VILLAGE

The Iowa City Charter Review Commission has focused on three other possible changes to the city charter.

COUNCIL COMPENSATION

Council members receive about \$7,000 annually for their services. They have the ability to increase their own pay, but haven't done so in the last 20 years.

Some would like to see council members earn higher compensation. Some argue that the meager compensation and the hefty time commitment for city councilors precludes many who simply can't afford to hold city office. On the other hand, if you pay much more, then council candidates may begin to be more motivated by compensation than by the idea of serving the community.

DISTRICT REPRESENTATION

The council is made up of four at-large seats and three district seats. The district council members have to live in the geographic district they represent, but everyone—not just voters in the district—gets a vote for each seat.

Some say we should go to "true districts," giving citizens a vote only in at-large races and in their own district. Others, though, say the current system makes all the council members accessible to everyone, instead of district council members serving only their district's interests.

ELECTION OF THE MAYOR

Rather than voting on a mayor, Iowa City residents elect council members, and subsequently, the council selects a mayor from its own ranks. Supporters of that system say it works well for the weak-mayor form of government we have, where the mayor's only duties are to run meetings and do the ceremonial bits. As one community member told me at a public forum, "a little more democracy is probably not a bad thing."

—Adam B Sullivan

the government and can still be detained if they're accused of breaking laws. Of course they can—and should—complain about their government.

And since election voting is actually a relatively ineffective way to change your government, it shouldn't be any wonder why so many people avoid voting in the first place. If people choose not to register, should they be shut out of political participation altogether?

The whole distinction between "qualified" and "eligible" voters is contrary to the spirit of Iowa politics. Since the last Charter Review Commission met, Iowa law has changed to allow us to register to vote on election day at our polling places. That process eliminates the distinction between voters and non-voters—all eligible adults have the same right to walk into their polling place and vote, regardless of prior paperwork.

Meanwhile, city staff spend considerable time checking petitions against voter registration rolls. The restrictions are far greater than we require for signatures on politicians' candidacy petitions, which are counted as long as

they have a qualifying address.

Some constituents I've heard from are also worried—myself included—about whose signatures are being thrown out. People who are new to our community are among the most likely not to have a valid local registration,

ONLY SIGNATURES FROM SO-CALLED QUALIFIED ELECTORS—THOSE WHO ARE CURRENTLY REGISTERED TO VOTE IN IOWA CITY—ARE COUNTED.

and because we know young people and poor people tend to be more transient, we have to carefully consider who we're excluding from the petition process.

The debate over Iowa City's petition rules has earned the attention of the American Civil Liberties Union. Their lawyers have written to the commission, pointing out that state law prescribes a petition process much less stringent

than Iowa City's. According to Iowa Code, petitions are valid if they include signatures from "eligible electors, equal to 10 percent of the number of voters in the previous city election. The signers only have to be "eligible electors," and the petition only needs signatures equal to 10 percent of the voters in the previous city council election. In Iowa City, that would be about 1,000—far fewer than the 2,500-plus required by the city charter.

Our city attorney disagrees with the ACLU's interpretation, saying that portion of the Iowa code doesn't apply to initiative and referendum petitions that are permitted through city charter code. Since I'm not a lawyer, I don't know about the legal question. What I do know is that easing the petition standards wouldn't hurt us. Say there is a silly or misguided petition that scrapes together a thousand signatures, the worst that could happen is that it would go on a ballot. Reasonable people that we are, we would reject it.

So what are we afraid of? A little bit of democracy? **lv**



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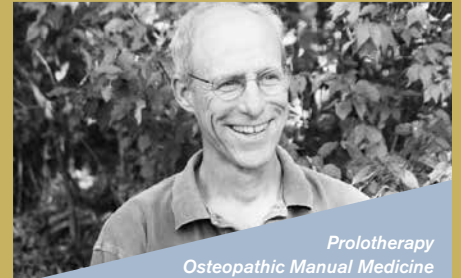
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THE FUTURE OF NEWS

As Gannett restructures to give us the news we 'want,' our community suffers as a result. • BY ROBERT GUTSCHE, JR.

In early January, the *Press-Citizen* announced a new roster of reporters and aims for their newsroom of the future.

The changes come after months of reorganization within the paper's parent company, Gannett, which has resulted in layoffs across the country. In October 2014, one reporter from the company's paper in Vermont was fired after she refused to reapply for the position she already had. She called the process "degrading and demoralizing."

The company has laid off thousands from its ranks over the past four years, even as Gannett remains profitable. *The Wall Street Journal* reported last fall that the company's third quarter earners were up some 49 percent after spending \$1.5 billion on a broadcast corporation, Belo Corp. and a \$1.8 billion completion of its ownership over Cars.com.

For those following the news industry, these changes have been seen by many of us to be problematic to the field—if not personal attacks to the very core of what it means to be a journalist.

Following the layoff of a good friend at *The Tennessean* in Nashville, for instance, former Gannetter Jeff Pearlman, at his website (jeffpearlman.com), titled his open letter to the company with a simple headline: "Dear Gannett. Fuck yourself. Love Jeff."

His September 2014 letter goes on to criticize the company for other things he thinks it did to ruin journalism, but more recent changes made to Gannett papers—including the *Press-Citizen* and *The Des Moines Register*—are to create a "Newsroom of the Future," one that relies upon fewer managers; on reporters who can cross between reporting, production

and planning; and on more journalists who are charged with engaging with the community.

Jim Romenesko, an online mediate, published new job descriptions for the "future" *Pensacola News Journal* (Florida), which are representative of changes in Gannett papers across the country. The *News Journal*, for instance, now boasts a community content editor who will be paid between \$46,400 and \$69,000 to provide "complementary community content" that meets "audience needs."

A reporter for prep sports at the *News Journal*, with a salary between \$25,280 and \$37,920, will be a "public ambassador through community outreach and connects with readers through social media." And at the *Press-Citizen*, journalists will be "host(ing) a time for coffee and chatting with community members at least once a quarter."

And despite rhetoric that these new newsrooms will better serve the public, there's little to suggest that Gannett will change how its news is covered—and who it's covered for.

* * *

The *Press-Citizen* has long been overshadowed by economic ties to its big sister paper, the *Register*. Content is shared, republished and repurposed—often with little effort to localize news from 'there' to 'here' and vice versa. Today, if readers are lucky, the same stories that appeared in one paper will run in the other—and on the same day—as opposed to a day or two later.

For as long as many of us have been in journalism, media owners have focused on reducing the labor force—even when it meant



- 1860 *Iowa State Press* established (a Democratic paper)
- 1891 *Iowa City Citizen* established (Republican paper)
- 1920 Both papers merge into *Press-Citizen (P-C)*
- 1937 *P-C* building at 319 E. Washington St. dedicated
- 1977 Speidel Co. merges with Gannett Co.
- 1985 Gannett acquires *Des Moines Register* and Tribune Company and owns over 80 papers.
- 1991 *P-C* moves into 1725 N. Dodge St. building
- 1997 *P-C* switches from afternoon to morning paper
- 2008 *P-C*'s press decommissioned, printing switched to the *Des Moines Register*
- 2011 *P-C* newsroom moves back into downtown Iowa City at 123 N. Linn St.
- 2014 Gannett reveals their vision for the "Newsroom of the Future"



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moving resources to investigative and literary journalism near the end of the last century. And with claims that they will maintain the mythical “wall” between news and business, these changes in the types of journalism—and journalists—that appeared were rooted in notions of community building and democratic watchdogging.

Today’s changes to the news labor force have moved away from any sense of specialization or hyper-localization to centralization and multi-tasking. Especially concerning, some critics say, is that editorial decisions made for local newspapers are carried out in corporate boardrooms. And, in some cases, in separate parts of the country.

But these decisions have always been made based on potential profits, not public service, in mind. Since conception, the press has always put their own needs and communities of police, politicians, business leaders and popular demagogues first. The public comes second.

Indeed, moments of mainstream “investigative” work that appear to be critical of the status quo are merely temporary instances of conflict that suggest the press have an interest in stories that operate outside of their tight relationships with fellow institutions.

Even this month, the *Press-Citizen*, for instance, ran a bloated breaking news story about University of Iowa President Sally Mason retiring. The PC’s initial breaking story that appeared online stated that she was “retiring from ‘fishbowl’ life,” a nod to her comments that she’s always under watchful eyes. A follow-up story by the newspaper boasted “flood recovery” was “key in Sally Mason’s UI legacy.”

Nothing was mentioned in either story about her inability to effectively address rampant sexual assault of college students.

Nothing was mentioned about the militarization of the UI police force under her watch.

Nor was there a mention of the university’s lack of success in recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and student body—let alone parity of pay and treatment among minority faculty and staff.

Coverage related to local racial issues are left to the imagination within police blotters. Stories of discrimination and inequalities are left to texts heavy on data but absent of shared human experience. Conversely, a story about local police releasing new decks of baseball-card-like Cop Cards is personified through photos and quotes of local police officers, one who apparently believes that baseball cards



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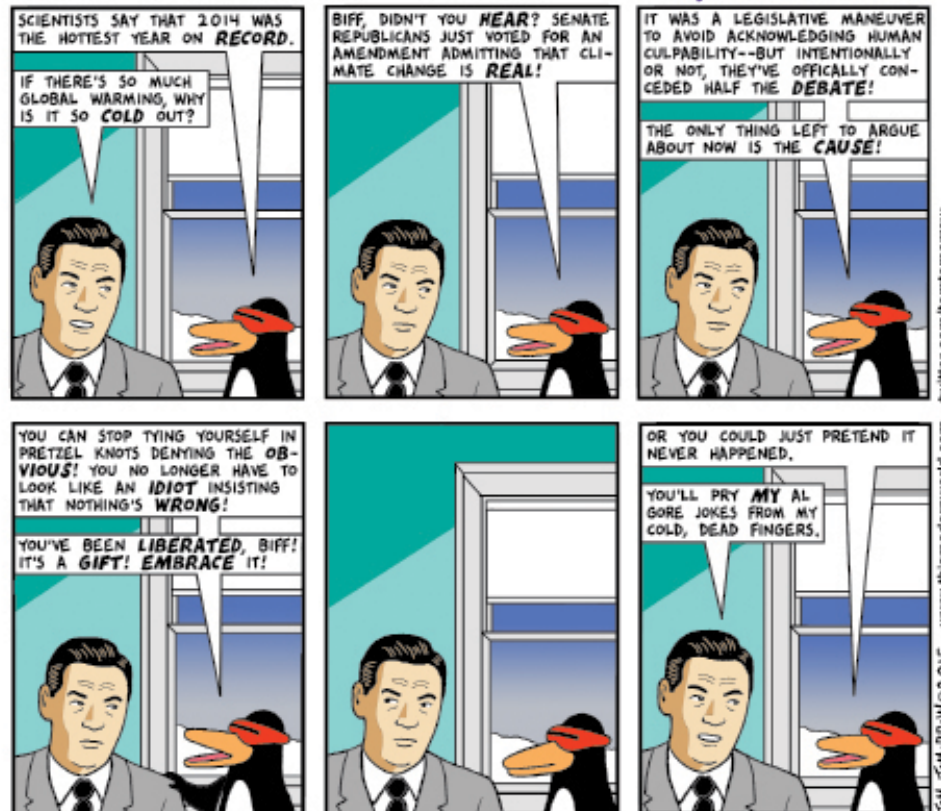
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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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of local K9 cops “builds a positive interaction with the public.” (Just a side note: That’s not why people don’t “trust” you. Your guns are.)

There may be a time when journalists step up and remember the problems that have been ignored in our community, but there is little to suggest that any changes coming from the new newsrooms of the *Press-Citizen*—or any newspaper, perhaps—will challenge such boosteristic coverage.

* * *

Over the past few years, I’ve focused my research and journalism on exploring how communities, including Iowa City, host a journalistic community that is one and the same as its local power elite, and which covers a single local community—no matter the geography.

As I wrote in my book about mythical histories of Iowa City, local media have long segregated the pages of the paper to ignore such things as black news, or news of other marginalized groups within our geographic borders—portions of the populations that have now been gentrified out of the Southeast Side to other parts of the region, including Coralville and

North Liberty.

Reduced to no other option, some of these families have simply moved out of the area, leaving us with a largely monochromatic citizenry. But when people have stuck around and found places to live, news media have found ways to push them out, too.

The cover of the June 7, 2014 *Press-Citizen*, for instance, proclaimed: “WESTSIDE CRIME ON THE RISE” in response to an increase in shots fired in and around the Pheasant Ridge apartments, an effort to focus on the next section of the city to be ghettoized based on myths of violent, dark-skinned citizens settling there.

Especially in the past three years, since the murder of black youngster Trayvon Martin by a white Hispanic in Sanford, Fla., and then the killing of black teen Michael Brown by a white police officer in Ferguson, Mo., local news organizations across the U.S. have localized these racialized news events by ignoring local cultures that are based on racial divides, thereby presenting issues of race issues as something that happens “somewhere else.”

A Sept. 24, 2014 editorial related to nationwide debate about the police murders of black

folk, the *Press-Citizen* editorial board asked what was to stop police response and a death like Ferguson “from happening somewhere else? Anywhere else? Here?”

THE PROBLEMS OF THE *PRESS-CITIZEN*, THE *REGISTER* AND *GANNETT*’S OTHER PAPERS ARE NOT THEIR OWN. THEY ARE ALSO OURS.

The paper’s editorial board members were pleased to announce local law enforcement officials had already taken action, listing efforts by Iowa City police to increase the use of police body and car cameras, the purchasing of 15 more body cameras by Coralville police officials and a continued use of cameras by both the University of Iowa police force and by police in nearby North Liberty.

Yet local press have seemed to forget that “a Ferguson” has happened in Iowa City with

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the police shooting of John Deng in 2009. Furthermore, local media have failed to report on the role of the police in the most recent racial issues on University of Iowa campus contributed to the rise of #BlackHawkeyes.

Another Iowa City “Ferguson” is undoubtedly on its way due to increased racial tensions and the intentional ignorance among community leaders of what the issues are and what can be done about them. Instead, our local media seem satisfied publishing propaganda from officials at public meetings during which they claim, as the *Press-Citizen* notes most recently, a “desire to resolve” issues of inequality. We’ve read that in local press before.

* * *

The problems of the *Press-Citizen*, the *Register* and Gannett’s other papers are not their own. They are also ours.

What appears in the pages of our newspapers and what’s broadcast on our public, profit-supporting airwaves is not our community in its true richness and complexities. They are stories based only on the experiences of a segment of the population, most notably those in

the business of boosting particular images of Iowa City.

In fact, according to public notes from editors at the *Register* and the *Press-Citizen*, Iowa City’s “future newsroom” will be focused on expanding its downtown and dining coverage. How civically minded.

So, instead of wondering to what degree these changes may influence the community—as though these changes would reduce the most important of civic coverage and information related to our “democracy”—we must ask why these changes are doing nothing more than maintaining the business-centric and hegemonic coverage that we’ve become used to.

More troubling, however, is that these “changes,” which expand the paper’s commitment to a closed interpretive community of city leaders, are teaching future media users—our children and students—that this is the kind of journalism we expect them to want. News managers know that the most we as a public have ever done to influence the press—other than burning presses during the country’s formative years and again during movements of abolition—is to cancel our subscriptions.

To be clear, individual journalists and

editors aren’t necessarily to blame for their safe and kind reporting. They are only reporting what we want. The public seems not to really want what it says it does from its local press. We need to ask ourselves the following: Do we really want journalism to remind us what’s wrong in the world? In our own world? In our back yards?

We say we do, and journalists say that’s what they are for.

But though most journalists try to be accurate, try to be fair and balanced, and just want to find a good story, they work in a system that’s rigged against good intentions, and, in turn, the public seems confused about just what we want in the news.

So maybe the first question we need to ask ourselves during these changing times of journalism is what we really want from our press and what we are going to do to get it. **IV**

Robert Gutsche, Jr. is a journalism professor at Florida International University in Miami. His book, A Transplanted Chicago, appeared in 2014 and focuses on media coverage of race in Iowa City. His new book, Media Control will appear in 2015.

intersections

PART 8 OF 12

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BASKET CASINGS

Contain clutter while beautifying your space with rope baskets.
BY FRANKIE SCHNECKLOTH



Photos by
Frankie Schneckloth



Rope baskets are a great way to organize odds and ends on your desk, contain your jewelry or hold a potted plant. These rope baskets are easily assembled and can be made in any shape or size you want.

STEP 1 | Start by overturning the pot you're using as your mold and crossing the two strips of fabric over the center of the form in an X. Use tape to secure the fabric pieces to one another and to the pot. You'll be using this fabric cross when you remove the rope basket from the mold.

STEP 2 | Take one end of your rope and place a line of glue about three inches long beginning at the tip of the rope. You definitely want to use enough glue so things stick, but try and keep the basket clean—especially if you plan on adding any color with fabric paint or dye—because places with excess glue will react much differently to color. Start to coil the rope into a flat spiral by tucking the gluey end of the cord inward and winding around until you come to the end of your glue. This is a bit easier to manage if you begin to coil the rope in the center of the mold where the fabric pieces cross.



MATERIALS:

- A BOWL, PLASTIC FLOWER POT OR TRAY TO USE AS A MOLD
- TWO STRIPS OF FABRIC, EACH LONG ENOUGH TO BE DRAPED ON TOP OF OVERTURNED MOLD AND STILL HAVE FABRIC REMAINING. I USED SCRAP PIECES OF MUSLIN—IT'S CHEAP AND DOESN'T SLIP AROUND LIKE SOME OTHER FABRICS.
- TAPE (I USED MASKING TAPE)
- WHITE COTTON CLOTHESLINE OR SASH CORD (AVAILABLE AT HARDWARE STORES)
- FABRIC OR TACKY GLUE (ANYTHING THAT DRIES CLEAR)
- FABRIC DYE OR PAINT (OPTIONAL)
- TAPE

STEP 3 | Continue to glue along the length of the cord, and wrap in stages. Be sure to press the new spiral of cord into the previous one so everything sticks. Take your time around edges and use a bit of extra glue if needed. When your basket is the size you want, cut the end of the cord. You'll cover this end in glue and press into place, connecting it to the previous spiral.

STEP 4 | Let the glue dry according to directions—usually an hour is long enough. Carefully free the rope basket from the mold by gently pulling on the ends of the fabric. If your coils start to separate a bit, just glue along the break and let it dry.

STEP 5 | If you want to add a splash of color to your stark white coil basket, you can mix up a bit of fabric dye or paint. You might choose to dip dye the bowl—giving it a color-blocked look—or for a more abstract and free look you can apply the dye or paint with a paintbrush to specific areas. Let dye or paint completely dry before putting to use. **iv**

Frankie Schneckloth is currently photographing Little Village's new food and drink publication, Bread and Butter: The essential guide to eating and drinking in the Iowa City Area, out this spring.

BREW OF THE MONTH: FEBRUARY

THREE CHEERS FOR THREE BEERS

Just because February is the shortest month of the year doesn't mean it needs to be lacking in tasty beverages. These three beers are not only easy on the taste buds, their higher-than-average ABV will warm you during these winter doldrums.



YEARNING FOR SUMMER?



TRY: **CAMP FIRE BLACK LAGER**

Confluence Brewing Company |
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ABV

Recalling memories of campsites and warmer weather, Camp Fire Black Lager will sustain you until spring arrives. Released in October, Camp Fire is Confluence's autumn and winter seasonal and should still be available on tap and retail shelves through the end of February. Pour into a nonick or imperial pint glass. The color is non-opaque black, and a finger or more of dense, tan-colored head will leave an even ring around the edge. An aroma of smoked malt is prominent but not overpowering; it is tempered by toasted malt, a little caramel, toffee and dark fruit. The flavor mostly mirrors the aroma, but the smoked malt is much more prominent.

of dense, light-brown head dissipates evenly. Toasty, nutty and fruity, the aroma and flavor are somewhat reminiscent of a brown ale. Toasted malt and caramel are most prominent, followed by a nuttiness and peat-like earthiness. There are also touches of charcoal, smoked malt, vanilla, cocoa, cherry, burnt sugar and molasses.

FEELING IRONY-DEFICIENT?



TRY: **LAGUNITAS SUCKS**

Lagunitas Brewing Company |
Petaluma, Calif. | 7.85 percent
ABV

Do not be misled by the name: Lagunitas Sucks is delicious. Sold in 32-ounce bottles and best served in a pint glass, the color is clear, medium gold with a light tint of amber, and the dense, eggshell-colored foam settles slowly. The aroma features citrus and tropical fruit; scents of pineapple, kiwi, floral hops, orange, lemon zest, rye and caramel are most noticeable. The flavor follows the smell, but it has a solid, sweet, malt base. Flavors of gritty hop bitterness—orange, lemon, a touch of caramel, rye and a hint of alcohol—greet the taste buds. **IV**

Casey Wagner writes about beer for Little Village. Find out the latest brewing news at LittleVillageMag.com.

LIVING ON A BUDGET?



TRY: **HUBER BOCK**

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TV FOR HIBERNATING

These five new television shows will get you through to spring.

BY MELISSA ZIMDARS



The following list of must-watch TV shows got started when the air outside my apartment felt like negative 35 degrees, and I wanted something to look forward to besides the thoughts of sun and drinking on my porch. These new and soon-to-air shows should keep you occupied until the grass is green again.

Empire (FOX) premiered a couple weeks ago, and the beginning of first episode hooked me. (I should explain that I'm total sucker for ABC's *Nashville*, a soapy country-music drama, so the promise of a hip-hop version excited me right off the bat.) Created by Lee Daniels—known for directing numerous films including *Precious*—*Empire* stars Terrence Howard as Lucius Lyon, a former drug

A TV HIP-HOPERA | *Empire* stars Terrence Howard as a former drug dealer who's made it as a hip-hop mogul.

dealer and current hip-hop mogul, and Taraji P. Henson as the totally badass Cookie Lyon, who just finished a prison sentence and is now managing her son's music career. The show deals with Lucas struggling with his ALS diagnosis, the sibling rivalries between his three sons and his homophobia in both hip-hop culture, and, according to Daniels, African American communities.

Togetherness (HBO) premiered this January and features four friends in Los Angeles who are all in their late 30s, leading lives that have become either boring or



a total shit show. Brett Pierson's (played by Mark Duplass of *The League* fame) marriage to Michelle (played by Melanie Lynskey also known as Rose on *Two and a Half Men*) has become monotonous and void of sex, which leads to an awkwardly wonderful masturbation scene in the pilot. Meanwhile Michelle's sister, Tina (Amanda Peet), and Brett's friend, Alex (Steve Zissis), both need a place to crash because of stalled careers and failed relationships, forcing the four grown adults to live under the same roof. Basically, all of the characters are a total mess but are trying to get through it together, producing moments of both sadness and hilarity.

WITH TINA FEY AT THE HELM, *UNBREAKABLE PROMISES TO BE FUNNY, AND NETFLIX IS CLEARLY BANKING ON IT CONSIDERING THEY ALREADY ORDERED TWO SEASONS FOR US TO BINGE WATCH.*

Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt (Netflix) premieres March 6, so mark your calendars now. I'm pretty excited for this comedy produced by Tina Fey and Robert Carlock, who was the showrunner for *30 Rock*. The premise: Ellie Kemper (*The Office*) plays Kimmy Schmidt, who flees from a doomsday cult and begins rebuilding her life in New York City. The show will also feature Kimmy's friends from her former cult and Tituss Burgess as Titus, an over-the-top singer working as a robot in Times Square. With Tina Fey at the helm, this show promises to be funny, and Netflix is clearly banking on it considering they already ordered two seasons for us to binge watch.

The Man in the High Castle (Amazon), another online-only series, began on Jan. 15. Based on Philip K. Dick's novel of the same name, *The Man in the High Castle* takes place in 1962 and reimagines history based on the Allies losing World War II. As a result,

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the United States is split in two with Nazi Germany ruling one half and Japan ruling the other. Censorship and oppression seem to be the new world order, sparking resistance, the exchange of underground films and a growing rebel movement in Colorado. The show is produced by both Ridley Scott and Frank Spotnitz (*The X-Files*) and is described as a combination of *LOST* and *The Americans*. P.S. If you haven't checked out *Transparent* and *Mozart in the Jungle* on Amazon, do it!

Better Call Saul (AMC) will finally premiere on Feb. 8, giving *Breaking Bad* fans something to obsess over besides re-watching old episodes on Netflix. *Better Call Saul*, which is also produced by Vince Gilligan and Peter Gould, takes place in 2002 prior to Saul Goodman, still played by Bob Odenkirk, meeting the infamous, meth-cooking Walter White. In fact, the story even begins before Saul Goodman is Saul Goodman. Instead we are introduced to James "Jimmy" Morgan McGill, a small-town lawyer and public defender in Albuquerque, who eventually becomes Saul some time after meeting Mike Ehrmantraut (one of my favorite characters on *Breaking Bad*), played again by Jonathan Banks, as a parking lot attendant turned private investigator. Needless to say, I'm pretty pumped to find out the impetus behind Jimmy becoming Saul, the sleazy criminal attorney. **IV**

Melissa Zimdars wishes someone could find her a \$250 apartment in Iowa City just like Hannah Horvath recently did on HBO's Girls.



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BEYOND THE DOOR

At Studio 54, the mainstream and the underground were united by a single shared ambition: to get past the velvet rope.

BY KEMBREW MCLEOD



Studio 54 was more than just a nightclub—it was a pop culture supernova.

“To me, the best room in the city has always been Studio 54,” says Jim Fouratt, who ran the disco in the late 1970s. “I mean, just the physical space, and the way that they used screens and just how they ran it—it was a theater. It was an absolutely fabulous space.”

The club had a spectacular lighting system that featured towers of multicolored lights, seizure-inducing strobes, rotating light balls, roving spotlights, swirling color wheels and a huge mirrored ball. Studio 54’s centerpiece was a massive man in the moon—with a coke spoon—that descended and blew bubbles.

As euphoric partiers lost themselves on the 5,400 square foot dance floor, folks on the balconies could watch, be seen, take drugs and/or have anonymous sex. Hedonism was in the steamy air: The bartenders and busboys were shirtless, and they were highly sought after by clubgoers as sexual conquests.

“I used to go to Studio 54, before I opened up Hurrah,” Fouratt says, referring to one of New York’s other major clubs that he operated, in

POP CULTURE SUPERNOVA | Studio 54 inspired disco hits like Chic’s “Freak Out.” Illustration by Lev Cantoral

addition to Danceteria. “Studio was the place to be at, and to me, the core of Studio was the gay guys on the dance floor. It was basically a gay dance club—not just all the other celebrity stuff and everything going on.”

Studio 54 grew out of a business partnership between Ian Schrager and Steve Rubell, who co-owned the successful Steak Loft Restaurant chain. Business boomed in 1974 after Rubell turned one of their locations in Queens into a nightclub called Enchanted Garden. Then in 1977 they opened Studio 54. It was built inside an old CBS soundstage called Studio 53 (because the entrance was on West 53rd Street), back when classic TV shows like *The \$64,000 Question* and *Captain Kangaroo* broadcast from there.

The midtown Manhattan office building that held Studio 54—located at 254 W. 54th St.—occupies a central space in pop culture history. It contained the recording studio and business offices of label Scepter Records, which released hit records by The Shirelles and several



other girl groups in the early 1960s. The Velvet Underground also recorded its debut album there, and Tom Moulton engineered the first 12-inch disco remix in Scepter’s studios. More than just a curious coincidence, it highlights how the mainstream and the underground can converge in remarkable ways—particularly in New York City.

“STUDIO WAS THE PLACE TO BE AT, AND TO ME, THE CORE OF STUDIO WAS THE GAY GUYS ON THE DANCE FLOOR.”

—JIM FOURATT

Studio 54’s opening night on April 26, 1977 was a major media event. As Calvin Klein, Brooke Shields and Margaux Hemingway partied inside, many of the 5,000 invitees (including Warren Beatty and Henry “The Fonz” Winkler) couldn’t get in because of the mob scene outside.

Co-owner Rubell—a short, schlubby, skinny white guy—quipped that no one who looked like him ought to be able to get into Studio 54. The club’s exclusive door policy furthered its mystique, and inspired some good disco songs. Kid Creole and the Coconuts scored a minor hit with “Dario, Can You Get Me Into Studio 54?,” and Chic’s mega-hit “Freak Out” was written after Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards were denied entry.

The annoyed musicians went back to their rehearsal space and came up with a catchy hook directed at the offending doorman: “Aaaaahhhh, FUCK OFF!” Realizing it was potential hit, the Chic masterminds altered the chorus to the more radio-friendly, “Aaaaahhhh, FREAK OUT!”

“I changed the door policy at Studio when I was there, about who got in and who didn’t,” Fouratt says. He took over the club in 1979, after Rubell and Schrager went to jail for tax evasion (during the famous 1978 raid on Studio 54’s offices, the police reportedly

found piles of cash hidden in the ceilings and floorboards).

"We changed the door people, we put women in as bartenders," Fouratt says, describing some of the adjustments he made at the club. "I remember Steven [Rubell] on the phone from prison, saying, 'Do they take their shirts off?' I said, 'No, Steven, the women bartenders do not take their shirts off.' He just couldn't get this."

"I had a door policy at Hurrah, I had a door policy at Danceteria," Fouratt says. "It was really thought out, about who got in."

More than anything else, this door policy was meant to filter out aggressive displays of machismo. For instance, Fouratt recalled a time when the blustery concert promoter Bill Graham tried to get into Studio 54, but couldn't.

"Of course he couldn't get in, with his rude manner," Fouratt says. "Two days later, I get this phone call, screaming at the top of his lungs at me, for 25 fuckin' minutes. And I said, 'Well, why didn't you call first? You know, you wouldn't have had any problem.' I said, 'You know, there's a reason we have a door policy.'"

During this time, Studio 54 hosted an unlikely assortment of people.

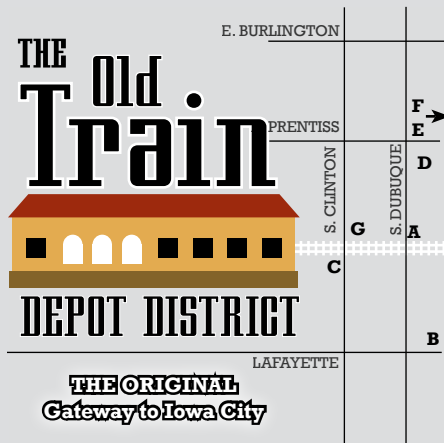
"It wasn't about who was rich—who was this, who was that," Fouratt explains. "It was about a mix of people, and it was about it being a safe place for gay people and a safe place for straight women. And everybody got laid. The straight guys made out like crazy," he laughs, "If they acted like they were gay." **lv**

Kembrew McLeod is putting together a kids music album! Stay tuned to Little Village for more details.



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PEDRITO MARTINEZ

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HEADROOM

PUBLIC SPACE ONE | FEB. 4 | PAGE 24

DOUBT: A PARABLE

THEATRE CEDAR RAPIDS | FEB. 6 - FEB. 28 | PAGE 26

CELLULOID REIMAGINED

The UI Digital Studio for Public Humanities kicks off its third year of the Headroom Screening Series with handmade films and filmmaker visits.
BY PAT BROWN

Iowa City's Headroom film series returns on Feb. 4 at Public Space One with a program called the "New England Home Movie Tour." Since 2013, curator and Cinematic Arts Professor Jesse McClean and the Digital Studio for Public Arts and Humanities at the University of Iowa have organized Headroom to offer experimental cinema programming to the denizens of Iowa City.

Headroom presents a new group of films each month, offering looks at short films that fall under the broad designation of "experimental"—films that attempt to explore or expand the possibilities of cinema as a medium in a multitude of ways. For their first screening of 2015, they will present work by a group of filmmakers from the Northeastern U.S.—Luther Price, Jodie Mack, Robert Todd, Jonathan Schwartz, Jo Dery, Colin Brant and Warren Cockerham, who will be in attendance

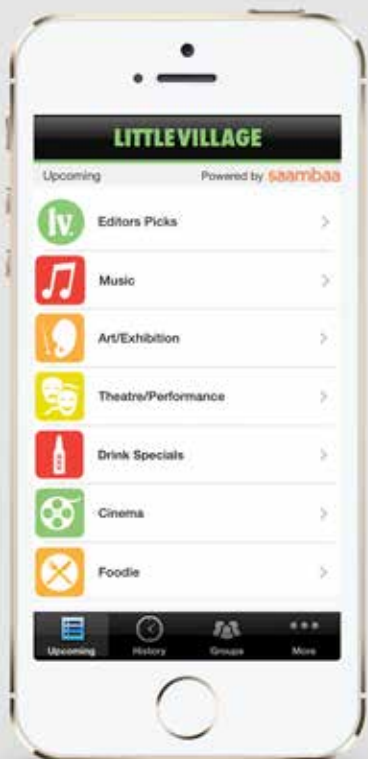
at the Feb. 4 screening.

The films in the New England Home Movie Tour do not seem to be exactly the "home movies" the title suggests, but that doesn't mean the title is necessarily intended to be sardonic. Instead, "home movie" is probably meant to refer to the handmade, deceptively amateurish aesthetic of the experimental films. According to Headroom, the series "aims to share films that embrace the contemporary DIY strategies, politics and aesthetics of an enduring, artisanal and personal approach to filmmaking."

Home movies—actual home movies—are also a type of filmmaking tied to an era before digital technologies made captured video

"NEW ENGLAND HOME MOVIE TOUR"

Feb. 4, 8 p.m., Public Space One (120 N. Dubuque St.) Still from Sorry (2005-2012) a 35mm handmade slide from a series of 80 by Luther Price.



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omnipresent in our lives; an era in which moving images were captured on material film, and in which setting up the projector to share the films with friends took considerable effort. The term therefore suggests a type of materiality absent from most contemporary self-captured video: sounds and images stored

HOME MOVIES—ACTUAL HOME MOVIES—ARE ALSO A TYPE OF FILMMAKING TIED TO AN ERA BEFORE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES MADE CAPTURED VIDEO OMNIPRESENT IN OUR LIVES...

on film and run through projectors.

Thus the Home Movie Tour focuses not only on work shot on 16 or 35mm, but also on films that—and here is where the importance of “experimental” comes in—makes us think about the (now passé?) medium of celluloid film itself. *Scream Tone* by Jo Dery, for example, is a three-minute “direct animation” film, meaning that instead of using a photographic process, the frames of the

film were drawn or painted directly onto the filmstock.

Moreover, Dery’s film experiments with the sound technology of analog cinema: The sound heard during the film is produced by the images themselves, as most analog projectors produce sound via an optical reader. (A traditional sound track, too, is an image printed onto the film, hidden from the audience’s view by a masking aperture and “read” by a device that re-converts the sine-wave images into sound.)

Films like Dery’s experiment with the possibilities of cinema not just as a mass-produced, narrative medium, but as a craft, a medium of personal expression, and an art among others in the dynamic field of 20th and 21st century art movements. Iowa City is no stranger to this type of film—students and professors in the University of Iowa’s Cinematic Arts department have been making and screening such films for decades—but Headroom provides the town with the opportunity to sample a diverse range of cinema beyond the narrative-centered films of both the multiplex and the arthouse.

Pat Brown is a graduate student in the UI

WED., FEB. 4



/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: *Dreamgirls*,

Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$21 - \$33, 7:30 pm |

If you're in the mood for a 1960s girl-group

- groove, check out *Dreamgirls*, a 1981 musical that
- is experiencing a comeback thanks to the 2006
- movie, starring Jennifer Hudson and Beyoncé.
- The story documents the ups and downs of a fic-
- tional singing group (that bears absolutely no simi-
- larity to the Supremes, wink wink.) (Through Feb.
- 14) —Jorie Slodki

/CINEMA: Oscar Shorts 2015, FilmScene, \$6.50 - \$9, See Website | FilmScene shows short films nominated for best animated, live action and documentary shorts. (Through Feb. 11)

Foxcatcher, FilmScene, \$6.50 - \$9, See Website | Drama starring Channing Tatum, Steve Carell and Mark Ruffalo. (Through Feb. 12)

Miami Connection, FilmScene, \$4, 10 pm | Worldwide superband Dragon Sound has had enough of the crime-infested streets of Miami. Watch them fight to defeat the evil drug lords and clean up the streets.

New England Home Movie Tour, Public Space One, \$5, 8 pm | Art filmmakers from the Northeast showcase films.

/EDUCATIONAL: Felt Love, Home Ec. Workshop, Free, 6 pm | IC artist Sayuri Sasaki Hemann presents a slideshow about felt making and its many uses.

THURS., FEB. 5

/MUSIC: Jerrod Niemann, Paramount Theatre, \$40 - \$50, 7 pm | Country star Jerrod Niemann performs with Joe Diffie and Joe Denim.

The Sapwoods w. Dan Tedesco and Crystal City, The Mill, \$7, 9 pm | Local folk, blues and rock musicians perform.

Future Death w. BLXPLTN, Gabe's, \$8 - \$10, 10 pm | Austin-based rock band.

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION: Sharpie Selfie Class, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, \$15, 5:30 pm | Draw a self portrait using Sharpie markers.

BYOBeamers, Public Space One, Price TBD, 7 pm | Artists bring their projectors to showcase their works.



/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: *Lucky Me*,

Riverside Theatre, \$18 - \$30, 7:30 pm |

Meet Sara Fine, a young woman who is

- unlucky in love—and just about everything else.
- She's all but given up on love until she meets a
- handsome TSA agent who sets out to find the
- source of her troubles. (Through Feb. 22) —JS

Spring Calendar 2015

THE PEKING ACROBATS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

Englert Family Series

DAVE MASON'S TRAFFIC JAM

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8

OF MICE AND MEN

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

HD Broadcast - National Theatre Live

GAELIC STORM

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

THE SECOND CITY

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13 &

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14

PEDRITO MARTINEZ

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14

The Englert Presents at The Mill

BELL'S BREWERY TASTING

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Englert Gallery Pop-up

HOLLYWOOD LIVE!

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Co-presented by FilmScene

BÉLA FLECK & ABIGAIL WASHBURN

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

LA MALETA

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Englert Family Series

HUGH MASEKELA AND VUSI MAHLASELA

TUESDAY, MARCH 3

THE FAB FOUR

FRIDAY, MARCH 6

JUSTIN TOWNES EARLE

FRIDAY, MARCH 13



Photo by Kristan Hellige

/CINEMA: *Matilda*, FilmScene, \$2, 3 pm | Children's classic about a girl who discovers she has telekinetic powers and takes down her nasty principal.

/FOODIE: **Make Kombucha at Home, New Pioneer Co-Op Coralville, \$15, 6 pm** | Learn to make probiotic drink, kombucha, and how to flavor it using ginger and dried flowers.

/COMMUNITY: **Gems of Hope Workshop, Beadology, Free, 6 pm** | Make earrings and cards to support new patients at UIHC.

/EDUCATIONAL: **Embroidery the Sequel Sampler, Home Ec. Workshop, \$55, 6 pm** | Once you've mastered the basics of embroidery, try something more challenging with this class.

FRI., FEB. 6

/MUSIC: **Tim Sparks, Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$20 - \$30, 8 pm** | Guitarist known for playing a blend of blues, jazz and classical.

Gram Parsons Tribute, The Mill, 8 pm | IC musicians pay tribute to Gram Parsons.

12th Annual Bob Marley Birthday Bash, Yacht Club, \$10, 10 pm | Bob Marley tribute band, Natty Nation.

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION: **First Friday: Surrounded by Art, FilmScene, Free, 5 pm** | Mingle with other art enthusiasts at the UI Art Department's monthly event.

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: **Chris Yon, CSPA Hall, \$15 - \$18, 8 pm** | Dancers Chris Yon and Taryn Griggs create a whimsical world using only images. (Through Feb. 7)

Doubt: A Parable, Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$13 - \$20 | John Patrick Shanley won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for this drama

about the staff of a Catholic school in the Bronx during the 1960s. Turmoil ensues when a young nun suspects that a priest is sexually abusing schoolboys. It was later adapted into a film starring Meryl Streep, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Amy Adams. (Through Feb. 28) —JS



Good Kids, UI Theatre Building, Opens Feb. 5, \$5 - \$18 | Rape has become a subject of public discourse in a way that was unthinkable even 10 years ago. Students are demanding action from schools and universities to hold attackers accountable and take an active role in diminishing the influence of rape culture. At the same time, the public is taking more notice of female artists and celebrating their accomplishments. Last month, a public outcry emerged when the Academy Awards did not nominate a single woman in directing or screenplay categories—the first time that these fields had all-male nominees since 1999.

In the midst of these major cultural shifts, the Big Ten Theatre Consortium is launching its New Play Initiative. First proposed by UI Division of Performing Arts director Alan MacVey, it is a collaboration between the theatre departments of all Big Ten schools to bolster opportunities available to female playwrights and actresses. Each year for the next three years, the Consortium will commission a female playwright to write a play with at least seven female roles. The play will then be available for any Big Ten university to perform royalty-free for three years.

The first play to come out of the New Play Initiative is *Good Kids* by Naomi Iizuka, which will have a rolling premiere at nine Big Ten theatres. Inspired by the Steubenville rape case, the play follows a high school girl named Chloe as she tries to reconstruct what happened to her at a party. Each performance is followed by a talkback where the audience can speak to members of the cast, Women's Resource and Action Center, and Rape Victim Advocacy Program. (Through Feb. 15) —Jorie Slodki

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/COMMUNITY: World's Toughest Rodeo, US Cellular Center, \$12 - \$38, 7:30 pm | Watch bareback riding, saddle bronc riding and barrel racing. (Through Feb. 7)


/KIDS: *The Little Engine that Could Earns her Whistle*, Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$7, 12:30 pm | A children's musical about hard work and perseverance.

SAT., FEB. 7

/MUSIC: Girls Rock! Benefit Concert, Public Space One, Donation, 7 pm | Help cover costs for the Girls Rock! summer camp.

Hancher Presents: Kronos Quartet, Englert Theatre, \$10 - \$37, 7:30 pm | The quartet will perform new music commemorating World War I.

Joe Hertler & The Rainbow Seekers, The Mill, \$8, 9 pm | Six-piece that blends, psychedelic, folk and pop.

 **Prof, Gabe's, \$12 - \$15, 10 pm** | Emcee Prof the Rapper will perform at Gabe's with special guests St. Paul Slim and AWTHNTKTS. Prof has made a name for himself in the rap game as a degenerate—flicking the chips off his shoulder and spitting them into the face of his critics. Now signed with independent label Rhymesayers Entertainment, Prof's work has paid off. His 2014 summer jam, "Farout" has a super catchy saxophone riff that will make you want to grab a Bud Light Lime and run to the nearest pool party. —Ben Kasl

Evergreen Grass Band, Yacht Club, \$6, 10 pm | See a barnstorming band with a mandolin.

/CINEMA: *Song of the Sea*, FilmScene, \$2, 10 am | Hand-drawn animated film about two siblings who set out to save the world of magic from the owl witch.

/FOODIE: Local Foods at the County Farm, Johnson County Fairgrounds, Free, 10 am | Meet with other foodies and share knowledge. Also enjoy a locally sourced lunch from Devotay.

/COMMUNITY: NewBo Con, NewBo City Market, Free, All Day | Meet up with other comic enthusiasts.

/EDUCATIONAL: Peyote Stitch Techniques, Beadology, \$55, 10 am | Learn more about weaving beads.

Felting: Flowers, Home Ec. Workshop, \$50, 1 pm | Learn the basics of felting. Create 3 felt flowers.

Using a Weave-It Loom, Indian Creek Nature Center, \$8 - \$10, 1:30 pm | Make your own bookmark using string and a special loom. Supplies provided.

/KIDS: Sharpie Selfie Class for Kids, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, \$15, 1 pm | Children will learn to draw self portraits with permanent markers.

SUN., FEB. 8

/MUSIC: Dave Mason, Englert Theatre, \$35, 7 pm | Former member of the band Traffic, Mason brings the sounds of classic rock to IC.

Bush w. Theory of a Dead Man, Paramount Theatre, \$40 - \$225, 7:30 pm | An evening of grunge by way of butt rock.

The Ragbirds, CSPS Hall, \$15 - \$18, 7 pm | Dance to this fusion of folk rock and pop hooks.

/LITERATURE: Dollar Dog Readings, Riverside Theatre, \$1, 6:30 pm | Rebecca Gilman will read from Luna Gale.

/FOODIE: Winter Farmer's Market, Johnson County Fairgrounds, Free, 11 am | Purchase local products from local artisans.

/COMMUNITY: Days for Girls Sewing, Home Ec. Workshop, Free, 12 pm | Sew reusable sanitary pads for girls without access to products.

/EDUCATIONAL: Multi-Stranded Beaded Cuff Bracelet, Beadology, \$65, 12 pm | Use seed beads and copper wire to create a cuff bracelet.

Intro to Screenprinting, Public Space One, \$10, 2 pm | This introductory class will allow you to use the press during community work hours.

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MON., FEB. 9



/COMMUNITY: Writing Climate Change, Iowa City Senior Center, Free, 6 pm | 100 Grannies presents this lecture with author Connie Mutel on her latest book about changing the climate situation through storytelling. —SM

/KIDS: Family Fun Wellness Class, Cedar Rapids Downtown Library, Free, 10 am | No need to register for this family-oriented low-impact fitness class.

TUES., FEB. 10

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: National Theatre Live: *Of Mice & Men*, Englert Theatre, \$15 - \$18, 7 pm | Watch an HD recorded performance of James Franco and Chris O'Dowd's Broadway performance in *Of Mice and Men*.

/LITERATURE: Beer & Books, The Mill, Free, 5 pm | Meet up and chat with literaries of Iowa City.

Luis Bravo, Prairie Lights, Free, 7:30 pm | IWP member and poet Luis Bravo reads from his new book.

/FOODIE: French Champagne Tasting, Bread Garden Market, \$5, 5 pm | Sample French champagnes and snack on light refreshments.

WED., FEB. 11

/MUSIC: Willie Nile, CSPS Hall, \$16 - \$19, 7 pm | Rock and roller, known for his fiercely insightful lyrics.

Gaelic Storm, The Englert Theatre, \$35, 8 pm | Celtic band performs their greatest hits.

/KIDS: Water: We Can't Live Without It, Indian Creek Nature Center, \$5, 11 am | Bring your children to learn about the water cycle through hands-on activities.

THURS., FEB. 12

/MUSIC: JD McPherson, Gabe's, \$15, 9 pm | MFA-holding rockabilly musician tour for his new album, *Let the Good Times Roll*.

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: IC Kings, Yacht Club, \$5, 9:30 pm | See IC's drag king troupe perform.

/CINEMA: Art 21: Season One, Episode One, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free, 6:30 pm | CRMA screens and discusses *Art 21: Art for the 21st century*.

Hits, FilmScene, Donations Welcome, 8:30 pm | See this dark comedy exploring the trade-offs of fame.

/LITERATURE: Amber Dermont and Jericho Brown, Prairie Lights, Free, 7 pm | Two UI visiting writers-in-residence read from their work.

/FOODIE: Southern Valentine, New Pioneer Co-Op, \$20, 6 pm | Formerly of the Lincoln Cafe, Matt Steigerwald demonstrates how to make southern dishes like spicy shrimp and pecan pie.



Cocktails with Chris Soules, Cedar Rapids Marriott, \$20 - \$40, 5:30 pm | Have cocktails with Chris Soules from ABC's *The Bachelor!* *The Other Bachelors* of Arlington, Iowa will be there for a live date auction so you can bid on your favorite farmboy hunk. Proceeds from the fundraiser will benefit Arlington's community center. —SM

/EDUCATIONAL: Knit & Wine, Home Ec. Workshop, Free, 6 pm | Work on personal projects with IC's knitting guild, *Prairie Yarn Over*.

Backyard Chicken Basics, Indian Creek Nature Center, \$7 - \$10, 7 pm | Learn care basics for urban chickens.

/KIDS: Pom Pom Valentine, Home Ec. Workshop, \$35, 3 pm | Spend an afternoon making pom pom animals.

FRI., FEB. 13

/MUSIC: Head for the Hills, Java House, Free, 2 pm | IPR broadcasts Studio One live from Java House while this modern bluegrass group performs.

No Tide, Public Space One, Price TBD, 6 pm | Indie-punk from Lincoln, Nebraska.

Hancher Presents: Terrell Stafford Quintet, The Mill, \$10 - \$20, 7 pm | Trumpeter Terrell Stafford brings his expressive jazz sounds.

Head for the Hills, Yacht Club, \$8, 9:30 pm | Colorado musicians with a refreshing take on folk and bluegrass.

Mike Page, Gabe's, \$5 - \$7, 9:30 pm | A night of hip hop with Mike Page, Chandla, Young Ezy, Jazzy Prince, DK Muzik and OzTra.

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION: Opening Reception, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free, 5:30 pm | Celebrate CRMA's newest exhibits, *Guardians of Grain*, *Drawing on History* and *The ABCs of Children's Book Illustrations*.



/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Second City Hits Home, Englert Theatre, \$29 - \$34, 8 pm | Chicago's up-and-coming comedy stars head to IC with the famed Second City. They'll perform improvisation about our fair city, as well as material from the archives. (Through Feb. 14) —SM

The Spy Who Killed Me, Cedar Rapids Clarion Hotel, \$50, 12:30 pm | Enjoy a comedic murder mystery and dinner. (Through Feb. 28)

Love Hurts: An Anti-Valentine's Day Cabaret, Mendoza Wine Bar, \$5 - \$35, 8:30 pm | Celebrate a darker side of love, with performances by area musicians. Enjoy a pre-fixe menu, perfect for a date—or not. (Through Feb. 14)

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An Evening of Farces, Corallville Center of the Performing Arts, \$12 - \$27, 7:30 pm |

City Circle presents an evening of one-act comedies by award-winning playwrights. In Peter Shaffer's *Black Comedy*, a "meet the parents" evening goes awry when the power cuts out. Stick around for Tom Stoppard's *The Real Inspector Hound*, a murder-mystery, play-within-a-play. Get ready for a night of slapstick and delightful misunderstandings! (Through Feb. 15) —JS

SAT., FEB. 14

/MUSIC: Skin Kandy, Wildwood Smokehouse and Saloon, \$0 - \$10, 8 pm | Get down with country music.

Joe Driscoll & Sekou Kouyate, CSPA Hall, \$17 - \$21, 8 pm | Beatboxer Joe Driscoll mixes his sounds with African styles from Kouyate.

Local H, Gabe's, \$12, 9:30 pm | Two-man, post-punk, alternative rock music from Chicago.

Thunder and Rain, Yacht Club, \$5, 10 pm | This folk band specializes in "mountain-made Colorado county" music.



Pedrito Martinez Group, The Mill, \$10 - \$20, 8 pm |

If you are looking for a subdued, quiet Valentine's Day, avoid the Pedrito Martinez Group at all costs. Those who can handle the heat of this dynamo Afro-Cuban fusion from Hell's Kitchen should venture to The Mill—and be prepared to dance. As regular performers at the Guantanamo in Manhattan, the ensemble delivers authentic, sizzling dance rhythms perfectly balanced with jazz sensibilities. The Pedrito Martinez Group tours nationally for a reason: They are the real deal: bonafide, lip-smacking, dance-your-face-off Cuban fire. —Justin LeDuc

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION: Opening: The ABC's of Children's Book Illustration, Free - \$5 | See selections from the Cedar Rapids Public Library's Zerzanek collection.

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Romeo & Juliet, Paramount Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$19 - \$49, 7:30 pm | Ballet Quad Cities and Orchestra Iowa present this ballet based on Shakespeare's classic play.

/CINEMA: Song of the Sea, FilmScene, \$2, 3 pm | See a hand-drawn animated film about two siblings set out to save the world of magic from the owl witch.

ONGOING EVENTS

MONDAYS:

New Dance Fitness Classes Jazzercise Fitness Center \$15, 7 am, 3:15 pm **Stories for Scooters Cedar Rapids Downtown Library Free, 9:30 am** **Play & Learn Cedar Rapids Ladd Library Free, 9:30 am** **Toddler Storytime Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10:30 am** **Alcoholics Anonymous Uptown Bill's, Free, 12 pm & 6 pm** **Starlight Story Time Cedar Rapids Downtown Library Free, 6:30 pm** **Open Mic The Mill, Free, 8 pm** **Catacombs of Comedy Yacht Club, \$5, 10 pm**

TUESDAYS:

Toddler Storytime Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10:30 am **Alcoholics Anonymous Uptown Bill's, Free, 12 pm** **Scott Barnum Trio Motley Cow Cafe, Free, 5:30 pm** **Play & Learn Cedar Rapids Downtown Library, Free, 6 pm** **Blues Jam Parlor City Pub and Eatery, Free, 7 pm** **Line Dancing Lessons Robert E. Lee Recreation Center, \$5, 7 pm** **Upper Deck Dance Party Yacht Club, Free, 10 pm** **Comedy and Open Mic Studio 13, Free, 10pm**

WEDNESDAYS:

New Dance Fitness Classes Jazzercise Fitness Center, \$15, 7 am, 3:15 pm **Story Time Cedar Rapids Downtown Library, Free, 9:30 am** **Preschool**

Storytime Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10:30 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** **Open State Wednesday Studio 13, Free, 10 pm**

THURSDAYS:

Preschool Storytime Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10:30 am **Alcoholics Anonymous Uptown Bill's, Free, 12 pm** **Children's Meditation Quaker's Friends Meeting House, \$30, 5:45 pm** **Buddhist Meditation Quaker's Friends Meeting House, \$5 - \$10, 6:30 pm** **Open Mic Uptown Bill's, Free, 7 pm** **Karaoke The Vault Penguin's Comedy Club, Free, 10 pm** **SOULSHAKE Gabe's, Free, 10 pm** **Mixology Gabe's, \$2, 10 pm** **Karaoke Thursday Studio 13, Free, 10 pm**

THURSDAYS:

New Dance Fitness Classes Jazzercise Fitness Center, \$15, 7 am, 3:15 pm **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** **Drag & Dance Friday Studio 13, Cover, 10 pm**



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The Life of Yogananda, FilmScene, \$6.50 - \$7.50, 12:30 pm | See this unconventional documentary about an Indian Swami who brought yoga to the western hemisphere during the 1920s. (Through Feb. 15) —SM

/EDUCATIONAL: Cubed Right Angle Weave, Beadology, \$55, 10 am | Learn a fun new stitch for beaded pendants.

SUN., FEB. 15

/MUSIC: Jury of My Peers CD Release Party, Parlor City Pub, Free, 4 pm | Live rock from the Dave Paris Group. Session Americana, CSPA Hall, \$16 - \$19, 7 pm | Get rowdy with this quintet of musicians from Massachusetts.

That 1 Guy, Gabe's, \$15, 9 pm | *That 1 Guy* might seem like something from Dr. Seuss, but that's pretty much what this entertainer is going for.

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Hancher Presents: Spencers' Theatre of Illusion, Englert Theatre, \$10 - \$30, 3 pm | Bring the family for an afternoon of magic.

/FOODIE: 2015 CSA Fair, Iowa City Public Library Room A, Free, 12 pm | Learn more about Community Supported Agriculture and purchase a share of fresh food for the summer.

/LITERATURE: Free Generative Writing Workshop, Public Space One, Free, 5:30 pm | Each month, one area writer will develop an original writing prompt to share with others.

MON., FEB. 16

/LITERATURE: Forrest Gander, Prairie Lights, Free, 7 pm | American poet reads from his work.

/FOODIE: Alton Brown Live!, Paramount Theatre, \$48 - \$128, 7:30 | Food Network's Alton Brown brings a foodie, comedy, quiz, lecture, storytelling music show.

TUE., FEB. 17



/MUSIC: Lights, Blue Moose Tap House, \$15 - \$18, 6:30 pm | The Canadian electropop songstress Lights makes a stop

at Blue Moose with X Ambassadors. Still on a world tour in support of her most recent LP, *Little Machines*, Lights brings a richly developed and refreshing take on the intersections between pop and electronic music that shatters the bar set by many others. *Lights* is a multi-instrumentalist and insistent songwriter of her own material—the rare breed of pop star whose talk is more than backed by her walk. —Josh Messer

SATURDAYS:

*Community Folk Sing Uptown Bill's, Free, 3 pm (*Once a month) *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) Open Lab Beadology, Free, 12 pm 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

Photo by Bob Goodfellow



/ART-AND-EXHIBITION: R.E. Henry: New Works Taag Art Gallery, Free (Through Feb. 7) Peter Sis: Cartography of the Mind National Czech and Slovak Museum, Free - \$10 (Through Mar. 1) Drawn to Illustrate Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free - \$5 Jeni Reeves' Illustrations for Voice of Freedom Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free - \$5 Celebration! Rituals and Revelries of Life National Czech and Slovak Museum, Free - \$10 Faces of Freedom: The Czech and Slovak Journey National Czech and Slovak Museum, Free - \$10 Shadows of History: Photographs of the Civil War Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free - \$5 Guardians of Grain: Bamana and Dogon Door Locks Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free - \$5 (Through Mar. 19)

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Dreamgirls Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$21 - \$33, 7:30 pm (Through Feb. 14) Good Kids Theatre Building at UI, \$5 - \$18, 8 pm (Through Feb. 15) An Evening of Farces Corallville Center of the Performing Arts, \$12 - \$27, 7:30 pm (Through Feb. 15) Lucky Me (pictured) Riverside Theatre, \$18 - \$30, 7:30 (Through Feb. 22) Doubt: A Parable Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$13 - \$20 (Through Feb. 28) The Spy Who Killed Me Cedar Rapids Clarion Hotel, \$50, 12:30 pm (Through Feb. 28)



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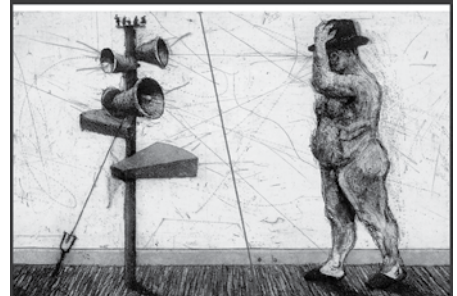
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William Kentridge, *Man with Megaphone Cluster*, 1998. Etching and aquatint, © William Kentridge, Collection of John L. and Roslyn Bakst Goldman.

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SW, ncsmi.org

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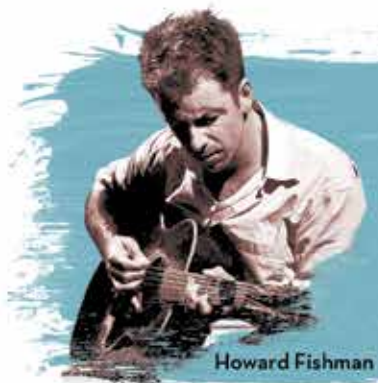
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IS ANIMAL TESTING STILL COMMON?

My wife read on Facebook about businesses still testing their products on animals. She tried to find out through Google how true this is, but she couldn't get any really clear idea of who was doing what. Is animal testing still prevalent, or are most companies trying to go a different route?
—Bob, Lansing, Michigan

If visions of scientifically tortured baby bunnies keep you up at night, stop reading right now. Anti-testing activist groups may not be in the news, but it's only because we have so many other things to complain about these days. It still exists, and in full force. There have been no major U.S. federal restrictions on animal testing since the 1966 Animal Welfare Act, passed back when everyone was more concerned with the commies and nuclear war than with the well-being of test monkeys (some of whom were rocketed into space in competition with said commies and didn't do so well on the return journey).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, it's not a very stringent law: its guidelines don't apply to mice, rats, birds, farm animals raised for food and agricultural research, or reptiles and amphibians. It does cover treatment of the cutest ten percent of lab animals—dogs, cats, hamsters, etc.—who presumably have a stronger congressional lobby. Only chimpanzees receive protection from psychological damage, courtesy of the CHIMP Act of 2000. The minimal standards for their housing, feeding, handling, and veterinary care are enforced with \$10,000 maximum fines—but considering it costs around \$15,000 a year to feed and house a chimp, that's a pretty negligible sum.

So yes, animal testing is, unlike the animals themselves, alive and well. If your wife couldn't track down any good, comprehensive numbers for how many animals are involved altogether, that's because they're not out there. We do know, though, that in 2013 about



900,000 animals covered under the Animal Welfare Act were killed in research and testing in the U.S., including 170,000 rabbits, 68,000 dogs, and 64,000 nonhuman primates. That's just the fatalities, and it doesn't

include the mice and rats, which make up the great bulk of lab animals. Noting the growing role of genetically modified animals in research, one independent estimate from 2004 put the total number of animals used annually in the U.S. at 80 million.

It's not that there's been no progress. Since the late 1950s the animal welfare movement has been advocating the principles of "replacement, reduction, and refinement": i.e., (1) using insentient materials—which now include computer simulations as well as things like cell cultures—for testing rather than conscious living creatures; (2) minimizing the number of animal subjects needed to get useful results, via better experiment design, data sharing, etc.; and (3) limiting the amount of actual pain and harm the animals experience. Which all basically makes sense, even leaving ethics aside—for one thing, animal stress can alter test results. And to some extent it's happening: computer modeling has in fact decreased the need for living subjects in toxicity research. Modeling and in vitro testing still have their limits, though, so 100-percent replacement doesn't look imminent. Some higher-order test animals (mice, guinea pigs) can be swapped out for lower-order ones (zebra fish, fruit flies); purists take issue, but you can't please everyone.

The goals of animal testing have changed as well. Activists may still invoke the specter of cosmetics testing to call attention to the animal welfare cause (it's certainly simpler than firebombing researchers' houses), but that's a battle the good guys seem to be winning, however slowly. In 2013 the European Union banned all trade in animal-tested cosmetics; meanwhile, last year China stopped requiring animal testing for certain cosmetic products. Such moves

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are possible largely because the cosmetics industry has plenty of existing data on skin irritants, and their analyses can be run accurately using test-tube simulations.

Instead, the vast majority of animals are now used for medical and toxicological research—an area that has grown with our increased interest in the health and safety of everyday and industrial chemicals. The EU’s chemical evaluation program, called REACH, will likely require the death of around 2 million animals in its current phase of testing. For the animals this may not be any more pleasant than cosmetics testing, but at least it’s a weightier cause.

There are some research subjects where animal testing may not be pulling its weight: carcinogens, for instance. Multiple animal studies show possible weak links between substances like (e.g.) saccharine and cancer, but no major epidemiological data has been found to indicate clear danger to humans. Comprehensive animal-based cancer studies are time-consuming and expensive, with very high false-positive rates—it’s been estimated 90 percent of clinical drug trials fail because animal trials can’t accurately predict how humans will respond.

At a certain level, I think most people would still agree, better one human in a clinical trial than humans generally, and better a dog than a human. It’s not a perfect system (judging from the number of lawsuits, anyway), but I, for one, would have more trouble sleeping at night without the sacrificial bunnies standing between the diseases and us. **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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WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

A reader seeks advice on finding sexual satisfaction when it means looking outside her marriage. • BY DAN SAVAGE

My husband and I are a straight couple in our early 50s, and we've been married for more than 30 years. We were raised to wait for sex till we got married—this was back in the early '80s—and we did. Our wedding night was pretty disappointing since neither of us knew what we were doing. He got off, but I didn't. We both assumed that there was something wrong with me, because he didn't have any problem coming, right? We were both raised to believe that sex was something men took from women, that it was difficult for women to orgasm, and that no woman wanted sex as much as a man did. We read books, we went to counseling, but nothing changed. This went on for a couple of decades. He's a great guy—funny, loyal, faithful, great dad to our kids—so I figured I was lousy in bed and I was lucky he put up with me. Recently, I got my hands on a vibrator. OH. MY. GOD. There's nothing wrong with me! Now I think my libido might actually be stronger than his. But even with what I now know about my sexuality, we have been unable to figure out how to get me to orgasm when we are together. I've suggested some milder forms of kink, but he isn't interested. I suspect we're just incompatible in bed, which has made me a fairly vocal opponent of the “waiting for marriage” garbage, much to my husband's consternation. He thinks it's so sweet that neither of us has ever had sex with someone else. So you can probably see my dilemma. Neither of us has ever been unfaithful, and neither of us is okay with being unfaithful—I know he isn't. Even though I'm intrigued by the idea, I don't think I could pull off the lying and deceit required to do it behind his back. We also live in a small town where it would be nearly impossible to have a discreet affair. I don't really want a divorce, because it means losing the entire life we've built together, which is no small thing. But when I think about never having good sex in my entire life, I can hardly stand it. What would you do?

—Bored In Bed For An Unbearably Long Time

What would I do? I would be unfaithful, BIBFAULT.

And since there's no guarantee that I would click sexually with the first guy I fucked other than my husband—or the second guy or the third guy or the fourth guy—I would go right on fucking other guys until I fucked a guy who was spectacular in bed. (Please note: While “spectacular in bed” sounds like some sort of objective standard, it's actually a highly subjective and personal experience. One person's spectacular sex partner is another person's meh-to-traumatizing sex partner. So while BIBFAULT and her husband aren't a match—clearly—he has matches out there and so does she.)

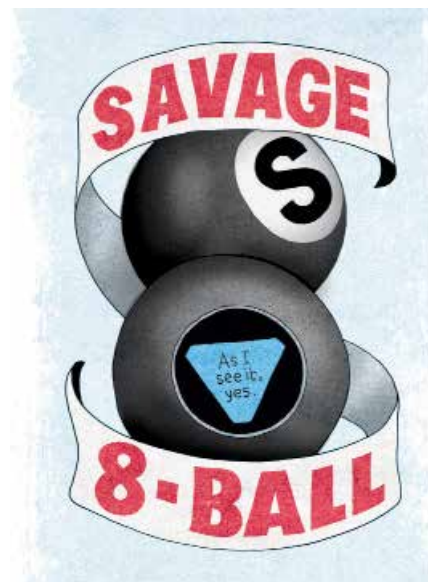
I'm not telling you what to do, BIBFAULT, I'm just answering the question you posed: “What would you do?” If I were in your shoes, if I had suffered through three decades of subjectively lousy sex, if I were staring down the possibility of going to my grave without ever having experienced good-to-great sex (not even once!), I would cheat on my husband of 30 years. I would've cheated on him already, past tense, a decade or two ago and probably at regular intervals. (I also would've sued all

those counselors who failed to suggest buying a vibrator when I complained about my difficulty achieving orgasm.)

But that's me, BIBFAULT. What should you do? I really couldn't tell you.

That's not true. I could tell you what to do. Telling people what to do is pretty much my fucking job. But in all honesty, I'm not sure what you should do. You say you're not okay with cheating, and I almost believe you—you wouldn't have written if you weren't okay with cheating on some level and/or seeking permission to cheat—and cheating would be logistically complicated, given your circumstances, and it would put everything you have with your husband, who you genuinely love, at risk. So I'm not going to tell you to cheat.

But I will tell you this: You may have an easier time not cheating—an easier time not going out there and actively seeking out sex with other men, an easier time not seizing the first opportunity to cheat that comes your way—if you give yourself permission to cheat if an opportunity to cheat discreetly and with minimal deceit comes along. Telling yourself it will never happen, that you'll never have good sex, means living in despair, and despair



isn't good for individuals or marriages. But telling yourself that it might happen—but only if the planets have all aligned perfectly (you're out of town, it's someone you trust, you won't have to actively lie)—means living in hope, and hope is good for individuals and marriages.

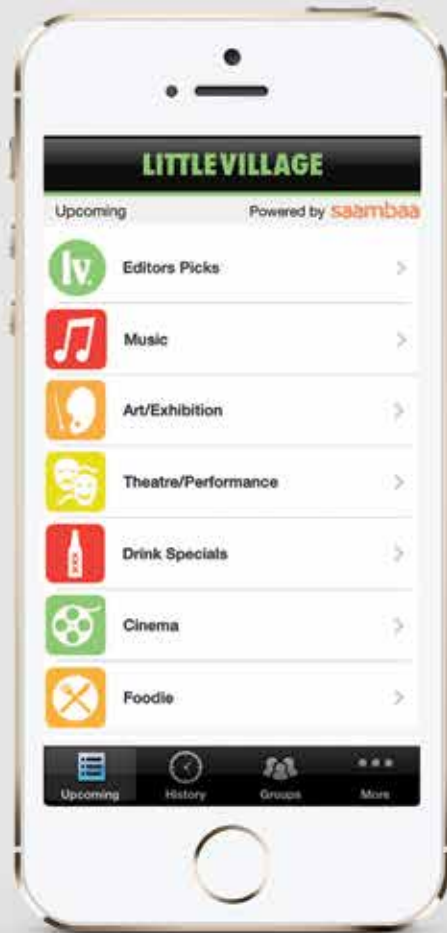
And knowing that you can cheat when the right opportunity presents itself will make it easier for you to resist cheating—to resist doing something reckless—when the wrong opportunities present themselves.

My wife, who is 35, had sex with a 25-year-old neighbor when she was barely 15 years old. (It was two days after her 15th birthday.) I should say “was raped by,” not “had sex with.” She insists it was consensual, claims she wasn't traumatized by it, and is actually Facebook friends with the man who raped her. I think this is unhealthy. How do I get through to her?

—Totally Unacknowledged Trauma

I had sex with someone in their mid-20s when I was 15—I had sex with two mid-20s someones at the same time when I was 15—and I regard that encounter as consensual and I wasn't traumatized by it. So you can take this question to some other advice columnist, TUT, or you can stop policing your wife's feelings about her own sexual history.

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CURSES, FOILED AGAIN

• Police said Eric Frey, 29, handed a pizza shop employee in Uniontown, Pa., a note written on toilet paper. “I have a gun,” it read. “Give me \$300.” The worker hit the silent alarm, summoning police before Frey could leave. He explained that a bearded man had confronted him in a nearby alley and forced his action, but officers who searched Frey’s apartment found a newly opened roll of toilet paper with a pen impression from Frey’s note on the top sheet. (Associated Press)

• A masked man tried to rob a convenience store in New Haven, Conn., by pointing a finger at the clerk to “simulate” that he had a gun, police Officer David Hartman reported, noting, “But he didn’t have his hand in his pocket.” The clerk “grabbed the man’s finger and told him he’d break it if he didn’t get out of his shop,” Hartman said after the would-be robber fled. (New Haven Independent)

NON-SURPRISE OF THE WEEK

The Central Intelligence Agency admitted that at least half of the reported UFO sightings in the 1950s and 1960s were actually test flights of its super-secret U-2 spy plane. (United Press International)

SECOND-AMENDMENT FOLLIES

• Veronica J. Rutledge, 29, died after her 2-year-old son reached into her purse, grabbed her concealed gun and shot her in the head at a Wal-Mart store in Hayden, Idaho. (Associated Press)

• Tony Roe, 23, was shot in the chest at a home in Largo, Fla., while he and Dylan Harvey, 19, were playing a game with a loaded revolver. It involved rolling the chamber and then taking turns pointing the gun at each other, according to the Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office. Deputies said Harvey was holding the weapon when it fired. (Tampa Bay Times)

• Former police officer Darrell Smith, 58, accidentally shot off his finger with a .380 caliber handgun at a gun store in Glasgow, Ky. He asked to see the weapon and was examining it when it fired. Even though Smith didn’t do a safety check on the gun before handling it, he insisted the employee who handed it to him should have, so he’s suing Barren Outdoors for negligence. (Bowling Green’s WBKO-TV)

• Authorities said that Michael Foster, 43, saw Clarence Daniels, 62, getting out of his vehicle in the parking lot of a Wal-Mart store in Brandon, Fla., and noticed he had a gun in a hip holster under his coat. Foster followed Daniels inside, put him in a chokehold and yelled that Daniels had a gun. Daniels shouted that he had a permit. Sheriff’s deputies arrested Foster and charged him with battery. “We understand it’s alarming for people to see other people with guns, sheriff’s official Larry McKinnon said, “but Florida has a large population of concealed weapons permit holders.” (Tampa Bay Times)

WHEN GUNS ARE OUTLAWED

• Irish police Detective Paul Johnson thwarted two men he observed robbing a convenience store in Dublin by arming himself with a traffic cone, which he used to push the men down when they exited. (The Irish Times)

• An Alabama middle school principal asked students to bring canned food to school to throw at possible intruders. In a letter to parents, Priscilla Holley of W.F. Burns Middle School in Valley said an 8-ounce can of peas or corn “could stun the intruder or even knock him out until the police arrive. The canned food item will give the students a sense of empowerment to protect themselves.” (Associated Press)

• Police arrested Jeremiah Genesis Taylor, 25, after he argued with his pregnant girlfriend in Millington, Tenn., and hit her in the face and

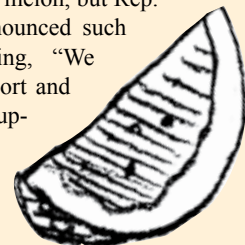
chest with some steaks. (Memphis’s WHBQ-TV)

• Workers at a reptile pet shop in Delray Beach, Fla., accused owner Benjamin Siegel, 40, of slapping them with a bearded dragon lizard. The victims said Siegel placed the lizard in his mouth and began hitting them with it. He also threw Gatorade at them, and tossed the large lizard into the air and swung it around. Siegel was arrested on battery and animal cruelty charges. (Broward-Palm Beach New Times)

FRUITS OF THEIR LABORS

Oklahoma lawmakers are at odds over the state’s produce. Sen. Nathan Dahm introduced a measure to repeal watermelon’s title as Oklahoma’s official vegetable, an honor lawmakers bestowed in 2007. Dahm pointed out watermelon is a fruit, not a vegetable, but the state fruit title isn’t available because it was awarded to the strawberry. Dahm said watermelon could be named the state’s seasonal fruit or the state’s melon, but Rep.

Scooter Park denounced such a move, declaring, “We will defend, support and make sure it is upheld as the state vegetable for Oklahoma.” (Tulsa World)



SAVING BUTTER

Researchers investigating reports of Canadian lobsters off England’s northern coast concluded that passengers on cruise ships have been ordering live lobsters and then, in an animal-rights gesture, asking their waiters to throw the shellfish overboard. Local fishermen have even found some of the lobsters with rubber

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bands around their claws. Removed from their native habitat, however, the lobsters “won’t last much longer than if the passengers had eaten them for dinner,” according to Mike Cohen of Holderness Fishing Industry Group. (Britain’s *Daily Mail*)

DROP IN THE BUCKET

The Government Accountability Office decided that taxpayers should stop providing federal employees who bring their lunch to work with “disposable cups, plates and cutlery” because the items “clearly constitute a personal expense.” The decision stems from a Department of Commerce policy of supplying hand sanitizer, paper goods and plastic ware to National Weather Service workers that began during a 2009 flu outbreak. When the Commerce Department stopped providing the goods in 2013, NWS employees filed an official complaint. “There’s no way this could cost them more than \$5,000 or \$10,000,” Dan Sobien, president of the NWS employee organization, said after the GAO ruling. (*The Washington Post*)

SLIPPERY SLOPES

China earmarked nearly \$90 million to divert water to make snow in Chongli, a provincial town in an arid region on the edge of the Gobi Desert, in an effort to win its bid for the 2022 winter Olympics. As a result of the government’s recent emphasis on winter sports, the number of skiers in China has risen from 10,000 in 1996 to 20 million, according to the Chinese Ski Association. High water demand for snowmaking by existing ski facilities around Beijing has led to a government crack-down on new golf courses. (*The Economist*) **lv**

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LOCAL ALBUMS



VOLCANO BOYS

Volcano Boys

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On paper, Volcano Boys looks like another project from the prolific Jordan Mayland (Jordan Mayland and the Thermal Detonators, Keepers of the Carpet, Nuclear Rodeo, Electronidoll and Tires), who is the principal vocalist and songwriter. But the blending of talent from Wolves in the Attic and Mantis Pincers member Trent Derby (drums, percussion and vocals), Eric Moffitt (guitar) and Tom Reneker (bass), gives Volcano Boys a sound reminiscent of retro-'90s alternative guitar rock.

The debut record from Volcano Boys is relentless in its no-holds-barred barrage of pop and grunge punk.

The album has mood swings. Like that friend you know who was absolutely the life of the party before taking a drunken swing at you.

At one end of that swing, you have the bombastic guitar attacks of album opener "40 Days & 40 Nights" and "The One"—both of which have a dark, layered guitar sound that

reminds me of Sunny Day Real Estate. The triumphant refrain of "Aaaaaa-OOOOOO!" makes "The One" my favorite track on the album, and "Criminal's" garden of Nirvana chords blooms with raging blossoms of distortion during its chugging bridge.

THE DEBUT RECORD FROM VOLCANO BOYS IS RELENTLESS IN ITS NO-HOLDS-BARRED BARRAGE OF POP AND GRUNGE PUNK.

At the other end of the sonic mood pendulum, you'll find songs that rely less on a storm of distortion and more on a poppy, surfy punk sound—think Pixies and Weezer.

"Blistered and Healed" may be a jarring switch from the previous "40 Days & 40 Nights," but it doesn't take long before you realize what this ride is going to be like. The aptly-named "Your Favorite Song" has had its stomp-and-clap rhythm, soaring vocals and pounding chords in rotation at Iowa Public Radio for good reason.

In "I Don't Care," Mayland sings the back-handed apology, "When the disco ball falls you'll go, I'll run. I don't care as much as you think. I'm a dickhead-fuckface-dipshit-ass-hole."

Those are the words of the friend that calls you to party again. And you do. **lv**

—Mike Roeder

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PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): According to the Bible, Jesus said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Author David Foster Wallace added a caveat. "The truth will set you free," he wrote, "but not until it is finished with you." All this is apropos for the current phase of your journey, Pisces. By my estimation, you will soon discover an important truth that you have never before been ready to grasp. Once that magic transpires, however, you will have to wait a while until the truth is fully finished with you. Only then will it set you free. But it will set you free. And I suspect that you will ultimately be grateful that it took its sweet time.



ARIES (March 21-April 19): In 1979, Monty Python comedian John Cleese helped direct a four-night extravaganza, *The Secret Policeman's Ball.* It was a benefit to raise money for the human rights organization Amnesty International. The musicians known as Sting, Bono, and Peter Gabriel later testified that the show was a key factor in igniting their social activism. I see the potential of a comparable stimulus in your near future, Aries. Imminent developments could amp up your passion for a good cause that transcends your immediate self-interests.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20): In the film *Kill Bill: Volume 1*, Taurus actress Uma Thurman plays a martial artist who has exceptional skill at wielding a Samurai sword. At one point, her swordmaker evaluates her reflexes by hurling a baseball in her direction. With a masterful swoop, she slices the ball in half before it reaches her. I suggest you seek out similar tests in the coming days, Taurus. Check up on the current status of your top skills. Are any of them rusty? Should you update them? Are they still of maximum practical use to you? Do whatever's necessary to ensure they are as strong and sharp as ever.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20): French Impressionist painter Claude Monet loved to paint the rock formations near the beach at Étretat, a village in Normandy. During the summer of 1886, he worked serially on six separate canvases, moving from one to another throughout his work day to capture the light and shadow as they changed with the weather and the position of the sun. He focused intently on one painting at a time. He didn't have a brush in each hand and one in his mouth, simultaneously applying paint to various canvases. His specific approach to multitasking would generate good results for you in the coming weeks, Gemini. (P.S. The other kind of multitasking—where you do several different things at the same time—will yield mostly mediocre results.)



CANCER (June 21-July 22): In 1849, author Edgar Allen Poe died in his hometown

of Baltimore. A century later, a mysterious admirer began a new tradition. Every Jan. 19, on the anniversary of Poe's birth, this cloaked visitor appeared at his grave in the early morning hours, and left behind three roses and a bottle of cognac. I invite you, Cancerian, to initiate a comparable ritual. Can you imagine paying periodic tribute to an important influence in your own life—someone who has given you much and touched you deeply? Don't do it for nostalgia's sake, but rather as a way to affirm that the gifts you've received from this evocative influence will continue to evolve within you. Keep them ever-fresh.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): "What happens to a dream deferred?" asked Langston Hughes in his poem "Harlem." "Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore—And then run? Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over—like a syrupy sweet?" As your soul's cheerleader and coach, Leo, I hope you won't explore the answer to Hughes' questions. If you have a dream, don't defer it. If you have been deferring your dream, take at least one dramatic step to stop deferring it.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Virgo author John Creasey struggled in his early efforts at getting published. For a time he had to support himself with jobs as a salesman and clerk. Before his first book was published, he had gathered 743 rejection slips. Eventually, though, he broke through and achieved monumental success. He wrote more than 550 novels, several of which were made into movies. He won two prestigious awards and sold 80 million books. I'm not promising that your own frustrations will ultimately pave the way for a prodigious triumph like his. But in the coming months, I do expect significant progress toward a gritty accomplishment. For best results, work for your own satisfaction more than for the approval of others.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Hall-of-Fame basketball player Hakeem Olajuwon had a signature set of fancy moves that were collectively known as the Dream Shake. It consisted of numerous spins and fakes and moves that could be combined in various ways to outfox his opponents and score points. The coming weeks would be an excellent time for you to work on your equivalent of the Dream Shake, Libra. You're at the peak of your ability to figure out how to coordinate and synergize your several talents.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): In 1837, Victoria became Queen of England following the death of her uncle, King William IV. She was 18 years old. Her first royal act was to move her bed out of the room she had long shared with her

meddling, overbearing mother. I propose that you use this as one of your guiding metaphors in the immediate future. Even if your parents are saints, and even if you haven't lived with them for years, I suspect you would benefit by upgrading your independence from their influence. Are you still a bit inhibited by the nagging of their voices in your head? Does your desire to avoid hurting them thwart you from rising to a higher level of authority and authenticity? Be a good-natured rebel.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): The crookedest street in the world is a one-way, block-long span of San Francisco's Lombard Street. It consists of eight hairpin turns down a very steep hill. The recommended top speed for a car is five miles per hour. So on the one hand, you've got to proceed with caution. On the other hand, the quaint, brick-paved road is lined with flower beds, and creeping along its wacky route is a whimsical amusement. I suspect you will soon encounter experiences that have metaphorical resemblances to Lombard Street, Sagittarius. In fact, I urge you to seek them out.



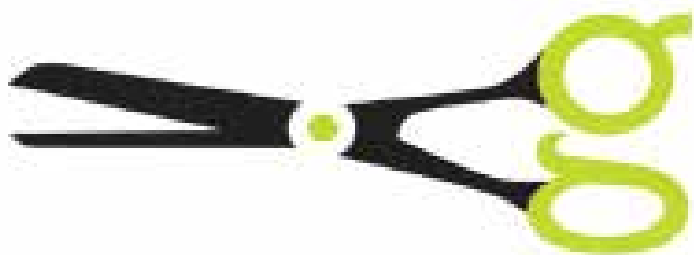
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): In the baseball film *The Natural*, the hero Roy Hobbs has a special bat he calls "Wonderboy." Carved out of a tree that was split by a lightning bolt, it seems to give Hobbs an extraordinary skill at hitting a baseball. There's a similar theme at work in the Australian musical instrument known as the didgeridoo. It's created from a eucalyptus tree whose inner wood has been eaten away by termites. Both Wonderboy and the didgeridoo are the results of natural forces that could be seen as adverse but that are actually useful. Is there a comparable situation in your own life, Capricorn? I'm guessing there is. If you have not yet discovered what it is, now is a good time to do so.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): In 1753, Benjamin Franklin published helpful instructions on how to avoid being struck by lightning during stormy weather. Wear a lightning rod in your hat, he said, and attach it to a long, thin metal ribbon that trails behind you as you walk. In response to his article, a fashion fad erupted. Taking his advice, fancy ladies in Europe actually wore such hats. From a metaphorical perspective, it would make sense for you Aquarians to don similar headwear in the coming weeks. Bolts of inspiration will be arriving on a regular basis. To ensure you are able to integrate and use them—not just be titillated and agitated—you will have to be well-grounded.

Homework: What's the best possible mess you could stir up -- a healing mess that would help liberate you? Testify at FreeWillAstrology.com.

—Rob Breznay



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