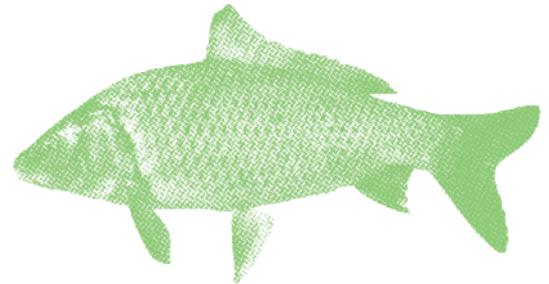
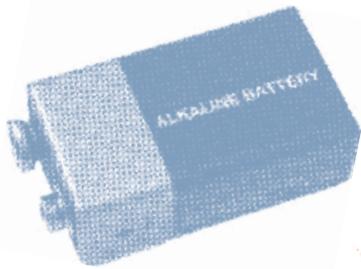


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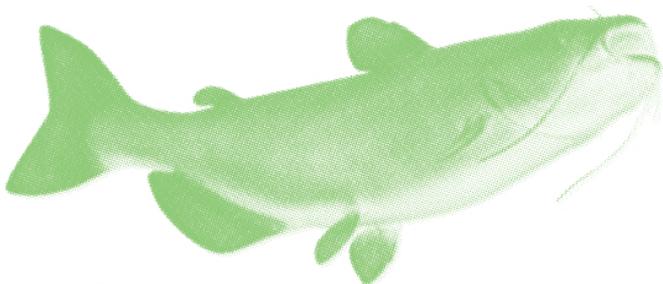


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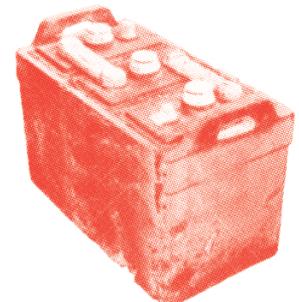
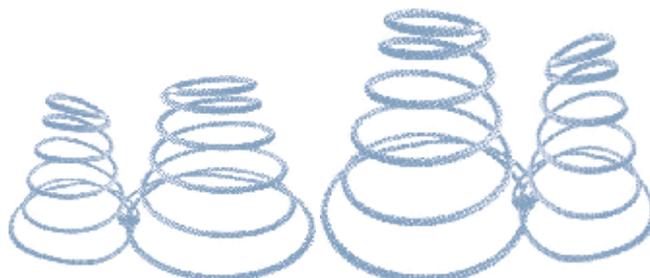
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IOWA CITY'S NEWS & CULTURE MAGAZINE

VOL. 18 | ISSUE 175
APRIL 15 - MAY 5, 2015

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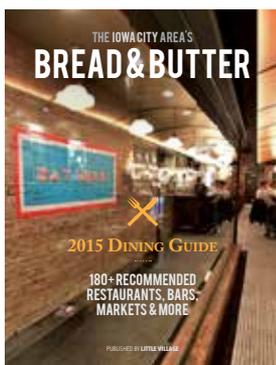
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—Tuscan Moon Grill on Fifth

Reel Talk on Film Festivals

"Thanks a lot to *Little Village Mag* for the kind words about my film that will be screening at Iowa City International Documentary Film Festival (ICDOCS)"

—John Richard

At Mission Creek

"I'm wondering where they keep the yachts around here. We like contradictions and the Buddhists say to embrace contradictions. Jack Kerouac said the Buddhists are right. The world is upside down. So we're just happy to be here." —Jim Jarmusch with Sqürl at the Yacht Club

"The theater I was performing at was old and rad and built in the '20s and the local openers were on point—totally different from one another and really sweet and professional. Hospitality left me a dang basket of ChapSticks in my dressing room. You know how I love ChapSticks!"

—Cameron Esposito, "In LA, you ain't shit," avclub.com

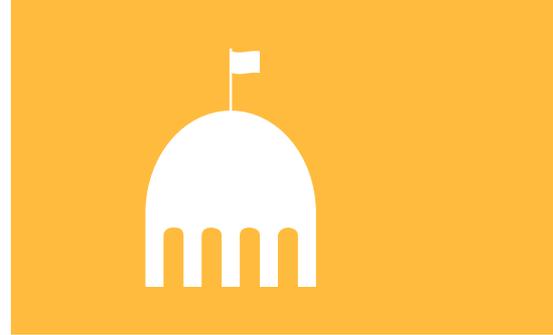
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MESQUAKIE PARK'S BURIED HISTORY

Beneath Iowa City's Mesquakie Park is a 30-acre dump, closed for decades. Despite elevated concentrations of heavy metals in the area, the dump today remains unchecked and unregulated. • BY ERICA DAMMAN



Situated south of Highway 6 and west of the Iowa River is approximately 30 acres of Iowa City-owned land that is unknown to most residents. Once labeled a park by the City of Iowa City's Park and Recreation Department and City Council, this land is inaccessible to residents. The city calls this place Mesquakie Park, and if one were able to visit, they would find the Iowa City Transportation Services Department's staging area, as well as the visible characteristics of a nature preserve: mature trees with tall grasses, gentle topography with small wetland areas and a stream.

But there is something a little unusual about Mesquakie Park: Right below a thin layer of topsoil are the remains of a former dump.

TRIBAL LAND TO LANDFILL

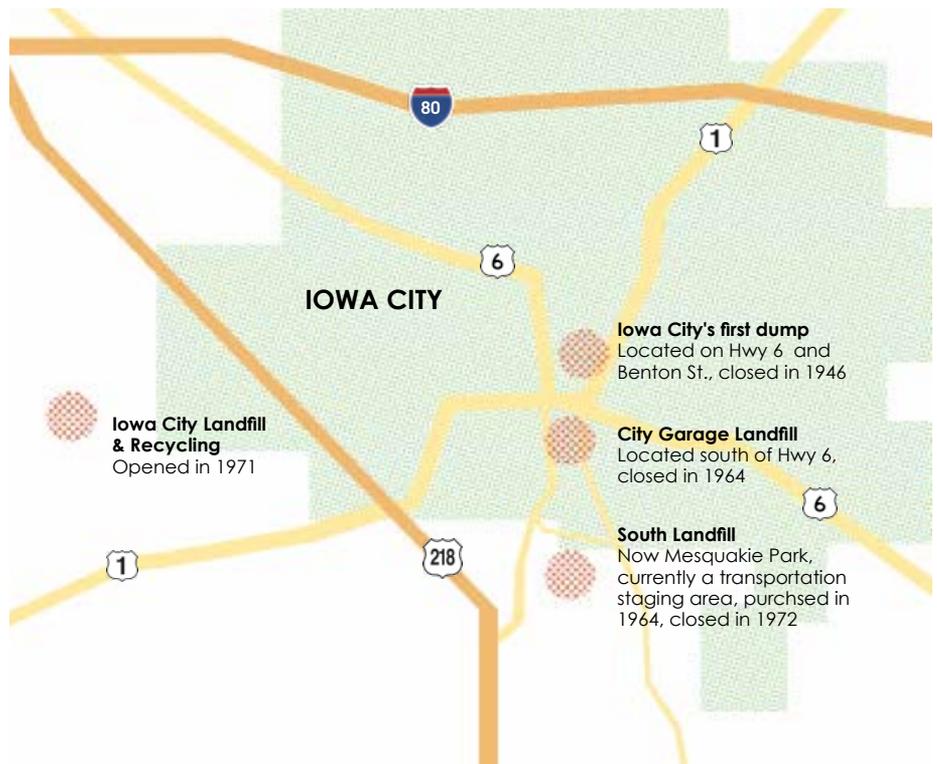
Like other cities across the country, as Iowa City grew in the 20th century, it had to confront the challenges of increasing amounts of waste. In the city limits, the preferred spots for waste disposal were low-lying, undeveloped and undervalued wetlands on the west side of the Iowa River. As sites filled to capacity, new sites, further outside of town, were identified and opened for trash collection.

The first dump of record was nestled between Highway 6 and Highway 1. According to Roger A. Gerhardt's 1972, University of Iowa, M.A. Thesis in Hydrogeology, that dump closed in 1946. A second dump (the City Garage Landfill), situated under the present-day Iowa City Transportation Services Building, filled to capacity and was closed in 1964. That same year, the city purchased the current site of Mesquakie Park and made it the city's third, officially operated municipal landfill site. Gerhardt's thesis claims that the lot, which was privately held prior to the City's procurement, was used as an open burning dump for an unknown amount of time.

This site, roughly 64 acres, was given the name South Landfill and was situated south of the Old River Road (now on McCollister Boulevard). The City of Iowa City, the University of Iowa and several surrounding smaller communities were all allowed to dump their refuse there.

At a glance, it's difficult to see just how much refuse was interred there over time: The entire dump encompassed approximately 30 acres of the 64-acre site. Long trenches roughly 10-feet deep, at variable length, running north to south, were filled with garbage and allowed to pile up, resulting in refuse stacked 16-to-18 feet deep, according to Gerhardt.

Regional Planning Commission requested data for materials deposited at the South Landfill during one week in April of 1971. Documents held at the City of Iowa City Parks and Recreation Department suggest that this was likely in preparation for the acquisition of lands for Iowa City's current landfill. The data is vague at best, but items that today would



In the '60s, the rules and regulations surrounding dumps were quite different than they are today, and while city officials referred to South Landfill as a landfill, it was in fact a dump due to the fact that the site wasn't lined, compacted, capped, managed or monitored. By contrast, our contemporary landfills operate under strict guidelines, including groundwater monitoring, hazardous materials control, leachate capture and much more, all overseen by both the state and federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) branches.

While environmental oversight of dumps at this time was nonexistent, the Johnson County

require special disposal so as not to pose danger to human or environmental health, in the '60s and '70s were permissible to dump without precaution: leftover paints, motor oil, drain cleaner, batteries and lawn fertilizer.

In late 1971, as the dump neared full capacity, the city began to envision the eventual retirement of the South Landfill. The old city dump, used prior to the South Landfill, remained undeveloped. With two open parcels of appreciable size already owned by the city but ineligible for building, the Parks and Recreation Commission began drawing up designs for a mile-long riverbank park. A

Press-Citizen editorial dated June 22, 1971 supported the preliminary plan, calling it a “promising approach toward a better use of existing resources,” as well as an opportunity for parking, additional high-valued common spaces near water and the possibility that the park would “[add] to the general attractiveness” of the city. Planning for the mile-long “Riverbank Park” continued apace, and as notes from the city council meeting for June 6, 1972 outline, several months before the dump would actually close, the city council approved the names Sturgis Ferry for the City Garage Landfill and Mesquakie Park for the South Landfill.

In 1989, EPA monitoring wells found elevated concentrations of Iron, Chromium, Arsenic, Copper, Lead, Magnesium and Barium leaching from buried refuse at the South Landfill, now known as Mesquakie Park.

DUMPS TO DESTINATIONS

What to do with closed dumps was, and remains, a perplexing question. The conversion of dumps and landfills to parks was an established practice by the time the Iowa City Parks and Recreation and City Council began considering that option for South Landfill. According to the Trust for Public Land (TPL), an historic example of dump to destination dates back to at least 1916, when the City of Seattle transformed its Rainier Dump into the Rainier Playfield. A more contemporary and well-known example of landfill conversion can be found in the ongoing transformation of the 2,200 acre Fresh Kills Landfill on Staten Island in New York. But not all landfills are created equal, and they come with a host of concerns such as toxicity, subsidence and

liability, not to mention cost. Additionally, the Center for City Park Excellence, a research branch of TPL, gives a rough cost estimate for landfill-to-park conversions of around \$300,000 per acre.

Before it was a dump, before the U.S. government partitioned the Iowa River Valley into lots for sale, the region where Mesquakie Park sits belonged to the Meskwaki and Sauk Tribes. Their territory encompassed a significant portion of the Upper Mississippi River region, including parts of Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri and Iowa. It is reasonable to assume, though not officially known, that this is the reason why councilman Loren Hickerson

offered the name Mesquakie for the South Landfill. “Mesquakie,” the spelling used by the City of Iowa City, is a spelling variation of “Meskwaki,” the spelling used by the tribe, which was pushed out of the area in the 1800s, and eventually relocated to Tama, Iowa where nearly 1,400 enrolled tribal members live today.

In 1971, there were obstacles to transforming the South Landfill into its new namesake Mesquakie Park, but they were surmountable. Documents held at the City of Iowa City’s Park and Recreation department detail the required actions: The city needed to pass an ordinance allowing river access, purchase an additional 13-acre parcel and allocate enough discretionary funds for the parks and recreation department to level the soil and seed it with grass. The city files state that the entire

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budget request for the 1972 fiscal year for the parks department was \$204,400.

The first major setback that the dump-to-park conversion faced was an injunction against the city in 1974. According to the legal proceedings on file with the city, Baucalis'

copper, iron, lead and manganese were all found to be leaching from the buried refuse. According to the EPA assessment, children from the neighboring mobile home park were known to play on the dump.

Despite the potential risks to both human

1985. If the site were to be tested by today's standards, the EPA's assessment might look very different.

In the meantime, the land still belonged to the city. Iowa City Parks and Recreation Superintendent Mike Moran chuckled during a recent interview, "Yeah, they always give us the land they don't want. They say, here, let Parks and Rec have it."

In fall 1995, the Parks and Recreation Commission was trying to think of what to do with the space. A bus, filled with commissioners, city administrators and perhaps some councilmen, parked at the gates of Mesquakie Park. According to city documents, they brainstormed aloud about scenarios, including wetlands and nature viewing platforms. After some discussion about the feasibility of making the area into a wetland, including details about the presence of refuse near the surface, the idea of the natural area was abandoned. By the end of the day, there was a unanimous vote to turn the lands over to Public Works: The group felt that it would be too costly to convert the site into a park, and that Public Works could make better use of the space. According to the city attorney reviewing the transfer,

"One option is to let sleeping dogs lie. And that's basically what's happening here." —Dave Elias

Mobile Home Park—located across the street from Mesquakie Park—sued the city for its continued use of the closed dump, and claimed that officials were depositing "sludge" in the area. Then, for reasons unclear, discussion over the park largely disappeared until 1985.

In the intervening years, across the nation, there was an awakening of urban environmental consciousness, as well as a variety of changes in environmental regulations resulting from the establishment of the EPA in December 1970.

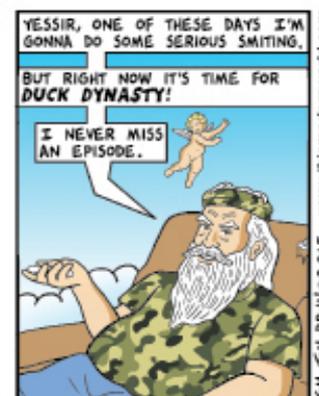
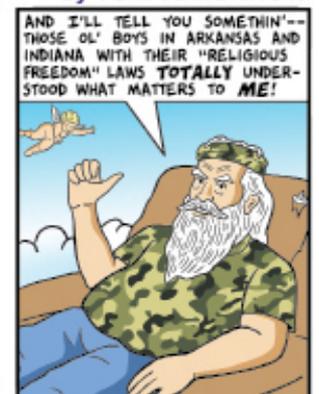
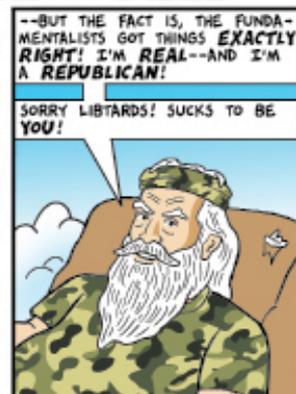
By May 1985, when Iowa City City Manager Neal Berkin asked about the status of Mesquakie Park, the parameters of the conversation had changed. Dump-to-park conversion had become a much riskier and more costly venture. The city would be required to create an appropriate earthen seal (the layer of dirt that sits atop the dump would have to be three feet deep, compared to the once-acceptable one foot or less soil depth) and drainage, which, in keeping with new regulations, would require 222,500 cubic yards of fill material, monitoring wells and much more, all at a cost of \$1,113,000, according to a city memo on file with the Iowa City Parks and Recreation Department.

In late 1988 and early 1989, the EPA Superfund Branch conducted an assessment of the River Street Landfill (their name for the South Landfill) and the City Garage Landfill. The monitoring wells at the South Landfill indicated chromium and lead at levels exceeding drinking water standards, and iron and manganese exceeding Secondary Drinking Water Standards, which measure for aesthetics—taste, smell and appearance. Additionally, heavy metals arsenic, barium, chromium,

and environmental health, the EPA concluded that the levels of heavy metals leaching from the South Landfill were not high enough to merit Superfund status, and instead, the site was left to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for monitoring and management. It's important to note that this decision was based on "permissible levels" set back in

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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a rededication of the park to other city uses could invite litigation. For the time being, the commission would have to settle with taking the park off its parks brochure. The area eventually became the transportation department's staging area, which is what it is used for to this day. The site has never been officially re-named.

LEGACY OF OUR WASTE

When I arrived at Mesquakie Park, where Landfill Superintendent Dave Elias agreed to give me a tour, dump truck operators were depositing large amounts of sand. They had gathered the materials after last spring's floods in City Park, located further upstream on the Iowa River.

The fact that this site contains a former dump inherited from a previous time, a period of different methods and knowledge of waste disposal, is pointed out to me every time I speak to someone from the city. Several city administrators have told me some version of "well, that site predates me" or "that site was way before my time." Elias has worked for

the city for 25 years, and as we begin talking about Mesquakie Park, he laughs and says, "this site was before even I was here."

Well into his second decade of service to Iowa City, this longevity gives him some perspective on the practice of waste management and how it has changed over time. A steady evolution of regulations and requirements means that even Iowa City's current landfill has areas that are antiquated in comparison to today's technology and management. And each closed landfill, including Mesquakie Park, stands as a time capsule, marked by the best practices of that time.

In my efforts to find data on Mesquakie Park, to locate numbers detailing the monitoring and ongoing management of it, I have found very little information. When I explain this to Elias, he quickly identifies the reason: There is no data. No monitoring was done at the site. With the exception of the EPA assessment, this site is closed.

He says, matter-of-factly, "As far as the EPA is concerned, they're happy as it is." Old dumps aren't particular to Iowa City. All across the United States, inherited sites such

as Mesquakie Park, and some much worse, are slipping out of common memory.

"Generally speaking," Elias begins and then pauses. "Generally speaking, we as a society, not just Iowa City, but as a society—one option is to let sleeping dogs lie. And that's basically what's going on here."

Nina Koger, Environmental Engineer at the Land Quality Bureau within the Iowa DNR, says the granting of landfill permits didn't begin until the '70s, and dumps that predate this process aren't typically monitored due to cost, unless there is an obvious problem such as leachate seeps or distressed vegetation due to methane gas migration.

As long as dumps remain covered and are no longer being used, then they'll often remain that way, she added. As far as what's in the dump at Mesquakie Park, Koger says we just don't know for certain. Monitoring costs money, she says, and unless there is growing concern, dumps will typically lay dormant and unchecked unless problems arise.

In 2013, Mike Moran, Parks and Recreation Superintendent, seemed unconvinced that anything would happen to the site in the near



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future. Talking with him again this March, however, brought about a different conversation. Development pressures in south Iowa City, he predicts, will cause city administrators to take a second look at the site within the decade. While it is likely a prime candidate for brownfields funding, a form of EPA grants and funding for the cleanup of sites such as Mesquakie Park, there are still impediments to development.

Admittedly though, how this site will be remembered or forgotten, and to whose benefit or detriment, is an important thing to consider. The name and location of the site recalls us to the fact that the Meskwaki did not want to leave this region, that our town is built on what had been their land and that they continue to live in Iowa. Jonathan Lantz Buffalo, a Meskwaki and Tribal Historian, said in an interview, "If the park is a park, then the Mesquakie name can stay but that if it is a transportation staging area, then that's what the City should call it."

Reacquainting ourselves with Mesquakie Park also ties us to the future. The fact that the site was a dump and that materials deposited there will persist beyond the average human time frame not only illuminates the history and continued advancement of waste management, but serves as a stark reminder of our contemporary consumption practices. We are currently creating waste at an unprecedented rate.

"We've been doing this," Elias says as he points out at the landfill, "for a long time, and we easily forget about it. We're interested in asking, 'Where do we go from here?' 'What can we do that is different from what we have always done?'" Mesquakie Park is an old dump that may one day become something else, but our relationship with waste has remained largely the same. Brooke Butler, City of Iowa City Recycling Clerk, says, "At this point, as far as things have come, we're still throwing garbage in a hole in the ground. That's something that we need to stop doing. Something needs to change." **lv**

Erica Damman is a Ph.D. candidate within the Environmental Humanities in the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program at the University of Iowa. Interviews took place beginning in summer 2013 and through March 2015. This work was completed and reviewed as part of the author's comprehensive examination portfolio for her Ph.D. candidacy. Comprehensive examination date: October 2014.



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Since 2012, The Lost Cuban in Cedar Rapids has been consistently serving flavorful Cuban favorites, garnering well-deserved buzz along way.

Lost Cuban’s dining room is colorful and clean, free from the clutter of knickknacks. Customers order at the register, and friendly, helpful servers bring the food out to the table when it’s ready (which doesn’t take long).

The menu offers sandwich fare, including the ever-popular, hot-pressed Cuban sandwich (an Iowan’s dream of pork, cheese, mustard and pickles), and entree-style dishes, such as the ropa vieja (steak in a tomato-based sauce, though a vegetarian version is also available), served over rice with a choice of side and a fountain drink. They also sell a variety of Cuban sodas. And after the main meal, those

FINDING FLAVOR IN CEDAR RAPIDS

The Lost Cuban’s plate of lechon asado with platanos maduros. Photo by Adam Burke

of us needing a sweet fix can choose between flan or tres leches cake for dessert.

On recommendation from the staff, I tried the lechon asado, pulled pork that is marinated for three days in mojo seasoning—a combination of sour orange, lemon, lime and herbs—then slowly steam-roasted for another eight hours. The pork was heavenly—so tender and flavorful.

My entree came with a choice of plantains or yuca—a starchy, tuberous root simmered with garlic and onions—on the side. I went with the yuca and boy, am I glad I did. My epicurean guide brought me out some sauces to top the side dish: a sweet and mildly



spicy sauce with pineapple and cilantro, and the “medium spice” sauce that is made from smoked jalapeño and smoked habaero. I like heat in my food, and this sauce was hot enough to make the roof of my mouth tingle a bit, while still retaining the smoky flavor that truly adds to the food. He explained that their hottest sauce, which they call the “Cuban Missile Crisis,” was not available at the time, because they have not yet grown the ghost peppers that go into the sauce. Also, I was told that they do not serve the sauce in the small to-go containers like the other sauces, because it eats through the two ounce plastic cups. This seems a little hard to believe, but it certainly piqued my interest.

Lost Cuban serves exactly the kind of food I want to eat as the weather begins to improve—still warm and comforting, but with bright, citrusy notes that cause my taste buds to go from six to midnight. I think for the quality of the food, the \$10 price I paid was a bargain. And while utensils, plates and cups at the Lost Cuban are all disposable, I could imagine the same food being served in a much more formal atmosphere.

I’m excited to go back and try an empanada—they are made fresh for each order. I’d also like to find someone to split their Cuban burger with me (apparently it’s usually too big of an undertaking for one person). It’s a double patty made from meat that they grind themselves and served with at least two different homemade sauces. And while I’m not sure I’ll ever find myself in Cedar Rapids for breakfast, if I did, I would order a Cuban espresso and some guava and cream cheese-filled pastelitos (pastries).

The Lost Cuban also offers catering services. Frankly, I can’t think of anything better for a graduation party or summer gathering. The food practically screams for a fresh mojito or an ice-cold beer to accompany it as you dine al fresco under the twinkling lights in your backyard. Which leads me to my lone scruple: Why is this not in Iowa City?! **IV**

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HOT TIN ROOF: ONE DEGREE NORTH

BY HALEY NAUGHTON

Hot Tin Roof is a program to support new literary work produced in Iowa City. Each month one writer is published and granted a \$100 honorarium. The series is supported by the Englert Theatre, UNESCO City of Literature USA, M.C. Ginsberg Objects of Art and *Little Village*.



It's always too hot and he carries on like it isn't a problem but it is. The sun bakes black shadows, casting the shy likeness of each mangrove root as scribbles on the packed sand. He is there on the beach, covered in sunscreen and sweat, rifling through an ocean of plastic straws, condoms, netting, and bones. Across the barren wasteland of filth and neglect he tiptoes in the sand, stopping every once and a while to pick up a pollutant and place it in a big black trash bag.

"I've had it with all the women in this family, they're too strong willed," he says.

He thinks about what it would be like to be in the same room with them—his mom and his two sisters—and shakes his head. They forgave him because they had to, because it was eating them alive, he knew. But there was no way he was going to talk about it. Not in a million years.

Last week, he acted in a post-apocalyptic play in which he painted his face white and wore all white and talked about dancing bears and shivered in an overstuffed arm chair, as if overcome by a fear of water. The play was called *At Least We've Got A Turkey* and at the end he carved up the turkey, center stage. It was nothing more than a platter of bones.

Deep in the mangroves, he finds a dog. It might have been a dog. He plucks a sun-bleached vertebra from the pile and puts it in his pocket. The plastic mountain does not dwindle until months after he starts and he comes to the conclusion that if they were considering him at all, they were not considering him above their own emotions.

But he still misses them. He still misses them all. **lv**

Haley Naughton has, for some time now, been trying to lock down the onomatopoeia for that sound your teeth make when you clack your jaw, because it's definitely not just clack.

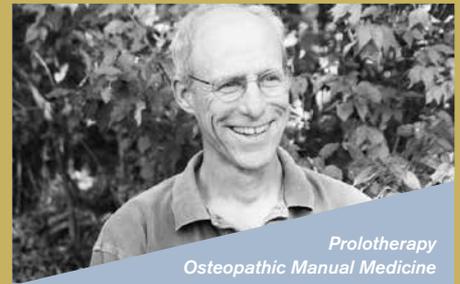
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ESMÉ PATTERSON

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22
Intimate at the Englert Series

TODD SNIDER

FRIDAY, APRIL 24

MARY ROACH

MONDAY, APRIL 27
Visiting Writers Series

**THE ADVENTURES OF
ROBIN HOOD**

TUESDAY, APRIL 28
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SATURDAY, MAY 2

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SUNDAY, MAY 3

DANIEL LANOIS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6

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SATURDAY, MAY 9
University of Iowa Department of Theatre Arts

An Evening with
SUZY BOGGOSS

SUNDAY, MAY 10

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SHAPING THE SCULPTOR

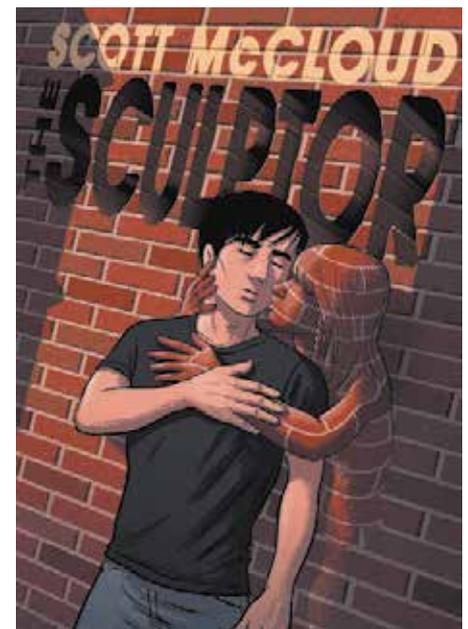
Scott McCloud, best known for *Understanding Comics*, tests his understanding of the form with a new, ambitious graphic novel. • **BY ROB CLINE**



Scott McCloud is best known for *Understanding Comics*, his 1993 examination of the comics medium that is, itself, presented in the form of a comic. It's a seminal work, admired by general readers, critics, scholars and comics practitioners (Neil Gaiman, Matt Groening, Alan Moore, Art Spiegelman, Garry Trudeau, Will Eisner and Jim Lee are among those who have praised the book). *Understanding Comics* established McCloud's credentials as a fellow who both understands how comics work as a storytelling medium and can explain them in an appealing fashion.

McCloud's new graphic novel, *The Sculptor*, isn't his first foray into fictional comics, granted. He was creating them well before the release of *Understanding Comics*, though *The Sculptor* is only his second stand-alone graphic novel. The first, 1998's *The New Adventures of Abraham Lincoln* was not well received, according to McCloud. Thus, an important question raised by *The Sculptor* is how well does McCloud employ his copious knowledge of the inner working of comics to tell his own story?

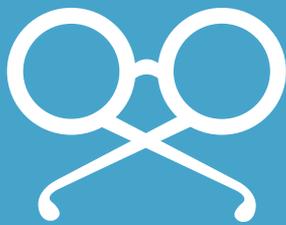
The answer: quite well, indeed. *The Sculptor* is visually striking, which does much to ameliorate the fact that its narrative drags in spots. Given the urgency of the story—in which the protagonist is bedeviled by his need to create works of genius before his rapidly approaching death—the slow pace is a flaw,



DEAL WITH THE DEVIL | In *The Sculptor*, David makes a Faustian bargain at the expense of his lifespan.

but not a fatal one.

In the early pages of *The Sculptor*, a young man named David makes a classic Faustian bargain with a supernatural being who has taken the form of his late Uncle Harry. David is granted the power to manipulate the physical world in fantastic ways, potentially allowing



him to create astonishing works of art, but he will die in 200 days.

Of course, soon after he makes the deal, David has an unusual encounter with Meg, a complicated woman with whom he is immediately enraptured. Meg is devoted to making the world a better place and living fully in the moment, though she is plagued by devastating bouts of depression that will test her burgeoning relationship with David even as he watches his waning days slip away.

Meg, who humanizes David, is easily the most nuanced character in *The Sculptor*. One could argue that Meg, in her gentle but persistent reshaping of David's worldview and priorities, is in fact the essential "sculptor" in the book.

McCloud's art is detailed and rendered entirely in shades of slate blue, gray and black. His characters are sharply detailed and his settings fully realized. Employing various points of view and panel arrangements, he creates a textured, varied world and gives the story a cinematic feel. In the book's more paranormal and philosophical moments, he masterfully uses negative space.

The kinetic nature of David's artistic endeavors is also a highlight of the book. McCloud helps us experience the physicality of a sculpture's work—particularly when that sculptor is working with only his mystically enhanced hands. While David's finished pieces seem to lack a certain warmth, his striving is filled with heat.

The climactic scenes of *The Sculptor* are ambitious and unfold somewhat unevenly. McCloud has a philosophical point to make, and it means putting a lot of words on the page even as the action reaches its emotional peaks. But the ending also features a bravura stretch of wordless panels and pages that are some of the most powerful in the entire novel.

McCloud may hammer his message home just a bit too hard, and his story might unfold just a bit too slowly, but *The Sculptor* is nevertheless entertaining, thought-provoking and visually pleasing. **IV**

Rob Cline seeks out the good and bad across the comics landscape as the Colorblind Comics Critic.



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BANGING OUT THE LAUGHS

Neil Campbell, head writer for *Comedy Bang! Bang!*, talks about his writing process, improv and getting his start at the University of Iowa.

BY ARASHDEEP SINGH

Neil Campbell is the head writer for IFC's *Comedy Bang! Bang!*, the surreal comedy talk show hosted by Scott Aukerman with comedic and musical accompaniment from Reggie Watts, and now Kid Cudi. In 2005, then-recent University of Iowa graduate Campbell was performing sketch comedy at L.A.'s Upright Citizen Brigade (where he would later assume the position of artistic director) when Aukerman offered him and fellow sketch performer Paul Rust the chance to guest host *Comedy Death Ray*, the precursor live show to *Comedy Bang! Bang!*. Soon after, Campbell began collaborating with Aukerman on writing for various comedy projects, and in 2012, when IFC offered Aukerman a television deal, Campbell was recruited to assist with writing the pilot for *Comedy Bang! Bang!*.

Campbell returns to Iowa City to perform in *The Big Splash* comedy show for the Floodwater Comedy Festival on Saturday, April 18 at 9 p.m. at the Blue Moose Tap House. Campbell will also conduct an improv workshop on Friday, April 17 at 4 p.m. at Public Space One and a sketch writing seminar on Saturday at 2 p.m. at Theatre B at the UI Theatre Building.

Little Village: You're currently in the fourth season of *Comedy Bang! Bang!* How do you feel the show has evolved over time?

Neil Campbell: I think that season one had a lot more stuff that was straight-up parody of talk show conventions and now I would describe it more as a talk show that exists in a crazy world. We started using storylines to create and explore this fun, weird world, and that has become more of the voice of the show as time has gone on. It became less about parody and more about this talk show set in this kind of heightened reality.

How does the writing process work at *Comedy Bang! Bang!*?

We kind of encourage everyone to pitch what they are excited about and what would be fun for them to write. The show can really kind of go anywhere and be about anything. You know, we've had episodes where Scott and Reggie have superpowers. Another week, there is a love story with a character we've never seen before. One episode of the show takes place during an earthquake where everyone is trapped inside the studio. Whatever kind of story would be interesting for us to tell, or whatever sketch idea makes us laugh, we just try to do that.

NEIL CAMPBELL AT FLOODWATER COMEDY FESTIVAL | Campbell

headlines the Floodwater Comedy

Festival | April 16-19 in Iowa City.

Illustration by Jared Jewell

So writers will bring up those kind of ideas and the room will start to all pitch on that idea together and try to come up with jokes for it. And then we try to beat out a general structure for it.

Once we've gotten the general outline for a storyline or a sketch together, one or two or three people will go off and write it together. That sort of depends on who was working on



what, and how many people we have and all that. Probably the person who pitched the initial idea and one or two other people, it sort of depends who was working on what and how many people we have and all that. There are no hard-and-fast rules for it. Then we read it in a room and move on to rewrites. And once Scott is happy with it, we're allowed to see our families again.

You and several of the writers at the show have backgrounds in improv and performing. Do you think doing improv helps you to be a better comedy writer?

I do think it is beneficial to do both. I think you learn a lot from actually getting up on stage and performing. There can be times when you write something you think is so clever, but then you go on stage, and you see it doesn't totally connect. Not everyone is amazing at both writing and performing, but I think trying both helps you with both.

I was all into sketch before doing improv, and a big hurdle for me to overcome in improv was to step out into a scene without a really funny idea. I was always trying to start a scene with a sketch at the level of Mr. Show—trying to be a total mind fuck and have it be the most clever idea of all time. Improv helped me to pare it down to where it can be just two people talking, and it doesn't necessarily have to be the most conceptual thing in the world. I still like writing conceptual things, but at 24, you shouldn't have your mind made up that you are only going to write conceptual stuff and nothing else.

I think that improv has helped me with accessing ideas without overthinking them. With improv, you can sometimes build something up one piece at a time and take it to somewhere really interesting and weird that you wouldn't have if you thought about it too much to begin with.

Is there anything particularly satisfying about being a writer for *Comedy Bang! Bang!*, in terms of creative freedom or otherwise?



Definitely a big thrill for me has been to meet a lot of my comedy icons. Either they have been guests on the couch, or they come in for a day or so to shoot a sketch. It is just pretty awesome that all these people come on from

write these bits, and Amy Poehler and Dave Koechner were then saying the words we wrote. That was definitely a huge thrill, and it continues to be. To get to work with so many awesome people.

Not everyone is amazing at both writing and performing, but I think trying both helps you with both.

SNL, Mr. Show, Kids in the Hall, The State and all these other shows that helped shaped my sense of humor.

I specifically remember in season one me and Tim Kalpakis, a writer for the show, were talking about how crazy it was that we get to

You're an Iowa alum and you collaborate quite frequently with two people you met while at Iowa, Paul Rust and Michael Cassidy (also appearing at the Floodwater Comedy Festival). Can you elaborate on the role Iowa played in your comedy career?

I went to Iowa and I studied film and theatre. I had never done theatre before I went Iowa, actually. I started taking more theatre classes and eventually wound up double majoring. What I really liked about the theatre department was that there was a lot of opportunity to put on my own stuff. I found myself more interested in getting to write my own plays, direct a friend's play or act in a new play.

My sophomore year I started doing No Shame Theatre [a forum for stage performance based in Iowa City]. That's where I met Paul Rust, who is still my best friend, and we still write and perform together out here in L.A. all the time. Because of No Shame, and because of the chance to put up my own work, I just gravitated toward doing a lot of comedy. It was just a lot of fun to do. Paul, Michael and I graduated and eventually we just decided to move to L.A. and do stuff together like we had in college. **lv**

Arashdeep Singh is a writer, comedian and Reggie Watts celebrity impersonator based in Iowa City. Full disclosure, Singh will perform stand up in the Floodwater Comedy Festival.

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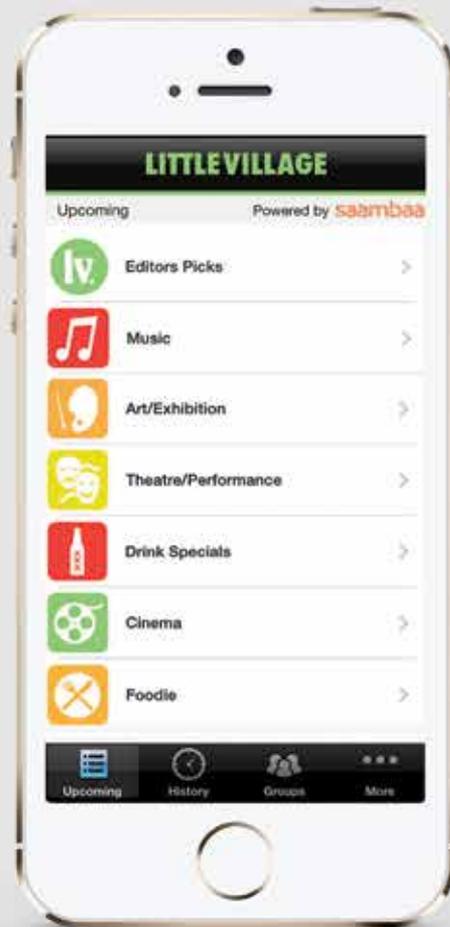
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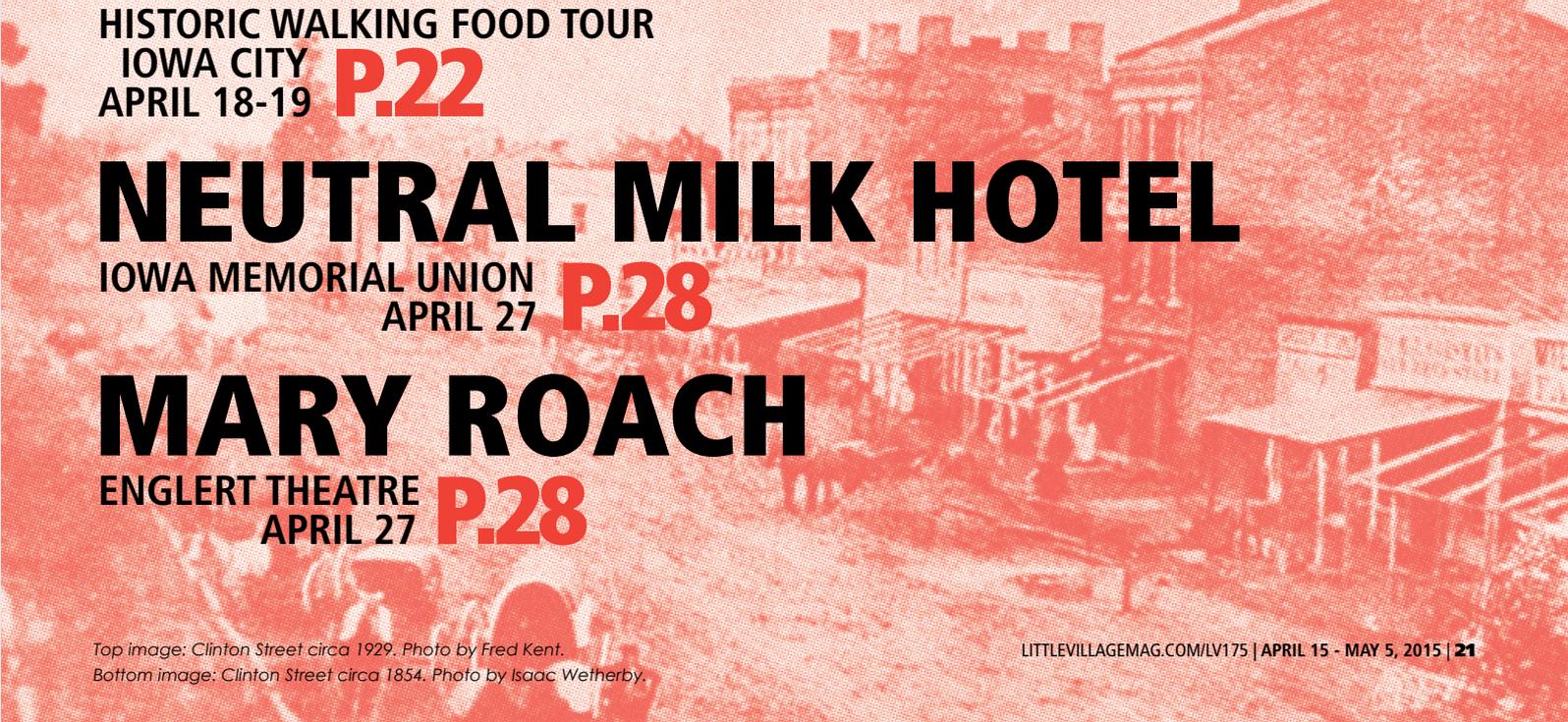
HISTORIC WALKING FOOD TOUR
IOWA CITY **P.22**
APRIL 18-19

NEUTRAL MILK HOTEL

IOWA MEMORIAL UNION **P.28**
APRIL 27

MARY ROACH

ENGLERT THEATRE **P.28**
APRIL 27



Top image: Clinton Street circa 1929. Photo by Fred Kent.
Bottom image: Clinton Street circa 1854. Photo by Isaac Wetherby.

A TASTE OF IC HISTORY

The Old Capitol Museum hosts a walking tour of Iowa City's food history as part of its "Land Provides" exhibit. • **BY CELINE UHL**

Have you ever wondered where Iowa City's food culture came from, or what foods and drinks are specifically tied to Iowa City, and why? Have you ever wanted to know what the heck people were eating here in 1850, long before grabbing a burger at George's was even an option?

As part of the Old Capitol Museum's series "The Land Provides: Iowa's Culinary History," Rachel Wobeter, a student in museum studies at the University of Iowa, will lead a Historic Walking Food Tour on Saturday, April 18 and Sunday, April 19 from 1 – 3 p.m.

During the tour, Wobeter will guide participants to various Iowa City locations important to the town's culinary history. The tour will discuss various elements of Iowa City's food scene between the years 1830 and 1900,

including grocers, restaurants, hotels and brewers. Participants will learn the proud history of John's Grocery, what the most popular bar munchies of the 19th century were and why an old brewery, in true hipster fashion, only sold Pabst beer. Wobeter says that locals and out-of-towners alike will get something out of this immersive tour.

"Food is something that everyone can relate to and find a connection with," said Wobeter. "For those who are familiar with Iowa City, this tour will reveal hidden secrets and stories that will make them look at the city in a new light, and people who aren't familiar with Iowa City will enjoy the tour because it includes lots of general information about 19th century food trends and culture."

The tour will start at the Old Capitol and travel to Clinton Street Social Club, Pullman

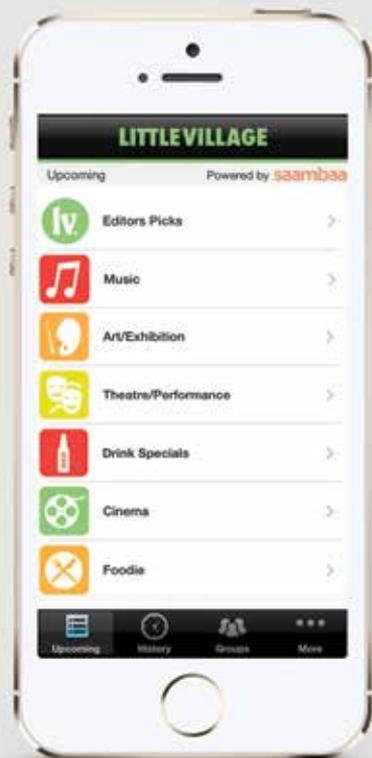
Diner, Devotay and John's Grocery. Along the way, samples of food and beer (for those over 21) will be offered to help illuminate the historical narrative and allow participants to consider how food has changed since the 19th century.

"As our industrial food system is changing at the speed of light, we've ventured extremely far away from our food roots," said Wobeter. "This tour helps people stop and reflect on our old foodways."

The walking distance of the tour will be about 1.5 miles total and will take place regardless of the weather. The suggested donation is \$15, and pre-registration is required; to register, contact Kathrine Moermond at 319-335-0546.



Illustration by Frances Cannon



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WED., APRIL 15

/MUSIC: Black Violin, Englert Theatre, \$10 - \$22, 8 pm
 | Diversity Focus brings this mix of classical, hip hop, bluegrass and R&B.

Subterranean All Stars, Gabe's, Free, 9 pm | Boogie down with this soulful jazz-funk band from Fairfield.

John Jorgenson Quintet, CSPS Hall, \$20 - \$25, 7 pm | John Jorgenson is a master of gypsy jazz.

/LITERATURE: J.C. Hallman, Prairie Lights, Free, 7 pm | Writers workshop grad will read selections from his latest work, B & Me.

Bijou Film Forum: The Hunting Ground, FilmScene, \$6.50 - \$7.50, 6 pm | See this riveting documentary about the climate surrounding sexual assault on college campuses. (Through April 19)

/EDUCATIONAL: Sewing: The Bias Skirt, Home Ec Workshop, \$30 +supplies, 5:30 p.m. | Learn to sew a simple and flattering skirt you can wear year round.

THURS., APRIL 16

/MUSIC: Lil Bibby, Blue Moose Tap House, \$15 - \$17, 6:30 pm | Party with this Chicago rapper who has been compared to Chief Keef.

Freakabout w. The Unusual Suspects, Yacht Club, \$5 - \$7, 9 pm | Blues-rock band Freakabout grabs audiences with colorful lyrics.

THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Janice Ian Experience, The Mill, Free, 9 pm | Laugh with IC's all-female improv comedy group.



Photo by Adam Burke

Housebroken, Riverside Theatre, \$18 - \$30, See Website | Local funny lady Megan Gogerty (pictured) is back with a new one-woman show. Her last show, Feet First In The Water With A Baby in My Teeth, was filled with humorous observations of life as a mother. This time, she examines another marker of adulthood—buying a home. (Through April 26)—JS

The Liar, Theatre Building at UI, \$5 - \$18, See Website | See this comedy set in France about a classic case of mistaken identity. (Through April 26)

/LITERATURE: Art Lovers' Book Club, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free, 4 pm | Discuss Einstein, Picasso: Space, Time and the Beauty that Causes Havoc by Arthur J. Miller.

/EDUCATIONAL: Knitting: Seamless Top-down Baby Sweater, Home Ec Workshop, \$35 +supplies, 6 pm | Learn the basics of top-down knitting construction from this three-part class. (April 16, 23 and 30)

FRI., APRIL 17

/MUSIC: Benefit for Angie Hargrove, The Mill, \$20 Suggested Donation, 7 pm | Proceeds will benefit Hargrove, who has been diagnosed with Stage 3 Brain Cancer. Performers include Gloria Hardiman and Kevin BF Burt, among others.

Lil Dicky w. Kosha Dillz, Blue Moose Tap House, \$17 - \$75, 7:30 pm | This Jewish rapper uses humor and self-deprecation to hook his fans.

GoodcaT w. Gramps the Vamp, Yacht Club, \$6, 9 pm | Des Moines band, GoodcaT is a funky folk group with an eclectic sound.

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION: Opening Reception: Under 20 Art Exhibition, Chait Galleries Downtown, Free, 5 pm | See this juried youth art show, where young artists showcase and sell their work.

Opening: Beer, Please! National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library, Free, All Day | Learn about the history of beer, from ancient Egyptians and medieval Europe to present day.

THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Rob Little, Penguins Comedy Club, \$12 - \$14, 7:30 pm | Rob Little is an optimistic comedian and is considered one of the best. (Through April 18)

Paperback Rhino, Public Space One, \$2, 10:30 pm | Check out this local improv troupe who placed second in the recent National College Improv Tournament



Opening: All Recipes are Home, Johnson County Fairgrounds, \$10 - \$30, See Website | Hancher and WGT collaborate on another

• play based on real-life interviews and stories. When
 • a young man goes to work on a farm, his sister fol-
 • lows him to give him an important family recipe. The
 • performance takes place at the Johnson County
 • Fairgrounds. Bring a picnic and enjoy a concert by
 • the Awful Purdies before the play begins. (Through
 • April 18)—JS

Opening: Pinocchio, Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$5 - \$7, See Website | Child actors in grades K-4 act out this classic tale. (Through April 18)

Opening: The Man Who Came to Dinner, Iowa City Community Theatre, \$8 - \$16, See Website | Originally set during the 1930s, this modern adaption takes place on Christmas in Ohio. When a famous radio personality falls and hurts a hip at the house of a rich factory owner, shenanigans ensue. (Through April 26)

First Fleet Concerts Presents
LIL BIBBY 4/16 - 6:30 PM

First Fleet Concerts Presents
LIL DICKY 4/17 - 6:30 PM



First Fleet Concerts Presents
MICKEY AVALON
 4/23 - 8 PM

SUBconscious Productions Present
MARTYPARTY 4/24 - 8 PM

Blue Moose Tap House Presents
JOEY FATTS 4/26 - 6 PM

First Fleet Concerts Presents
EXMAG 4/28 - 8 PM



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Are you normal body weight?

- Yes, normal
- 5-15 pounds overweight
- More than 15 pounds overweight
- More than 10 pounds under weight

Are you fatigued?

- Yes, I'm too tired for routine activities
- Occasionally a problem
- Not very often

Are you cold (prone to cold hands/feet)?

- Yes, always cold
- Hand or feet are often cold
- Not very often

Is your hair falling out or thinning?

- Yes, noticeably
- To some extent
- No

Is the outside portion of your eyebrows thinning or gone?

- Yes, noticeably
- To some extent
- No

Do you have constipation (bowel straining or not eliminating daily)?

- Yes, may not go for several days
- Inconsistent
- Some straining
- Not an issue

Is there a swelling of the throat area or do you have voice-strain problem?

- Yes, noticeably swollen or strained
- Voice falters at times, some tenderness/swelling
- No

If you answered yes to TWO or more of these questions you could be suffering from low functioning thyroid, hypothyroidism or sub-clinical hypothyroid. There is hope and there are answers to your weight gain, fatigue, depression, weakness / soreness, cold, low libido, hair loss and sleeplessness symptoms.

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/CINEMA: Cedar Rapids Independent Film Festival, Collins Road Theatres, \$8 - \$35, See Website | Check out this veritable

- smorgasbord of works from Iowa filmmakers and actors. See films about zombies, documentaries about sex trafficking and even music videos at this jam-packed two-day festival. (April 18) —SM

SAT., APRIL 18

/MUSIC: Acoustic Cage Match, Gabe's, \$5, 7 pm | Singers compete for over \$250 in prizes.

113th Annual Frolics, Englert Theatre, \$10, 7 pm | Carver School of Medicine students perform musical acts and comedy.

KRUI 30th Anniversary Party, The Mill, Free, 7 pm | Celebrate 30 years of the student-run radio organization KRUI.

Uniphonics w. People Brothers Band, Yacht Club, \$7, 9 pm | After leaving Iowa City in 2007, the Uniphonics have traveled the U.S. and played with some of the biggest names in music.



/LITERATURE: Iowa Review Veterans Event, Prairie Lights, Free, 7 pm | United States military veterans visit Iowa City to read from

- works, chosen by Anthony Swofford, the author of Jarhead, with reception to follow. —SM

/EDUCATIONAL: Knitting: Green Thumb Mitts, Home Ec Workshop, \$40 +supplies, 10 am | Beginner and intermediate knitters can learn to construct simple fingerless gloves in this two-session course. (April 25)

SUN., APRIL 19

/MUSIC: Iowa City Community String Orchestra, Englert Theatre, Free, 3 pm | Community musicians present their 2015 showcase.

Virgin Mary Pistol Grip, Gabe's, Free, 9 pm | Live, local rock music.

Trio 826, The Mill, \$8 - \$10, 7 pm | See three orchestral musicians on a mission to bring life to classical music.

Liz Carroll w. Jake Charron, CSPS Hall, \$18 - \$22, 7 pm | Celtic musician Liz Carroll has played around the world.

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Was The Word, Englert Theatre, Suggested Donation, 8 pm | Local actor and comedian Megan Gogerty hosts this monthly spoken word and storytelling event.

Brad Reeder, Gabe's, \$10, 8 pm | You might recognize Reeder from Dawson's Creek. See him perform stand up, with opening acts Tom Garland, Doug Dorrington, Tiffany Buehneeman, Anthony Rios, Joe Beadle and Dan Hensing.

/LITERATURE: Free Generative Writing Workshop, Public Space One, Free, 5:30 pm | Bring some hot tea and curl up at PS1 where writers will write from the same writing prompt and share with others.

/EDUCATIONAL: Indigo Dye Workshop, Home Ec Workshop, \$35, 1 pm | Wear something you don't mind turning blue! Find out more about this natural dye method. Just bring one yard of 100 percent cotton fabric.

MON., APRIL 20

/MUSIC: 420 Burndown, Gabe's, \$5, 9 pm | Celebrate the stoner's holiday with music from roots rock and reggae-funk bands The Dawn and FireSale and Cake tribute band, Have Your Cake.

/LITERATURE: Casey Walker, Prairie Lights, Free, 7 pm | Writers' Workshop grad will read from his first novel, Last Days in Shanghai.

TUES., APRIL 21

/MUSIC: Diarrhea Planet, Gabe's, \$10 - \$12, 9 pm | SXSW veterans, Diarrhea Planet is a rock and roll band with a name as unconventional as their live shows.

Sean Rowe w. Matthew Fowler, The Mill, \$10, 9:30 pm | This singer-songwriter makes a point to connect to his audience with every performance.

Cory Branan w. Tim Easton, CSPS Hall, \$13 - \$16, 7 pm | Cory Branan is a songwriter who plays both country and punk genres.

/LITERATURE: Marc Rahe and Daniel Khalastchi, Prairie Lights, Free, 7 pm | Two Iowa City poets read from their recently published collections, On Hours (Rescue Press) and Tradition (McSweeney's).

/CINEMA: Siddharth, FilmScene, \$5, 6 pm | What would you do if you couldn't find your child? Watch this film about a father who makes his way across India to find his son.

/FOODIE: Elegant Lemon Tart, New Pioneer Co-op Coralville, \$20, 6 pm | Make the dough from scratch and use fresh lemons to make this refreshing springtime dessert.

WED., APRIL 22

/MUSIC: Burlington Street Bluegrass Band, The Mill, \$5, 7 pm | These Iowa City based bluegrass musicians play the Mill monthly.

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Esmé Patterson w. Brooks Strause, Englert Theatre, \$15, 8 pm | Join Patterson on stage for a close-up performance as part of the 'Intimate at the Englert' series.

Access w. Fro Frizzle, Gabe's, Free, 9 pm | Enjoy a free hip-hop show.

/LITERATURE: Talk Art, The Mill, Free, 10:30 pm | Writers' Workshop attendees present their works to the public.

/COMMUNITY: Earth Day, Indian Creek Nature Center, Free, 6:30 pm | Go on a hike when Indian Creek officially opens their trails for public use in 2015. Sheila Stevens joins on the guitar, and patrons can enjoy family-friendly activities like catching frogs.

THURS., APRIL 23

/MUSIC: Preston Lacy's Cockus Tour, Gabe's, \$15 - \$20, 7 pm | You might recognize Preston Lacy from Jackass. Tom Garland opens the night of comedy.

iHeartC, The Mill, Free, 8 pm | This travelling monthly concert series features various musical, art and dance performances from Iowa City artists.

Mickey Avalon, Blue Moose Tap House, \$15 - \$17, 9 pm | This glam rapper became famous for his song, "Jane Fonda" during the MySpace era of music availability.

Red Comet w. The Sapwoods, Yacht Club, \$5, 9 pm | Folk band connects to fans with super relatable lyrics.

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION: Grant Wood Art Colony Fellows Lecture, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free, 7 pm | 2014-2015 Grant Wood Art Colony Fellows Michele Lauriat and Serhat Tanyolacar will give a lecture on their work and experiences as Grant Wood Fellows.

THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Dancers In Company, CSPS Hall, \$10 - \$13, 7 pm | University of Iowa undergraduate and graduate students will perform their spring Midwest tour.

50 Shades of Men, Penguins Comedy Club, \$14 - \$20, 7:30 pm | Former Chippendales dancers will give a classy performance, perfect for a ladies night out.

/LITERATURE: Paul's Book Club, Prairie Lights, Free, 7 pm | Paul Ingram's April selection is *Winter in the Blood* by James Welch.



Photo by Alpha

/FOODIE: Pork Belly and More, New Pioneer Co-op Coralville, \$30, 6 pm | There're so many things you can do with pork belly. Learn techniques to make bacon, salt pork, pancetta and porchetta from the melt-in-your-mouth meat. —SM

FRI., APRIL 24

/MUSIC: Jazz After Five, The Mill, Free, 5 pm | Relax after a long work week with music from Scott Barnum Trio, Dan Padley and Jon Snell Trio.

The Big Time w. An Honest Year, The Resolution, Gabe's, \$10 - \$12, 5:30 pm | Dance like it's 2003 with three pop-rock bands.

Todd Snider w. Rorey Carroll, Englert Theatre, \$20 - \$22, 8 pm | Snider's latest album *Agnostic Hymns and Stoner Fables* has garnered him praise as a brilliant musical storyteller.

MartyParty w. Electrocity, Blue Moose Tap House, \$12 - \$15, 9 pm | This producer/rapper combines hip-hop and dubstep beats for an awesome dance party. OG Wentworth and DJ Kage will also take the stage.

Caroline Smith w. Vic & Gab, The Mill, \$12 - \$15, 9 pm | Smith's love of '90s R&B, neo-soul and pop music heavily influences her sound.

Mayflies w. The Almost Heroes, Yacht Club, \$7, 9 pm | Check out this energetic, local band playing electric and acoustic music.

THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: The Swinger David Scott, Penguins Comedy Club, \$15 - \$17.50, 7:30 pm | David Scott puts on an excellent stand-up show and performs "The World's Most Dangerous Bit in Comedy." (Through April 25)

Great White Narcs, Public Space One, \$2, 8 pm | Relatively new IC comedy troupe performs improv.



Photo by Emily McKnight

Opening: Romance/Romance, Johnson County Fairgrounds, \$10 - \$18, See Website | If The Last Five Years whet your appetite for small-

- scale musicals, check out their latest musical with a four-person cast presented by Iowa City Community Theatre. Based on two short stories, the two acts tell love stories against the backdrops of 19th Century Vienna and 1980's Long Island. (Through May 3)—JS

Opening: Into the Woods, Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$12 - \$27, See Website | This twist on classic fairy tales finds a baker and his wife attempting to conceive a child with the help of a nefarious witch. (Through May 3)

/LITERATURE: Poets on the Books: Ted Mathys and Matt Hart, Prairie Lights, Free, 7 pm | Two poets read from their recent works. Presented in partnership with Poets on the Book and the Iowa Youth Writing Project.

David Sedaris, Paramount Theatre, \$35.50 - \$42.50, 8 pm | Hear works from this acclaimed author and Grammy award-nominee.

SAT., APRIL 25

/MUSIC: Crystal City w. Superfun Yeah Yeah Rocketship, The Mill, \$7, 9 pm | Local musicians combine punk and Americana sounds.

Brewgrass After Party, Yacht Club, \$5, 9 pm | After the Brewgrass beer festival, sip on craft beers and jam to bluegrass music. Frank F. Sidney's *Western Bandit* Volunteers and Cedar County Cobras take the stage.

/LITERATURE: Jim Furnish, Prairie Lights, Free, 4 pm | Iowa City native reads from his memoir, *Toward a Natural Forest: The Forest Service in Transition*.

Frank Sinatra Tribute, Old Creamery Theatre, \$28.50, 2 pm | Robbie Howard regularly performs Sinatra tunes in Vegas. See him croon in *Amana*.

/CINEMA: Red Cedar Chamber Music: The Brinton Silent Film Project, CSPS Hall, \$15 - \$18, 8 pm | This will be the first filming of the project in over 100 years. The film includes comedy, drama, and more.

/FOODIE: Dorm Room Gourmet, Public Space One, \$5 - \$8, 5 pm | Local Food Connection presents a class where you can learn to make some awesome foods using just a microwave or toaster oven, instructed by chefs from *Local Burrito, Ride and Fairgrounds*.

/COMMUNITY: Women in Nature, Indian Creek Nature Center, \$45 - \$50, All Day | Formerly known as the Women's Walking Workshop, join Indian Creek for a day full of gentle yoga, guided meditation, relaxing nature walks and massages from Carlson College of Massage Therapy.

World Tai Chi and Qigong Day, Body Moves Fitness and Wellness Center, Free, 9 am | No experience is necessary to participate in relaxing, outdoor Tai Chi and Qigong exercises.

SUN., APRIL 26

/MUSIC: Joey Fatts w. A\$ton Matthews, Evan Nash, DJ One Way, Blue Moose Tap House, \$13 - \$15, 7 pm | Long Beach rapper heads to IC on his *Ill Street Tour*.

Jay Ungar & Molly Mason, CSPS Hall, \$18 - \$22, 7 pm | American acoustic duo, Jay Ungar & Molly Mason play a variety of music.

THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Closing: Clybourne Park, Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$13 - \$24, 2:30 pm | Playwright Bruce Norris wrote

- this drama loosely as a sequel to Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, set in 1959, where the white residents of a Chicago neighborhood try to stop a black family from moving in. In this play set in 2009, black residents of that same neighborhood worry that their area is gentrifying. —JS

/LITERATURE: Dina Elenbogen, Hillel House (122 E Market St.), Free, 2 pm | Poet reads from her memoir, *Drawn from Water*.

/CINEMA: Royal Shakespeare Company: *Love's Labour's Won*, \$15 - \$18, 2 pm | See this HD screening of the Bard's comic romance.

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION: Closing: *Billy Bishop Goes to War*, Old Creamery Theatre Studio Stage, \$30, See Website | Watch this introspective biopic tale of Billy Bishop, a Canadian WWI hero.



Closing: *Not Real Food*, Prairie Lights, Free, All Day | Jonathan Sims' current show of prints, *Not Real Food*, explores both the appeal and repulsiveness of fast food and junk food. Taking cues from advertisements from the '80s and early '90s, Sims uses bright colors, comic book graphics and ridiculous juxtapositions to point out the absurdity of advertising and consumer culture.

In *Ice Cold Soda Pop*, one of my personal favorites, Sims uses humor to demonstrate the brainwashing effects of advertising. The print presents the viewer/consumer with a syrupy glass of soda. Look a little closer and you'll see a goldfish swimming amongst the ice cubes. This thirst-quenching beverage is set against the backdrop of a starburst pattern reminiscent of Japanese propaganda posters. It's a clever device for critiquing the cringe-worthy strategies of advertising, particularly the glorification of a product that everyone knows is crap. After all, who hasn't seen the videos where Coca-Cola doubles as an effective toilet bowl cleaner? (Through April 26)

—Elizabeth Schule



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MON., APRIL 27



/MUSIC: Neutral Milk Hotel (pictured), Iowa Memorial Union, \$30, 8 pm | After a 15-year hiatus, Neutral Milk Hotel returned to the music scene in 2014 for a reunion tour.



/LITERATURE: Mary Roach, Englert Theatre, Free, 7 pm | Roach is an author who specializes in the science of the weird and unconventional, publishing books about things like sex and science, life on mars and the "lives" of human cadavers. —SM

Angela Flournoy, Prairie Lights, Free, 7 pm | Workshop grad reads from her latest novel on family, love and pride, The Turner House.

TUES., APRIL 28

/MUSIC: James McMurtry w. Max Gomez, The Mill, \$15, 8 pm | McMurtry sets out on tour after a six-year album hiatus.

Exmag w. Marvel Years, M!NT, Blue Moose Tap House, \$10, 9 pm | Electronic music featuring funky basslines.
Nellie McKay, CSPS Hall, \$21 - \$26, 7 pm | Nellie McKay has sung on Broadway and in Woody Allen movies.

THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, Englert Theatre, \$5 - \$10, 6:30 pm | The Englert's family series brings this fresh take on a classic tale, performed by Visible Fictions theatre company.

WED., APRIL 29

/MUSIC: Icarus the Owl, Blue Moose Tap House, \$10, 6:30 pm | Jam with this pop-rock band from Portland.
Lágbájá, CSPS Hall, \$20 - \$25, 7 pm | Lágbájá, the masked Nigerian singer and saxophonist, delivers an entertaining if enigmatic mix of afrobeat.

/LITERATURE: Alex Lemon, Prairie Lights, Free, 7 pm | Lemon reads from his collection of poetry, The Wish Book.

/COMMUNITY: The Art of Propaganda, University of Iowa Museum of Art, Free, 7:30 pm | Cultural historian of 20th century France, Brett Bowles presents a lecture on how propaganda in print media affected public opinions in the U.S. and France during World War I.

/EDUCATIONAL: Make a Quilt from Start to Finish, Home Ec Workshop, \$85 +supplies, 6 pm | Learn to make a small quilt, and use Home Ec's space to work on it in between each of the three sessions. (May 6, 13)

THURS., APRIL 30

/MUSIC: Runa, CSPS Hall, \$17 - \$21, 7 pm | The group Runa uses Irish step dancing, instruments, and their voices to create a unique and beautiful performance.

Hancher Presents: Cantus, St. Mary's Catholic Church, \$10 - \$30, 7:30 pm | One of the world's finest male vocal ensembles performs their anthology, Anthems.

Funk, Friends, Farm: An Earth Month Send-Off, The Mill, \$4, 8 pm | The University of Iowa Environmental Coalition kicks off Earth Month with performances by Soul Phlegm, Alpha Bet and Addison Payne. All proceeds benefit Field to Family.

THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Opening: *The Matchmaker*, Old Creamery Theatre, \$30, See Website | Bring the kids to see this delightful romantic comedy, which finds busybody Dolly helping other couples tie the knot. (Through May 21)

/LITERATURE: Joanna Klink, Prairie Lights, Free, 7 pm | Poet to read selections from Excerpts from a Secret Prophecy.

FRI., MAY 1



Photo by Angela Laffey



THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Opening: *Death of a Salesman*, Various Locations, \$10 - \$13, See Website | Dreamwell is concluding its season of "The Grand Delusion" with quite possibly the best play to embody this theme. Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* is widely considered the best American play of the 20th century.

- Traveling salesman Willy Loman clings to the hope that his children will achieve greatness one day, but son Biff grows disillusioned with his father's version of the American Dream. When it first premiered in Philadelphia 1949, the audience sat stunned for a lengthy period of time before they began to applaud. Critics and audiences knew they were witnessing something special, and the play went on to win both the Tony Award for Best Play and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama.
- The play is a favorite for Broadway revivals, with the most recent production in 2012 featuring Philip Seymour Hoffman as Willy. Theatres stage productions everywhere from Sweden to China. There will even be a Yiddish-language adaptation off-Broadway in October. This Iowa City cast will feature prolific local actor Rip Russell in the titular role.
- Many are already familiar with this iconic play. They might even have vague memories of reading it in high school English classes. Regardless, even if you've encountered the words before, this play is still worth seeing in person. Its depiction of expectation and disappointment will resonate with viewers of all walks of life.
- Like Willy Loman, Dreamwell is staking this production on the road. The first two performances will be at the First Street Community Center in Mt. Vernon, while the rest of the performances will be at the Iowa Children's Museum at Coral Ridge Mall. (Through May 16) —JS

Opening: *Mary Poppins*, Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$24 - \$39, See Website | Theatre Cedar Rapids presents a stage version of the popular Disney film. (Through May 23)

Scott Long, Penguins Comedy Club, \$10 - \$12, 7:30 | Scott Long uses his childhood story in his performance. He grew up in the Cornstalk Ghetto of Iowa and lived a very dysfunctional life. (Through May 2)

/MUSIC: Eufórquestra w. Jon Wayne & the Pain, Gabe's, \$10 - \$15, 9 pm | See two Iowa City favorites and groove to some roots rock and high energy, global dance music. Designer Drugs w. Kill OG, Arnie, Blue Moose Tap House, \$13 - \$15, 9 pm | Famed EDM DJ duo heads to Iowa City to celebrate the release of their newest album. Twins w. Mooner, Black Bull Nova, Colt Walkers, Yacht Club, \$5, 9 pm | Get ready for a night of power-pop.

SAT., MAY 2

/MUSIC: The Fez, The Mill, \$12, 8 pm | Iowa City's Steely Dan Cover band plays an intimate set. Acoustic Guillotine w. Gnarley Davidson, Shitstorm, Yacht Club, \$5, 10 pm | Iowa City's Acoustic Guillotine self-describes as a "guitarless metal" band. Orchestra Iowa Presents Russian Matters, Paramount Theatre, \$19 - \$49, 7:30 pm | See orchestral works by Russian composers, Glazunov, Borodin and Tchaikovsky. **/FOODIE:** Food and Wine Pairings, White Cross Wine Cellars, \$10, 6 pm | Try seven wines from White Cross and learn more about selecting foods to pair with each wine. **/COMMUNITY:** Plant Sale, Indian Creek Nature Center, Free, 9 am | Stock up for spring with all types of plants for your garden or flowerbed.

SUN., MAY 3

/MUSIC: Speedy Ortiz w. Krill, Two Inch Astronaut, Sainthood, Gabe's, \$10 - \$12, 8 pm | Listen to lo-fi, experimental pop music. **/ART-AND-EXHIBITION:** Closing: Drawing on History, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, \$0 - \$5, All Day | Check out illustrations of Frederick Douglass by Cedar Rapids artist, Jeni Reeves.



THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Welcome to Night Vale, Englert Theatre, \$25, 7 pm | See a live broadcast of this twice-monthly podcast, which focuses on news and community updates from the fictional town of Night Vale, where strange lights appear in the skies and dark, hooded figures roam the streets. —SM

/COMMUNITY: Full Flower Moon, Indian Creek Nature Center, \$4 - \$15, 7:30 pm | Admire woodland wildflowers and watch the full moon rise.

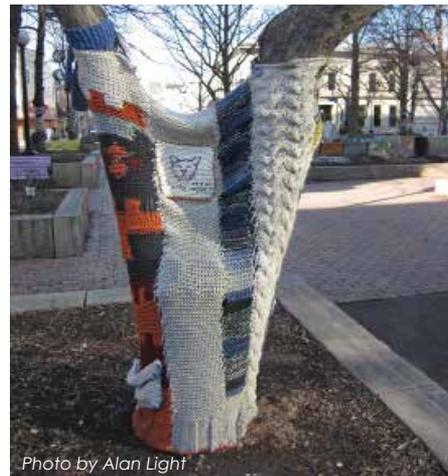


Photo by Alan Light

Repurpose Tree Huggers, Home Ec Workshop, Free, 12 pm | Iowa City's tree huggers are finally taken down and washed. Help weave the ends in on the tree huggers that were donated so they may be given to community organizations and used as scarves and blankets. —SM

TUES., MAY 15

/COMMUNITY: Share Your Pride, The Mill, Free, 7 pm | Community members gather to show off their stuff at a local talent show.

ONGOING EVENTS

MONDAYS Play & Learn, Cedar Rapids Ladd Library, Free, 9:30 am **Toddler Storytime**, Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10:30 am **Dance Church** Public Space One, Free, 7 pm **Open Mic** The Mill, Free, 8 pm **Catacombs of Comedy** Yacht Club, \$5, 10 pm

TUESDAYS 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 Preschool Storytime Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10:30 am **Theology Brewed** Journey Church, Free, 7 pm **Open Jam and Mug Night** Yacht Club, \$5, 10 pm **Open Stage** Wednesday Studio 13, Free, 10 pm

THURSDAYS Zenic Press Open Studio Public Space One, Free, 12 pm **Open Mic** Uptown Bill's, Free, 7 pm **Karaoke** Penguin's Comedy Club, Free, 10 pm **Locally Owned** Gabe's, Free, 9 pm **Mixology** Gabe's, \$2, 10 pm **Karaoke** Thursday Studio 13, Free, 10 pm

FRIDAYS Kirkwood English Conversation Club Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10 am **Book Babies** Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10:30 am, 1:30 pm **Drag & Dance Friday** Studio 13, Cover, 10 pm **SOULSHAKE** Gabe's, Free, 10 pm

SATURDAYS Zenic Press Open Studio Public Space One, Free, 12 pm **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

SUNDAYS Dance Church Public Space One, Free, 10 am **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

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION: UltraTerrestrial White Rabbit Gallery, Free (Through April 30) **Tilly Woodward** Legion Arts CSPS Hall, Free (Through May 3) **Jonathan Rattner** Legion Arts CSPS Hall, Free (Through May 3) **Drawing on History: Jeni Reeves' Illustrations for Voice of Freedom** Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free - \$5 (Through May 3) **The ABCs of Children's Book Illustration: Selections**

from the Zerkane Collection Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free - \$5 (Through May 17) **Drawn to Illustration: Selections from the Collection** Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free - \$5 (Through May 17) **From the Grand Tour to American Pop Learning with the Alden Lowell Doud Collection** Iowa Memorial Union at UI, Free (Through May 17) **Melissa Furness and Rian Kerrane** CSPS Hall, Free (Through May 30) **Guardians of the Grain: Bamana and Dogon Door Locks** Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free - \$5 (Through July 26) **A Time of Service: Brucemore in the World Wars** Brucemore, Free (Through July 31)

THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: **The Secret Garden** Old Creamery Theatre, \$10 (Through April 18) **Pinocchio** Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$5 - \$7 (Through April 18) **Clybourne Park** Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$13-\$20 (Through April 26) **The Liar** Theatre Building at UI, \$5 - \$18 (Through April 26) **The Man Who Came to Dinner** Iowa City Community Theatre, \$8 - \$16 (Through April 26) **Billy Bishop Goes to War** Old Creamery Theatre, \$18.50-\$30 (Through April 26) **Housebroken** Riverside Theatre Iowa City, \$18-\$30 (Through April 25) **Romance/Romance** Johnson County Fairgrounds, \$10 - \$18 (Through May 3) **The Matchmaker** Old Creamery Theatre, \$30 (Through May 21)



REAL ESTATE AT THE ENGLERT THEATRE | April 2 at Mission Creek Festival. Photo by Sanna Miller

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CURSES, FOILED AGAIN

• Joey Patterson, 22, eluded Idaho authorities for several months, but then he posted his whereabouts on Facebook. He invited friends to play softball at Armory Softball Field in Caldwell. That's where police found him. Monitoring social media has led officers to suspects before, Sgt. Joey Hoadley noted, explaining, "Surprisingly, even fugitives can't keep from updating their Facebook status." (Associated Press)

• Police arrested three suspects in a tailgate-stealing spree in Volusia County, Fla., after one of them tried to return one of the nine stolen tailgates to claim a reward. The victim paid the reward but called deputies, who located the trio. (Orlando's WESH-TV)

SARAH PALIN TOLL BRIDGE

Russia unveiled plans to build a high-speed railway and freeway link between London and the United States — via Siberia. State railway boss Vladimir Yakunin, who helped develop the plan, dubbed Trans-Eurasian Belt Development (TERP), promised that the proposed 12,400-mile route would "supercharge" global economic growth by connecting Russia's oil and gas pipelines to the rest of the world. (Britain's *The Independent*)

MISSING THE POINT

A speaker at Australia's sixth annual National Disability Summit had to be lifted onto the stage because there was no ramp for wheelchairs or mobility scooters. In addition, disabled participants, who each paid \$2,000 to attend the privately organized event, were all seated at one table in the back of the room. A blog post by participant Jax Jacki Brown noted that the "accessible toilet was filled with chairs and used as a storage space," and "the food provided was up on really tall tables" so wheelchair users couldn't reach it. (Australia's ABC News)

WHEN GUNS ARE OUTLAWED

Australian authorities charged Erica Leeder, 26, with assaulting a police officer with breast milk. While being searched after her arrest on an unspecified warrant, Leeder was nude from the waist up when she grabbed her own breast and squirted milk onto the forehead, arms and clothes of a female officer conducting the search. The Western Australia Police Union said the assault charge was partially due to the possibility of the breast milk's spreading disease. (*United Press International*)

THE SOUND OF NO HAND CLAPPING

Organizers of Britain's National Union of Students (NUS) Women's Conference asked delegates to use jazz hands instead of clapping to avoid "triggering anxiety." The aim, delegate Nona Buckley-Irvine explained, is "to show appreciation of someone's point without interrupting or causing disturbance." Gee Linford-Grayson agreed. "Plus," she added, "who doesn't like jazz hands?" (BBC News)

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

The world's largest international sperm bank moved its main U.S. office from New York to Orlando, Fla. Cryos International is definitely targeting college students, the company's Jim Londeree said, noting nearby University of Central Florida is among the largest universities in the nation, providing "a huge donor base here." He added that approved donors "can make up to \$750 a month." (*Orlando Sentinel*)



OBVIOUS SOLUTION

California's death row, the country's largest, has run out of room. With 738 inmates in lethal limbo since a court invalidated the state's lethal injection method nearly a decade ago, Gov. Jerry Brown asked the Legislature for more than \$3 million to open 100 new cells for condemned men at San Quentin Prison, which already has 715 inmates facing execution. Brown's request, the Los Angeles Times said, "anticipates an average of 20 new arrivals on death row yearly" without a decrease in the existing condemned population. (NPR)

SLIGHTEST PROVOCATION

• Police said Phyllis D. Jefferson, 50, stabbed her 61-year-old boyfriend while the two were eating chips and salsa at home in Akron, Ohio, after they got into an argument over who was eating all the salsa. (Cleveland's WKYC-TV)

• Jerome Clemons, 44, set fire to his house in Boynton Beach, Fla., authorities there said, after his niece refused to give him a ride to a liquor store. (*South Florida Sun Sentinel*)

BOTTOMS ARE TOPS

Luxury toilet seats topped the list of souvenirs brought home by the record number of Chinese tourists who celebrated this lunar new-year holiday in Japan. Costing around \$540,

the heated seats feature pulsating water jets, deodorizers and even music to cover up the sound of nature's call. Many offer hands-free lid opening; some are portable and battery-operated. China's state-run media reported that many of the toilet seats sold in Japan were made in China. (*The Economist*)

Way to Go

Stephan Woytack, 74, died while attaching a cross to a grave marker at a family plot in Scranton, Pa. The tombstone unexpectedly tilted off its base, toppled and crushed him to death, according to police Officer Andy Kerecman, who called the accident "freaky." (*New York Daily News*)

Do As I Say, Not As I Do

The Rev. Shaun O. Harrison, 55, a Boston educator known for preaching anti-violence to young people, was charged with the execution-style shooting of a 17-year-old boy he had enlisted to sell marijuana for him. Prosecutors said Harrison shot the youth in the back of the head in Roxbury, Mass. The victim survived. Harrison denied charges stemming from the shooting, but Suffolk Assistant District Attorney David Bradley said a surveillance system at a nearby business recorded the episode. (Springfield's *The Republican*)

BORDER DISPUTE

Roseanne Di Guilio, who has lived in a house that straddles the New York-Connecticut line since 1997, was surprised to learn that she no longer owns the half of her house on the New York side because her mortgage servicer failed to pay property taxes. Di Guilio said she was never notified, nor did she know that Putnam County foreclosed on the property. Her neighbor, Althea Jacob, bought the 0.2 acres at county auction in 2010 for \$275 and now owns Di Guilio's living room, kitchen and sun porch and part of her bathroom. Jacob never told Di Guilio, who continued paying upkeep and insurance until she found out the truth. Jacob then offered to sell her back the property for \$150,000. She lowered her asking price to \$35,000, but Di Guilio sought to have the New York Supreme Court overturn the foreclosure. The outcome is uncertain because she didn't bring the action within the two-year statute of limitations. (Westchester County's *The Journal News*) **lv**

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ANGRY GIRLS

Dan Savage discusses how not to be a lowlife when trying to keep a relationship on the low. • BY DAN SAVAGE

consider myself a straight guy—but for the last four years, I’ve been having an affair with “Connie,” a trans girl I met online. It was just casual at first, but over time we developed a deeper personal relationship but kept it hidden. At some point, I figured out she was in love with me. I love her too, but I don’t think I am “in love” with her. Several weeks ago, I went on a couple of dates with a girl I met on Match.com. The new girl posted about our dates on Facebook, Connie saw it and was upset, and then Connie outed me to the new girl. The new girl and I weren’t dating anymore, but it still was a betrayal that Connie told her—told anyone—about our relationship and my kink. Right now, I can’t look at or speak to Connie, but her friends tell me that she is despondent. I can’t get past my anger. I’d like to keep her as a friend, but can I trust her? She reached out to me recently, but I told her to just leave me alone.

Secret Telling Unnerves Nice Guy

“Right out the gate, STUNG has to declare his heterosexuality,” said Bailey Jay, an AVN Award-winning trans porn performer, writer, prolific (and hilarious) tweeter, and cohost of The Jim Norton Show on Vice.com. “Unless he’s trying to say that trans women are men or that he’d be mortified to be mistaken for a gay person, then emphasizing ‘straight’ is unnecessary.”

Also unnecessary: that “but” after “I consider myself a straight guy.” Guys who desire and fuck women exclusively are straight, trans women are women, so no need to drop a “but” before telling us you’ve been sleeping with a woman who happens to be trans.

“The term ‘kink’ stuck out as well,” Jay added. “Sex with a trans woman can still be vanilla. I know lots of trans chicks who are a total bore in bed—so while something new can be exciting, sex with trans women is not innately kinky because of our bodies.”

Vocabulary lesson’s over, STUNG. Now the advice...

“STUNG says he feels betrayed by Connie blabbing about their relationship,” said Jay, “but it sounds less like a betrayal and more like embarrassment. The whole tone of his letter seems to imply that it’s a given that being with a trans woman is innately shameful. But take out all of the conditioned negative associations that some have with trans people, and what are you left with? At worst, we have a young lady who got jealous and acted immaturely.”

Let’s pause for a moment to think about why Connie behaved immaturely and tried to screw up your (already DOA) relationship with the new girl.

“STUNG seems to feel that it’s a given that Connie should know better than to talk openly about their relationship,” said Jay, “because trans women are an embarrassment and Connie should know enough to keep quiet.”

So you treated Connie like she was an embarrassing secret for four long years, STUNG, and that caused her pain. You caused her pain. Then you go on a couple dates with another woman—a cis woman—and it’s instantly all over Facebook. Connie was understandably upset, and not just by the fact that you were seeing someone else. All the hurt and anger

Sex with trans women is not innately kinky because of our bodies.

that built up over the last four years—hurt at the way you treated her, anger with herself for putting up with it—overwhelmed her, and she lashed out. Connie isn’t a bad person, STUNG, she was just angry and upset.

“And I don’t think STUNG is a bad guy,” said Jay. “His attitude toward trans women was shaped by a culture that treats trans women as either fetishes or punch lines. I am a transgender woman, and I have my own internalized transphobia that I’ve had to navigate



around. So while I can dissect and analyze STUNG, I can hardly vilify him.”

So what do I think you should do about Connie? You should call her and apologize. You should tell her that you treated her badly and you can understand why she lashed out. And you should tell her that, while you aren’t

“in love” with her, you do love her. Then you should tell her you’re open to meeting up and talking things out.

And what does Jay think you should do going forward? “I think STUNG should try to see every woman he sleeps with as fully human, regardless of their genitals.” Follow Bailey Jay on Twitter @BaileyJayTweets.

Contact Dan Savage: mail@savagelove.net, [@fakedansavage](https://twitter.com/fakedansavage) on Twitter.



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GET FIT AND FICTIONAL

Wayne Diamante offers advice on how to get a body like Richard Simmons and how to write a body of fiction about Richard Simmons. • **BY WAYNE DIAMANTE**

bet you've been busy wondering what to wear while reading Pro Tips. Don't worry about it, you look great. More or less. You'd look better without all that baggage. Go ahead, unpack your luggage, and I'll do my best to tell you what your problem is. Email me at askwaynediamante@gmail.com.

Dear Wayne,

I'm preparing to slim down for swimsuit season, and I'd love to hear your weight loss tips and tricks.

—Martin

Dear Martin,

Like many of you, each fall I spend a few weeks bulking up by eating Texas-sized helpings of lard and baked potatoes in anticipation of winter. And like you, come springtime I'm inclined toward trimming down and looking fit when I slap on

Dear Wayne,

For more than a year I've been writing Richard Simmons fan fiction. My boyfriend left me and my parents want me to move back in with them, provided I throw away my headband and leotard wardrobe. The worst part is, I don't feel bad about it at all. Is that wrong?

—Lucy

Dear Lucy,

Writing fan fiction is totally almost normal. Maybe you were one of those kids reading under the blanket long after mom and dad decreed "lights out." Maybe you're one of those people who fall in love with inanimate objects. Either way, it's evident you want something you can't have or have something you can't want. I know because I'm speaking from experience. Perhaps you recognize the following:

"Abdullah, his body transmogrified before John's eyes, all pink mist and gristle, had been insisting on more night raids. The shockwave crushed air against flesh and flesh against bone and bone against past; John remembered his last broadcast as a civilian. It was *Intelligence for Your Life*. Some bullshit holiday edition. An east coast headshrinker had done a study and discovered many successful musicians had at one time, or another, found themselves in a tough spot. Addiction or divorce or heart-break, or worse. John wondered if Mosul counted as a tough spot."

You've guessed it, I'm WhenIthinkaboutyou Iteshmyself42069, webmaster of www.teshmerga.net. I'm not afraid to admit it because sometimes the people we want to be heroes can't cut it, or the heroes we do have need life beyond what they've been scripted. Lucy, you go out there and write the best Richard Simmons fan fiction you can. Odds are no one else is, or will. But you could.

—Wayne IV

Replace 1/3 of the flour with talcam powder—you'll never taste the difference!

the old Speedo. Some "fad" diets work for a while, but can be hard to maintain and many of them are just plain bad for you. I find the most effective approach is to focus on healthy alternatives to your regular victuals. For example, at breakfast I'll trade in my Captain Crunch for a nice crispy bowl of acorn tops. For you snackers out there, you can make a perfectly tasty homemade ranch sauce by replacing the buttermilk and mayonnaise with Brylcreem and Gyne-Lotrimin. If you're carb conscious but also love baked goods, stick to your favorite recipes but replace a third of the flour with talcum powder. You'll never taste the difference!

—Wayne



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WHAT ARE VACCINES SAVING US FROM, EXACTLY?

Can you do the teeming millions a favor? The Jenny McCarthy contingent is going on about the risks of vaccinations, but absent from this discussion is any consideration of the risk of the diseases. —Mark J. Costello

This recent measles outbreak got me wondering about the cost. I read an article saying the Centers for Disease Control report that "every dollar spent on the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine saves the U.S. \$23.30 in medical costs." It also said that Arizona spent \$800,000 to contain an outbreak. I understand the necessity for vaccinations, but what costs are they talking about? —Bob from Lansing

You're asking whether vaccination is worth it. There could be stupider questions—just wait till some C-grade celebrity leads the charge against indoor plumbing and electric lights. However, for now those questioning the value of vaccination pretty much have the market cornered on idiotic. By any measure childhood immunization has been one of humanity's great achievements, substantially eradicating diseases that in centuries past depopulated continents and in the memory of persons still alive killed or crippled thousands every year. But today few have any clue, leading some to ask why we still need to poke babies with needles and all that jazz.

So fine. Let me explain why locking up mass murderers makes sense.

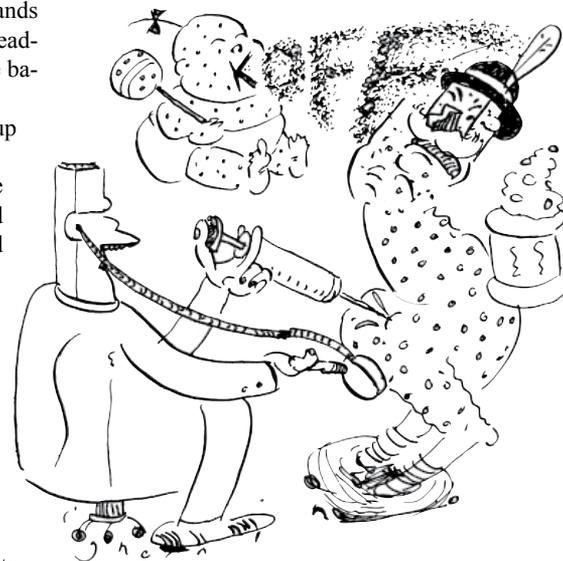
The argument has changed since we last talked vaccines in 2007. The second McCarthy era has seemingly come and gone, as Jenny has walked back many of her claims about the mercury-autism link, now thoroughly debunked. Likewise, Andrew Wakefield's findings tying the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine to autism and bowel disease have been judged bogus at best. However, newer and equally daft vaccine myths have taken their place:

It's not the mercury, it's the aluminum.

Aluminum is added to some vaccines to boost their effectiveness. But aluminum is common in the environment—many babies get a fair amount via the water mixed into formula. After conducting a study in 2011 the FDA concluded, along with the rest of the scientific community, that the amount currently used in vaccines poses no significant risk.

Too many vaccines administered simultaneously or in close succession can overwhelm the immune system. This has become a popular

"reasonable" position: We're not against vaccinations, we just want to space them out better. Problem: there's no evidence of anything harmful about the current vaccination schedule but good reason to think monkeying with it leads to lower immunization rates. A 1994 paper found an effort to administer MMR shots at the same time as other vaccinations would have spared a third of the unvaccinated preschoolers who got measles during an early-90s U.S. outbreak.



Vaccines haven't actually been that effective—death rates were decreasing in the relevant diseases even before the vaccines were introduced. No shit death rates were going down—healthcare in general improved drastically once we got past the era of bloodletting, and mortality from all sorts of causes declined throughout the 20th century. None of that accounts for the massive drops in disease

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period immediately after the introduction of vaccines. Just before the measles vaccine was licensed in the U.S., in 1963, annual average incidence was around 500,000 cases (with probably several million more unreported); by 1966 we were down to about 200,000 new cases, and by 1968 just 22,000. During its first 20 years the measles vaccine prevented an estimated 52 million cases, 17,400 instances of mental impairment, and 5,000 deaths.

Then there's smallpox, diphtheria, and whooping cough. They killed thousands of Americans a year at their respective pre-vaccine peaks; by 2004 annual deaths had been reduced by more than 99 percent. Polio vaccination led to equally dramatic drops—the U.S. has been polio-free since 1975.

But you asked about MMR cost, possibly thinking measles is a mild disease. Not for everybody. A 2004 paper estimated the hypothetical cost of not giving the MMR vaccine to any of the 3.8 million American babies born in 2001, factoring in medical treatment, long-term care of kids left disabled, lost wages for the dead, reduced earnings for the hearing-impaired, and so on. Grand total: \$7.9 billion for that one batch of babies, against \$300 million in vaccination costs.

A study of polio vaccination found a net benefit of \$180 billion from 1955 to 2014. When the value of avoided suffering, paralysis, and death was included, the benefit rose to \$800 billion.

Are vaccines risk-free? Nothing is risk-free. In 1955, when the polio vaccine was in development, the release of a defective specimen led to 200 cases of paralysis and ten deaths. Tragic? Absolutely, but the program went on; no one doubted a successful vaccine would save far more lives.

The concept of herd immunity having now been explained often enough that even state legislators understand it, since the beginning of this year lawmakers in a dozen states have introduced bills modifying vaccination policy—some eliminating the personal or philosophical exemption, others requiring school districts to make vaccination-rate information publicly available. Medicofascism? Some think so. But if ever there were justification for public intrusion into private decision-making, this is it. **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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MIRROR COAT

Whispers

mirrorcoatmusic.bandcamp.com

"Shoegaze" was the genre of a group of late '80s and early '90s bands primarily from the U.K. who shared a common musical aesthetic. Part Phil Spector's "Wall of Sound" and part Britpop,

the sound was distinguished by its use of layers of effects. The name "shoegaze" came from the observation that bands like My Bloody Valentine, Lush and Chapterhouse during performances seemed focused at the floor where the guitar effects pedals were.

THE VOCALS AND MELODIES RESEMBLE THE STYLE OF A YOUNG BRIAN WILSON.



The genre, by and large, ended by the late '90s but is enjoying a kind of resurgence as bands like quartet Mirror Coat, formerly of Iowa City, deliver this sound to new ears. Since they relocated to Chicago in 2013, the group has put out a split cassette release with fellow Chicago band Bow & Spear as well as an EP.

In February, Mirror Coat released a three-track single for *Whispers*, available for download from their Bandcamp page. These songs show a refining of the dreamy, shimmering

pop they established with their previous releases. The vocals and melodies of the songs have taken on more of an emotional reach and resemble the style of a young Brian Wilson.

The production and performance balance instruments, vocals and layer effects to achieve a delicious headphone-filling depth. Bass player Scott Myers in an email said, "Our engineer John Acarregui did a great job getting a pretty high-end sound, even though it was very much a DIY sort of situation at our place in Chicago."

Indeed, even though it's been almost 20 years since the heyday of shoegaze rock, these three tracks take me back to the days when I listened to just about every band that claimed the genre. I had pretty much put the shoegaze sound behind me, but I'm glad it's back in the capable hands of bands like Mirror Coat. **iv**

—Mike Roeder

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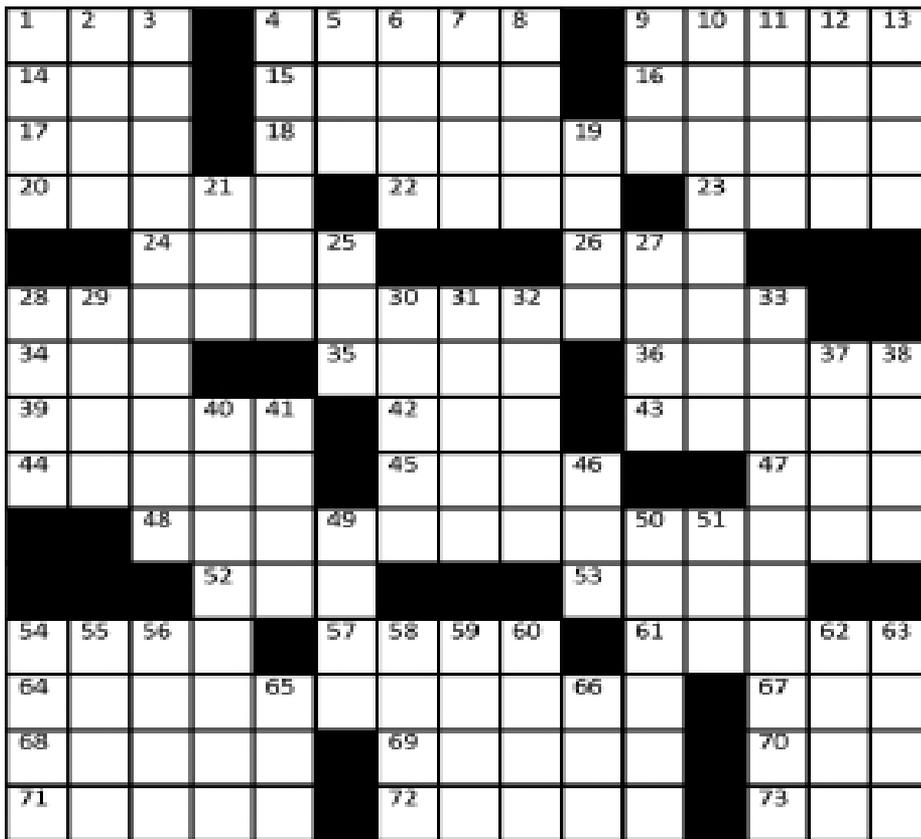
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FROM GRAY TO BLACK



5. Ethiopian river
6. Source of many a toddler fight
7. Johnny _____
8. Red beer cup brand
9. College email ending
10. Try your _____
11. Burn
12. _____ fair in love and war
13. Marble and dark
19. Indian bread
21. U of C's presidential campaign study
25. Benz SUV class
27. One of the largest cells in the female body
28. Type of top or sock
29. The bad guy in the bout
30. Remove
31. Salivary response
32. Jewish religious leader
33. The diamond of costume jewelry
37. Word correction
38. Vietnam's Cam _____ Bay
40. Licorice flavoring
41. Middle of the road
46. Early AIDS treatment
49. Snicker and _____
50. Cardiac or blotter
51. _____ Arthur
54. They are either high or low
55. Model Chyna
56. J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy
58. Reps or plates make up one of these (two words)?
59. Female strength competition, for short
60. Bee's home
62. Corn units
63. Elbow or leg, e.g.
65. "This is _____ we do it."
66. French FKA

MANIA BY JULIA LIPPERT

ACROSS

1. Panhandle State, abbreviated
4. HRC is the front-runner to be the next
9. The FBI's middle name?
14. _____ Hewitt consulting firm
15. Japanese (pseudo)scientist Masaru
16. *The _____ Show*
17. Currently, one hour before EST
18. Televised event with over 30 competitors from this puzzle's theme
20. End of a kids' song
22. "_____ fly, don't bother me."
23. Capone's investigator
24. Bubbler or water, e.g.
26. Italian shoe and bag seller
28. The Undertaker's finishing move (two words)
34. Dangerous air concentration, on an MSDS
35. The Stimulus Act, in D.C.
36. Job at a wedding for an uncle or cousin
39. Lugosi and Fleck
42. Swedish pop group, to fans
43. Two sacred Greek peaks share this name, commonly

44. The one, in Spanish
45. Asian noodle
47. '90s grunge band tat'
48. Macho Man Randy Savage's and wrestling's first lady
52. Often called junior
53. _____ leches cake
54. Ready, willing and _____
57. To _____ their own
61. Graded
64. Hulk Hogan loved this arm hit
67. East coast jam band
68. Weight loss plan "_____ live" (two words)
69. Roof overhangs
70. Conservative magazine's web presence, abbreviated
71. Bone?
72. Rockin' robin sound
73. Mind reading gift, for short

DOWN

1. The good guy in the bout
2. "_____ dodi we likes to party"
3. Pre-Civil War South
4. Italian lager

MID-MARCH ANSWERS



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