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Walter Wlodarczyk

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Happy anniversary, Iowa! A decade of marriage equality began in the courts.

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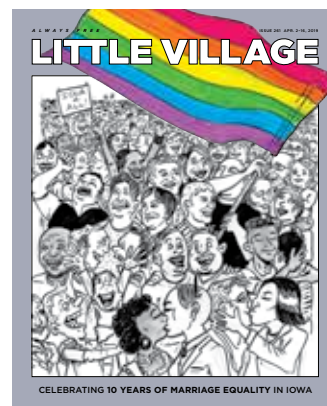
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Little Village is an independent, community-supported news and culture publication based in Iowa City. Through journalism, essays and events, we work to improve our community in the Iowa City, Coralville and Cedar Rapids area according to a few core 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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INTERACTIONS

LV encourages community members, including candidates for office, to submit letters to Editor@LittleVillageMag.com. To be considered for print publication, letters should be under 500 words. Preference is given to letters that have not been published elsewhere.

Letter to the editor: Kaufmann's sports betting bill pushes gambling addiction

I've read a summary of Bobby Kaufmann's bill and have been impressed. This bill brings a now socially acceptable gambling into the light. If we don't, then people will still find a bookie and bet on credit (Can't do this with casinos) or gamble offshore where they won't guarantee your payout. (I've heard plenty of stories where they don't.) This bill provides protections to the consumer. They added an amendment to include some of the profit going to gambling addiction.

Sports gambling won't bring a lot of tax revenue because people can actually use skill to win unlike slots. Sports gambling is fun and played in moderation. If you

think gambling is immoral, that's fine! Just go bother [with something] else that's more dangerous like alcohol, smoking, sugar, climate change, smog, chemical runoff into rivers, etc ... —*John K.*

The government does not need to parent everyone. People should have free choice to decide for themselves whether to gamble and, if so, how much and how often.

—*Adam J.P.*

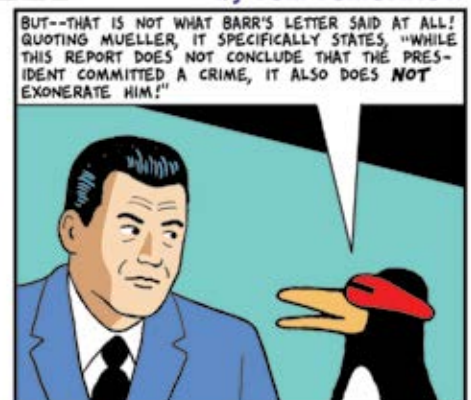
Dark money group steps up support for new fee on solar panels

If you can't beat them, legislate and tax them into oblivion. —*Christoph G.*

Thanks for covering this. What a scummy sham. —*Chris C.*

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



TOM TOMORROW © 2019

HAVE AN OPINION?

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Andrew Yang discusses quality of life, fake news prevention and his 'Freedom Dividend' in Iowa City

I met Andrew briefly last week at the Yacht Club. His ideas and demeanor are a breath of fresh air. I'm not certain UBI is politically feasible, but given the direction that automation and tech are already moving, UBI is almost certainly going to be needed in the future in some form. The U.S. is arguably the most advanced economy/country in history; we can afford to sacrifice a little so our people live well. —*Mckay*

State Senate approves multi-million dollar program to promote 'Iowa work ethic' among Medicaid recipients

Why not start at the top and approve a program to ensure that the president of the United States actually exhibits a proper work ethic, by actually *working* at least eight hours a day, instead of watching Fox news and tweeting nonsense for three hours a day and then going out to golf? Such hypocrites. —*Kathy D.S.*

I have friends who have been jobless and looking for a job for over a year. How can you expect them to work when they can't get hired? —*Jayne R.*

The "declining Iowa work ethic"? I think this is what galls me most. I also love how Republicans will spend millions of dollars to shame and punish a very, very small portion of Medicaid recipients. There are often much larger, structural issues keeping those who aren't working from working. It isn't simply laziness, despite what Republicans think. —*Katherine O.S.*

So many Iowans are full time care givers to others, family members with dementia, disabled children that no daycare will accept, etc. What are they supposed to do? Again, Iowa legislating morality and treating constituents like children. Sick and tired of this American Taliban. —*Nikole P.T.*

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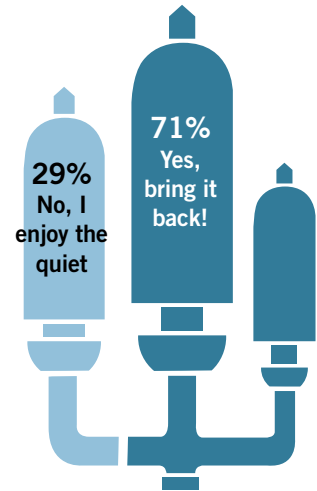
INTERACTIONS



 /LittleVillage

READER POLL

Do you miss the Iowa City steam whistle?



Poll: Midwesterners favor marijuana legalization more strongly than other Americans

We have the best top soil in the world and we're not growing tasty herb? —*del*

Your Village: What happened to Iowa City's steam whistle?

I was wondering what happened. I have been enjoying not hearing it. We live at the top of hill just a couple blocks from it and it is super loud. —*Jenny M.*

Bring it back sooner rather than later. It's literally one of the best traditions of IC. If it's a money issue, I'd happily contribute to any fundraising. —*PSCodd*

The part about the Iowa students blasting the whistle during the Iowa State game is hilarious! —*Megan K.*

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JOHN MARTINEK





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Spring Breakers



This past week, the University of Iowa

observed that time-honored tradition known as “spring break.” You know this already, of course, either because you sort of vaguely noticed that the bars weren’t quite as hoppin’ on Friday night, or because you went splitsies with six other people on a room at the South Padre Island Motel 6. This year, your faithful correspondent decided to forgo my traditional reenactment of that one episode of *The O.C.* where they all get arrested in Tijuana. Instead, I traveled to a far more exotic locale: Cedar Rapids.

I’m a family values kind of girl, readers, and I can appreciate the importance of regularly spending time with one’s clan, but I cannot report that it was without its trials. You know how going home makes you feel like a teenager all over again? This was literally that kind of week. When my sister and I borrowed our father’s pickup truck to go to the Hot Topic that still proudly resides in the Lindale Mall, we were pulled over by a truancy officer on suspicion of joyriding because of the sheer size of the vehicle, which made us look like children. Yeehaw.

We also celebrated my younger brother’s birthday at one of those restaurants that serves food from every culture that could remotely be described as Asian—like a Cheesecake Factory, but with gongs on the wall. Our parents insisted that we wear our “church clothes” to mark the occasion. I became intensely nostalgic for good old Iowa City, where you have your pick of authentic Szechuan joints, none of which serve apple pie.

Finally, I rounded out the week with a comedy show at the up-and-coming brewery, Thew Brew, a trendy little cinderblock building nestled underneath the interstate overpass. One thing I had forgotten about the city of my birth is that it’s a little more focused on presentation. In Iowa City, it’s perfectly acceptable to wear a man’s oxford as a dress and forget to brush your hair for, say, six years. In Cedar Rapids, it gets you a lot of extra tips at your comedy show, because above all, Cedar Rapidianians are charitable.

All in all, I’m glad to be home. LV

—Audrey Brock

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What's in a bud?

People have used cannabis in a wide variety of forms and for many different reasons over the course of thousands of years, whether to treat anxiety and depression in ancient India, or enhance a Sleep concert in modern Middle America. It wasn't until the mid-20th century, though, that researchers began to isolate and identify the specific molecules that are responsible for the effects one experiences when consuming this class of plant. Taking their name from the plant itself, these substances are known as cannabinoids.

The first to be discovered was cannabidiol, or CBD, in 1940. Tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, followed in 1964. These two cannabinoids are the most abundant and well understood, but there are over 100 others which appear in lower concentrations in various strains of cannabis. As the primary psychoactive cannabinoid (meaning it's responsible for the high traditionally associated with smoking or eating cannabis), THC has long been the more popular of the two. Over the last several decades, growers have selectively bred cannabis plants to produce an increasingly large proportion of this chemical.

Both THC and CBD have medicinal uses such as managing pain, nausea and anxiety. However, CBD has recently increased in popularity because it isn't psychoactive, and thus doesn't have intoxicating effects. When smoking or cooking with raw plant matter, one will most likely be consuming both THC and CBD. Various strains have been bred to contain much higher levels of one than the other, but both are generally present.

However, it is also possible to process the cannabis plant to separate them. Doing this enables the sale of products that contain little to no THC. For example, Iowa's extremely narrow medical cannabis system limits the THC content of approved products to 3 percent—low enough to be virtually ineffective. The 33 other states that have legalized medicinal cannabis allow patients access to both THC and CBD. LV/

—The Cannabis Columnist

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Below: American Ballet Theatre, Hancher Auditorium, and Nolte Academy of Dance collaborated to bring a dab of Whipped Cream to the 2018 University of Iowa Homecoming Parade! (Photos: Zak Neumann, John Emigh/UI Center for Advancement)



In this full-length story ballet—which will include a bevy of local dancers—a young boy overindulges at a Viennese pastry shop and falls into a delirious dream, filled with sugary heroes who come to his rescue. This dollop of delightful whimsy is a treat for the entire family and features alluringly sweet costumes and sets from the mind of pop surrealist visionary Mark Ryden. Choreographed by Alexei Ratmasky and featuring a score by Richard Strauss performed by Orchestra Iowa, *Whipped Cream* will satisfy your cravings for fun and fabulous dance.

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Love Won

Two Iowa City couples reflect on the ruling that changed their families forever and made a shining case for marriage equality nationwide.

BY EMMA MCCLATCHY

The BarbouRoskes

The day the Iowa Supreme Court announced they'd made a decision in *Varnum v. Brien*, the landmark case that would determine whether to legalize same-sex marriage in Iowa, Dawn and Jennifer BarbouRoskes' two young daughters had covered their faces in temporary tattoos.

"Jen's at work and I'm scrubbing their faces," Dawn recalled. "Bre had fallen at school."

"And had a massive lump on her forehead," Jen said. (The women have a tendency to finish each other's sentences.) "We were told all this national media is going to be there tomorrow. That's exactly how our life goes."

"And we didn't have shoes for McKinley, so we had to get shoes for her," Dawn added with a laugh. Finding humor in stressful situations, they said, is one of their talents as a couple.

After some face-washing, shopping and driving, the Iowa City family eventually found themselves at the Hotel Fort Des Moines. The next morning—April 3, 2009—the BarbouRoskes gathered in a room with the other 11 plaintiffs in the *Varnum* suit. Someone took their cell phones. Their



The *Varnum v. Brien* plaintiffs in 2005, courtesy of the BarbouRoske family (far right).

attorneys were upstairs, sifting through the ruling ahead of a press conference, at which the plaintiffs, in front of the world, would hear the justices' decision.

"We had to prepare our kids that whole time," Dawn said. Breeanna, 6 and a half years old, and McKinley, 11, were also plaintiffs in the case. Their moms told them, "We're fighting for this. It's the right thing. It may not happen, but that doesn't mean we're not a family still."

"That's a lot of pressure: to be sitting in a room knowing other people know what your life has in store for you, but you don't know," Dawn said. "In that moment you're tossed out of a plane, and is the parachute going to open or not?"

Their journey to that hotel room began in 1990, on the Grinnell College campus.

Jen, who grew up in Wheaton, Illinois, was working at Grinnell General Hospital; Dawn, originally from Jacksonville, Florida, took a theater job at the college.

"It was a really poor career choice, but it was a fabulous life choice," Dawn said.

They met in a "traditional" lesbian way, they joked: on a local softball team. They only played a couple games. Then, together, they moved to Iowa City, where they became one of the first couples in town to register as domestic partners. They melded their last names, becoming the BarbouRoskes.

After years of living between Iowa, San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, D.C., Pennsylvania and other places, they settled back in Iowa City to raise their family. The mothers started Proud Families, a group of more than 30 gay and lesbian parents in area



1970

Jack Baker and Michael McConnell are rejected when they apply for a marriage license in Hennepin County, Minnesota. They file a lawsuit, *Baker v. Nelson*.

1972



U.S. Supreme Court rejects appeal of *Baker v. Nelson*.

Video still from *Leonard D. Bart*, WCCO-TV4 (ABC) Minneapolis.

1973



Maryland passes the country's first law against same-sex marriage. Twenty-seven other states will eventually do the same.

1993

Hawaii Supreme Court rules that state can only ban same-sex marriage if there is a "compelling" reason to do so.

1996



President Clinton signs Defense of Marriage Act, stopping the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages.

schools who met once a month to chat while their kids played.

The community they helped build through Proud Families was tapped by Lambda Legal, a nonprofit organization working to achieve LGBT equality across the country. Iowa was well suited for marriage equality, Lambda told local parents in an outreach meeting, with a constitution primed for civil rights advancements and a reputation as a model Heartland state. Part of Lambda's legal strategy was to collect and share the stories of average LGBT couples in Iowa.

"It's your story that engages people and that starts to change hearts and minds," Dawn said. "With that, then, you have to become more free-flowing about your story. Which took work. Not to craft the story, but to get more comfortable sharing everything."

The BarbouRoskes toured small-town Iowa, sitting on panels and discussing some of their darkest experiences—struggles that may have been mitigated had they had access to traditional spousal and parental rights: Jen giving birth to McKinley prematurely; Jen's hospitalization for a heart condition, during which Dawn was told by an ER clerk she could not be with her partner; the costly, complicated process of securing adoption rights for both parents, for both of their daughters.

In 2005, the couple agreed to become plaintiffs in Lambda's planned marriage lawsuit, led by attorneys Camilla Taylor and Kenneth D. Upton, Jr. They hardly hesitated.

"[My parents] didn't understand at all why we were doing the case. 'Why does it have to be you?'" Dawn said. "Because we want to do it, and we're proud and we want this change. We've been working and advocating for all of these years to make this happen because we don't have these rights."

First things first: they had to apply, and

be rejected, for a marriage license at the Office of the Polk County Recorder. The BarbouRoskes were the first of the six couples involved in the lawsuit to complete this technicality. They drove to Des Moines with their daughters and Natoshia Askelson, their friend and witness, and submitted their application with a \$35 fee.

"They weren't quite sure what to do," Dawn said of the Polk County clerks. They took some time to confer with their supervisors before formally denying the request of a marriage license. "It hits you: You're a second-class citizen. But we knew that was going to happen. We couldn't file a lawsuit until we had been denied. Then we took the girls to the science museum."

"We had a great time," Jen said.

In summer 2006, Jen and Dawn made the more difficult decision to add their children to the lawsuit. Trusting Lambda's judgement and the legitimacy of their daughters' claims to justice, they agreed. McKinley and Bre, as well as Jamison Olson, became the first children to serve as plaintiffs in a marriage equality case in the U.S. They faced a lack of legal protections and "a loss of dignity and legitimacy," according to Lambda's filings, because of their parents' inability to marry.

"What I did, it wasn't just for my family, it was for a ton of families," a 12-year-old McKinley told the *New York Times* in 2010, reflecting on her involvement in the case.

Through every step of the lawsuit, appealed all the way to the state's supreme court, the plaintiffs became like family, Dawn said. The BarbouRoskes, Kate and Trish Varnum, David Twombly (who passed away on Dec. 8, 2018), Larry Hoch, Ingrid Olson, Reva Evans, Jamison Olson, Jason Morgan, Chuck Swaggerty, Bill Musser and Otter Dreaming all contributed their presence in

the courtroom as well as their stories, shared through the attorneys' petitions and statements.

They attended oral arguments in front of the Iowa Supreme Court in December 2008, and were cautioned by Lambda to expect massive protests.

"They would tell us, 'Prepare the kids because they're going to hear some awful things,'" Jen said. "So we sit the kids down and say, 'OK, you might hear people say *this* about your parents and you might hear them say *this* about people you know.' And then they didn't hear them so, sadly—I mean, it's good—"

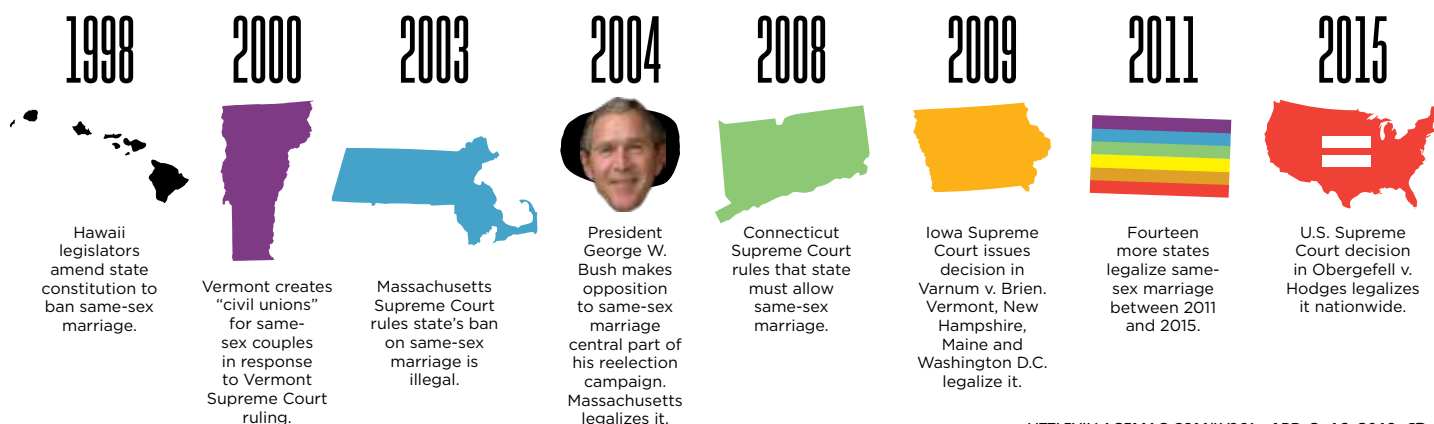
"But we ended up saying worse things to them than the protesters," Dawn said as both mothers laughed. Demonstrations that day were rather tame, it turned out, despite the keen interest vocal anti-LGBT organization Focus on the Family took in the case.

Chief Justice Marsha Ternus—who was removed from office in a post-Varnum retention election but went on to receive the Profile in Courage Award from the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation—made the unique decision to allow cameras in the courtroom during opening arguments as a means of educating the public. Sitting in the front row, amid the pomp and circumstance of the Supreme Court, Dawn and Jen had the distinct impression the camera was trained on them.

When it was over, the waiting game began again until finally, on April 3, 2009, Camilla Taylor approached the podium in the hotel conference room. Dawn and Jen tried to decipher the verdict from her expression.

"We couldn't read her," Jen said. "No smile."

"None of us knew," Dawn said. "Then she was like—"



“‘We won,’” Jen said. She and Dawn recited in unison, “‘It was unanimous.’”

Dawn showed me her arms, covered in goosebumps. She said she still gets them, 10 years later, whenever she thinks of that moment.

“It was amazing. It was thrilling,” she said. “McKinley just naturally threw her hands up and was so excited.” An AP photographer snapped a photo. It would wind up in papers and magazines across the country and, later, in a frame on the BarbouRoskes’ living room wall.

Hugs, kisses and a whirlwind of questions followed the announcement. Through all the celebrations, Dawn said they couldn’t help

“IT HITS YOU: YOU’RE A SECOND-CLASS CITIZEN. BUT WE KNEW THAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN. WE COULDN’T FILE A LAWSUIT UNTIL WE HAD BEEN DENIED.”

wanting to hurry home.

“Your knee-jerk reaction is, let’s drive back to Iowa City and get the license, because what if they revoke [the ruling]?”

Reluctantly, they followed Lambda’s advice and took their time (a few months, at least) to plan the wedding their way, which included rainbow cupcakes and plenty of kid-centric entertainment. They saw it as a time to rejoice and rejuvenate.

The BarbouRoskes’ signed a marriage license at last. Camilla Taylor and Janelle Rettig contributed their signatures as witnesses. Some of their fellow plaintiffs attended. That summer was full of weddings.

An even stronger sense of validity came with the federal acknowledgement of their marriage rights in 2013, and then the legalization of same-sex marriage nationwide in 2015, Dawn said. But there was, and is, still so much work to do, from guarding the laws in place to establishing protections for trans and nonbinary individuals.

A substitute teacher through much of the Varnum case, Dawn now works as an ELP teacher at Longfellow Elementary in Iowa City; Jen has shifted from nursing at the

University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics to serving as the school nurse at Mark Twain, another Iowa City elementary school. Both are members of the Iowa City Community School District’s LGBTQ+ Steering Committee.

“What we’ve done is take our focus and efforts, emboldened by our collective victories, and have focused in the last six years in particular on really pushing to create policy and openness and professional development and awareness to families,” Dawn said.

The BarbouRoskes helped establish an ICCSD presence at the Iowa City Pride Festival, and invited district staff to submit their names and photos to a book of allies, creating a resource for LGBTQ students.

“We’re trying to help the next generation,” Jen said, and Dawn continued, “because it wasn’t there for us. We’ve secured rights for families, but we still have kids who are being left out, who are in non-supportive households and environments and for whom school can be one of those.” LGBTQ youth are more than eight times more likely to attempt suicide than other students, she noted. “It can’t just be that whispered thing anymore. They have to find safety and protection and people they can go to, and have respect for who they are.”

In April 2018, ICCSD approved a statement of inclusion for LGBTQ+ youth. In the schools themselves, textbooks now include sections on Varnum v. Brien.

The Grays

Decades before Lois and Karen Gray became one of the first same-sex couples in Iowa to legally marry, they were Iowa farm girls, courting each other on the campus of Grand View College in Des Moines.

In the mid-1980s, in fairly quick succession, the women became friends, then roommates, then girlfriends. This evolution was organic, they said, though neither was fully aware of their attraction to women until they met each other. Lois was from New Hampton, Karen from Lake City; both are from fairly conservative families.

“I remember an early date, we went to the Des Moines capitol after hours and we brought a bottle of wine and we sat and drank it on the steps of the State Capitol Building,” Lois recalled.

“I remember that!” Karen said.

They were confident they’d be together forever. The women decided they were married in their hearts and minds, and set Feb. 24, 1986 as their anniversary: February 1986, because it was the month they “knew they were more than friends,” and the 24th because Lois was born on May 15, Karen June 9, and 15 plus 9 equals 24.

“By the time we graduated college, it would have been easy to gravitate to San Francisco or somewhere with a more out and visible LGBTQ mecca,” Lois said. “But since family was so important to us, we made a conscious decision to stay in the Midwest.”

Their parents weren’t exactly celebrating the relationship—Lois’ felt a little awkward about it and seemed to see it as lesser than her siblings’ heterosexual relationships; Karen’s family has “always been quietly accepting”—but they enjoyed walking, hiking and traveling together, as well as visiting gay bars, including Iowa City’s now-closed 620 Club.

“It wasn’t like we were really into the bar scene, but it was a space where you could feel safe and kind of celebrate and feel open and hold hands without worrying about violence or harassment,” Lois said. “You could just dance and enjoy the music.”

Karen joined the Army Nurse Corps and served as a second lieutenant from 1986-1989. “I couldn’t be out,” Karen said. “That was a tough time.”

Before long, their sights turned to starting a family.

“We had considered ourselves married for 10 years and our life was just structured and designed to have children, and that’s what we wanted more than anything. To go through that experience was just amazing,” Karen said.

“Karen carried our first daughter and I carried our second daughter, 16 months apart,” Lois said. “There was this big fear and concern for us: If something happened to one parent, what would happen to the non-biological child?”

They pursued second-parent adoption, a long and expensive process that involved them moving their family from Cedar County to the less conservative Johnson County, where there were a few recorded instances of same-sex couples being granted second-parent adoption rights. Around 2003 or 2004, the rights were granted.

The Grays stuck around as their first daughter started school, sure the child of same-sex parents would be safer in the Iowa

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City Community School District than other eastern Iowa districts. That didn't mean there weren't challenges.

"I often felt like I lived in a glass house, because we were one of the first lesbian parents that some educators, even in Iowa City at that time, had encountered," Lois said. "There was always this feeling of representing; you're just living your life, but you recognize that it has repercussions."

Lois and Karen had never imagined marriage equality would be achieved in their lifetimes. Then the *Varnum v. Brien* decision came through on April 3, 2009.

"It was just kind of hard to believe at first that it was real. It rocked my world for a little bit," Lois said of the ruling that legalized same-sex marriage in Iowa. "It was really shocking, but also exhilarating and affirming."

Spousal rights had been on Lois and Karen's minds since the '80s, when they saw a film about an older lesbian woman who was denied survivor's benefits after the death of her partner.

"We thought, 'We need that legal protection.' It wouldn't make our relationship any

stronger or make us love each other any more. What it can do is protect us legally if something happened to us. Benefits, Social Security, just all those things any committed couple would want [in] protections and recognition," Lois said.

Weeks away from a family vacation to Washington D.C., Lois and Karen felt an urgency to cement the protections granted by *Varnum* for their daughters, should anything happen to them. Marriage licenses—which same-sex couples were able to access starting



Lois and Karen Gray in their Coralville home. Zak Neumann / Little Village

Making a Case for Equality

How marriage (and divorce) came to 'take on a new meaning' in Iowa.

BY PAUL BRENNAN

The path to marriage equality in Iowa started with a divorce.

Kimberly Brown and Jennifer Perez traveled from their home in western Iowa to Vermont in 2002 to be joined in a civil union, a substitute for traditional civic marriages Vermont created for same-sex couples in 2000. But during the following year, Brown and Perez decided to go their separate ways. Like any couple in their situation, they hired attorneys.

A petition to dissolve the civil union was included in a group of divorce petitions presented to Woodbury County District Judge Jeffrey Neary in November 2003. Neary realized any decision he made would be controversial. But it was an amicable split, and Neary felt bound by judicial comity to respect the laws of another state as long as they didn't contradict the laws of Iowa.

Iowa passed a law against same-sex couples

getting married in 1998, but nothing in that law dealt with the divorce of people married in other states. Neary approved Brown and Perez's petition.

The *Sioux City Journal* printed a story on the divorce, but it wasn't until the *Des Moines Register* ran a front-page story titled "Iowa Judge OKs Lesbian Divorce" on Dec. 2, 2003, that the case got much attention.

Conservative politicians and anti-LGBTQ groups across the state exploded in outrage. A same-sex divorce was an implicit recognition that same-sex unions were valid, they complained. Worse, they feared Neary's decision might turn Iowa into a destination for same-sex couples wanting a divorce.

A group of right-wing lawmakers filed a petition with the Iowa Supreme Court, asking the justices to invalidate the Brown-Perez divorce. Republicans in the legislature began pushing for an amendment to the Iowa Constitution to prohibit same-sex marriage. Both efforts not only failed, they actually backfired on the opponents of same-sex marriage.

"Had those legislators left the case alone, I wouldn't have gotten Lambda Legal's attention," Des Moines attorney Sharon Malheiro later said. "We can thank them for *Varnum*."

As Tom Witosky and Matt Hansen

explained in their book about the *Varnum* decision, *Equal Before the Law: How Iowa Led Americans to Marriage Equality*, Malheiro, then-president of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center in Des Moines, had been trying to interest Lambda Legal, a nonprofit legal organization that advocates for LGBTQ rights, in supporting a court challenge to Iowa's 1998 marriage law.

Malheiro believed same-sex couples could win, thanks to the Iowa Supreme Court's long tradition of protecting civil rights more strongly than the U.S. Supreme Court does. But she also knew that a case would be expensive, so it needed the support of an organization like Lambda Legal. She reached out to Camilia Taylor, an attorney with Lambda Legal's Marriage Project in Chicago.

Taylor was intrigued by the Brown-Perez case, and impressed by the way the Iowa Supreme Court handled it. In June 2005, the court dismissed the lawmakers' petition to invalidate.

"Iowa law has never permitted such unwarranted interference in other people's cases," Chief Justice Louis Lavarato wrote. "Simply having an opinion does not suffice for standing."

Taylor had already been consulting with

April 27—usually have a three-day waiting period after being issued before they're active. The Grays, along with six other couples, were granted a waiver to the waiting period the morning of April 27, meaning they were free to become officially married that day.

"It happened pretty rapidly," Lois said.

After getting the call about the waiver, the Grays pulled their daughters out of school, called Lois' two nephews, on their way up from Utah for a casual visit, to tell them to hurry, and invited a couple neighbors to be witnesses. "It was just this very small consolation of people who were close to us and who celebrated our relationship," Lois said.

The *Press-Citizen* ran a front-page photo of the women walking down the steps of the Johnson County Courthouse, grinning after signing their license. In the weeks and years since, they said they've received more support than they anticipated, particularly in their jobs at the University of Iowa—Lois, with the College of Education and Karen in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the UI Children's Hospital.

"The unit that I worked for at the hospital,

they would have group celebrations for wedding showers, and even though we weren't having a traditional wedding, Lois and I were included," Karen said. "I'm not a really out person, I don't talk about really personal issues, so it was really affirming to get that support from the university."

"Even to say I have a wife—even having it be legal, it has made it better for me to come out," she continued. "I have [proof] that my marriage matters as much as a heterosexual marriage does, where I didn't have that until that law was passed. I definitely think I was more closeted before, or at least not as open."

Another landmark moment came on June 26, 2015, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on *Obergefell v. Hodges*, securing marriage equality nationwide.

"That definitely made a big difference for our rights as a married couple," Karen said.

"It made doing taxes a lot easier," Lois added with a laugh.

Today, the couple is celebrating the success of their daughters: The oldest is headed to medical school, the youngest to work for the United Launch Alliance coding rockets after

graduating from UI.

Between the laws on the books and better representation of LGBTQ people and families in TV, movies, comic books, YouTube channels and social media, Lois said they're seeing "more reflections of our reality now."

A much less hopeful narrative is playing out in the U.S. legislature, Karen said, but despite the proposal of policies that threaten to stifle LGBTQ progress, she feels homophobic rhetoric is being taken to task better than in the past.

"People have to acknowledge what they believe and then support why they think someone should have less rights than them," she noted. "I'm optimistic people will do the right thing. That they will not take away our rights and go back in time."

One thing that hasn't changed in 33 years has been the bond between Lois and Karen Gray.

"In our hearts and minds, we've always been married," Lois said. "I feel like the arc of our life has been that of a married couple." **LV/**

Emma McClatchey is Little Village's managing editor.

Malheiro and fellow attorney Janelle Rettig about the possibility of Lambda Legal launching a case in Iowa when the court dismissed the lawmaker's petition. Rettig, still four years away from becoming a Johnson County Supervisor, was already a well-known advocate for civil and human rights in Iowa. She and her wife, Robin Butler, had been leaders of the opposition to the constitutional amendment against same-sex marriage. (Rettig and Butler had been married in Canada, where same-sex marriage had been. After the court's ruling, Taylor, Malheiro and Rettig agreed it was time to act.

Six same-sex couples from around the state were selected. Starting on Nov. 3, 2005, each would go to the Polk County Recorder's Office and apply for a marriage license. All six were rejected. On Dec. 13, 2005, Lambda Legal, working with Des Moines attorney Dennis Johnson, sued Polk County Recorder Timothy Brien on behalf of the couples. Katherine Varnum of Cedar Rapids had already agreed to give her name to the case as the lead plaintiff.

Polk County District Judge Robert Hanson ruled in favor of the plaintiffs on Aug. 30, 2007, finding that prohibiting same-sex marriage violated rights guaranteed to Iowans by

the state constitution. Hanson put his decision on hold four hours after issuing it, because it was being appealed, but during that brief period Iowa's first same-sex marriage happened.

Timothy McQuillan and Sean Fritz of Ames, who weren't part of the lawsuit, drove to their recorder's office in Des Moines, got a marriage license and were married during the 240 minutes same-sex marriage was possible.

But for everyone else, the question of same-sex marriage's legality wasn't settled until the Iowa Supreme Court issued its decision on April 3, 2009. That decision was unanimous—Hanson's ruling was affirmed.

Varnum v. Brien was the first time any state supreme court had ruled unanimously in favor of same-sex marriage. It was also the first time a court had directly addressed the religious objections to same-sex marriage.

"The sanctity of all religious marriages celebrated in the future will have the same meaning as those celebrated in the past," Justice Mark Cady wrote for the court. "The only difference is civil marriage will now take on a new meaning that reflects a more complete understanding of equal protection of the law. This result is what our constitution requires." **LV/**

Paul Brennan is Little Village's news director.

THE REACTION

to the Iowa Supreme Court decision in *Varnum v. Brien* is almost as famous as the decision itself. Conservative politicians and anti-LGBTQ groups were enraged. And not just in Iowa. National groups flooded the state with money—reportedly more than \$700,000—to defeat three members of the supreme court on the judicial retention ballot in the 2010 election. It worked. All three lost.

Less well-known are the attempts to unseat Judge Neary, who approved the Brown-Perez divorce in 2003. His regularly scheduled retention elections happened in 2004 and 2010. He survived both times, but by lower-than-expected margins. By 2016, however, same-sex marriage was no longer generating much anger in voters. Neary won retention that year with 71.2 percent of the vote. **LV/**

En Español

El florista

POR BENITO OCAMPO CAMPOS

Mi nombre es Benito Ocampo Campos, y nací en el Estado de Morelos, México, donde crecí a lado de mi familia. Pasaba mucho tiempo al aire libre. Mi ciudad natal estaba centrada en la agricultura y manufactura, y mi padre fue un agricultor ganadero de la región de Tilzapotla, Morelos.

Yo soy uno de sus tres hijos, y mis días comenzaban por las madrugadas ya que los días de vacaciones y fines de semana me despertaba a las 4 de la mañana para comenzar a realizar tareas en el campo. Esto me permitió pasar mucho tiempo con la naturaleza y disfrutar todo lo que ella nos provee. Una de las cosas que más admiraba era ver la belleza de las plantas y las flores; las buganvillas es una de mis flores favoritas, y me encantaba verlas crecer alrededor de la colonia. Las flores es uno de los grandes regalos que la naturaleza nos provee.

Durante este tiempo, también aprendí que las flores son temporales, y me recuerda que hay un ciclo para todo en la naturaleza y en la vida. Esto me crea una sensación de agradecimiento y maravilla, Fue durante mi infancia que mi amor por las flores podía desarrollar y se convirtió en mi pasión.

A los 21 años de edad, me mudé a la ciudad de Chicago donde viví por 5 años, y en los cuales comencé a estudiar inglés por las tardes y por el día trabajaba en diferentes fábricas. Hace aproximadamente 3 años me mudé a Iowa City. Empecé a trabajar en el Coralville Marriott y al mismo tiempo estudiaba diseño floral. Era una de las metas que tenía; estudiar y aprender más sobre las flores. Uno de mis grandes sueños fue emprender mi propio

negocio, lo cual sabía que iba a ser una meta difícil pero no imposible. Después de tres años de buscar una locación donde empezar a realizar mi sueño, conocí a Nancy Bird, la directora de la asociación de Iowa City Downtown quien me ayudó a encontrar la locación para mi negocio.

Me decidí a empezar mi propio negocio en Iowa City porque desde la primera vez que visité esta ciudad me encanto. Una de las mejores características que tiene Iowa City es su gente; siempre te reciben con amabilidad y respeto, así es como comencé mi sueño

en Beno's Flowers and Gifts. Ahora tengo la oportunidad de demostrar el amor y la pasión que le tengo a las flores a través de mis diseños. Una de las cosas que más me gusta hacer es diseñar bodas o eventos ya que en estas ocasiones especiales puedes transmitir por medio de las flores la felicidad y el amor.

Estoy agradecido de combinar mi educación y herencia con la cultura de Iowa City y de ofrecer un estilo de diseño que es una combinación de los recuerdos de mi infancia, mientras que también exploro estilos más modernos. Actualmente, me gusta mucho



Zak Neumann / Little Village



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The Florist

BY BENITO OCAMPO CAMPOS
TRANSLATED BY JENNIFER SHYUE
AND ALLANA NOYES

My name is Benito Ocampo Campos, and I was born in the state of Morelos, Mexico, where I grew up surrounded by family. I spent much of my time outside. My hometown is an agriculture and industrial town, and my father was a livestock farmer in the Tilzapotla region of Morelos.

I'm one of three children, and my days started before sunrise. During vacations and on weekends, I'd wake up at 4 in the morning to begin my chores in the fields. This gave me the opportunity to get to know the beauty of plants and flowers and to enjoy all that nature provides for us. I always loved seeing the Bougainvillea growing in my neighborhood, and they are still one of my favorite flowers today.

During this time I also came to realize that flowers are temporal; they are a reminder that there is a cycle to everything in nature and life as well. Flowers are one of the most precious gifts that nature provides us, and this gives me a deep feeling of awe and gratitude. It was during my childhood that my love for flowers began to develop and would eventually become my passion.

At 21, I moved to Chicago, where I lived for five years. While there, I began to study English at night and worked at various factories during the day. I moved to Iowa City about three years ago and started working at the Coralville Marriott while also studying floral design. That was one of my first goals: to study and learn more about flowers. My

dream was to start my own business, which I knew would be difficult, but not impossible. After three years of looking for a location where I could start making my dream come true, I met Nancy Bird, the director of the Iowa City Downtown District, who helped me find a storefront for my business.

I decided to start my business in Iowa City because I fell in love with the city from day one. One of Iowa City's most defining characteristics is its people; they're always ready to make you feel welcomed with kindness and respect. This is how my dream to create Beno's Flowers and Gifts began, and I now have the opportunity to share my love and passion for flowers through my designs. One of the things I most enjoy is designing for events, because one way to spread happiness and love on special occasions is through floral arrangement.

I'm grateful to be able to combine my training and heritage with the culture of Iowa City and to offer designs that represent memories from my childhood while also exploring more modern styles. What I've most loved working on recently are wedding designs and creating arrangements with modern vases. My style is definitely different than what you might see in shops that carry local flowers.

Through the work I do at Beno's Flowers and Gifts, I hope to represent a celebration of life. From the moment you enter Beno's, you gain a sense of joy, peace and love. The products I carry demonstrate my commitment to high quality and authenticity, and I personally take it upon myself to make sure your experience at Beno's Flowers and Gifts is a memorable one. **LV**

Beno Ocampo Campos is the owner of Beno's Flowers and Gifts, located at 107 E Iowa Ave in Iowa City.

trabajar en diseños para bodas y realizar diseños en cajas modernas. Mi estilo es ciertamente diferente de lo que pueden ver en las tiendas de flores locales.

A través de Beno's Flowers and Gifts quiero representar la celebración de la vida. Desde el momento en que entras a Beno's, se transmite felicidad, paz y amor. Por mi selección de productos se refleja la autenticidad y calidad, y yo personalmente me encargó de que en Beno's Flowers and Gifts tengas una experiencia única.

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Though it opened in 2018, LP Street Food looks like it easily could've been in its location for 50 years. It fits seamlessly into the ever-expanding Kingston Village neighborhood just west of downtown Cedar Rapids, and the look is more cozy and lived-in than brand new. That fits well with the food, which is as messy as it is tasty.

The street tacos, prepared with black beans, cashews, chorizo and cilantro coleslaw, are best eaten with a firm grip and a tilted head. The ramen comes with do-it-yourself pour-on broth with a strong peanut flavor, which is likely to spill on your shirt while you enjoy the mildly spicy noodles, veggies and pork belly. The poutine was a stand-out favorite—Philly beef is served over tater tots with herbs and a white queso cheese sauce. It's filling, but the heavier ingredients, like the cheese sauce, are well-portioned to keep the dish from being too heavy.

Right after we arrived at the restaurant, some acquaintances walked through the door and asked if we had ever tried the food. When we said it was our first time, they replied, "Mmm, enjoy," gesturing as though already digging into the food. The restaurant seems to already have a group of dedicated regulars and a super friendly vibe—like you could ask someone at the next table if you can try their food. There's buzz about the



Jessica Carney / Little Village

ramen in particular, perhaps because it's a somewhat rare dish to find in Cedar Rapids. It seems residents appreciate that it's not just greasy, basic food that someone would want when intoxicated (although I'm sure it would taste good then, too). They've added thoughtful touches, like fresh basil and toasted nuts, to dishes that would otherwise be uncomplicated. The menu is small and curated—it only takes up one page—but there's also a secret menu that I hear includes corn dogs and oysters (hopefully not together).

Herbs and elevated touches aside, the fried dishes are the stars. The parmesan tots are delicious and pair nicely with the large

selection of beers, including many locally brewed options. It smelled like Crunch Berries downtown on the day we visited, so we obviously had to order the only dessert on the menu: a donut served on a stick with tons of cinnamon and a marmalade-type drizzle. It's only related to a donut in that it's made of fried dough—its shape is more like a donut disguised as a skewer of vegetables. The portion is generous; I only recommend ordering it if you have a group of friends that will help you conquer it. If you don't, there's most likely a seasoned LP Street Food eater at the next table who will lend a helping hand. **LV**

—Jessica Carney



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Trumpet Blossom Cafe

Wednesday, April 24, 5:00 pm—8:00 pm
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Hancher Culinary Arts Experience presents a special evening with a local favorite, Trumpet Blossom Cafe, opened by Katy Meyer in 2012. Trumpet Blossom provides the community with truly sustainable organic comfort food that highlights the seasons and contains no animal products.

Join us at 5 pm for a social hour with appetizers showcasing spring favorites including deviled new potatoes and ginger carrot bisque. The spring theme continues as the plated dinner delights your palate with a roasted vegetable salad with green goddess dressing; locally-made artisan breads with sprout pesto and edamame hummus; and a main dish featuring local tofu with a lemon herb caper sauce, fresh greens, seasonal veggies, and quinoa. Saving the best for last, dessert is a fun spin on a nostalgic classic, Trumpet Blossom's own Black Iowa Dirt Cake made with vegan chocolate sandwich cookies and edible flowers.

Tickets must be purchased in advance through the Hancher Box Office. Ticket price includes dinner, non-alcoholic beverages, tax, and gratuity. Capacity is limited.

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Colorblind Comics

Love and Comics

Jaime Hernandez looks back on 38 years of his groundbreaking comics series. **BY ROB CLINE**

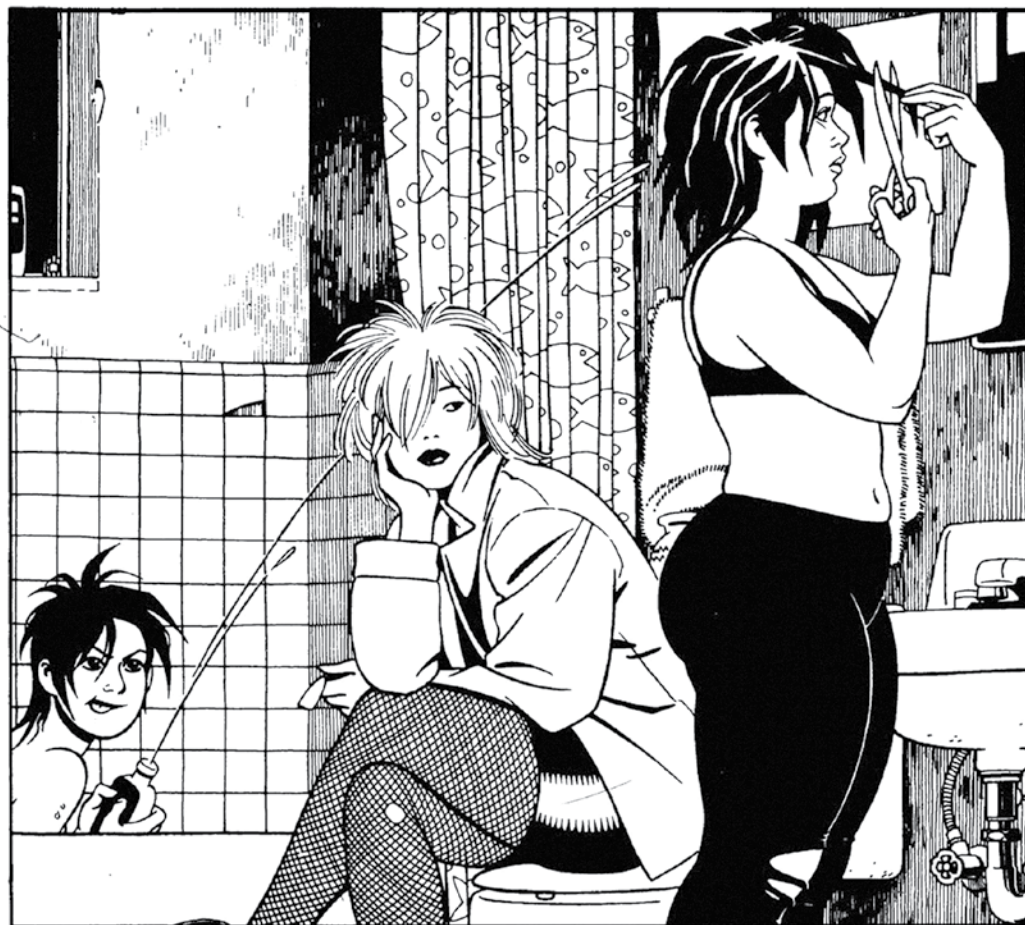
Los Bros Hernandez—Jaime, Gilbert and Mario—self-published the first issue of *Love and Rockets* in 1981. Since then, they (primarily Jamie and Gilbert) have created a substantial body of work. So substantial, in fact, that it can be intimidating to new readers.

But don't ask Jaime Hernandez where to start.

"I throw up my hands and shrug," he said in a phone interview. "Hopefully, if you start any place, it will grab you and you'll want to go back. That's all I can hope for. Of course, that doesn't always work, but I've given up trying to think of where they should start. You know, you could say, 'Yeah, start from the beginning,' and I would say, 'Well, I was pretty young then and still learning.' Some of that stuff I'm a little shy of because it's not fully formed yet. But, you know, I don't know, if they want to, that's fine because some readers have that thing where they need to start from the beginning. Well, good. I just hope you stay with it."

Hernandez will speak as part of the 20th annual International Comic Arts Forum (ICAF), being held this year at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, April 4-6. The forum is free and open to the public.

In its 38 years, *Love and Rockets* has come to be considered one of the most influential works in the medium. As ICAF Academic Director Brittany Tullis puts it, the book "allowed readers who had previously been swimming in seas of straight, white, male characters to finally see themselves (and their



Hopey, Daffy and Maggie from Los Bros Hernandez's *Love & Rockets*



Jaime Hernandez, via Fantagraphics

International Comic Arts Forum: Artist Talk—Jaime Hernandez, St. Ambrose University Rogalski Center, Davenport, Friday, April 5, 7 p.m., Free

families, neighbors and friends) reflected in the pages and panels of comic books."

Maggie and Hopey are the central characters of the *Hoppers 13* (or *Locas*) storyline Hernandez has been crafting throughout the run of *Love and Rockets*. His characters age in real time, growing and changing as their lives and relationships unfurl. That's a lot

ICAF IN DETAIL

Dr. Brittany Tullis, an assistant professor of Spanish and women and gender studies at St. Ambrose as well as academic director on the board of the International Comics Arts Forum, is bringing her two worlds together.

"We are delighted to bring ICAF to St. Ambrose University this year," Tullis said,

"not only because it offers the opportunity for Ambrosians and local community members to come together on campus to further celebrate and explore comics under the larger framework of Visual Narratives (this year's annual theme at St. Ambrose), but also because it has allowed for an exciting collaboration with the Iowa

City Expo for Comics & Real Eclectic Alternative Media."

ICAF, which began in 1995 at Georgetown University, is held in a different location each year, so many of those who attend the free forum are likely experiencing it for the first time. Tullis, whose scholarly focus is Latinx American comics,



of continuity to keep in mind, and Hernandez is up front about the challenges that can present.

"Sometimes I have to avoid certain things because I can't remember. Like when was the last time this character did that particular thing? Hmm, I don't know, so maybe I'll just leave that out until I figure it out," he says. "For the most part, I kind of do it as life is moving forward, so I try to look at it that way more than the million things that have happened before. So I just think, well, I know this character really well, so I know they haven't had a major dramatic experience, or *traumatic* experience, lately, so they're kind of safe, you know? And I can move them forward innocently, without a bad past. You can kind of forgive their mistakes more, so you don't have to think

so much about what mistakes they've made. Some characters made big mistakes, and you can't forget that. So you have to write that sort of underlying trauma or drama."

Los Bros Hernandez's work is often thought of as falling into some combination of categories—Latinx, feminist and more. But Hernandez doesn't think of his art that way.

"I like to think that I'm just part of the comics world," he says. "That my comic is just as legitimate as the next comic. I don't try to put myself in a category, other than the

basic: I'm more independent comics than mainstream comics. That's a given. But other than that, I try to look at it as, this is just a comic for everyone to read; it just happens to have [more] Latinas than the other one."

Hernandez says his ICAF presentation will be a conversation with the audience.

"I'm better with questions than just me mouthing off because I could go in a direction that [the audience gets] pretty bored with. I kind of like to hear a question, and I'll know exactly where they want me to go. Because I can just go on different tangents and not even realize that half the audience is asleep," he says with a laugh.

As for what he's working on next, Hernandez gives an unsurprising answer.

"Just the next *Love and Rockets*. I ended a major story recently and I'm trying to figure which characters to take on next and what kind of stories are coming up."

Hernandez surprised me when he admitted to being "a little shy" of his early work on *Love and Rockets*. I asked him if he could go back to the beginning now and talk to his younger self as the series was just getting started, would he have any advice for that young artist and writer.

"Nah," he says. "I would just say, 'It's fine. You did fine. We all grew up together. It worked out.' I have no regrets, really." **LV**

Born colorblind and therefore convinced he'd never enjoy graphic forms of storytelling, Rob Cline was first bitten by the comics bug in college. The resulting virus lay dormant for many years before it was activated by the inscrutable work of Grant Morrison. Now Cline seeks out the good and bad across the comics landscape as the Colorblind Comics Critic. He thanks the (super)heroic Professor Corey Creekmur, who will also be speaking at ICAF, for providing important background for this story.

is excited to welcome new patrons into the fold.

"First-time attendees can expect an engaging blend of academic presentations by over 40 comics scholars from the U.S. and abroad; artist talks by celebrated creators including Marnie Galloway, Rob Guillory, Jaime Hernandez, Fernando

Iglesias ("Kohell") and Alberto Ledesma; and a keynote by University of Iowa Professor of Hispanic Studies and author Ana Merino," said Tullis (a three-time UI grad herself). "They can also expect the kind of welcoming and inclusive environment that I am proud to say characterizes both the field and this forum." **LV**

MCF: I.C.E. C.R.E.A.M. @ ICAF



Terrestrial Press

I.C.E. C.R.E.A.M. at ICAF, St. Ambrose University Rogalski Center Ballroom, Davenport, Friday, April 5, 3 p.m., Free

MCF: I.C.E. C.R.E.A.M.: The Fourth Annual Iowa City Expo for Comics & Real Eclectic Alt Media, Public Space One, Saturday, Apr. 6, 11 a.m., Free

The fourth annual I.C.E. C.R.E.A.M.—Iowa City Expo for Comics and Real Eclectic Alternative Media—is set for Saturday, April 6 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Public Space One as part of Mission Creek Festival. This year, the expo is expanding its reach by participating in the International Comic Arts Forum on April 5 at St. Ambrose University.

Dave Dugan, an organizer for I.C.E. C.R.E.A.M., says that the goal in bringing expo participants to the ICAF is to help the artists involved find new audiences. "Since ICAF moves their yearly conference around, and they won't be back in Davenport next year, we are hoping to use this unique opportunity to lure more people beyond the Iowa City area to come to the show in Iowa City."

More than 20 independent artists from Iowa and surrounding states will participate in a book fair during ICAF. The Iowa City event at PS1 is even bigger.

"We have over 50 artists selling their wares, including self-published comics, zines, buttons, stickers, T-shirts, cassette tapes, chapbooks of poetry, handmade art books and prints," Dugan said. "Most of the artists are from Iowa, but we have a handful traveling from Chicago, Wisconsin and Minneapolis to participate in the show." **LV**

Upcoming Events:

EVERY MONDAY - PARCHEMENT LOUNGE - 6:30 PM
free write session hosted by Iowa Writer's House
EVERY WEDNESDAY - ANDREW'S BAR EXAM - 7:00 PM

APRIL 5 8:00 - 11:00 PM	John Rapson
APRIL 6 8:00 - 10:00 PM	Good Vibes Only
APRIL 12 8:00 - 10:00 PM	Cedar County Cobras
APRIL 13 8:00-10:00 PM	The Tornadoes
APRIL 19 8:00 - 10:00 PM	Joe & Vicki Price
APRIL 20 8:00-10:00 PM	Mike Maas & Carlis
APRIL 22 5:30 - 7:30 PM	Three Jazz Cats
APRIL 26 8:00 - 10:00 PM	Blake Shaw Trio
APRIL 27 6:00 - 8:00 PM	Saul Labaroff and Michael Wolf

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Courtesy of the artist

Prairie Pop Toss and Turn

How a 'series of unfortunate events' led Boston's Guerilla Toss to electro-punk glory. **BY KEMBREW MCLEOD**

For a band that creates frenetic, rhythm-charged, psychedelic music, Guerilla Toss's absurd origin story is perfectly on-brand. Back when Kassie Carlson first crossed paths with the group at a DIY basement venue named the Smokey Bear Cave, they initially had a saxophonist instead of a vocalist. Meanwhile, she was singing in a hardcore band that was sharing a bill that night with Guerilla Toss.

"When it came time for my band to perform, things got pretty hectic," Carlson said of that 2012 show in Allston, Massachusetts. "At the start of the first song, the room exploded into this crazy mosh pit. Dozens of people were falling all over each other, interlaced, drenched in sweat and looking like a rat king that had just crawled out of a sewer."

During their second song, an audience member who was desperately trying to regain their footing grabbed a pipe and accidentally unleashed even more chaos.

"Before I knew it, cold water was spewing everywhere out on the crowd, amps, me and everyone!" Carlson said. "I really thought everyone was going to be electrocuted. Lucky for us, no one actually died. The only thing that did die was my band."

That night Carlson and the others discovered that their drummer was engaged to the guitarist's girlfriend, a *Spinal Tap*-esque twist that caused the band to fall apart around the same time Guerilla Toss's saxophone player called it quits.

"So, really, this series of unfortunate events led to an extraordinary mind meld," Carlson continued. "We started rehearsing right away, and six weeks after that we went on a tour to SXSW. Right after that, we recorded our first album, *Jeffery Johnson*. Pretty neat!"

Their most recent album, *Twisted Crystal*, opens with synapse-frying layers of guitar textures, synthesized noise and a body-thumping whoomph of a bassline that anchors "Magic Is Easy." At 29 minutes, the album is lean and densely packed, a collage of sonic influences.

Guerilla Toss forms like a funky Voltron assembled from pieces of electronic dance music, hip hop breakbeats, jam band grooves, industrial dissonance, synth pop and jagged post-punk guitar freak-outs. Dynamic on record, the group really pushes the needle into the red during live shows that engage all the senses (complete with lights and projections inspired in part by drummer/producer Peter



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MCF: Guerilla Toss w/ Younger, Dana T, Gabes, Iowa City, Thursday, April 4, 9 p.m., \$10-12

Negroponte's love of the Grateful Dead).

"As a band, we are trying to create a memorable experience, not just a show," Carlson said, describing how they adapt their shows to each specific venue and context. "We aren't the kind of band that just plays all the hits every night. Each setlist is specifically catered to the vibe of the night and changes daily."

Kassie was immersed in music from a young age growing up on Cape Cod in a devoutly religious household, attending church multiple times a week and saying grace in Wendy's over her chicken nuggets. She sang in church and sometimes on local radio in a four-part harmony gospel quartet with her mother, grandmother and grandfather, performing such songs as "He Touched Me" and "On the Wings of a Dove."

"Although some of the subject matter was a little questionable," Carlson said, "I learned a lot about harmonies, cadences and listening in a group. I also studied violin at this time,

DOZENS OF PEOPLE WERE FALLING ALL OVER EACH OTHER, INTERLACED, DRENCHED IN SWEAT AND LOOKING LIKE A RAT KING THAT HAD JUST CRAWLED OUT OF A SEWER.

performing in youth orchestras and learning how to read music by sight and by listening."

"It isn't that I wasn't exposed to anything else as a child," she added, "but more that I

lived with the fear of God inside of me."

Meanwhile, her half-brother was in a (secular) Boston-area hardcore thrash metal band named Only Living Witness during the 1990s, and while he never lived with Carlson, she always looked up to him as a source of personal and musical inspiration.

During high school, she was largely on the musical sidelines, going to punk shows every weekend and hanging out at band rehearsals while listening to her guy friends' music.

"We'd laugh, party, go to shows, but it was always me strumming my guitar or pounding on my Casiotone alone in my room. Why? I don't know. I'd like to think of this as an incubation period, rather than a loss."

Nor does Carlson view her strict religious upbringing, which she has left behind, with regrets. Growing up with a faith that denied the existence of dinosaurs and other such things eventually sparked an over-excited fascination with all things science and made her realize that "being a woman doesn't need

CONT. >> ON PG. 44



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A-List

Advice from the Lights

Stephanie Burt's words will come to life with Mission Creek's visual poetry synthesizer. **BY TALITHA FORD**

Adulthood is complex. Those of us who make it there are often consumed by it, following certain paths set out by families or careers or courses of study. Often, as adults, we leave behind the people we were in childhood, and focus our identities forward to who we think we should be.

Dr. Stephanie Burt, poet, literary critic and professor of English at Harvard University, would say "Fuck that."

Burt wears many proverbial hats in her various roles. She writes, reviews and guides students on their own work, all while balancing the responsibilities of a professor, transgender activist and human person in the 21st century.

She shared her thoughts on identity, art and her upcoming Mission Creek Festival reading in a recent phone interview.

Advice from the Lights, her 2017 collection, is a deeply visceral, personal collection that wrestles with adulthood, childhood and how we experience ourselves. She'll be reading from the book, which was written and published over the course of her transition, at the Visual Poetry Synthesizer during Mission Creek.

"Some of what I'm struggling with in that book is that there's some things about adulthood, like settling down with one person and sharing a dwelling with them, raising children

together, that I love and really want to do a good job at—but in our culture, those things are bound up with cis-heteronormativity and all sorts of expectations that would prevent me from being me, and prevent some people that are like me, from being alive," Burt said.

"Some of [the confines of adulthood] are great ... some of them are terrible ... and some of them are not for me," she said. "Adulthood can also mean closing yourself

off and distancing yourself from your own childhood and teen selves. No one should have to do that."



Courtesy of the artist

MCF: Lit Walk Round #1, Discerning Eye, Iowa City, Friday, April 5, 6 p.m., Free + Visual Poetry Synthesizer, 7 S Linn St, Iowa City, Saturday, April 6, 4 p.m., Free

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"I think that the reclaiming of childhood and ways of speaking and acting that appear childish [are] to me part of the general project, an ethical project of suspending people's completely narrow expectations."

Her body of work has attracted many accolades and awards, including a Guggenheim fellowship awarded in 2016. In her writing, Burt continuously pushes against these boundaries and expectations, using writing as a lifelong tool to explore her many selves.

"In [writing there is] a space to create versions of myself that are not me, a space where I can see myself without having to be myself, and a space where I have been rewarded for expressive behavior that wasn't imaginable in real life ... to create multiple alternate selves when I didn't think I had a real self that I could live out. I still like the idea that writing is creating alternate selves, and I have no wish to give that up."

She hopes to bring a variety of other themes to her Mission Creek readings, including ones that allude to deeper aspects of *Advice from the Lights*. With the added stimulus of the visual poetry synthesizer, more leeway can be given to the works she will share.

"One of the things I want to happen in that book is all about finding community. The thing I'm trying to explore at the end of that book and what I'm writing now are versions of inclusive community. Not just a friend, but friends," Burt said. "The poetry world produced me, and that's the art form I make and people seem to want from me, but there were certain things I wasn't getting when that was my only cultural world. Being in a space that's not dependent on the academy in the same way; [there is] a different kind of way to enjoy it."

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Neely-Cohen (resident artist at NYC's Culture Hub, a community that seeks to blend art and technology) the visual poetry synthesizer uses speech-to-text and word-emotion association software to create and display images drawing from the readings—live and in real time.

An avid consumer and scholar of comic books and graphic novels, Burt looks forward to exploring what pairing her work with the visual poetry synthesizer will add to her words. She calls herself an “X-Men kid,” and frequently draws from the superhero genre's questions of self and representation.

“The X-Fandom is the only cultural space I’ve ever been in that has no majority identity,” Burt said. She’s used these themes in her poetry and, perhaps more transparently, written reviews of major character developments for the *New York Times*.

“I do think about words and images very frequently now ... I write about comic books, and I think about comic books (and graphic novels), and there’s a lot you can do with words and pictures that you can’t do with only words or only pictures,” she said. “I try to think of a lot of the poetry I write as being able to be words alone, but I like the idea of working with images.”

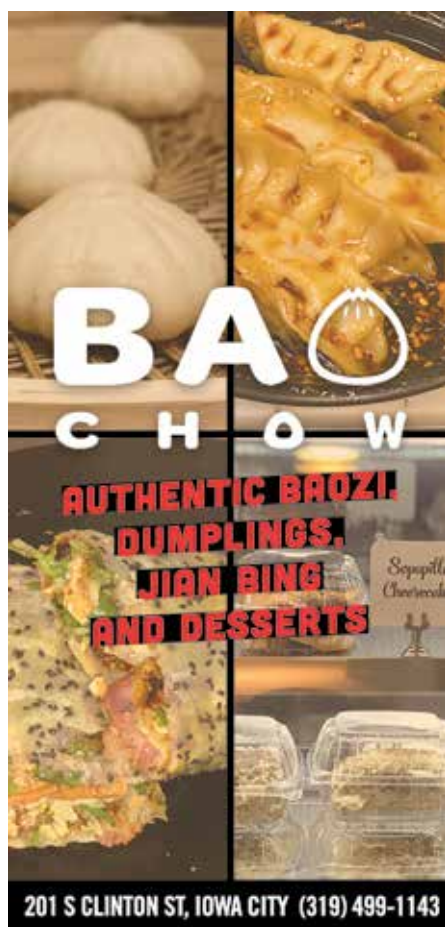
The stories of her alternate selves are all influences on *Advice from the Lights*, and they manifest in themes that can resonate with every reader.

“It’s like what one of my favorite fantasy novelists says: ‘No one is only one thing.’ I like the way the comic space I’m in allows me to be multiple things, and to be multiple things around other people and other trans people.”

Keep an eye out for Burt’s next project, a book of prose called *Don’t Read Poetry: A Book About How To Read Poems*, which debuts in late May. As an introductory guide for people new to the poetry genre, *Don’t Read Poetry* will give readers the tools they need to find and continue finding poetry that they enjoy and can connect with.

Seating is limited for Mission Creek’s Visual Poetry Synthesizer reading. Attend to enjoy an afternoon of incredible work—and maybe to reach out to the kid within yourself. **LV**

Talitha Ford is a University of Iowa fourth year biology student, member of the Janice comedy team and Little Village Arts and Culture intern. Butterflies are her second favorite pollinator, and she can probably name more species than you.



EDITORS' PICKS

CALENDAR

EVENTS AROUND THE CRANDIC APRIL 3-16, 2019

Planning an event? Submit event info to calendar@littlevillagemag.com. Include event name, date, time, venue, street address, admission price and a brief description (no all-caps, exclamation points or advertising verbiage, please). To find more events, visit littlevillagemag.com/calendar. Please check venue listing in case details have changed.

Wed., Apr. 3

Iowa City Open Coffee, Merge, Iowa City, 8 a.m., Free (Weekly)

Health Hacks that will Boost Your Business with Fully Aligned Coaching, MERGE, Iowa City, 11:30 a.m., Free (reservation required)

Gentle Yoga, Public Space One, Iowa City, 5 p.m., \$5-10 (Weekly)

Break Dance Group, Public Space One, Iowa City, 6 p.m., Free (Weekly)

FEATURING POET HEATHER ‘BYRD’ ROBERTS
Reality Bites: Black History is American History, Cedar Rapids Public Library, 6 p.m., Free

MCF: Nonfiction Writing Program Showcase, Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Iowa City, 7 p.m., Free

MCF: Ratboys w/ Halfloves, Pink Neighbor, The Mill, Iowa City, 7:30 p.m., \$8

Open Mic Night, Penguin’s Comedy Club, Cedar Rapids, 8 p.m., Free (Weekly)

MCF: Chef PZ x The Cubist w/ Jordan Burgett, Gabe’s, Iowa City, 9 p.m., \$8-10

Underground Karaoke Wednesday, Iowa City Yacht Club, 9 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Open Stage, Studio 13, Iowa City, 10 p.m., Free (Weekly)

STAFF PICKS

WHAT ARE WE DOING? APR. 3-16, 2019

Still from Are We Good Parents?



MCF: I.C.E. C.R.E.A.M. Comics + Zine Fair, Public Space One, Iowa City, Saturday, April 6, 11 a.m., Free It's really important for art directors to go out and see art, so that's what I'm gonna do on Mission Creek Saturday. At I.C.E. C.R.E.A.M. (Iowa City Expo for Comics and Real Eclectic Alternative Media), 40 or so regional artists, many of whom *Little Village* has been lucky enough to work with (one even illustrated the cover of this issue!), will be displaying and selling their work: comics, zines, sequential works and prints, shirts, stickers (I think it's safe to assume there will be stickers!) and other odds and ends. Get there early so that you might peruse with a walking taco (oh, hell yes!). Stay late and catch bands at I.C.E. C.R.E.A.M. S.A.N.D.W.I.C.H. (Iowa City's Expo for Comics and Real Eclectic Alternative Media's Stellar Audio and Natural Dance With Interjections Coinciding Henceforth, if you're wondering), which, plainly put, will be local bands Astrodome, Couch Fire, Techno Lincoln and Mustard-in-Law till 9 p.m. (Then go see Moor Mother and Mock Identity at Yacht Club!)

—Jordan Sellergren

▲ Lunafest, Englert Theatre, Iowa City, Thursday, April 11, 7 p.m., \$10-45 If you didn't get your fill of female-driven movies at FilmScene during their Women's March series last month, get to the Englert on the 11th for eight more films made by, for and about women. Lunafest 2019 will present its mini short-film festival in 175 cities this year, including Iowa City, thanks to Eastern

Iowa physical education program *Girls on the Run* (all proceeds from the event benefit the program). This year's Lunafest line-up of award-winning dramas and comedies includes a film about a Filipino-American DJ in the '80s, a woman facing down eternity, a 14-year-old surprising her parents with her heterosexuality and more stories discussing immigration, race, sexism and making peace with oneself. Great films, great venue, great cause—and on top of everything, free appetizers and desserts. I assume *Girls on the Run* supports me choosing Lunafest over, well, a run. —Emma McClatchey

EPX Con 2019, University of Iowa Art Building West, Iowa City, Saturday, April 13, 9 a.m., Free I am not a serious video gamer, but I have always been surrounded by them. For that and many other reasons, EPX Con feels like home. It's still small, as cons go, and only on its eighth year in 2019, but the programming is fascinating, the industry guests top-notch and the atmosphere convivial—and breakfast and lunch are complimentary. Guest highlights this year include composer Chance Thomas (*DOTA 2*, *Lord of the Rings Online*), Disney/Pixar animator and Iowa native Kyle Mohr (*Big Hero 6*, *Toy Story 4*), voice actor Neil Kaplan (*Destiny 2*, *Voltron: Legendary Defender*), Discovr Labs CEO and co-founder Gemma Busoni and many more. One of the greatest features is the Interactive Play Lounge, where attendees can play games by local developers, University of Iowa faculty and UI student members of the EPX Studio, which runs the con. —Genevieve Trainor

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- Mo Apr 8 **Lucy Wainwright and Suzzy Roche**
- We Apr 10 **Söndörgö**
- Th Apr 11 **Nordic Fiddlers Bloc**
- Su Apr 14 **Peter Mulvey**
- Mo Apr 15 **Portland Cello Project**
- Sa Apr 20 **David Huckfelt**
- Su Apr 28 **Mason Jennings**
- We May 1 **Alistair Moock**
- Fr May 3 **Mile Twelve**
- We May 8 **Jeffrey Foucault**
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TOP PICKS: QUAD CITIES

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Zak Neumann / Little Village

▲ Wake w/ Closet Witch, Rock Island Brewing Company, Rock Island, Wednesday, April 3, 8 p.m., free The true north grindcore specialists of Wake have thrashed audiences throughout the western hemisphere, and the music press loooves Closet Witch, a fast-rising QC favorite featuring pixiesque vocalist Mollie Piatetsky, who's raging scream-bellow radiates invincibility. Do not miss this shit. Wear expendable clothing and plan to call in sick on Thursday.

—Melanie Hanson

The Golden Fleece Album Release Show w/ Condor & Jaybird, Faintlife, Rozz-Tox, Rock Island, Friday, April 5, 9 p.m., \$5 Fresh off trips to SXSW and Treefort Music Fest, the Golden Fleece return to the homeland to release their much anticipated new album *Mind Mirror*, out April 5 on Goldbird Recordings. Beloved local psych wizards Condor & Jaybird and Chicago neo-psychedelic outfit Faintlife will open the show. The Golden Fleece say *Mind Mirror* is "the kind of album you listen to once, then throw on a pile of fire." —Paige Underwood

Outlet x Rozz-Tox Presents: Tatsuya Nakatani w/ Assif Tsahar, Randall Hall & Tony Oliver, Rozz-Tox, Rock Island, Sunday, April 7, 8 p.m., \$8-12 Last time I saw avant-garde percussionist, composer and performing artist Tatsuya Nakatani at Rozz-Tox, the audience had circled around him on the floor, paying close attention to

each new bowl, stick, bell or tool he introduced into the performance and taking in each and every sound with unwavering admiration. Trust me, you've never seen anything like this before. Joining Nakatani will be Assif Tsahar, an Israeli tenor saxophonist and bass clarinetist. Experimental saxophone/percussion duo Randall Hall & Tony Oliver will open the show. —PU

Just Blow the Roof Off, Great River Brewery, Davenport, Sunday, April 7, 1 p.m., free This fundraiser for legendary venue Codfish Hollow features local musicians and Hollow alums, hors d'oeuvres and a raffle and auction, all to support the reroofing of the Hollow Barn, a \$30,000 project. The barn's roof is one of its unique identifying characteristics, giving audiences the sense they're seeing a show inside a whale. Help keep this Iowa landmark alive and have a blast doing it. —MH

Roaring Rhetoric ft. Amari Walker, Courtney Smith, Rozz-Tox, Rock Island, Saturday, April 13, 6 p.m., \$10-15 Local spoken-word artist, author and dancer Amari Walker supports Des Moines' Courtney Smith for this edition of Roaring Rhetoric, now in its fourth year. Smith began performing spoken word and slam poetry at 19. She now teaches writers of all ages to find their own voices and access poetry's healing properties. Groove on it. —MH LV/

EDITORS' PICKS

THIS WEEK: 'MIND TRAP AKA DANGER USA
AKA WHITE WIDOW'

Late Shift at the Grindhouse, Film Scene,
Iowa City, 10 p.m., \$4 (Weekly)

Thu., Apr. 4

I.C. Press Co-op open shop, Public Space
One, Iowa City, 4 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Reception for artist Luisa Caldwell,
Hancher, Iowa City, 4 p.m., Free

NewBo Happier Hour, NewBo City Market,
5:30 p.m., Free (Weekly)

**Iowa City Meditation Class: How To
Transform Your Life**, Quaker Friends Meeting
House, Iowa City, 6:30 p.m., \$5-10 (Weekly)

Line Dancing and Lessons, Wildwood
Smokehouse & Saloon, Iowa City, 6:30 p.m.,
Free (Weekly)

READING: 'BROWN'

MCF: Kevin Young, Prairie Lights Books &
Cafe, Iowa City, 7 p.m., Free

Thursday Night Live Open Mic, Uptown
Bill's, Iowa City, 7 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Daddy-O, Parlor City Pub and Eatery, Cedar
Rapids, 7 p.m., Free (Weekly)

CONTINUING THROUGH APRIL 20

'Apple Season,' Riverside Theatre, Iowa City,
7:30 p.m., \$10-30

AVANT JAZZ

**MCF: Mark Guillian SPACE HEROES w/
Jaimie Branch**, The Mill, Iowa City, 8 p.m.,
\$15

Live Jazz, Clinton Street Social Club, Iowa
City, 8 p.m., Free (1st & 3rd Thursdays)

Karaoke Thursday, Studio 13, Iowa City, 8
p.m., Free (Weekly)

ART ROCK

MCF: Guerilla Toss w/ Younger, Dana T,
Gages, Iowa City, 9 p.m., \$10-12

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EDITORS' PICKS

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PANEL DISCUSSION

MCF: Publishing Reimagined, *Prairie Lights Books & Cafe*, Iowa City, 3:30 p.m., Free

READING

Terry Maggert, *M & M Books*, Cedar Rapids, 4:30 p.m., Free

MCF: Lit Walk Round #1, *Discerning Eye, Raygun, Beadology and Fair Grounds*, Iowa City, 5 p.m., Free

Thérèse Murdza 'True Maps' Exhibit Opening Reception, *Gilded Pear Gallery*, Cedar Rapids, 5 p.m., Free

MCF: Lit Walk Round #2, White Rabbit, *Revival and RSVP*, Iowa City, 6 p.m., Free

FAC Dance Party, *The Union*, Iowa City, 7 p.m. (Weekly)

MCF: Lit Walk Round #3—'The Believer,' *Goosetown Cafe*, Iowa City, 7 p.m., Free

IOWA PREMIERE

'Stout Hearted: George Stout And The Guardians of Art,' *FilmScene*, Iowa City, 7 p.m., \$25

MCF: Lit Walk Round #3—Writers of Color, *Haba Salon*, Iowa City, 7 p.m., Free

INDIE ROCK

MCF: Mitski w/ Jay Som, Good Morning Midnight, *Englert Theatre*, Iowa City, 7 p.m., Sold Out (Festival Passes Available)

OPENING NIGHT! RUNS THROUGH APRIL 13

'The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon,' *RHCR Theatre*, Cedar Rapids, 7:30 p.m., \$12-17

CONTINUING THROUGH APRIL 20

'25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee,' *Giving Tree Theater*, Marion, 8 p.m., \$26

MINNESOTA HIP HOP

Prof w/ Mac Irv, Cashinova, Willie Wonka, *Blue Moose Tap House*, Iowa City, 8 p.m., \$15

MCF: Mission Beat X—Tyler von Holst, Hoodtek, Leon J, ACG3, bTsunami, *Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon*, Iowa City, 8 p.m., \$15

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Horse Camp - June 24-28
Flowers, Fabric and Fiber Camp - June 24-28
Little Big Kid Fiber Art Camp - July 1-3
Sewing: Teen Fashion Camp - July 8-12
Quilt It Camp - July 8-12
Sew Tidy Camp - July 15-19
Print, Dye, Sew Camp - July 15-19
Sleepover Ready Camp - July 22-26
Doll, Clothes and Carry All - July 22-26
Learn to Knit and Sew Camp - July 29 - Aug. 2
Project Fun-way - August 5-9
Back(PACK) to School Camp - August 12-16

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EDITORS' PICKS

ALSO SATURDAY, APRIL 6 AT 3 & 8 P.M.

Greg Warren, Penguin's Comedy Club, Cedar Rapids, 8 p.m., \$15-18

Miles Over Mountains, Famous Mockingbird, Marion, 8 p.m., \$10

ALSO SATURDAY, APRIL 6

SPT Theatre Presents: 'Hello My Name Is Murphy's Law,' CSPS Legion Arts, Cedar Rapids, 8 p.m., \$20-25

Underground Pianos w/ Jeff Mead, Iowa City Yacht Club, 9 p.m., \$5-10 (Weekly)

AGELESS MINNEAPOLIS HARMONIES

MCF: The Cactus Blossoms w/ Becca Mancari, Crystal City, The Mill, 9 p.m., \$10-12

CHICAGO INDUSTRIAL

MCF: HIDE w/ Dryad, Peanut Ricky and the Fiends, Iowa City Yacht Club, 9:30 p.m., \$8

ILLINOIS RAP

MCF: Kweku Collins w/ Mark Guilliana BEAT MUSIC, Jack Lion, Gabe's, Iowa City, 9:30 p.m., \$12-15

SoulShake, Gabe's, Iowa City, 10 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Sasha Belle Presents: Friday Night Drag & Dance Party, Studio 13, Iowa City, 10:30 p.m., \$5 (Weekly)

Sat, Apr. 6

Annual Spring Arts & Crafts Show, Marriott Conference Center, Coralville, 9 a.m., Free-\$5

Family Storytime, Iowa City Public Library, 10:30 a.m., Free (Weekly)

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Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/art/index.html>


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EDITORS' PICKS

MCF: Literary Magazine and Small Press Book Fair, The Mill, Iowa City, 11 a.m., Free

IOWA CITY EXPO FOR COMICS AND REAL ECLECTIC MEDIA

MCF: ICE CREAM Comics + Zine Fair, Public Space One, Iowa City, 11 a.m., Free

I.C. Press Co-op Open Shop, Public Space One, Iowa City, 12 p.m., Free (Weekly)

MCF: Underground Showcase, Gabe's, Iowa City, 1 p.m., Free

American Ballet Theatre Presents: 'Whipped Cream,' Hancher, 1 & 6:30 p.m., \$20-90

READING: 'THE MOON OVER WAPAKONETA' / 'THE BALLAD OF BIG FEELING'

MCF: Michael Martone and Ari Braverman, Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Iowa City, 1 p.m., Free

'Stout Hearted: George Stout And The Guardians of Art,' FilmScene, Iowa City, 2 p.m., \$8-9

MCF: Big Grove Vinyl Market, Big Grove Brewery & Taproom, Iowa City, 2 p.m., Free

MCF: Big Free Show—Lilly Hiatt w/ Middle Western, Becca Mancari, Mercy Bell, Johnathan Timm Band, Flash in a Pan, Big Grove Brewery & Taproom, Iowa City, 2 p.m., Free

READING: 'SUGAR RUN' / 'REENACTMENTS'

MCF: Debut Showcase Reading—Mesha Maren and Hai-Dang Phan, Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Iowa City, 2:30 p.m., Free

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MCF: Visual Poetry Synthesizer Reading—Maxwell Neely-Cohen w/ Stephanie Burt, Sabrina Orah Mark, Brandon Alexander Williams, 7 S. Linn St, Iowa City 4 p.m., Free

READING

MCF: Glory Edim w/ Jericho Brown, Daniel Gumbiner, The Mill, Iowa City, 6 p.m., Free

'Earthwords' Release and Reading, Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Iowa City, 7 p.m., Free

MCF: Hurray for the Riff Raff w/ Elizabeth Moen, Nadalands, Englert Theatre, Iowa City, 7 p.m., \$20

12,000 Voices: 12 Angry Men Performed by 12 Impassioned Women, Theatre Cedar Rapids, 7:30 p.m., \$10

AFROFUTURIST SENSORY COLLAGE

MCF: Moor Mother w/ Mock Identity, Sinner Frenz, Iowa City Yacht Club, 8:30 p.m., \$8

"WHAT IF GOYA OR BOSCH MADE RAVAGED VOCODER POP?"

MCF: Black Moth Super Rainbow w/ Makaya McCraven, the Only Ion, Gabe's, Iowa City, 9 p.m., \$15

Elation Dance Party, Studio 13, Iowa City, 9 p.m., \$5 (Weekly)

Starship Pilgrims, Famous Mockingbird, Marion, 9 p.m., \$10

MCF: Comedy Showcase Featuring Pete Dominick and Friends, The Mill, Iowa City, 9 p.m., \$10-12



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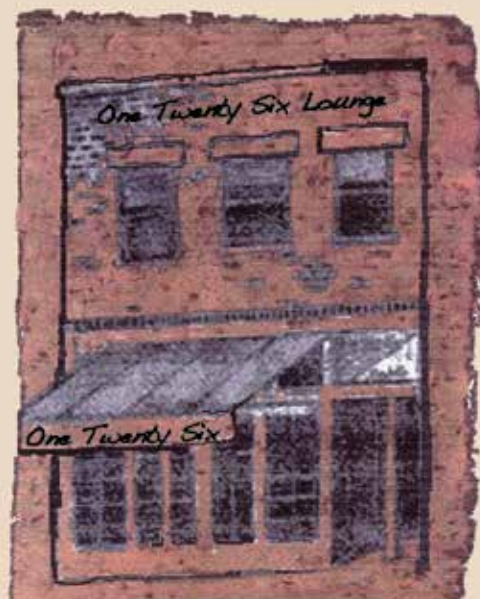
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TOP PICKS: DES MOINES APR. 3-16, 2019



Via the artist

Surf Zombies w/ Hex Girls, Lefty's, Des Moines, Friday, April 5, 9 p.m. A warm March sun has climbed above the towering snow mounds, signaling the first early spring in years. The remnants of the polar vortex have melted and been washed away in waves large enough to surf—and thus, the Surf Zombies have risen! Meshing together the tremolo-picking guitar sounds of early surf rock with all the wonderful grime of the genre's later iterations, Iowa's own Surf Zombies are a proper throwback in an era of nostalgia-driven appropriation. Their April 5 show at Lefty's will also feature a rare Des Moines appearance from one of our other Iowa favorites, Cedar Falls' Hex Girls.

Opening Day: Iowa Cubs vs New Orleans Baby Cakes, Principal Park, Des Moines, Tuesday, April 9, 6:38 p.m., \$5-30 I think I've been to at least one Iowa Cubs game every year for my entire life, and I don't think I've ever seen them win. Maybe it's a Cubs thing (there's always next year), or perhaps it's just what happens when you try and build a minor league baseball team in the middle of Iowa. Either way, you can still count on hot dogs, left-field hecklers and the occasional home run crushed over the fence into the Des Moines River. Go Cubs Go!

▲ Acid Mothers Temple w/ Yamantaka // Sonic Titan, Heavy Gratitude, Vaudeville Mews, Des Moines, Wednesday, April 10, 8 p.m., \$12-15 It could just be the eons and eons that the country has existed, but there's something about Japanese legends that always seem larger than life. This is especially the case with regard to music, and a band like Acid Mothers Temple is a perfect example. The band formed in the mid-'90s during a time when indie rock was beginning to experiment with noise music and drone. They seemed to emerge onto that scene as immediate veterans of the genre, robed and with beards to the floor. Now, 25 years and something like 80 albums later, the band has practically been deified by its fans.

Unwed Sailor w/ TIRES, Ymir, Vaudeville Mews, Des Moines, Sunday, April 14, 8 p.m., \$8-10 I've long been a believer that Unwed Sailor deserves the same widespread reverence that other post-rock bands like Godspeed You! Black Emperor and Explosions in the Sky seem to have. Each of their albums felt like different directions from one another, still rooted in the effect-laden walls of guitar rhythms, but pressed in places with the touch of outer-genre experimentation. The band is currently out on tour in support of their first full-length album since 2008, *Heavy Age*. —Trey Reis LV/

BIJOU AFTER HOURS

'Unfriended,' FilmScene, Iowa City, 11 p.m.,
Free-\$6.50

Sun., Apr. 7

Sunday Funday, Iowa City Public Library, Iowa
City, 2 p.m., Free (Weekly)

HANDS-ON DEMOS AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

STEAM Fest, Robert A. Lee Recreation Center,
Iowa City, 2 p.m., Free

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**National Theatre Live: 'The Tragedy of King
Richard the Second,'** FilmScene, Iowa City, 2
p.m., \$9-18

**MCF: John Moreland w/ Ryan Joseph
Anderson,** The Mill, Iowa City, 7:30 p.m., \$15

TROPIDELIC

Plaid Hawaii w/ LWKY, Gabe's, Iowa City, 8:30
p.m., \$10

Pub Quiz, The Mill, Iowa City, 9 p.m., \$1 (Weekly)

Mon., Apr. 8

**'Stout Hearted: George Stout And The
Guardians of Art,'** FilmScene, Iowa City, 6 p.m.,
\$8-10.50

READING: 'JOY'

**Erin McGraw In Conversation with Margot
Livesey,** Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Iowa City, 7
p.m., Free

MOTHER-DAUGHTER SUPER COMBO

Lucy Wainwright & Suzzy Roche, FilmScene,
Iowa City, 8 p.m., \$17-21

Open Mic, The Mill, Iowa City, 8 p.m., Free
(Weekly)

Comedy Open Mic with Spencer & Dan, Yacht
Club, Iowa City, 9 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Say Anything Karaoke, Gabe's, Iowa City, 10
p.m., Free (Weekly)

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TOP PICKS: WATERLOO/CEDAR FALLS

APRIL 3-16, 2019

Via 'This American Life'



▲ **Ira Glass, Gallagher Bluedorn**
Performing Arts Center, Cedar Falls,
Saturday, April 6, 7 p.m., \$23.35-57.75

Ira Glass—creator, producer and host of *This American Life* (and everyone's secret public radio boyfriend, amirite?)—brings his presentation to the Gallagher Bluedorn. The show incorporates music, audio clips and video as well as his signature storytelling and touches on his inspirations and his creative process. The beloved storytelling program *This American Life* has run since 1995 on WBEZ Chicago, garnering Glass a string of Peabody Awards and a cameo on *The Simpsons*, as well as other honors. Glass was inducted into the National Radio Hall of Fame in 2014.

▲ **RodCon, University of Northern Iowa Rod Library, Cedar Falls, Saturday, April 13, 10 a.m., Free** Can't go wrong with a comic con, no matter the scope! More and more libraries are getting in on the fun with free, family-friendly events. UNI's Rod Library was ahead of the curve, hosting its first RodCon mini con in 2014 (and winning an Innovation in College Librarianship award for it in 2015, from the Association of College and Research Libraries' College Libraries Section). This year's sixth annual event will feature current Lumberjanes co-writer Kat Leyh. Panels and presentations will include a discussion of women in comics, a look at the Godzilla phenomenon and UNI professor Shuiab Meacham on blackness and *Black Panther*. Donations will be collected for the Northeast Iowa Food Bank. Dressing in costume is, of course, encouraged.

▲ **Riverview Center Sexual Assault Awareness Benefit, Octopus College Hill, Cedar Falls, Saturday, April 13, 8 p.m., \$5** Cedar Falls band Hex Girls headlines a program that includes Greenlake from Cedar Rapids and spoken word artists Melina Gotera and Jayce Nguyen, all for the benefit of Riverview Center, an agency devoted to supporting survivors of sexual violence. The center has locations in Cedar Rapids, Decorah, Dubuque, Galena, Mount Carroll and Waterloo. In several regions in Iowa, Riverview Center is the only provider of such services, which include a 24-hour hotline, legal advocacy, support groups and more. This benefit is being held in April in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month.



Via the artist

▲ **Jake the Snake Roberts Dirty Details Tour, Majestic Moon, Waterloo, Tuesday, April 16, 7 p.m., \$20-200** World Wrestling Federation fans, line up! Folks who grew up steeped in the (second) golden age of professional wrestling won't want to miss this chance to hear storytelling from behind the scenes: tales from the road, details of pranks pulled and more. Jake the Snake, the man who popularized the infamous DDT finishing move, is on tour to put you in a headlock with his captivating stories. Roberts was inducted into the (now) WWE Hall of Fame in 2014. The tour has several other upcoming stops in the state, including Dubuque (April 17), Cedar Rapids (April 18), Burlington (April 19) and Keokuk (April 20). In addition to \$20 general admission tickets, there are \$25 tickets available to a pre-show meet-and-greet at 4 p.m. at sponsor restaurant Chad's Pizza and a \$200 VIP meet-and-greet option. An hour of Q&A will follow the show. LV/

EDITORS' PICKS

Tue., Apr. 9

PROG DEATH METAL

Entheos w/ Wolf King, Beyond the Heavens, Frontal Assault, Burden the Bear, Gabe's, Iowa City, 5:30 p.m., \$13-15

BIJOU HORIZONS

'3 Faces,' FilmScene, Iowa City, 6 p.m., Free-\$6.50

Blues Jam, Parlor City Pub and Eatery, Cedar Rapids, 7 p.m., Free (Weekly)

PRESENTED BY PRAIRIE LIGHTS

Patty Marx and Roz Chast In Conversation with Lauren Haldeman, Englert Theatre, Iowa City, 7 p.m., \$25

Weekly Old-Timey Jam Sessions, Trumpet Blossom Cafe, Iowa City, 7:30 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Dance Party with DJ Batwoman, Iowa City Yacht Club, 9 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Comedy & Karaoke, Studio 13, Iowa City, 9 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Karaoke Tuesdays, The Mill, Iowa City, 10 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Wed., Apr. 10

Iowa City Open Coffee, Merge, Iowa City, 8 a.m., Free (Weekly)

Gentle Yoga, Public Space One, Iowa City, 5 p.m., \$5-10 (Weekly)

History at the Grove: Thrill of Open Water Swimming, Big Grove Brewery & Taproom, Iowa City, 5:30 p.m., Free

Break Dance Group, Public Space One, Iowa City, 6 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Burlington Street Bluegrass Band, The Mill, Iowa City, 6 p.m., \$5 (2nd & 4th Wednesdays)

EASTERN EUROPEAN FOLK

Söndörgö, CSPA Legion Arts, Cedar Rapids, 7 p.m., \$21-26

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EDITORS' PICKS

April Zen Write Night, Iowa
Writers' House, Iowa City, 7 p.m.,
Free-\$10

**READING: 'THE LUMBERJACK'S
DOVE'**

Gennarose Nethercott, Prairie
Lights Books & Cafe, Iowa City, 7
p.m., Free

**Open Mic Night, Penguin's
Comedy Club**, Cedar Rapids, 8
p.m., Free (Weekly)

**Underground Karaoke
Wednesday**, Iowa City Yacht Club,
9 p.m., Free (Weekly)

PSYCHEDELIC STEW
Zoofunky, Iowa City Yacht Club,
9 p.m., \$7

Open Stage, Studio 13, Iowa City,
10 p.m., Free (Weekly)

**THIS WEEK: 'THE GIRL IN THE
CRAWLSPACE'**

Late Shift at the Grindhouse,
Film Scene, Iowa City, 10 p.m., \$4
(Weekly)

Thu., Apr. 11

I.C. Press Co-op open shop,
Public Space One, Iowa City, 4 p.m.,
Free (Weekly)

NewBo Happier Hour, NewBo City
Market, 5:30 p.m., Free (Weekly)

**POST-SCREENING DIALOGUE WITH
DIRECTOR HERNAN BARANGAN**
'Cancer Rebellion', FilmScene,
Iowa City, 5:30 p.m., Free

**Iowa City Meditation Class: How
To Transform Your Life**, Quaker
Friends Meeting House, Iowa City,
6:30 p.m., \$5-10 (Weekly)



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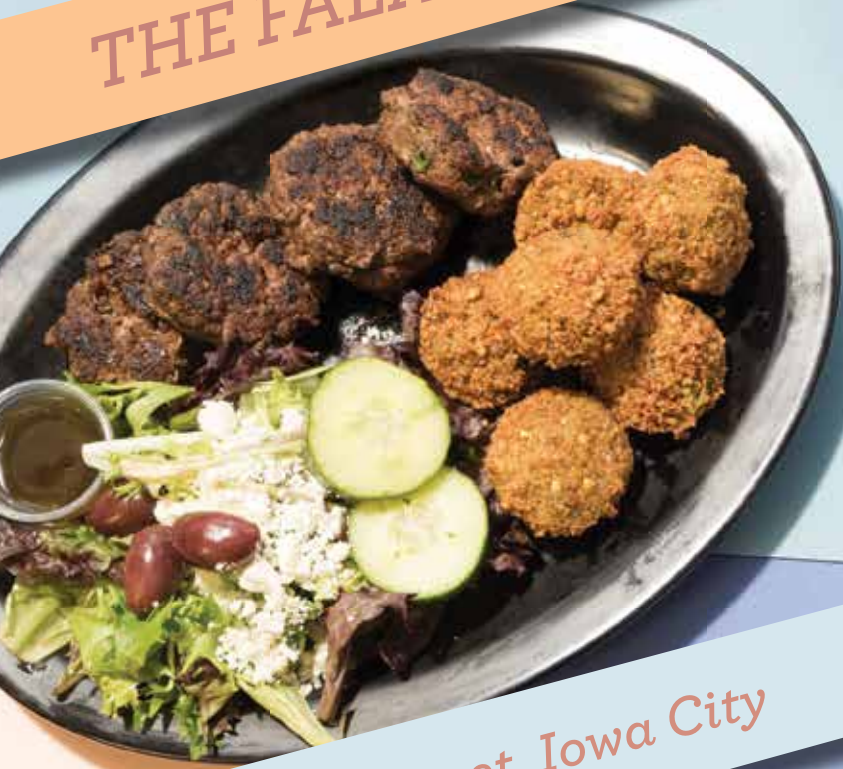
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>> CONT. FROM PG. 25

to disqualify you for positions of power.”

And as the charismatic vocalist of Guerilla Toss, she most definitely wields her power onstage and in the studio.

Since recording *Jeffrey Johnson* in 2013, the group has built an ever-evolving and growing body of work. *Twisted Crystal* is Guerilla Toss’ biggest evolutionary leap yet, building on their critically acclaimed 2017 album *GT Ultra*, also released on DFA Records, as well as several other albums and EPs prior.

“We love DFA! They’ve done a lot for us,” Carlson said. She noted that the label has provided them with access to recording studios that had previously been out of their reach.

“We recorded *Twisted Crystal* at Outlier Inn Recording, a studio in upstate New York with the most incredible gear and vibe,” Carlson said. “The experience was super special because we got to use a lot of ’70s and ’80s analog gear that most of us had never seen or used before. Even the mixing board was from the original Electric Lady Studios.”

While much of their earlier music was collaboratively created by everyone in the band, *Twisted Crystal* is a bit different. Carlson and Negroponte started working on it as a side project, but after writing a batch of songs, the two decided to include the rest of the band (guitarist Arian Shafiee, keyboardist Sam Lisabeth and bassist Stephen Cooper) in the studio.

Recording and mixing a Guerilla Toss album is a painstaking procedure, Carlson said: overdubbing various kinds of percussion and synths as well as recording doubles and triples of vocals to create what she calls a “manic cheerleader” sound.

“It’s really truly an insane process,” she said. “Then we take the recordings and listen to them on speakers in the studio, then speakers in the house, then in the car, go back and tweak stuff, do it all over again, but in the end it’s totally worth it.”

“Recording an album is like a painting,” Carlson observed. “It never truly feels done, but you can get pretty close.”

Kembrew McLeod is the Eggman.

EDITORS’ PICKS

Line Dancing and Lessons, Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon, Iowa City, 6:30 p.m., Free (Weekly)

INTERNATIONAL TRIO

Nordic Fiddlers Bloc, CSPS Legion Arts, Cedar Rapids, 7 p.m., \$19-23

RECOMMENDED FOR VIEWERS 13+

Girls on the Run Presents: Lunafest 2019, Englert Theatre, Iowa City, 7 p.m., \$10-45

Thursday Night Live Open Mic, Uptown Bill’s, Iowa City, 7 p.m., Free (Weekly)

READING: ‘ALL SHIPS FOLLOW ME’

Mieke Eerkens, Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Iowa City, 7 p.m., Free

Daddy-O, Parlor City Pub and Eatery, Cedar Rapids, 7 p.m., Free (Weekly)

LA VIA CHICAGO RAPPER

Scope Presents: Open Mike Eagle, Gabe’s, Iowa City, 7:30 p.m., \$17

Rebellion Underground Presents: Now That’s What I Call Improv!, Iowa City Yacht Club, 9 p.m., \$5

Karaoke Thursday, Studio 13, Iowa City, 8 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Fri., Apr. 12


NewBo Open Coffee, Roasters Coffeehouse in NewBo City Market, Cedar Rapids, 8 a.m., Free (2nd & 4th Fridays)

Cedar Rapids Independent Film Festival, Collins Road Theatres, Cedar Rapids, 6 p.m., \$9-35

Friday Night Out, Ceramics Center, Cedar Rapids, 6:30 p.m., \$40 (2nd Friday)

FOREFATHER OF INDIE HIP HOP

Sage Francis: The Epic Beard Men Tour w/ B. Dolan, Gabe’s, Iowa City, 7 p.m., \$15-18



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EDITORS' PICKS

READING: 'THE STUDY OF ANIMAL LANGUAGES'

Lindsay Stern In Conversation with Charles D'Ambrosio, Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Iowa City, 7 p.m., Free

FAC Dance Party, The Union, Iowa City, 7 p.m. (Weekly)

Batsheva Dance Company Presents:

'Venezuela,' Hancher, Iowa City, 7:30 p.m., \$10-60

OPENING NIGHT! RUNS THROUGH APRIL 14

University of Iowa School of Music Presents:

'Little Women,' Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, 7:30 p.m., \$5-20

OPENING NIGHT! RUNS THROUGH APRIL 14

Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre Presents: 'The Grant Wood Operas: Strokes of Genius,' Theatre Cedar Rapids, 7:30 p.m., \$40

'AMERICA'S GOT TALENT: THE CHAMPIONS'

FINALIST

Preacher Lawson, Englert Theatre, Iowa City, 8 p.m., \$25

ALSO SATURDAY, APRIL 13

Steve Kramer, Penguin's Comedy Club, Cedar Rapids, 8 p.m., \$13-15

Brass Transit Authority, Famous Mockingbird, Marion, 8 p.m., \$10

The Fawn and the Flame w/ Lily DeTaeye, Will Hancock, the Near Misses, Trumpet Blossom Cafe, Iowa City, 9 p.m., \$7

Underground Pianos w/ Jeff Mead, Iowa City Yacht Club, 9 p.m., \$5-10 (Weekly)

PUNK

Direct Hit! w/ Rational Anthem, Iowa City Yacht Club, 9:30 p.m., \$10-12

SoulShake, Gabe's, Iowa City, 10 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Sasha Belle Presents: Friday Night Drag & Dance Party, Studio 13, Iowa City, 10:30 p.m., \$5 (Weekly)

Sat., Apr. 13

Agape Café Breakfast Fundraiser: Renovate the Kitchen!, Agape Café at Old Brick, Iowa City, 8 a.m., \$10-25 sliding scale suggested donation

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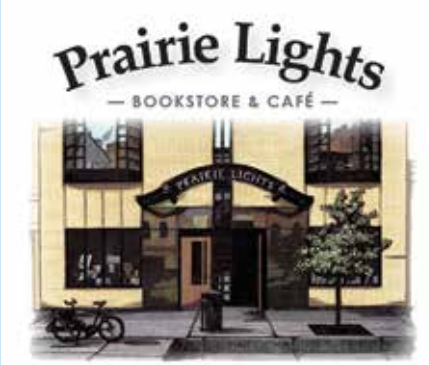
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EPX Con, University of Iowa Art Building West,
Iowa City, 9 a.m., Free

Cedar Rapids Independent Film Festival,
Collins Road Theatres, Cedar Rapids, 9:30 a.m.,
\$9-35

EXPLORE IOWA EATS!

**Dan & Debbie's: Taste of Iowa, Dan &
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Family Storytime, Iowa City Public Library,
10:30 a.m., Free (Weekly)

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Humanize My Hoodie Workshop, Old Capitol
Museum, Iowa City, 10:30 a.m., \$80

I.C. Press Co-op Open Shop, Public Space One,
Iowa City, 12 p.m., Free (Weekly)

SCIENCE ON SCREEN

'Science Fair,' FilmScene, Iowa City, 2 p.m., Free

**READING: 'CREATING THE BLACK UTOPIA OF
BUXTON, IOWA'**

Rachelle Chase, Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Iowa
City, 3 p.m., Free

INSTRUMENTAL GUITARIST

An Evening with Leo Kottke, Englert Theatre,
Iowa City, 8 p.m., \$33.50-53.50

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**Ben Eaton + Atom Robinson w/ Frankie
Zoloff and the Electrolytes, Bootleg Ginger**,
The Mill, Iowa City, 8 p.m., \$7

REGGAE & BLUES

**Aaron Kamm & the One Drops w/ the Laguna
Beach Boys**, Gabe's, Iowa City, 9 p.m., \$8

Elation Dance Party, Studio 13, Iowa City, 9
p.m., \$5 (Weekly)

BIJOU AFTER HOURS

Repo Man, FilmScene, Iowa City, 11 p.m., Free-
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Sun., Apr. 14

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EDITORS' PICKS

INSTRUCTOR: EMILY STOCHL

Find Your Voice: An Introduction to Podcasting, Iowa Writers' House, Iowa City, 1:30 p.m., \$75

CLOSING PERFORMANCE

'I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change,' Old Creamery Theatre, Amana, 2 p.m., \$30

CLOSING PERFORMANCE

Iowa City Community Theatre Presents: 'The Music Man,' Johnson County Fairgrounds, Iowa City, 2 p.m., \$11-19

Sunday Funday, Iowa City Public Library, Iowa City, 2 p.m., Free (Weekly)

EMO PUNK

Keep Flying & Sundressed w/ Bain Marie, Eugene Levy, Unsettled Serenade, Gabe's, Iowa City, 6 p.m., \$10-12

ROCK

Valley of the Sun w/ Bellringer featuring ex-Melvins Mark Deutrom, Züü!, Acoustic Guillotine, Hep Cat, Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon, Iowa City, 6 p.m., \$12-15

SINGER-SONGWRITER

Peter Mulvey, CSPS Legion Arts, Cedar Rapids, 7 p.m., \$17-21

Pub Quiz, The Mill, Iowa City, 9 p.m., \$1 (Weekly)

Mon., Apr. 15

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Letters to My Body Exhibit, Cedar Rapids Public Beams Auditorium A, 10 a.m., Free

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Portland Cello Project, CSPS Legion Arts, Cedar Rapids, 7 p.m., \$17-21



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Comedy Open Mic with Spencer & Dan, Yacht Club, Iowa City, 9 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Say Anything Karaoke, Gabe's, Iowa City, 10 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Tue., Apr. 16

HUMANITIES IOWA SERIES
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MUSEUM OF IOWA

150 Years of Progress for African American Men, University of Iowa Main Library, Iowa City, 3 p.m., Free

Blues Jam, Parlor City Pub and Eatery, Cedar Rapids, 7 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Ben Miller Band w/ Cedar County Cobras, Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon, Iowa City, 7 p.m., \$10-12

READING: 'DOOMSTEAD DAYS,' 'LOVE DREAM WITH TELEVISION'

Brian Teare and Hannah Ensor, Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Iowa City, 7 p.m., Free

Weekly Old-Timey Jam Sessions, Trumpet Blossom Cafe, Iowa City, 7:30 p.m., Free (Weekly)

FUNK

Kung Fu, Gabe's, Iowa City, 8 p.m., \$15

Dance Party with DJ Batwoman, Iowa City Yacht Club, 9 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Comedy & Karaoke, Studio 13, Iowa City, 9 p.m., Free (Weekly)

Karaoke Tuesdays, The Mill, Iowa City, 10 p.m., Free (Weekly)

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 - TRUMPET BLOSSOM
 - THE CLUB CAR
- IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH (17)
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- NODO (29)
- OASIS FALAFEL (43)
- OBERRMANN CENTER (39)
- ORCHESTRA IOWA (26)
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A year ago, my husband engaged in frequent and very personal Whatsapp chats with a woman he met in a hobby group. They met first with some other friends in the group. After that, they worked on a project together. This project brought them closer to each other. My husband often spent hours chatting with her, even wee and late hours. She confided in him about her personal matters, her marital problems and her fling.

I found out about their interaction and confronted him about it. He said he was just being nice to her. He sympathized with her because she was in a troubled marriage. He said nothing happened between them, although my husband admitted that in the beginning their conversation was mostly about their shared interests, but later she began to share very personal and intimate issues. My husband said he just wanted to be her good friend and nothing else. I felt hurt and betrayed.

My husband apologized and stopped contacting her. He did not want to hurt me, so he was willing to leave the group for good. I know my husband showed his remorse, but why do I still feel hurt and angry sometimes? I still cannot forgive the fact that he allowed chats of a personal nature to happen. I felt betrayed because he didn't respect my feelings when he texted the woman. He was willing to spend hours listening to her stories without thinking that his actions might hurt me. Even now, sometimes I bring this up, and then we fight. Am I wrong? How can I let this go?

Hurt and betrayed, Jane

Dear Jane,
Let's get the hard part out of the way first. Yes, you are wrong to keep bringing up your husband's past actions. Either you forgive him, in which case you need to work on letting it go on your own time, or you don't forgive him, in which case you need to either determine how he can make it right or cut your losses and leave. Relitigating ad infinitum is unkind to him and unhealthy for you. A marriage is a living

thing, and it can only live in the present. Too much time spent in the past, either rehashing old woes or pining for better days, is a death sentence.

So how do you let go? Well, it might help to remember that everyone has different personal limits when it comes to what breaks the bonds of intimacy in a relationship. Some things are big and obvious: Unless you're in some form of an open relationship, for example, sex with a person other than your partner(s) is pretty much a universal taboo. But other limits are more subtle and variable.

There are only two ways to learn to respect those less obvious limits. The first is radical honesty and self-awareness. As someone who's been burned in the past because of personal limits that previous partners weren't aware of, I make it a policy to be up front about my limits now. And when new technology or new situations reveal limits to me that I didn't know I had, I communicate them right away.

The other way, of course, is trial and error. You can't judge a person for crossing a line they didn't know existed—but you can absolutely judge them for how they behave once they know. Your husband responded by acknowledging your limits and centering your needs. That's textbook respectful behavior. It's easy to get caught in our own heads and believe that someone "should have known" that something would hurt us, but if we're not explicit, that's simply not true.

The rub there, of course, is that it's so much harder to heal when there's no one to blame for our hurt. It's important to remember that *your hurt is real*, and you need to give yourself space to convalesce. I can't tell you how to do that—that, too, is different for everyone—but if your heart has ever been bruised before, I'm sure you have some tried and true methods.

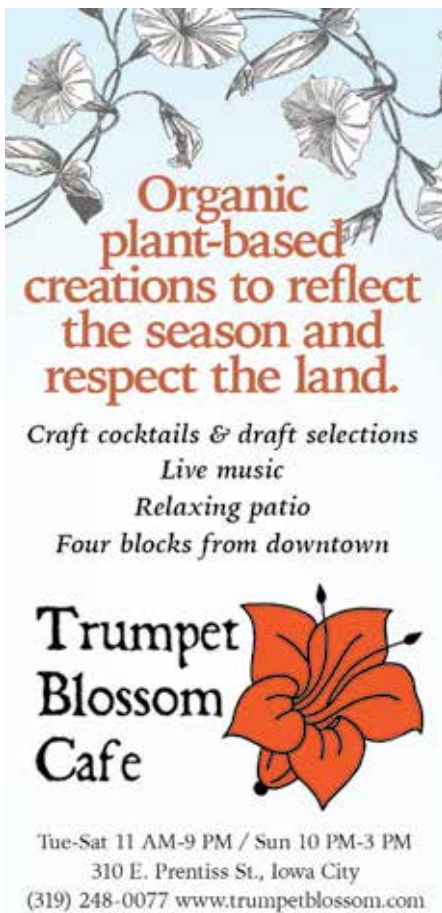
But as you heal, think of pain and anger as the bandage on your wound. When it's fresh, they protect it from worse damage. For the final stage of healing, you need to remove them and let the fresh air do its work.

xoxo, Kiki LV

KIKI WANTS QUESTIONS!



Questions about love and sex in the Iowa City-Cedar Rapids area can be submitted to dearkiki@littlevillagemag.com, or anonymously at littlevillagemag.com/dearkiki. Questions may be edited for clarity and length, and may appear either in print or online at littlevillagemag.com.



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ARIES (March 21-April 19): A mushroom shaped like a horse's hoof grows on birch trees in parts of Europe and the U.S. If you strip off its outer layer, you get amadou, spongy stuff that's great for igniting fires. It's not used much anymore, but it was a crucial resource for some of our ancestors. As for the word "amadou," it's derived from an old French term that means "tinder, kindling, spunk." The same word was formerly used to refer to a person who is quick to light up or something that stimulates liveliness. In accordance with astrological omens, I'm making "Amadou" your nickname for the next four weeks.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): "Human beings are not born once and for all on the day their mothers give birth to them," wrote novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez. "Life obliges them over and over to give birth to themselves." Here's what I'll add to that: As you mature, you do your best to give birth to ever-new selves that are in alignment with the idealistic visions you have of the person you want to become. Unfortunately, most of us aren't skilled at that task in adolescence and early adulthood, and so the selves we create may be inadequate or delusory or distorted. Fortunately, as we learn from our mistakes, we eventually learn to give birth to selves that are strong and righteous. The only problem is that the old false selves we generated along the way may persist as ghostly echoes in our psyche. And we have a sacred duty to banish those ghostly echoes. I tell you this, Taurus, because the coming months will be an excellent time to do that banishing. Ramp up your efforts NOW!

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): "When spring came, there were no problems except where to be happiest," wrote Ernest Hemingway in his memoir. He quickly amended that statement, though, mourning, "The only thing that could spoil a day was people." Then he ventured even further, testifying, "People were always the limiters of happiness except for the very few that were as good as spring itself." I bring these thoughts to your attention so as to prepare you for some good news. In the next three weeks, I suspect you will far exceed your quota for encounters with people who are *not* "limiters of happiness"—who are as good as spring itself.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): It's time to prove that Cancerians have more to offer than nurturing, empathizing, softening the edges, feeling deeply, getting comfortable and being creative. Not that there's anything wrong with those talents. On the contrary! They're beautiful and necessary. It's just that for now you need to avoid being pigeonholed as a gentle, sensitive soul. To gather the goodies that are potentially available to you, you'll have to be more forthright and aggressive than usual. Is it possible for you to wield a commanding presence? Can you add a big dose of willfulness and a pinch of ferocity to your self-presentation? Yes and yes!

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): General Motors manufactured a car called the Pontiac Aztek from 2001 to 2005. It wasn't commercially successful. One critic said it looked like "an angry kitchen appliance," and many others agreed it was exceptionally unstylish. But later the Aztek had an odd revival because of the popularity of the TV show *Breaking Bad*. The show's protagonist, Walter White, owned one, and that motivated some of his fans to emulate his taste in cars. In accordance with astrological omens, Leo, I suspect that something of yours may also enjoy a second life sometime soon. An offering that didn't get much appreciation the first time around may undergo a resurgence. Help it do so.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): "Of all the female sins, hunger is the least forgivable," laments feminist author Laurie Penny. She's referring to the hunger "for anything, for food, sex, power, education, even love." She continues: "If we have desires, we are expected to conceal them, to control them, to keep ourselves in check. We are supposed to be objects of desire, not

desiring beings." I've quoted her because I suspect it's crucial for you to not suppress or hide your longings in the coming weeks. That's triply true if you're a woman, but also important if you're a man or some other gender. You have a potential to heal deeply if you get very clear about what you hunger for and then express it frankly.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Only one of Nana Mouskouri's vocal cords works, but over the course of an almost 60-year career, the Libran singer has sold over 30 million records in 12 different languages. Many critics speculate that her apparent disadvantage is key to her unique style. She's a coloratura mezzo, a rare category of chanteuse who sings ornate passages with exceptional agility and purity. In the coming weeks, I suspect that you will be like Mouskouri in your ability to capitalize on a seeming lack or deprivation.

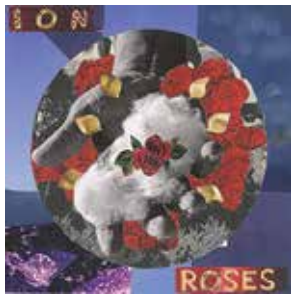
SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Your tribe is symbolized by three animals: the scorpion, the eagle and the mythological phoenix. Some astrologers say that the scorpion is the ruling creature of "unevolved" or immature Scorpions, whereas the eagle and phoenix are associated with those of your tribe who express the riper, more enlightened qualities of your sign. But I want to put in a plug for the scorpion as being worthy of all Scorpions. It is a hardy critter that rivals the cockroach in its ability to survive—and even thrive in—less than ideal conditions. For the next two weeks, I propose we make it your spirit creature.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Sagittarian novelist Gustave Flaubert declared that it's "our duty is to feel what is sublime and cherish what is beautiful." But that's a demanding task to pull off on an ongoing basis. Maybe the best we can hope for is to feel what's sublime and cherish what's beautiful for 30-35 days every year. Having said that, though, I'm happy to tell you that in 2019 you could get all the way up to 95-100 days of feeling what's sublime and cherishing what's beautiful. And as many as 15 to 17 of those days could come during the next 21.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Sommeliers are people trained to perceive the nuances of wine. By sampling a few sips, the best sommeliers can discern facts about the type of grapes that were used to make the wine and where on Earth they were grown. I think that in the coming weeks you Capricorns should launch an effort to reach a comparable level of sensitivity and perceptivity about any subject you care about. It's a favorable time to become even more masterful about your specialties; to dive deeper into the areas of knowledge that captivate your imagination.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Every language is a work-in-progress. New words constantly insinuate themselves into common usage, while others fade away. If you traveled back in time to 1719 while remaining in your current location, you'd have trouble communicating with people of that era. And today, linguistic evolution is even more rapid than in previous ages. The Oxford English Dictionary adds more than a thousand new words annually. In recognition of the extra verbal skill and inventiveness you now possess, Aquarius, I invite you to coin a slew of your own fresh terms. To get you warmed up, try this utterance I coined: *vorizzimo!* It's an exclamation that means "thrillingly beautiful and true."

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): One of history's most audacious con men was George C. Parker, a Pisces. He made his living selling property that did not legally belong to him, like the Brooklyn Bridge, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Statue of Liberty. I suspect you could summon his level of salesmanship and persuasive skills in the coming weeks. But I hope you will use your nearly magical powers to make deals and perform feats that have maximum integrity. It's OK to be a teensy bit greedy, though.



The Only Ion
Roses EP

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MCF: Black Moth Super Rainbow w/ Makaya McCraven, the Only Ion, Gabe's, Iowa City, Saturday, April 6, 9 p.m., \$15

Iowa City's own The Only Ion recently gave us his newest EP, *Roses*, in May 2018. It's such a diverse and articulate album it's really hard to label as one genre (a few that come to mind are hip hop, soul and a bit of blues), which is a nod to the talent Ion possesses. Throughout the project you'll hear in-depth lyrics, electronic instrumentation, string pieces, guitar riffs, piano chords—pretty much there is a ton that a listener can pick out.

The five-song project ultimately gives us different elements in each piece, and the common denominator is the soul that Ion brings to the forefront. Each song may hold a different meaning, vibe and core instruments, but each possesses a soulful core.

Ion is extremely poetic in his lyrics and in the overall structure of his songs, something which is evident from the start of the project.

From the first track, "Grindstone," to the closer "Roses," it's easy to pick out the different influences, techniques and inspirations. Again, it's hard to pin it down to a single genre, but each element is clearly planned out.

"Grindstone" shows off Ion's lyrical talent, featuring a great deal of electronic elements in the piece as well. From there, things take a turn into funk with "Fotia." He gets socially pointed with "W.G.T.M?" and teases vibes of intimacy with "Bacon (Go Down On Your Lover)." The title track closes things out with a soulful, funk-derived sound—a beautiful piece to end on.

This EP is fantastic; the best part was hearing the different ingredients that Ion brought into each piece and to the project as a whole. Make sure to keep an eye on what Ion is up to by following his socials and checking him out in the local scene.

—Connor Moellenbeck



Elizabeth Moen
A Million Miles Away

ELIZABETHMOEN.BANDCAMP.COM

MCF: Hurray for the Riff Raff w/ Elizabeth Moen, Nadalands, Englert Theatre, Iowa City, Saturday, April 6, 7 p.m., \$20

Months after its initial release, I still feel my ear pleading for another listen of Elizabeth Moen's third album, *A Million Miles Away*. While Moen has always possessed a certain sage sound, her junior album ups the stakes—her tone has matured in its cascading depths. She and her Gibson croon along, perfectly in sync. This album, more than others, feels purposefully unpolished. But resting where the tidiness and order could be is its heart. I wouldn't have it any other way.

Moen proves a point in *A Million Miles Away*, showcasing her musical prowess alongside her love for the fruits of her creation. Not only does she carry the emotional torch present in

her earlier work, but this album burns with experimentation. Her passionate disposition allows her to pull out all the stops without any cloying remnants. This is especially evident in "Time Is a Shitty Friend," which has moments of heavy blues and light psychedelia to it, and "Matilda" and "Planetarium," which both possess a charming creativity and expansion of sound.

On "Best I Can Do," her beautiful rasp delivers her plea to "let me love you" in the most beautiful way. We often overuse the word beautiful, leaving the real meaning by the wayside. But rest assured, I truly mean beautiful when I'm talking about how Moen roams through these verses.

When listening to Moen's voice, there is pulchritude in her sad songs and melancholy in her optimistic instrumentals. It's all mixed up in the most lovable way. *A Million Miles Away* masters an oxymoronic art of gleeful lament. Her's is a sadness that wraps around tight and warm—right in its wrong sensation. It's the comfort of Moen's relatability. Her engaging presence felt during live performances is palpable throughout her latest album. Despite the album title, Moen feels closer than ever.

—Alex Kramer



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You or a Loved One

Gabriel Houck, ORISON BOOKS

MCF: Nonfiction Writing Program Showcase, Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Iowa City, Wednesday, April 3, 7 p.m., Free

You or a Loved One is an arresting collection of short stories by New Orleans native Gabriel Houck.

Houck, who earned an MFA from the University of Iowa's Nonfiction Writing Program, is currently a lecturer in the English department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. On April 3, he will join fellow UI Nonfiction Writing Program alumni Jennifer Cheng and Lawrence Ypil for the Nonfiction Writing Program Showcase at Prairie Lights Bookstore as part of this year's Mission Creek Festival.

In *You or a Loved One*—Houck's debut and winner of the 2017 Orison Fiction Prize—readers enter the harsh worlds inhabited by a motley assortment of characters occupying different (and often unenviable) stations in

life in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Struggling to stay afloat while drifting toward an uncertain future, the characters are haunted by childhood yearnings, lifelong regrets and the possibility of hope as they are beaten down by the daily grind.

Bizarre situations with shocking turns occur amidst the staleness of everyday existence. Lives can be altered by the unthinkable as quickly as lightning can strike.

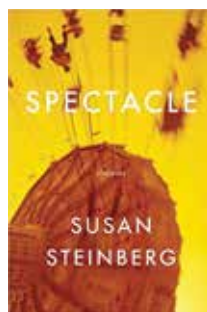
Houck plays with narrative structure, and through this play, his intense yet elegant prose illustrates human frailty with humor and pathos. Throughout these stories are moments of eerie familiarity, from the characters' thoughts to simple gestures they display.

The author has an uncanny talent for describing memories and dreams with keen observations of physical surroundings, showing how they are intertwined.

The story "Al, Off the Grid" contains a line worth pondering: "How funny that memory and imagination are verses of the same song."

Not since Denis Johnson's *Jesus' Son* (1992) or Jeremy Robert Johnson's *Angel Dust Apocalypse* (2005) has a body of short fiction resonated so deeply with this reviewer.

—Mike Kuhlenbeck



Spectacle, Susan

Steinberg, GRAYWOLF PRESS

MCF: Lit Walk Round #2, RSVP, Iowa City, Friday, April 5, 6 p.m., Free

Susan Steinberg's *Spectacle* collects 12 short stories bound within a slim, 135-page volume. Despite *Spectacle*'s brevity, due in no small part to Steinberg's impressive economy of language, several of the stories are so emotionally weighty, readers may feel the need to rest before moving onto the next.

The best of Steinberg's tales revolve around themes of disconnected youth, familial miscommunication and the tragic power of identity to at once elevate and also obliterate the humanity we see in others. The sex, drugs and violence that serve as the impetus for these stories are rarely shown, but their crushing impact is tangible and always present. Steinberg's narrators, all young women, struggle internally with external pressures of power and privilege while also contending with their

own hedonistic youthful instincts, which further complicate the respective narratives.

Spectacle's most immediately arresting feature is its prose, which umpteen other reviews have described as "experimental." To be sure, Steinberg has chosen an interesting method to tell her stories: a stilted, repetitive style that actually serves most of her narrators quite well. Their recursive self-scrutiny, bordering on obsession, teases out little haunting details that stuck with me long after I'd finished reading.

This isn't to say that everything in *Spectacle* is moving or important. But at her best, Steinberg is a writer who transcends story and style and simply engulfs readers in the kind of raw, unhealed, emotional vulnerability some may not have felt since junior high school or their first day in the working world or any other day we live collectively that is more performative than perfunctory.

What's most important about *Spectacle* is not the spectacular events that drive Steinberg's narrators toward a kind of vivisection (by way of self-scrutiny). Instead, the spectacle is introspection itself—an internal magnification like reading glasses for the psyche. It is precisely what these women choose to focus on, and what they willfully ignore, that makes *Spectacle* such an interesting and powerful read.

—Jon Burke



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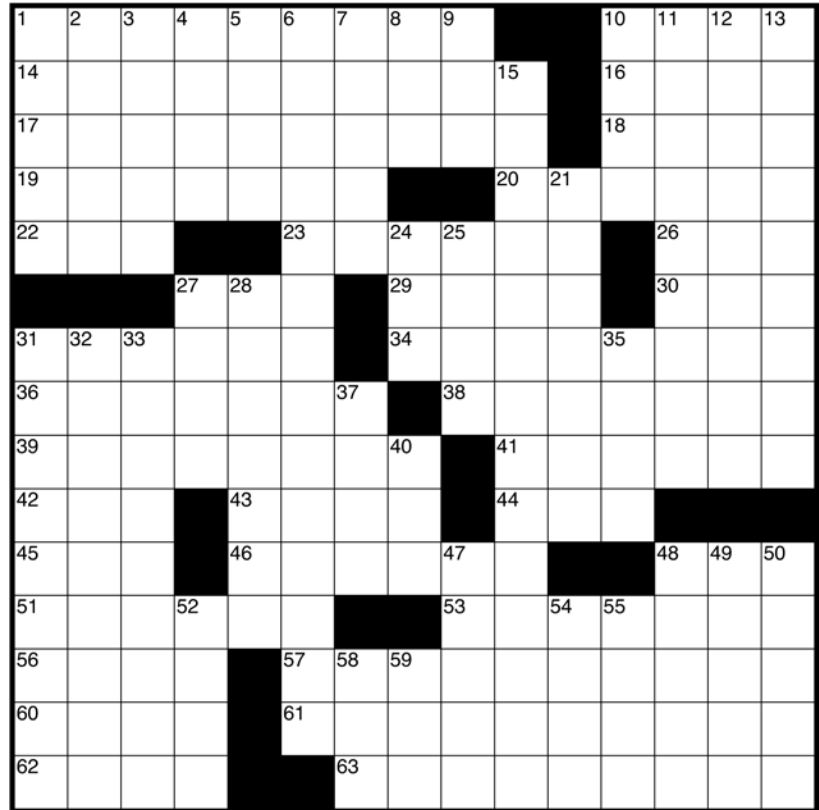
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THEMELESS BY KAMERON AUSTIN COLLINS

The American Values Club Crossword is edited by Ben Tausig.



ACROSS

1. Together
10. *Dirty Harry* force, for short
14. Legal smoking spots
16. "___ thing ..."
17. Bacterial infection treater (which is useless for viral infections, though, just FYI)
18. Guthrie with *Washington County*
19. Sides against a motion
20. Tuskegee heroes, e.g.
22. That latin@
23. Anita of *La Dolce Vita*
26. Vitamin C source
27. ___ Peres (St. Louis suburb)
29. Former General Motors subsidiary
30. Science class assignment
31. Discerning
34. Give new meaning to
36. Time travelers' needs, often
38. Heart
39. Participate in a certain flag ceremony
41. Orientation goes
42. Office hookup?
43. Foot part
44. *Lost* actor Somerhalder
45. Where revivals happen, hopefully
46. Occupy
48. Giannis Antetokounmpo's org.
51. On the way
53. More gray
56. Bon ___ of indie folk
57. What some leftist politicians promise to do for the rich
60. Leakes of *Real Housewives of Atlanta*
61. The "high priestess of soul"
62. ___-Iranian
63. Rocks made of clay

DOWN

1. Whitney Houston's "___ Nothing"
2. They're off-limits
3. Terra ___ (fired clay)
4. Dorothea Lange's "Migrant Mother," e.g.
5. Snatches
6. Lunar New Year

decoration

7. Digital edition

8. Bandicoot lookalike

9. Wizard Tournament prefix, in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*

10. Have a battle of wits, say

11. Prepare to wait for your lunch in an orderly fashion, or else you will sit in the classroom while everyone else goes to the assembly, understand?, say

12. Acrobatic club performance

13. Workers without stingers

15. F#\$%ing terrified

21. Spanish church

24. Bklyn, e.g.

25. Slashing instrument

27. Fealty

28. Belief in a strong central government

31. Cocktail with cider

32. Cooker that

uses the sun for heat

33. Go beyond

35. Green shade

37. Anti-cruelty org.

40. Short

47. Syrian Civil War figure

48. 1995 biopic starring Anthony Hopkins

49. Famed fashion designer Geoffrey

50. Bums

52. Blizzard option

54. Having words

55. ___-shanter

58. It comes before fire

59. Shiba ___

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