

LITTLE VILLAGE

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Land of Blood and Sunshine





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Photo by Skyler Prenosil

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Little Village is an independent, community-supported news and culture publication based in Iowa City. Through journalism, essays and events, we work to improve our community in the Iowa City, Coralville and Cedar Rapids area according to a few core values: environmental sustainability, affordability and access, economic and labor justice, racial justice, gender equity, quality healthcare, quality education and critical culture.

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2016

ARTS ISSUE

Since 2013, it has been a tradition at *Little Village* to begin the year with a special issue dedicated to inspirational artists working in our midst. This year's crop of artists are presenting projects that will unfold across the state of Iowa throughout the year to come.

With documentary film, dance and visual art, the organizations and individuals in these pages come to us from or make art about Decorah, Des Moines, Washington and Iowa City.

The projects bring dance out into the open and visual arts into juvenile detention centers; they explore our history through films and empower teenagers through training in the cinematic arts.

Though they span form, subject and location across the state, these projects have one thing in common: Each was selected from hundreds of applicants for a 2016 Iowa Arts Council Art Project Grant, a program designed to support initiatives that demonstrate public value based on innovation, impact and accessibility. The four stories presented here were chosen for the ground they cover both thematically and geographically.

Good luck to you, artists or otherwise, as you press on with your projects in this new year. We hope you all find the support you need and the satisfaction you seek in 2016.

—LV Editors

Remembering The Book Shop

UPON ARRIVING IN IOWA CITY a year ago with my own library still boxed and in a distant part of the country, I ventured in search of not only a book, but also a place like my favorite booksellers of New Orleans. I thought this would be an easy task in a UNESCO City of Literature. However, the choices were few. I was not expecting to find what I sought in a little place called The Book Shop. But at the sight of its narrow passages, densely packed shelves and stacks of books, I knew the Muses were smiling upon me. I was home.

It wasn't the name that set The Book Shop apart from other places. It was the large and unparalleled selection of long out of print novels, anthologies and chapbooks written by Workshop graduates or Iowa natives. The Book Shop inspired countless local and visiting authors in pursuit of the perfect word, thought or distraction.

We are now down to one book reseller and one independent bookseller. This is a sad state for any city.

The Book Shop was housed in one of three brick Civil War era cottages. This is where the literary history of South Dubuque Street grows by at least one more chapter. Its twin building at 610 South Dubuque Street had also been a reseller, Jim's Used Books and Records, a hub of activity during the early days of Iowa City's own literary movement, Actualism. With Actualism, Iowa City was once branded "Poetry City." Shortly after Jim's closed, nearly 30 years ago, The Book Shop opened and carried on in the same tradition.

It's devastating when one of these most prominent ambassadors to and maintainers of the written word is eliminated. This was evidenced by the huge public outcry to stop the demolition of The Book Shop. When efforts to save the structure finally failed, patrons arrived from all over the region to offer their support and preserve books from the wrecking ball. They carefully boxed, labeled and moved tens of thousands of books without care for anything other than to protect the pages of the past.

On May 27th, these buildings were torn down. Today all that remains of these markers of our literary past are three piles of clay bricks around three square foundation holes protected by an orange plastic fence. No sign, no plaque, not even graffiti remains to honor the literature or the conversations on books and writing they once housed.

We are down to one book reseller and one independent bookseller. This is a sad state for any city of our size, let alone one that pushed to be called North America's City of Literature. This hole doesn't need to be filled by negotiating away the cost of rent for book resellers, but preservation of their trade is as worthy as preserving our historical structures.

I know of at least one book reseller who would like to reopen his doors, but escalating rents limit this prospect. And perhaps expanding the UniverCity Program, or creating property tax reductions for literature oriented businesses could help more to locate themselves downtown.

—*Nathaniel Blasing*

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Johnson County Supervisors to Muslim community: 'We have your back'

"THIS IS ONE OF THE THINGS that makes me proud to call this place home."

—*Samlive Redbeard*

Exposé lands Iowa City natives' chocolate business in hot water

"I VISITED (the Mast Brothers') shop in Brooklyn. It sure looked AND smelled authentic. Huge bags of beans right their ready to make amazing chocolate."

t—*Rhonda Nichols Barr*

"WHATEVER! They still have to be better than Hershey's." —*Don Roberts*

COGS: Harreld comments that unprepared teachers 'should be shot' are a threat to university safety

"WHAT EVER HAPPENED to the responsibility of correctly interpreting a statement??? Just a simple metaphor! Get over it!!! Or, your [sic] not prepared." —*John Dyson*

"PERHAPS SOMEONE should take him on a tour of the T. Anne Cleary Walkway and describe how it got its name. Maybe the survivors of faculty and staff shot might be asked how they would interpret the President of The University of Iowa making this kind of 'off the cuff' remark. At minimum he is tone deaf." —*Barb Black*

"I DON'T KNOW which is worse: his cringe-worthy 'joke' or the eye-rolling 'he's threatening us' response." —*Trenton Orris*

Bike-themed restaurant Ride will shut its doors Jan. 1

"THAT'S TOO BAD. We really liked Ride. They had delicious food, it was walkable for us, and it had a friendly, neighborhood feel. We need Iowa Citians to patronize such businesses to help keep the town unique and livable. Unfortunately, parking and perceived convenience rules the local restaurant scene, even in a 'progressive' town." —*Daniel Kinney*

"VERY SAD TO HEAR THIS. This has been our favorite brunch place for many months now. They offered a breakfast that was creative, hearty, and delicious, without being snobby—and frankly, IC is short on this. Thanks for all your hard work, Ride. Your biscuits and gravy will be in my heart always (hopefully not as cholesterol). <3" —*Kenda Stewart*

"I WENT SEVERAL TIMES for breakfast but left because they were only serving lunch :(" —*Betsy Irving*


":(I love that place."—*LeAnn Gentry*

"NOT SURPRISED. Bad experiences every time we tried."—*Allison Strickland*

"SUCH A BUMMER. Great food and people."—*April Dirks*

"IT WAS a good ride."—*Jason Wilkerson*

Gigabit internet comes to West Branch and West Liberty

"TIME TO CATCH UP, Iowa City. Even Cedar Falls has had fiber to homes for the past five years." —*Isaac Podolefsky* 

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FOR MINORITY YOUTH CAUGHT UP IN THE POLK COUNTY SYSTEM, A CHANCE TO #KNOWJUSTICE

The state of Iowa has some of the worst statistics for disproportionate minority-police contact and incarceration. What can be said to minority youth who feel the cards are stacked against them? For ArtForcelowa's #KnowJustice program, the first step isn't to speak, but to listen.

BY MATTHEW STEELE



It's so difficult to understand these things not ever having been in that situation. ... The odds are so stacked against you. ... Regardless of whether you did it, just take the deal."

If you listened to season one of the hit podcast *Serial*, you might recognize that advice from Adnan Syed. Now 35, Syed was accused and convicted as a teenager in the 1999 killing of his ex-girlfriend, Hae Min Lee, a fellow senior at Baltimore, Maryland's Woodlawn High School.

Syed may well have been guilty of the crime—he was tried and convicted, after all, and that ought to mean something, right?—but a shocking lack of physical evidence, along with several other confounding details, left listeners reeling in doubts that, to many, felt pretty reasonable. His advice to “take the deal, regardless of whether you did it” strikes a heartbreaking chord amid a national conversation about unequal outcomes for blacks and minorities in the United States. In Iowa we have some of the nation's most disproportionate, including a worst-in-the-nation 14-to-1 ratio of black-to-white incarceration. As we listen to Syed (whose case showed much evidence of anti-Muslim bias) we are reminded that among our imprisoned populations, there are almost certainly some that the system has failed.

The cards are stacked against the more than 75% minority youth in the Polk County Detention Center, and it isn't unreasonable to harbor some doubts that in our court systems they are consistently being given an equal chance to know justice firsthand.

John Mark Feilmeyer, executive director of Des Moines nonprofit ArtForcelowa, mixed media artist Jordan Weber and curator Saulaman Schiegel are confronting this issue alongside court-involved youth with a series of art and activism workshops called the #KnowJustice Project.

According to its Iowa Arts Council grant application, #KnowJustice is not setting out to solve every level of this highly systemic problem of racial disproportionality, but to provide youth with “the tools and opportunity to learn about their personal rights, to contemplate their own participation in the justice system and to respond creatively through art.”

The project will culminate in an exhibition

NEW WRITERS ArtForcelowa participants practice spray-painting, summer 2015. Photo by John Mark Feilmeyer

of artwork by minority, court-involved youth that will “engage the public in a discourse around system disproportionality and social injustices these youth face.”

John Mark Feilmeyer answered some questions about how he sees the project playing out:

Little Village: The #KnowJustice workshops are for “court-involved” youth. How will participants gain access to the program?

John Mark Feilmeyer: The program is for a specific group of youth who are currently incarcerated/being detained by Polk County after either charges being pressed against them or after a violation of probation. We don’t know who they will be, because we don’t know who will be in trouble at that time. This workshop is intended for minority males, who easily make up about 3/4+ of the average 35 young people in Polk County Juvenile Detention Center at any given time. We go into detention to do workshops about two times a month already, so many youth are aware of us and excited to participate. Ultimately, the workers in Detention will ask youth if they want to participate, and they will be able to participate if they so desire. Over a period of several weeks, we will probably work with about 20-30 youth.

In the project description, you say that “Everyone, even juvenile court involved youth, have rights.” And, “If youth are made aware of their rights, they can own and internalize them as a powerful tool of action and social development.” Obviously this program and other rights education initiatives contribute something positive, but if I were an incarcerated youth, I’d want to know how knowing my rights was going to protect me from injustices like racial bias and, often, police brutality. How do you answer that question? Is it the burden of youth or the public to learn how to deal with law enforcement and the justice system productively? It is our collective burden as a society to know our rights, I think.

We’re looking at two different questions. The first, and most important, is “How can we ignite social change that will make these problems go away?” The second is this: “What do we tell our kids in the meantime?”

Often when we go to court hearings for the youth we mentor, we hear, “If the youth had just...” I’ve worked with youth who have

MEET: JORDAN WEBER #KnowJustice workshop facilitator

Little Village: What will happen in your workshops?

Jordan Weber: We are still writing and conceptualizing programs and lesson plans so it’s kind of hard to speak on exactly what will be happening at the workshops in detail. I can say that I will be exposing the youth to a variety of alternative materials from across the U.S., such as earth from Ferguson, for example.

What excites you most about the #KnowJustice project? I’m extremely excited to work with incarcerated youth at the detention center. I know what it’s like to be locked in a space without being able to express frustration, rage that comes from being in these spaces. The energy will be a lot more raw which will hopefully lead to more engagement in the workshops.

What scares you? My biggest fear is always the possibility of disappointing or boring the youth to a point of disinterest which is why I think using charged material will be really effective.

Even though this project got some funding, I’m sure you won’t be walking away with much of it, if any. Why are you doing it?

Money is never the focus but I’ll be alright! These kids are our people our culture and our future, we as a society are struggling to put it mildly! We have to take care and educate each other when put in tough situations. These kids often feel like no one has their back and it’s important for me to be involved with programs that will literally take the shirt off their back for our future Kings and Queens.

How did your personal art/studio practice lead you to this collaboration with ArtForceIowa?

My art practice isn’t just studio focused by any means. The works are interlinked with community outreach programs like ArtForceIowa. The totality of my practice is empowerment/enlightenment through multiple disciplines. ArtForce is a natural fit for both parties involved.

What is your previous experience with workshops/art education? I’ve been educating, running and working with nonprofit youth organizations for about 10 years now. It’s something I’ve been around my whole life honestly. My parents both worked in the same field growing up in Des Moines and organically exposed me to the cause at an extremely early age. I’ve worked/collaborated with Boys and Girls Club, CFUM, Homes of Oakridge, Oakland Unity Council (Oakland, Cal), Des Moines Public Schools, Movement 515. Hope I’m not leaving anyone out because these are really effective as well as progressive programs!

If your students can take away one thing from the experience, what would you like that to be? Environmental consciousness—both our social surroundings and the biosphere—hopefully igniting positive sustainable action when they come back to our community. **lv**



HELLO, WORLD Artist and #KnowJustice workshop leader Jordan Weber poses with Des Moines-based Children & Family Urban Movement (CFUM) participants. Photo courtesy of Jordan Weber

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spent months in juvenile court placement because they did the wrong thing in a bad situation involving the police. This might be something as simple as permitting a search to something more complicated, like fleeing the scene. Knowing how to react in the moment, responsibly and maturely, will empower these youth to protect themselves in the future. That's not only a benefit to the youth, but also a huge cost savings to our community, if

AMPLIFIED Participants in Consent 2 Create, an ArtForcelowa endeavor, perform with AFI Executive Director John Mark Feilmeyer at the piano. Photo by Skyler Prenosil

**I see a big empty space.
I don't want to predict
or imagine what youth
exhibitors will invent.**

—John Mark Feilmeyer

ultimately we help to keep youth out of court supervision.

In the long term, I hope that #KnowJustice can at least contribute to the ongoing dialogue and social movement, by giving our youth a forum to tell their stories.

Compared to increased emphasis on punishment in the adult courts, the juvenile justice system is largely centered around rehabilitation. A youth's success there is heavily measured by their compliance. How would you describe the nuances of your position of advocating for speech and

self-determination in that environment? How will #KnowJustice ensure that the participants feel comfortable expressing themselves given that the rest of the juvenile system is emphasizing conformity?

How will other aspects of the justice system support your effort? Will the juvenile attorney agree, for example, that it is in the youth's best interest to focus on expressing their sense of injustice? I wouldn't say that rehabilitation is measured by compliance. In the ideal situation, it's measured by positive growth and change. There are boxes that have to be checked—you have to go to treatment, you have to go to sanctions. But ultimate success isn't a box checked. It's when a youth is ready for or at least contem-

plating change.

I don't think we're in a precarious place as we promote speech and self-determination. Our programs have always had the full support of the justice community. People I work with in the justice system are well aware of the problems. Most believe it should be changed. I hope that these folks will be grateful for the dialogue created by #KnowJustice.

By nature, schools and other court facilities feel that they need to censor or hold back speech, art and expression. If anything, ArtForcelowa can give youth a positive space to express themselves in the truest and most

authentic forms. I hope that if something edgy, or maybe even a bit offensive comes out of that, they won't hold it against us.


How will they feel comfortable expressing themselves: They trust us because we're family. We build mutually respectful, caring relationships with our youth, even the ones in detention. We only work with the artists that are capable of that—like (Jordan) Weber, or the #KnowJustice Curator Saulaman Schlegel. Recently, I interviewed youth for a video I did, I asked them, "What gift does ArtForceIowa give you." A "family" was the most common response.

With juvenile records being sealed and not open to the public. When it comes to the rights of the artists, is anonymity a concern? How do they certify their willingness to participate? Do parents have to sign off on their participation? Participants freely consent to participating. This is a part of regular detention programming, that youth can opt in or out of. All the youth in #KnowJustice will exhibit anonymously to protect their identity and bright futures in the workplace.

The #KnowJustice exhibition will take place at the Polk County Heritage Museum, in the very court house where many of these youths first became "court-involved." When you close your eyes and imagine the exhibit, who do you see there? What impact do you envision? I see a big empty space. I don't want to foresee or predict or imagine what youth exhibitors will invent. I don't want Weber to either. I want the exhibit to be a real meeting-of-the-minds, wherein Jordan and these young adults in Detention contemplate, conceive and construct something incredible together.

The impact? Pride and Confidence. Every time we offer youth the opportunity to exhibit, they grow a little bit prouder, and a little bit better as artists. In a society that is often pushing them down, this is an opportunity to fly.

Dialogue. We need to talk more about this, and the youth who are going through the justice system deserve a voice.

Change. The more we look into each other's eyes, or into each other's souls, the closer we become. We hope this glimpse of our young people's souls will help exhibit-goers to re-think and to reframe the problems they face. 

Matthew Steele is publisher of Little Village. He is currently pursuing a master of fine arts in Media, Social Practice and Design at The University of Iowa.

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100 YEARS LATER, NEW AUDIENCES DISCOVER A LEGENDARY OUTSIDER

A retired history teacher's work to revive W. Frank Brinton's collection of oddities stands to connect Iowans with a weird and wonderful past.
BY GENEVIEVE HEINRICH

In 1981, then-junior high history teacher Michael Zahs lucked into a treasure trove of relics from a Washington, Iowa basement. He took a chance on what might have been so many boxes of junk, because of their source—they had originally been owned by W. Frank Brinton, a man who had been known locally as something of a sensationalist showman, but who also had a reputation as a world traveler and collector of oddities. Brinton had died in 1919, but many of his possessions had never been fully explored, just dumped into a box labeled

“Brinton crap” and left in limbo, waiting for the right person to come into possession of them.

Fast forward to 2013. Zahs had been touring with some of that “crap”—rare artifacts from a little-explored period in Iowa history—using it in lectures for several years. He’d started to gain attention for the deep importance of what he had found, and for his passion in exhibiting it. It was at this time that the team at Northland Films heard about Zahs, noting from the start that there was more to this compelling tale than the

historicity of the find. “The first time we met [Zahs],” says Northland Films’ Andrew Sherburne, “we knew that his story was just as interesting as Frank Brinton’s.” Sherburne, along with his collaborators Tommy Haines and John Richard, working together as Barn Owl Films, decided that this story needed to be told. “Mike has a warmth and a magnetism that instantly draws you in, and we knew he would be compelling on screen.”

This was the kernel that grew into Northland’s upcoming documentary feature *Saving Brinton*, currently in production.

Billed as a project that “follows the stories of two men, separated by 100 years, and the film collection that connects them,” *Saving Brinton* traces Zahs’ discovery and exploration of Brinton’s treasures, and the life and legacy of both subjects. As of this winter, the film got a bit of a budget bump: a \$10,000 grant from the Iowa Arts Council that, according to Sherburne, “provides critical



ZAHs AT THE OPERA HOUSE

Historian Mike Zahs stands outside the historic opera house in Ainsworth, Iowa. Photo courtesy of Andrew Sherburne

support to the post-production process, in particular editing.”

In the alluringly mysterious boxes that drew so many to Zahs and, through him, to Brinton, were historical programs, local memorabilia, amazing photographs and a large collection of magic lantern slides. An early precursor to moving pictures, predating even photography, magic lanterns were used often by magicians and entertainers. These slides offer a glimpse into our history that is seldom possible. On their own, they would have been an incredible historical find. However, Zahs’ Brinton collection soon grew, and the real excitement began.

A few months after he purchased the boxes, the executor of the Brinton estate came

back to Zahs with films that had recently been returned from the Library of Congress, where some of them had been copied. Specifically, they were films from the late 1800s and early 1900s—films that represented an era in the genre that previously had, to a large extent, been lost to time. All told in this collection, Zahs says, there are about 150 films.

It’s no wonder people have taken notice. There’s a film by Thomas Edison in there, and another by George Méliès (the filmmaker who rocketed back into the public’s consciousness with Brian Selznick’s 2011 novel *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*).

Brinton’s preservation and restoration project has proceeded with help from the University of Iowa Special Collections (where the films are currently housed), MediaPreserve and the Library of Congress. Also involved, at varying levels, have been Humanities Iowa, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Washington County Riverboat Foundation and, now, the Iowa Arts Council. Zahs speaks gratefully of Greg Prickman, head of UI Special Collections, pleased that he can “see the value in keeping the collection together,” because, he says, “Keeping the collection together and geographically near has been very important to me.”

Again, it’s the men behind the films whose stories spark the most interest.

W. Frank Brinton was, in all things, an entertainer. He was toying with ideas of powered flight 10 years before the Wright Brothers took off. He was a world traveler and a consummate showman, never simply exploring life for his own amusement, but always to draw a crowd. Sherburne calls Brinton “a tinkerer, an inventor, very much an eccentric.” A passage from a contemporary newspaper, the *Keota Eagle*, quoted in the Washington County Historical Society’s profile of one of his early (unsuccessful) attempts at flight, beautifully distills public reaction to him in his time:

Brinton! What magic word is that! What mighty spell it cast. Brinton! Brinton! At the name multitudes sway and are led, yea, even as lambs unto the slaughter! 'Neath its powerful spell great host rise up and gather together like onto the crowd at a county pumpkin show or distant fair. Brinton!! Prince of Fishermen!! He dippeth his net and lo! he hauled in a couple of thousand at 25¢ a head and waxeth rich ...

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PG. 37



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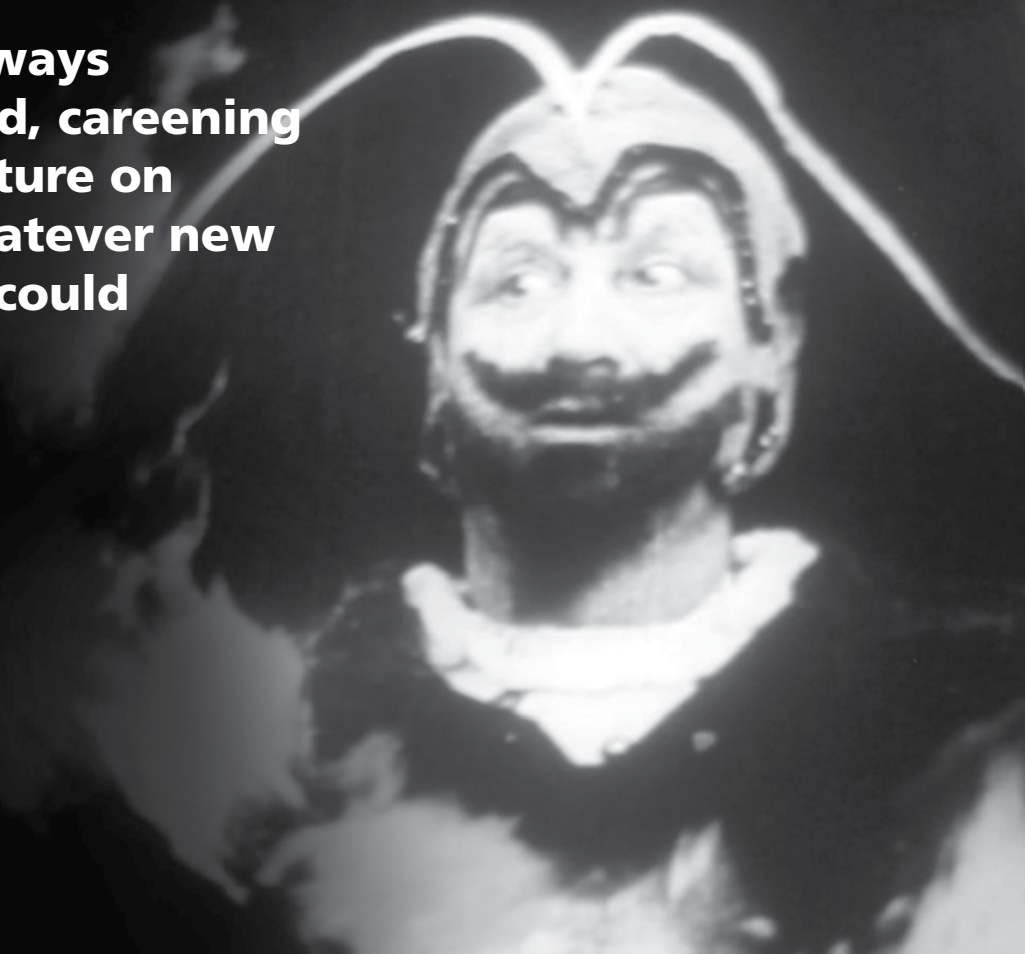
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Brinton was always looking forward, careening towards the future on the back of whatever new technology he could find or create.



Among his other escapades and passions, he and his wife Indiana made a steady living showing magic lantern slides and films in opera houses, theaters and, when nothing else was available, pop-up tents. As a lecturer on the Chautauqua circuit, notes Sherburne, he used the “magic lantern slides in his talks and moved to films when the technology became available.” He understood the power of the medium, and its importance in bringing the outside world to the small town that he called home, and others like it. While his eccentricities might sometimes have tested his public’s love, he gave them a great gift in introducing film to the rural masses.

Michael Zahs, the former history teacher, approached the power of film from the opposite direction. Where Brinton was always looking forward, careening towards the future on the back of whatever new technology he could find or create, Zahs saw backwards, to the wonder inherent in the past that was preserved by the films. He knew the value of what he had lucked into, and once the first several had been

preserved, he began traveling and lecturing with them, much as Brinton once had. He set up regular showings of films and magic lantern slides at the historic Ainsworth Opera House, a venue Brinton also once used.

It took time for the world to catch up to Zahs in realizing the films’ importance. Sherburne says that what he finds most compelling about Zahs’ dedication to his project is “his ceaseless energy and dedication to sharing that history, keeping it alive for the rest of us and ensuring it is properly recognized for generations to come.” He persevered for decades in bringing these films to light. In March of this year, he took a huge step towards that goal when he hosted a gala celebration for the Ainsworth Opera House’s centennial. The event consisted of two different programs, featuring a total of about 25 films, all only recently digitized by UI Special Collections, and thus all new to modern audiences. They were accompanied by live music—some adapted for the films, some newly composed—by the Red Cedar Trio.

At this point, 34 years on from his initial discovery, the 68-year-old Zahs has spent half his life dedicated to this project. It’s hardly, however, all that keeps him busy: “My family, teaching for most of my life, preserving historic buildings and materials, starting a nature trail, beginning graduate classes about Iowa, cemetery work, etc.” When asked what this project adds to his legacy, he quips, “A legacy is maybe more for Presidents.” Zahs is especially excited about the next step for the Brinton films, though—this spring, he’s looking forward to premiering films that he just got back from the Library of Congress, restored to be “as they originally were, in hand-painted color.” He hopes this will coincide with a formal recognition of the State Theatre in Washington, Iowa as the longest-running movie theatre in the world.

Brinton and Zahs may have had diverging goals, but their shared loves are what make this narrative so compelling. Says Sherburne, “Brinton was a man obsessed with the future, Mike is a man devoted to the past.



"WONDERFUL FLAMES" A still from the 1907 film by Segundo de Chomón. Photo courtesy of Andrew Sherburne

Their lives and their interests intersect in this collection. What they both wanted was to connect Iowans to the world, Brinton looking outward, and Mike drawing attention inward. Hopefully the film will take that story to an even broader audience."

Saving Brinton is still in production; since the story is "ever-changing," Sherburne says, they "won't really know when it's done filming until it's done filming." Still, the goal is for a 2017 festival premiere. In the meantime, several clips from the restored and digitized films are available to view through the UI Special Collections website. Even more than 100 years later, they continue to evoke a sense of wonder. **iv**

Genevieve Heinrich is a writer, an editor, a malcontent and a ne'er-do-well. Occasionally, she acts and sings.

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A NEW HUB FOR DANCE

InterDance celebrates a decade of taking dance from stage to street, spinning into Iowa City locales and dancing denizens into the spotlight.
BY LUCY MORRIS

During the last weekend of April, downtown Iowa City will be inundated with dance. For the tenth year in a row, audiences will be treated to a series of free public dance performances, master classes and installations. InterDance, the nonprofit organization run by dancer Nora Gorda, is the force behind Iowa Dance 2016: Dancing Our Visions, and its goal, she says, is “to educate and entertain.”

That goal is not one necessarily associated with dance, which is usually confined to

theatres and limited audiences who may have a presumed knowledge or existing connection to the form. “Dance for a long time has been considered an underrepresented art,” Gorda told *Little Village* last year.

But with a substantial new grant from the Iowa Arts Council to fund the festival’s tenth anniversary celebration, the mission to make dance both edifying and fun should be realized. Come spring, audiences will have the chance to take in modern, jazz, hip-hop and ballet performances, as well as Irish, African, Near-Eastern and Indian classical dance. At FilmScene,

University of Iowa faculty member Eloy Barragan will screen video-dances, an experimental form that records live performance and reshapes and reassembles it into new creations. The festival will be kicked off with an event at The Studio (700 S. Dubuque St.)

The performances and events are free and open to the public, and in some cases impossible to miss. They’ll be held at the Iowa City Public Library, Old Capitol Center, United Action for Youth, the Pentacrest and the Ped Mall. This use of public spaces is deliberate: one of InterDance’s goals is to bring dance to those who might not otherwise see it.

In addition to regular residencies in public schools, events were held last year at Fair Grounds Coffeehouse, Trumpet Blossom Cafe and Chait Galleries—all venues that might be encountered without the premeditation, planning or price of admission usually required to see dance.



Angie Hayes of Travelers Dance has been instrumental in the festival since its inception. She's seen it evolve, striving to make dance accessible around the city despite financial and space constraints. Over the last decade, Iowa Dance has taken the form of week- or month-long workshop programs supplemented by a limited number of formal performances, as funding has allowed. In more recent years, concerts have been held at the Coralville Center for Public Arts, but the use of downtown Iowa City spaces allows the events to be more widely attended.

Iowa Dance, as the only event of its kind in the state, also sees its role as uniting the wider dance community. At the beginning, Hayes says, "[The festival] was a chance to show my work, but mainly to start a process of connecting dancers from across the state ... we have always hoped that other dancers,

DANCE'S BIG LEAP *Travelers Dance (left) and Farida of Kahraman (right). Photos by Carol Grow Johnk, Grow Photography*

choreographers and companies in other cities would consider hosting similar events."

Gorda got the idea for Iowa Dance after participating in a dance festival in Spain in 2006, and hoped to bring its spirit home. The festival seeks to "invigorate" the dance community across Iowa, she says, and it also "promotes local business, statewide collaboration and outside recognition."

And some of that recognition has arrived: Iowa was one of only nine states recognized by UNESCO's International Dance Council in the last two years, acknowledging it as a hub for dance.

In recent years, the festival's ability to foster a state-wide community of dancers has grown with the help of contributions from

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local hosts and businesses. Gorda believes the collaboration and interaction that happens at the festival between local and visiting artists “should have a long-term impact on their work.” Iowa Dance 2016 will include dancers and choreographers from Ames, Cedar Falls, Cedar Rapids, Davenport, Des Moines and Fairfield.

The festival’s commitment to inclusion and diversity extends beyond geography. Performers and workshop participants are of all ages, come from different cultural backgrounds, and represent a full range of dance ability. Those differences—and similarities—of experience are brought into conversation through dance, which Gorda sees as “a vehicle to promote cultural exchange.”

Combined Efforts Theatre and Infinity Dance, two Iowa City-based disability-inclusive dance groups, bring an average of 30 performers to the festival. Accommodations for disability access are made at all venues, and events take place during daylight hours and in close proximity to one another.

The staging of a large-scale event like Iowa Dance is dependent not just on funding like the Council grant, but on the support of

a community behind it: the people offering beds and meals to out of town dancers, coordinating venues and ensuring that the days of packed events run smoothly. Volunteers pitch in around 1,500 hours of help to the festival each year, and Gorda says that in addition to

welcoming atmosphere for local and visiting artists,” she says.

This integration is by design. Bringing dancers into public spaces and inviting the community to participate and support them starts new conversations and establishes

new connections. “There are opportunities for artistic discussions, networking and personal interactions between performers, audiences and local supporters,” Gorda says.

InterDance’s reach stretches beyond the festival, with its long-term commitment to providing workshops, performances and residencies in public schools. One of Hayes’ roles is facilitating the donation of tickets to families who want to see dance but otherwise couldn’t.

That mission of broadening dance audiences has been important to Iowa Dance since its early days. Gorda sees the festival as “both educational and inspirational, encouraging future exploration of [audience members’]

“Dance is a vehicle to promote cultural exchange.”

—Nora Gorda

the dancers, crew and staff whose help is evident, “businesses, organizations, city government and audiences” are also critical to the festival. Fifteen business, 10 local organizations and the City Council all help “provide a



IOWA MOVES MOVmnt Dance Company.
Photo by Carol Grow Johnk, Grow Photography

own and other cultures, learning about new subjects and in new ways, all at affordable prices or no monetary cost at all.” She hopes, above all, to expose audiences to different art forms.

This year’s anniversary celebration will again bring dancers from across the state right into the middle of downtown Iowa City. On a stroll through the Ped Mall, you might pass a step-dancing troupe. Stop in the library and you might happen upon a modern dance master class taught by a visiting artist. And Barragan’s innovative video-dance screening at FilmScene is a must-see experience. Gorda promises that Iowa Dance 2016 will “celebrate and honor Iowa’s artistic and cultural diversity”—just as it’s been doing for the last ten years. **lv**

Lucy Morris read Dance Magazine for ten years straight, which helped prepare her for her new role editing Little Village.



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FRAMING THEIR WORLD

Decorah-based Oneota Film Festival teams up with nonprofit ArtHaus to create a new, free filmmaking workshop for teens. • BY ADAM BURKE

In March, Decorah will host the seventh annual Oneota Film Festival (OFF), and this year they've hatched a program to engage young people in filmmaking.

Area teens will take part in a series of free workshops for documentary production in a crash course that starts at the festival with screenings and a luncheon for filmmakers and teens to talk shop, make pitches and network. Later, when the teen auteurs premiere their work at a special screening, they'll get a "red-carpet" treatment for the opening.

When she became the festival director last summer, Christy Ebert Vrtis said she wanted to bring film programming geared towards teens to Oneota. Then last fall she taught a filmmaking class at ArtHaus, an art school in

Decorah. She hopes to get some of the kids from that class involved in the OFF project.

The project was galvanized, Vrtis said, through conversations with community members who were "concerned about the well-being of our teenagers." She said there is a need for inclusive activities, specifically arts activities, for young people in the area, and so she wrote a project grant to fund a documentary by and about teens.

The festival mission includes a focus on informing, inspiring and engaging viewers in the compelling issues of our time, but the primary goal is to build a community of film lovers. Vrtis said the teen project will address some of the critical issues young people face, and, at the same time, allow them to have

some fun along the way by learning new skills, creating art and working together.

She'd like to continue the program in the future and even bring teenagers onto the board of directors to give them a voice in Oneota's decision-making process and film selection.

Vrtis chose two films with a teen focus for 2016, *On Beauty* and *The Mask We Live In*. She said she was immediately drawn to *On Beauty*, which tells the story of a fashion photographer who turns his lens towards some unconventional young beauties. *The Mask We Live In* explores masculinity and gender stereotypes for young men. OFF is seeking sponsors to bring the two films' creators to the fest.

The Decorah teen doc production team will discuss the documentaries, then begin to research and formulate their own project before a technical training the following week. They'll have just over a month to complete their work, which will be screened on April 23 and again at the 2017 Oneota Film



Festival.

ArtHaus will host the free teen classes. Vrtis said that providing the film training at no cost was the most important aspect of the project. In addition to free workshops and food (an important consideration for teenagers), the grant gives teens access to free equipment, technical assistance and training from filmmaker mentors.

OFF is gearing up for about 30 youth, aged 13-19, to participate in the screenings, discussions, pre-production and planning, shooting and editing of the work.

Vrtis will use feedback from the project to inform future teen projects. A few years ago, Oneota hosted teen film seminars that saw the production of some short films. Vrtis said she is looking forward to meeting the teen film crew and OFF is excited to restart their youth film program.

The festival does extensive community outreach, and getting young people involved has been a long-term goal of Oneota.

"We'd like to use this project as the

ONEOTA, OH YEAH! (Clockwise from left)

The Mask We Live In, and On Beauty, two docs focused on teen issues will be screened at OFF 2016. OFF Director Christy Ebert Vrtis. Photo by Robert J. Vrtis

beginning of a fellowship program that gets teens involved in OFF throughout the year: on the board, choosing films, planning events, making films and attending the festival," Vrtis said.

OFF will host a night of short films at the "Very Best of Rural Route 2011-2015" screening on Jan. 21 at T-Bock's in Decorah. The Oneota Film Festival runs from March 4-6 at Luther College in Decorah.

Find out more about the festival at www.oneotafilmfestival.org. **lv**

Adam Burke is staying warm this winter with long underwear.



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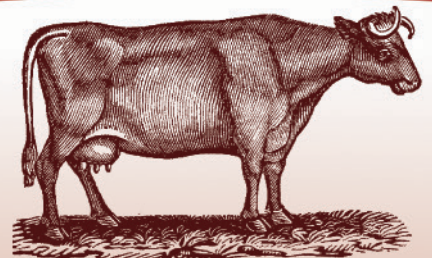
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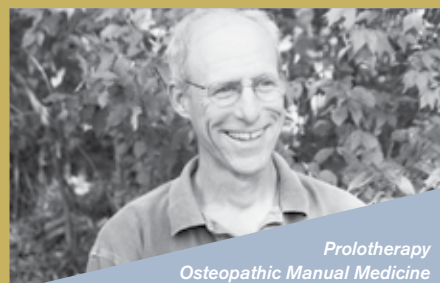
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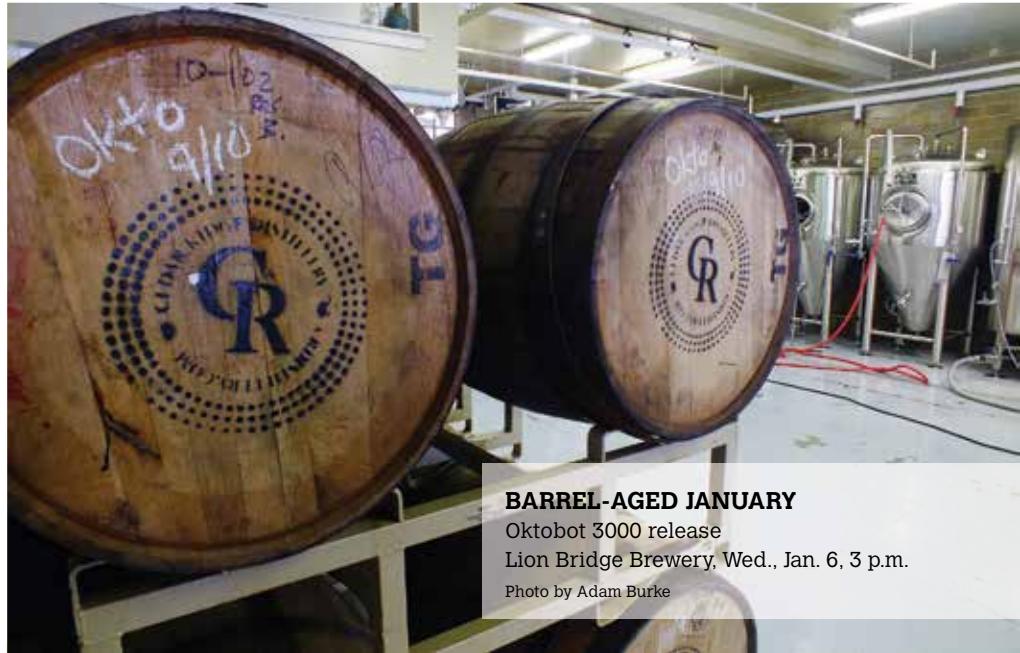
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BARREL-AGED JANUARY

Oktobot 3000 release

Lion Bridge Brewery, Wed., Jan. 6, 3 p.m.

Photo by Adam Burke

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/FOODIE: Barrel-Aged January: Oktobot 3000 release, Lion Bridge Brewing Company, Free, 3 p.m. This month-long release party featuring nine (maybe ten!) new beers from the award-winning team at Lion Bridge Brewing Company focuses on everything barrel-aged. From whisky and single malt barrels to hints of dark rum and apple brandy, Lion Bridge will be releasing a new beer every Wednesday and Saturday throughout January and are sure to produce something that will quench that winter-worn thirst.

WED., JAN. 6

/ARTS-AND-EXHIBITION: Art Bites: Mauricio Lasansky, Master Printer, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free, 12:15 p.m.

/CRAFTY: Don't Start Over, Home Ec. Workshop, \$25, 7 p.m.

/MUSIC: Animal Maps, Gabe's, Free, 9 p.m.

/MUSIC: Slewgrass, George's Buffet, Free, 8:30 p.m.
Satsang, Gabe's, Free, 10 p.m.

FRI., JAN. 8

/FOODIE: Barrel-Aged January: Oktobot 5000 release, Lion Bridge Brewing Company, Free, 3 p.m.

/SPORTS-AND-REC: Ballroom and Latin Dancing Lesson and Social Hour, Old Brick, \$4-8, 7:30 p.m.

Wine and Yoga Night, Zen Den Yoga, 6 p.m.

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Joe Larson, Penguin's Comedy Club, \$15-17, 7:30 p.m.

'Wit,' Giving Tree Theater, \$16-26, 8 p.m.

/MUSIC: Terry McCauley, Cedar Ridge Distillery, Free, 6 p.m.

Rude Punch with Drama Major and MC Squared, River Music Experience Redstone Room, \$8, 8 p.m.

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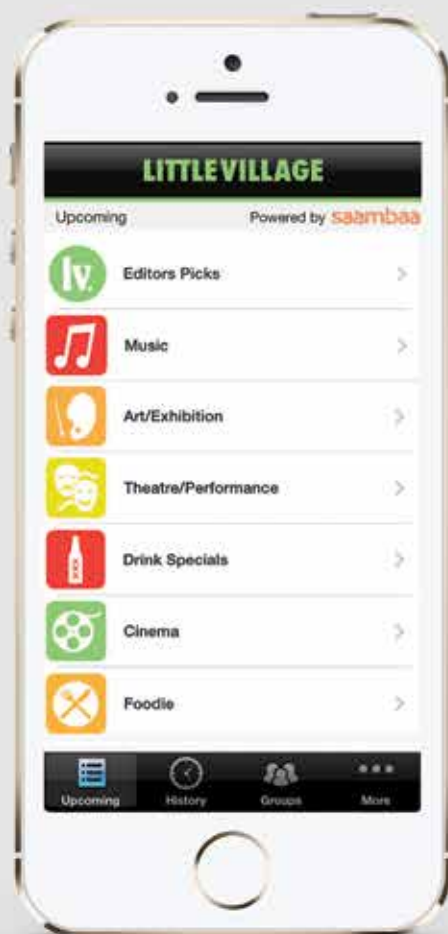
THURS., JAN. 7

/FAMILY: Doodlebugs: Jackson Pollock, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free, 10:30 a.m.

Pajama Storytime, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Free, 7 p.m.

/COMMUNITY: Policy on the Rocks, Lion Bridge Brewing Company, Free, 4:30 p.m.

/CRAFTY: Gems of Hope Workshop, Beadology, Free, 6 p.m.



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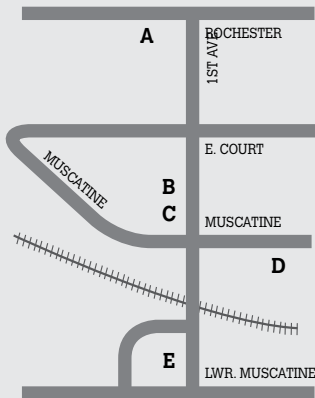
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OUTER VIBE
Parlor City, Sun., Jan. 10, 4 p.m.
Photo by Andy Terzes

SAT., JAN. 9

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: 'Pinocchio,' Cedar Rapids Public Library, Free, 10:30 a.m.

Joe Larson, Penguin's Comedy Club, \$15-17, 7:30 p.m.

'Wit,' Giving Tree Theater, \$16-26, 8 p.m.

/CRAFTY: Weather the Winter Months: Herbal Care Workshop, Public Space One, 1:30 p.m.

/FOODIE: Englert Theatre Collabeeration, Lion Bridge Brewing Company, Free, 3 p.m.

/MUSIC: Zachary Freedom, Parlor City Pub and Eatery, 8 p.m.

SUN., JAN. 10

/CRAFTY: Painting Class with Renee Reedich, Lion Bridge Brewing Company, \$30, 2 p.m.

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: 'Wit,' Giving Tree Theater, \$16-26, 2 p.m.

/MUSIC: Orchestra Iowa: French Kiss, Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$24, 2:30 p.m.

Brianna Lane, Milk & Eggs, Gabe's, Free, 9 p.m.

MON., JAN. 11

/FAMILY: Family Night, Coralville Public Library, Free, 6:30 p.m.

/MUSIC: Wave Chapelle with Lucien Petersen, Satori, Gabe's, Free, 9 p.m.

TUES., JAN. 12

/CRAFTY: Techniques and Strategies for Multi-Strand Pieces, Beadology, \$68, 6 p.m.

/MUSIC: *Outer Vibe*, Parlor City Pub and Eatery, 4 p.m. This self-described "cinematic surf disco" ensemble from Grand Rapids, MI takes the stage at Cedar Rapids' Parlor City Pub for a Sunday afternoon set. These five musicians (Nick Hosford, lead guitar; Sean Zee, vocals; Lisa Kacos, trumpet, keys; Andrew "Wonderboy" Dornoff, bass; and Noah Snyder, drums) put their friendship in the foreground as they perform, and view each show as a chance to bring new friends into the fold. They released their 4th full-length album, 'Full Circle,' in June. Known for their raucously delightful live shows, *Outer Vibe* has a hard-to-pinpoint sound that is best described as sheer energy.

/LITERATURE: Iowa Writers' House Presents: *The Violet Realm*, Iowa City Public Library, Free, 6 p.m.

/FAMILY: 'Sesame Street: Make a New Friend,' US Cellular Center, \$20, 6:30 p.m.

/MUSIC: Dustin Prinz, Gabe's, Free, 9 p.m.

WED., JAN. 13

/LITERATURE: It's a Mystery Book Group: 'The Girl on a Train,' Coralville Public Library, Free, 10 a.m.

Paul's Book Club: William Maxwell's 'The Folded Leaf,' Prairie Lights Books and Cafe, Free, 7 p.m.

/FAMILY: 'Sesame Street: Make a New Friend,' US Cellular Center, \$20, 10:30 a.m.

/CRAFTY: Bobbin Lace Making Demonstration, National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library, Free, 11 a.m.

/FOODIE: Barrel-Aged January: The Royal Wee release, Lion Bridge Brewery Company, Free, 3 p.m.

/MUSIC: The Wrong Omar, Gabe's, Free, 9 p.m.

THURS., JAN. 14

/SPORTS-AND-REC: Guided Meditation, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, \$10, 6 p.m.

Yoga by the Glass, Cedar Ridge Distillery, \$25, 6 p.m.

/CINEMA: Music is the Word Documentary Screening: 'Keep on Keepin' On,' Iowa City Public Library, Free, 7 p.m.

/MUSIC: Vine Street Vibes, Gabe's, Free, 10 p.m.

FRI., JAN. 15

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: 'Greg Morton,' Penguin's Comedy Club, \$15-17, 7:30 p.m.

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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

2015 IN REVIEW
IN WHICH WE BARELY SCRATCH THE SURFACE OF THE YEAR IN CRAZY PART THE SECOND

JULY 9: TRUMP SAYS HE STILL DOES NOT KNOW IF OBAMA WAS BORN IN U.S. BECAUSE I AM A RATIONAL PERSON WHO THINKS VERY RATIONAL THINGS!

AUG. 25: TRUMP SUP-PORTER FAMOUSLY DECLARES: "HIS GOAL IS TO MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN! IT'S ON HIS HAT!"
NEITHER TRUMP NOR SUP-PORTERS SPECIFY WHEN IT WAS GREAT THE FIRST TIME.

SEPT. 3: KENTUCKY MARRIAGE LICENSE CLERK HEADS TO JAIL FOR FIVE DAYS RATHER THAN ISSUE LICENSES TO GAY COUPLES.
SHE'S JUST LIKE ROSA PARKS, EXCEPT THE OPPOSITE!

SEPT. 17: JEB BUSH DECLARES THAT HIS BROTHER KEPT US SAFE. IF BY "SAFE" YOU MEAN--
--OH, WHY DO I EVEN BOTHER?

SEPT. 18: CARLY FLORINA DENOUNCES IMAGINARY PLANNED PARENTHOOD VIDEO. --AND THEN THEY TAKE BABY BRAINS AND FEED THEM TO ZOMBIES! I'VE SEEN THE FOOTAGE!

OCT. 9: BEN CARSON SAYS JEWS COULD HAVE PREVENTED HOLOCAUST WITH GUNS, BECAUSE I AM ALSO A VERY RATIONAL PERSON!
THE G.O.P. IS FULL OF THEM!

OCT. 13: HILLARY CLINTON SAYS EDWARD SNOWDEN SHOULD HAVE STAYED IN U.S. AS WHISTLEBLOWER. THEN WE COULD HAVE IGNORED HIS REVELATIONS AND PROSECUTED HIM!
THE SYSTEM WORKS!

OCT. 18: MIKE HUCKABEE OFFERS HIS VERSION OF HEALTH CARE REFORM. "LET'S CURE... DIABETES, HEART DISEASE, CANCER AND ALZHEIMERS!"
GRATEFUL NATION WONDERS WHY NO ONE THOUGHT OF THIS BEFORE.

NOV. 9: WEIGHING IN ON IMPORTANT DEBATE, JEB BUSH DECLARES: HELL YEAH I'D KILL BABY HITLER!
IN RESPONSE TO PRANK QUESTION, BEN CARSON LATER SAYS HE WOULD NOT ABORT BABY HITLER.

NOV. 13: TERRORISTS ATTACK PARIS, CAUSING MANY AMERICANS TO IMMEDIATELY FORGET THE LAST 13 YEARS. BOMB THEM! INVADE THEM!
WHAT COULD GO WRONG?

NOV. 27: CONSERVATIVES SHRUG OFF ANOTHER WHITE GUY GUN RAMPAGE. NOTHING CAN BE DONE!
DEC. 2: CONSERVATIVES ARE VERY ALARMED BY MUSLIM GUN RAMPAGE. SOMETHING MUST BE DONE!

DEC. 7: TRUMP EMBRACES HIS INNER FASCIST. BAN ALL MUSLIMS! SHUT DOWN THE MOSQUES!
EIN REICH! EIN VOLK!
HIS POLL NUMBERS GO UP.

DEC. 14: TRUMP'S DOCTOR RELEASES EXTREMELY CONVINCING LETTER OF MEDICAL FITNESS. "MR. TRUMP... WILL BE THE HEALTHIEST INDIVIDUAL EVER ELECTED TO THE PRESIDENCY!"

DEC. 15: TED CRUZ EXPLAINS HIS PLAN TO DEFEAT ISIS. "WE NEED TO FOCUS ON KILLING THE BAD GUYS!"
GRATEFUL NATION WONDERS WHY NO ONE THOUGHT OF THIS BEFORE.

NEXT YEAR: MORE GUN MASSACRES! MORE WAR! AND MORE DONALD TRUMP!
SO--LIKE THIS YEAR--
--ONLY MORE!

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AREA EVENTS



A MODERN SALON

Opening night, Brucemore

Fri., Jan. 15, \$40-45

Photo courtesy of Brucemore

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Opening Night: 'A Modern Salon,' Brucemore, \$40-45, 7:30 p.m. SPT Theatre returns to The Big House at historic Brucemore in Cedar Rapids for their Lucky 13th annual installment of A Modern Salon at Brucemore. This year, they will be joined by special guest Chris Okiishi, and the theme is ... yep, Lucky! Adding to that luck is the return of SPT founding member Janelle Lauer, after a two year hiatus. This annual tradition harkens back to the Paris salons at the turn of the last century, with music, stories and conversation to warm the night. Included in the cost of admission are pre-show wine and hors d'oeuvres and a champagne and dessert reception at intermission.

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Opening Night: 'La Traviata,' Paramount Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$19-69, 8 p.m. Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre presents Verdi's classic for two performances only, conducted by Daniel Kleinknecht with stage direction by James Marvel. The Sunday, Jan 17 performance will be broadcast live on Iowa Public Radio. La Traviata, or "The Fallen Woman," premiered in 1853. It follows the tragic tale of doomed courtesan Violetta. The soprano lead in this production will be sung by rising star Danielle Talamantes. Her lover, Alfredo, is performed by tenor Jason Slayden. Baritone Stephen Gaertner sings the role of Alfredo's father, Giorgio Germont, who fears that Violetta's reputation will be a stain on his family. This performance will be in Italian, with English supertitles.

/MUSIC: Drew Hurn, Cedar Ridge Distillery, Free, 6 p.m. Christine Lavin and Don White, Legion Arts CSPA Hall, \$18-22, 8 p.m.

Cornmeal with The Last Revival, River Music Experience Redstone Room, \$11.50-13.75, 9 p.m.

Soulshake, Gabe's, Free, 10 p.m.

Cubed Right Angle Weave Pendant: an Introduction to CRAW, Beadology, \$58, 2 p.m.

/SPORTS-AND-REC: Snowshoe through the Park, Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, Free, 10 a.m.

/COMMUNITY: Conscious Birth Summit, Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10 a.m.

/CINEMA: 'Coriolanus,' The Englert Theatre, \$15-18, 2 p.m.

/FOODIE: Barrel-Aged January: Cherry Wood Stave Royal Wee release, Lion Bridge Brewing Company, Free, 3 p.m.

/MUSIC: Ukulele Music Session, Uptown Bill's, Free, 4 p.m.

Jason Stuart: Cobalt Blue, Parlor City Pub and Eatery, 8 p.m.

Bluetone Jazz Collective, Franklin Street Brewing Company, 8 p.m.

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Greg Morton, Penguin's Comedy Club, \$15-17, 7:30 p.m.

'Avenue Q,' Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$25-35, 7:30 p.m.

'A Modern Salon,' Brucemore, \$40-45, 7:30 p.m.

SUN., JAN. 17

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: 'La Traviata,' Paramount Cedar Rapids, \$19-49, 2 p.m.

'Avenue Q,' Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$25-35, 2:30 p.m.

/CRAFTY: Make Glass Beads: Intro to Lampworking, Beadology, \$98, 9 a.m.

SAT., JAN. 16

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AVENUE Q

Opening night, Theatre Cedar Rapids
Fri., Jan. 15, 7:30 p.m., \$25-35

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Opening Night:

'Avenue Q,' Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$25-35, 7:30 p.m.

The first thing to understand about this puppet-driven musical is that it's NOT for children. This six-time Tony nominee (it won three) premiered in 2003, with music and lyrics by Robert Lopez (of Frozen fame) and Jeff Marx, and book by Jeff Whitty. It has been a subversive favorite on the musical theatre circuit ever since. The Theatre Cedar Rapids production is directed by Leslie Charipar and musical directed by Benjamin Schmidt. The story centers on recent college graduate Princeton and his love interest, Kate Monster. It is crass and offensive and delightful; although it has its philosophical moments (the song "What Do You Do with a BA in English?" hits home for many), it is ultimately a fury of irreverence and lunacy. No cultural sub-group is left un-offended, and no manner of taking offense is left un-mocked.

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'Sherlock Holmes & the Slashing Razor' murder mystery dinner, Cedar Ridge Distillery, \$50, 5 p.m.

/MUSIC: Applebutter Express, Parlor City Pub and Eatery, 4 p.m.

Third Sunday Jazz: Coleman Harris Quartet, River Music Experience Redstone Room, \$10-15, 6 p.m.

Wanyama, Gabe's, Free, 9 p.m.

/ARTS-AND-EXHIBITION: Closing of Ryan Bentzinger: nAMUH, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, 5 p.m.

MON., JAN. 18

/COMMUNITY: The Herky Cares Project, Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10:30 a.m.

TUES., JAN. 19

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: Blue Man Group, Paramount Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$53-73, 7:30 p.m.

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AREA EVENTS



**MIDWINTER
RENAISSANCE FAIRE**
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Sat., Jan. 16, 10 a.m., Free

/COMMUNITY: Midwinter Renaissance Faire, Cedar Rapids Public Library, Free, 10 a.m. The Cedar Rapids Public Library will be transformed into a fantastic wonderland for its second annual Renaissance Faire. Events occur in all major areas of the library, including a Marketplace in Beems A & B and a Fathomless Forest in the Children's Library. Representatives from the Society for Creative Anachronism's Shire of Deodar, among others, will be offering historical talks throughout the day. There will be a masquerade at 2:30 p.m. and the King and Queen will hold a knighting ceremony at 3:30 p.m. Renaissance music from a variety of local performers will play throughout the day. Visit Whipple Auditorium in the morning for Introduction to Sword Fighting and Medieval Dance lessons.

ONGOING EVENTS

/THEATRE-AND-PERFORMANCE: 'Wit,' Giving Tree Theater, \$16-26 (through Jan. 10) 'Avenue Q,' Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$25-35 (through Feb. 6) 'A Modern Salon,' Brucemore, \$40-45 (through Jan. 30)

/ART-AND-EXHIBITION: Living with Pots: Ceramics from the Eric Dean and Todd Thelen Collection, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art (through April 10) Maintenance Mode, Public Space One (through Jan. 23)

MONDAYS

Primetimers Potluck, North Ridge Pavilion, 12 p.m. (3rd Monday) Moeller Mondays, Rozz-Tox, \$8-12, 8 p.m. Open Mic, The Mill, Free, 8 p.m. Catacombs of Comedy, Yacht Club, \$3, 10 p.m.

TUESDAYS

Acoustic Music Club, River Music Experience, Free, 4:30 p.m. Tuesday Evening Jazz, Motley Cow Cafe, Free, 5:30 p.m. Tom's Guitar Show, Uptown Bill's, Free, 6 p.m. (last Tuesday) Blues Jam, Parlor City, 7 p.m. Underground Open Mic, The Yacht Club, Free, 8 p.m. Comedy & Open Mic Night, Studio 13, Free, 9 p.m.

WEDNESDAYS

Low Cost Yoga, Public Space One, \$2, 5 p.m. Honest Open Mic, Lincoln Wine Bar, 6 p.m. Burlington Street Bluegrass Band, The Mill, \$5, 6 p.m. (2nd & 4th Wednesdays) Open Mic Night, Penguins Comedy Club, Free, 6:30 p.m. Spoken Word, Uptown Bill's,

Free, 7 p.m. (1st Wednesday) Open Mic, Cafe Paradiso, Free, 8 p.m. Open Stage, Studio 13, 10 p.m. Open Jam and Mug Night, Yacht Club, Free, 10 p.m. Late Shift at the Grindhouse, FilmScene, \$4, 10 p.m. Talk Art, The Mill, Free, 10:30 p.m. (2nd & 4th Wednesdays)

THURSDAYS

Novel Conversations, Coralville Public Library, Free, 7 p.m. (3rd Thursday) Thursday Night Live Open Mic, Uptown Bill's, Free, 7 p.m. Karaoke Thursday, Studio 13, Free, 8 p.m. Gemini Karaoke, Blue Moose, Free, 9 p.m. Folk Night at Little Bohemia (1st Thursday), Little Bohemia

FRIDAYS

FAC Dance Party, The Union Bar, 7 p.m. Sasha Belle presents: Friday Drag & Dance Party, Studio 13, 8 p.m. SoulShake, Gabe's, Free, 10 p.m.

SATURDAYS

Family Storytime, Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10:30 a.m. Santa Saturdays, FilmScene, Free, 1 p.m. Horse Drawn Carriage Rides, Downtown Iowa City, Free, 1 p.m. Gift Wrapping Station, Old Capitol Town Center, Free, 1 p.m. Saturday Night Music, Uptown Bill's, Free, 7 p.m. Elation Dance Party, Studio 13, 9 p.m.

SUNDAYS

Live Music, Sutliff Cider Company, 3 p.m. Legends League, Borlaug Elementary, 4:30 p.m. Drag U, Studio 13, 8 p.m. Pub Quiz, The Mill, \$1, 9 p.m.

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CEDAR RAPIDS

African American Museum of Iowa, 55 12th Ave SE, (319) 862-2101, blackiowa.org

Brucemore Mansion 2160 Linden Dr SE, (319) 362-7375, brucemore.org

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, 410 Third Avenue SE, (319) 366-7503, crma.org

Cocktails and Company, 1625 Blairs Ferry Rd, Marion, IA, (319) 377-1140, cocktails-company.com

Daniel Arthur's 821 3rd Ave SE, (319) 362-9340, danielarthurs.net

Giving Tree Theatre, 752 10th St, Marion, IA, (319) 213-7956, givingtreetheatre.com

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River Music Experience 129 Main St, Davenport, (563) 326-1333, rivermusicexperience.com

iWireless Center 1201 River Dr, Moline, (309) 764-2001, iwirelesscenter.com

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Codfish Hollow Barnstormers 5013 288th Ave, codfishhollowbarnstormers.com

DUBUQUE

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WHAT WOULD THE EARTH LOOK LIKE IF HUMANS DISAPPEARED?

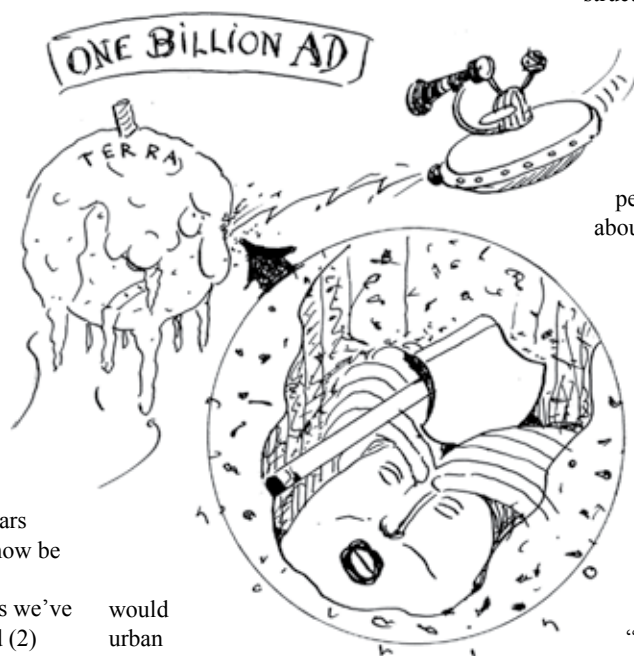
If humans were to die out tomorrow, how long would it take for nature to take over and overgrow most traces of our existence? After like 10,000 years, would you have to undertake an archaeological dig to find evidence of us, or would parts of major cities still be standing and distinguishable? —Jim Huff

Why not take it a step further: what if humans never existed at all? As the Republican primary race drags on, I can't say it's not an alluring proposition, and—helpfully—one that was broached this year by researchers at Denmark's Aarhus University. They came to the fairly obvious conclusion that, sans *Homo sapiens*, the rest of the world's fauna would be a hell of a lot better off—so much so that most continents would resemble Africa in the diversity of their mammal populations. In a human-free world, the authors imagine, not only wolves and bears but elephants and rhinos would right now be roaming northern Europe.

Alas, we have to work with the facts we've got, namely: (1) we exist on earth, and (2) someday we might not—whether by disease or nuclear winter, or because we've ditched this rock for one that's not yet totally hosed. For the sake of your question, though, let's imagine we simply vanished—a kind of non-denominational rapture.

As it happens, such a scenario was entertained by the journalist Alan Weisman in his 2007 book *The World Without Us*. Weisman's conceit was apparently seductive enough that it inspired not one but two documentary franchises: the History Channel series *Life After People* and National Geographic Channel's *Aftermath: Population Zero*. Granted, that latter title carries a real whiff of basic-cable cheese, but Weisman's no slouch. Working from interviews with botanists, structural engineers, art conservators, et al., he credibly predicts what might happen in cities and less-populated areas, as well as at sites whose abandonment would lead to notably dramatic results—think oil refineries and nuclear reactors.

A particularly vivid passage gives the play-by-play in New York City. How quickly



would urban infrastructure go to shit in a rapture scenario? Very, very quickly. "After we're gone, nature's revenge for our smug, mechanized superiority arrives waterborne," Weisman writes. In New York's case it comes from below: with no one to operate the pumps that keep water out of the subway tunnels, the system finds itself inundated in "no more than a couple of days." (Superstorm Sandy gave us a taste of what this might look like.) As the water rises toward ground level, it eats away at the soil; within 20 years the streets collapse, becoming rivers. Pipes burst, gas lines ignite—your standard post-apocalyptic hellscape. Within 50 years, their foundations scoured out by water, skyscrapers start to falter and crumble. It's another few centuries before trees really recolonize the place. (Interestingly, the animals that don't make it are ones that adapted too well to human dominance, including several species fabled for their supposed indestructibility: cockroaches, which can't handle northern winters without heating, and rats, which can't

replace the caloric value of a zillion tons of garbage.)

But you're thinking on a bigger scale than this, Jim. Here are the headlines:

- Debris in high earth orbit stays there for more than a century.
- Suspension bridges collapse within 300 years; other, heavier designs might hold up for a millennium.
- In cities like New York, the most durable structures will be stone walls, like those of

St. Paul's Church; Weisman sees them lasting "thousands of years."

Meanwhile, the estimated erosion rate at Mount Rushmore is just one inch per 10,000 years. From this, Weisman extrapolates that we can expect parts of it to remain recognizable for about 7.2 million years.

In 10,000 years, then, a visitor surveying the earth's surface will find it largely reforested, with stone ruins here and there indicating the former presence of human life.

How long till those are gone too?

Here's where Weisman and another scientist who's written on the subject—astrophysicist Mayank Vahia, of India's Tata Institute of Fundamental Research—demur.

Vahia suggests that stone and metal building materials will hang on "for tens of thousands of years," while


Weisman figures whatever's still standing in 20,000 or so years will be erased by another ice age.

What's left then? PVC plastics and glass remain under the ice, ground to a powder. Wiring and plumbing, which show up as subterranean metal deposits. Heavy metals and nuclear materials like uranium and plutonium residues, whose half-lives only begin at 24,000 years. You've heard of the Anthropocene, I presume—the name geologists have proposed giving to our current geological epoch, so profoundly affected by humans. Epochs are demarcated by identifiable shifts in the earth's strata; the aforementioned is all the stuff alien archaeologists will find as evidence of us, millions of years in the future, just as today's geologists find evidence of past glaciation. Of course, the likelihood of a coming ice age looks even dimmer now than it did back when Weisman wrote his book: we're not doing such a hot job keeping the atmosphere cool. But that's an existential problem for another day.

—Cecil Adams

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XOXO DEARKIKI XOXO



Dear Kiki,
I like including role-play scenarios in my sex life. My problem is that even if it's something that's been previously discussed with my partner, when I make the first move—say the first line, put on an outfit—I am overcome with the same embarrassment of performance that, say, watching open mics or bad theater gives me. It seems showy, so I get shy and silly while standing there in front of my partner. I don't have this problem with role play if I'm not initiating, but I'd really like to make some of my fantasies come true, too, not just be a participant in someone else's. Is it possible to overcome this?

Signed, Shy Player

Hey Kitten,

Sure. Lots of things are possible to overcome, depending on the circumstances and how you're prioritizing your resources. I think the primary problem here is that something in you is saying that the role you're taking on is fake and that you are an impostor. Before we get into how to overcome your feeling of stage fright, I have a more short-term suggestion. Talk to your partner about your difficulties, and then suggest a

See if one of these areas feels a little less fraught, and identify a few small ways you can expose yourself to your feelings of embarrassment. This could even mean going to an open mic or participating in some "bad theater" if these would terrify you less than bad sex. Doing a little homegrown exposure therapy and a little practice could make a world of difference. Even doing a "dry run" of a scenario with your partner could help you form accurate expectations for your performance on opening night.

Finally, impostor syndrome is something that can affect people who haven't been represented in their fields. If you haven't seen someone doing what you want to do, whether a job or a sex act, you might feel silly doing it for the first time. I would try and seek out people you identify with doing the things you'd like to do—whether in erotica,

porn or at a local kink demonstration. The more you can see it, the more you can be it. Remember that sharing your fantasy will make you vulnerable in new ways, and it makes sense that you feel nervous about how you'll come off. If your partner wants to play with you through your nervousness, you have a connection worth cherishing, and if they can't, then that says more about them than it says about your performance. Best of luck and have fun! *xoxo, Kiki*

Conquering role-play stage fright

fantasy that involves them initiating. That way you get to experience having control without putting yourself in a position that will make you self-conscious. This will also clarify whether initiating the fantasy or realizing it is tripping you up.

Next step is to investigate why you feel like an impostor when you initiate. Do you feel a similar kind of nervousness in other contexts? Do these areas have something in common, like violating a gender norm?

Questions about love and sex in the city of Iowa City can be sent to dearkiki@littlevillagemag.com. Questions may be edited for clarity and length, and may appear either in print or online at littlevillagemag.com



PIETA BROWN

Drifters

www.pietabrown.com

Pieta Brown and her band had a very productive four and a half days at Justin Vernon's April Base Studios recording her 2014 album *Paradise Outlaw*. They recorded 20 songs with the intention of making the album a double. Plans changed and she picked 14 songs for the single album we got.

Those remaining six songs find new life on the self-released EP titled *Drifters*. In the liner notes, Brown explains, "These outtakes—these drifters—[were] all held aside for one reason or another." But they wouldn't stay on the cutting room floor, because she added three of them to her live setlist. "After many sweet inquiries at shows from fans about the songs 'Goin' Up The Country,' 'Drifter' and 'Just Slip Away' I decided to go back and listen to the outtakes."

The collection of songs carries the same step-up-to-the-mic live-in-studio magic that *Paradise Outlaw* had. Although we don't know where these songs would have fallen in the tracklist, the inclusion of the remix of the instrumental "Little Swainson" by Vernon and engineer BJ Burton adds some additional attention to the fact that Vernon participated, and in my mind, the outtake and the original would have made nice bookends to the album.

The standout track on the EP is the call-and-response boogie "Goin' Up The Country." The song takes a front porch vibe with Brown's very talented family on backing vocals, reminding me of another talented music family—the Carters. However, I can see how the song might have gotten

cut, since it doesn't fit with the more staid and atmospheric *Paradise Outlaw*.

Although Pieta Brown thinks that the songs on *Drifters* have "many rough edges," they provide a picture of what a double album might have been like. She offers these songs as an experiment, launching

...inescapable rollicking flow—a persistent sense of movement that propels the listener along.

her own "underground" label imprint, Lustre Records. I'm looking forward to more collections of songs from her archives—*Drifters* is a great start!

—Mike Roeder



LAND OF BLOOD AND SUNSHINE

Lady and the Trance
Cartouche Records

Lady and the Trance, the upcoming release from Marshalltown's Land of Blood and Sunshine, is the kind of record that you don't ever want to end.

Coming close on the heels of LOBAS'

last release (last January's *Aeons*), this new record, which drops Jan. 15, is a wonderful next step in the band's upward trajectory. This six-member group (comprised of founders Joel Downs and Nicholas Beard, along with Bo Becker, Garrett Goodman, Bryan Leger and Danielle Downs) was

formed in 2008.

Each of their albums, beginning with 2009's *Magick Carcass Ride*, has had an inescapable rollicking flow—a persistent sense of movement that propels the listener along.

On the aptly-titled *Lady and the Trance*, however, that flow simply doesn't stop. It's a challenge even

to single out individual tracks for credit or criticism; this is an album best suited to listening on repeat. It's got the slightly more polished sound that LOBAS has been angling towards over the past couple of records, without losing the legacy of lo-fi fuzz that keeps their work determinedly otherworldly.

Although the bright, poppy bounce of "The Gardeners" and "Bringing Back the Dinosaur" stand out against the overall tone of the album (the latter has echoes of Jack Johnson's cover of The White Stripes' "We Are Going to be Friends"), they are more like detours than digressions. They offer a respite from the persistence that is welcome, though unexpected, while still moving inexorably forward.

The slow roll of "Lion Bearing Wings" and the dancy, driving "Meteorist" are the twists and turns of this record that I love best. But even those tracks are strongest as part of the whole. LOBAS has crafted a lovely continuity that both leaves you wanting more and inevitably rolls back into itself. When you reach the end, there's nothing for it but to start again at the beginning.

—Genevieve Heinrich

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): In her poem "Tree," California poet Jane Hirshfield speaks of a young redwood tree that's positioned next to a house. Watch out! It grows fast -- as much as three feet per year. "Already the first branch-tips brush at the window," Hirshfield writes. "Softly, calmly, immensity taps at your life." I suspect this will be an apt metaphor for you in 2016. The expansion and proliferation you have witnessed these past few months are likely to intensify. That's mostly good, but may also require adjustments. How will you respond as immensity taps at your life?



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Centuries ago, lettuce was a bitter, prickly weed that no one ate. But ancient Egyptians guessed its potential, and used selective breeding to gradually convert it into a tasty food. I see 2016 as a time when you could have a comparable success. Look around at your life, and identify weed-like things that could, through your transformative magic, be turned into valuable assets. The process may take longer than a year, but you can set in motion an unstoppable momentum that will ensure success.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Imagine that a beloved elder has been writing down your life story in the form of a fairy tale. Your adventures aren't rendered literally, as your waking mind might describe them, but rather through dream-like scenes that have symbolic resonance. With this as our template, I'll predict a key plot development of 2016: You will grow increasingly curious about a "forbidden" door -- a door you have always believed should not be opened. Your inquisitiveness will reach such an intensity that you will consider locating the key for that door. If it's not available, you may even think about breaking down the door.



ARIES (March 21-April 19): John Steinbeck won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962. His novel *Of Mice and Men* helped win him the award, but it required extra persistence. When he'd almost finished the manuscript, he went out on a date with his wife. While they were gone, his puppy Toby ripped his precious pages into confetti. As mad as he was, he didn't punish the dog, but got busy on a rewrite. Later he considered the possibility that Toby had served as a helpful literary critic. The new edition of *Of Mice and Men* was Steinbeck's breakout book. I'm guessing that in recent months you have received comparable assistance, Aries -- although you may not realize it was assistance until later this year.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Remember back to what your life was like during the first nine months of 2004. I suspect that

you fell just short of fulfilling a dream. It's possible you were too young to have the power you needed. Or maybe you were working on a project that turned out to be pretty good but not great. Maybe you were pushing to create a new life for yourself but weren't wise enough to make a complete breakthrough. Almost 12 years later, you have returned to a similar phase in your long-term cycle. You are better equipped to do what you couldn't quite do before: create the masterpiece, finish the job, rise to the next level.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20): To become a skillful singer, you must learn to regulate your breath. You've got to take in more oxygen than usual for extended periods, and do it in ways that facilitate rather than interfere with the sounds coming out of your mouth. When you're beginning, it feels weird to exert so much control over an instinctual impulse, which previously you've done unconsciously. Later, you have to get beyond your self-conscious discipline so you can reach a point where the proper breathing happens easily and gracefully. Although you may not be working to become a singer in 2016, Gemini, I think you will have comparable challenges: 1. to make conscious an activity that has been unconscious; 2. to refine and cultivate that activity; 3. to allow your consciously-crafted approach to become unselfconscious again.



CANCER (June 21-July 22): Ancient humans didn't "invent" fire, but rather learned about it from nature and then figured out how to produce it as needed. Ropes had a similar origin. Our ancestors employed long vines made of tough fiber as primitive ropes, and eventually got the idea to braid and knot the vines together for greater strength. This technology was used to hunt, climb, pull, fasten, and carry. It was essential to the development of civilization. I predict that 2016 will bring you opportunities that have metaphorical resemblances to the early rope. Your task will be to develop and embellish on what nature provides.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): British author Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) had a day job with the postal service until he was in his fifties. For years he awoke every morning at 5:30 and churned out 2,500 words before heading to work. His goal was to write two or three novels a year, a pace he came close to achieving. "A small daily task, if it really be daily," he wrote in his autobiography, "will beat the labors of a spasmodic Hercules." I recommend that you borrow from his strategy in 2016, Leo. Be regular and disciplined and diligent as you practice the art of gradual, incremental success.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Umbrellas shelter us from the rain, saving us from the discomfort of getting soaked and the embarrassment of bad hair. They also protect us from the blinding light and sweltering heat of the sun. I'm very much in favor of these practical perks. But when umbrellas appear in your nightly dreams, they may have a less positive meaning. They can indicate an inclination to shield yourself from natural forces, or to avoid direct contact with primal sensuality. I hope you won't do much of that in 2016. In my opinion, you need a lot of face-to-face encounters with life in its raw state. Symbolically speaking, this should be a non-umbrella year.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Around the world, an average of 26 languages go extinct every year. But it increasingly appears that Welsh will not be one of them. It has enjoyed a revival in the past few decades. In Wales, it's taught in many schools, appears on road signs, and is used in some mobile phones and computers. Is there a comparable phenomenon in your life, Libra? A tradition that can be revitalized and should be preserved? A part of your heritage that may be useful to your future? A neglected aspect of your birthright that deserves to be reclaimed? Make it happen in 2016.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Fourteenth-century author Geoffrey Chaucer produced a collection of stories known as *The Canterbury Tales*. It became a seminal text of English literature even though he never finished it. The most influential book ever written by theologian Thomas Aquinas was a work he gave up on before it was completed. The artist Michelangelo never found the time to put the final touches on numerous sculptures and paintings. Why am I bringing this theme to your attention? Because 2016 will be an excellent time to wrap up long-term projects you've been working on -- and also to be at peace with abandoning those you can't.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): A bottle of Chateau Cheval Blanc wine from 1947 sold for \$304,000. Three bottles of Chateau Lafite-Rothschild 1869 went for \$233,000 apiece. The mystique about aged wine provokes crazy behavior like that. But here's a more mundane fact: Most wine deteriorates with age, and should be sold within a few years of being bottled. I'm thinking about these things as I meditate on your long-term future, Sagittarius. My guess is that your current labor of love will reach full maturity in the next 18 to 20 months. This will be a time to bring all your concentration and ingenuity to bear on making it as good as it can be. By September of 2017, you will have ripened it as much as it can be ripened.

—Rob Breznsky



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