



# LITTLE VILLAGE

IOWA CITY'S NEWS & CULTURE MAGAZINE

VOL. 15 | ISSUE 145  
DEC. 4, 2013 - JAN. 7, 2014

## AU REVOIR DR. STAR

BUT FIRST, MEET THE MIND BEHIND  
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## CHRISTMAS WITH PEE-WEE

KEMBREW INTERVIEWS PAUL REUBENS • P. 34

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IOWA CITY'S NEWS & CULTURE MAGAZINE

**VOL. 15 | ISSUE 145**  
**DEC. 4, 2013 - JAN. 7 2014**

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**APP:** Little Village Best of IC

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Illustration by Ben Mackey

## CHRISTMAS' CARDAMON CALL

A traditional Scandinavian spice takes center stage this season.  
BY THOMAS DEAN



**A**s autumn segues to winter, my seasonal spice shifts, too. Since September, it's been all about nutmeg for me, the one essential ingredient to my apple crisp (aside from Wilson's Orchard apples, of course). But as Thanksgiving passes to Yuletide, nutmeg yields to cardamon. Oh sure, I'll still sprinkle a little nutmeg on the old egg nog, but my Danish ancestry ascends at Christmas, and cardamon is synonymous with Dansk Jul.

**ASK A MODERN DANE, SWEDE OR NORSK TO PLAY WORD ASSOCIATION WITH CARDAMON, AND CHANCES ARE HE OR SHE WILL RESPOND WITH "BEDSTEMOR," "BESTEMOR," "MORMOR" OR "FARMOR"—THE SCANDINAVIAN WORDS FOR GRANDMOTHER.**

Cardamon (our family uses an "n" as the final consonant, rather than "m") is a staple of Scandinavian cuisine—its aromatic tones infused the pastries of my youth year-round. Both of my maternal grandparents hailed from Denmark as part of the tail-end wave of the

**ADD THIS ALL-STAR SPICE TO YOUR REPERTOIRE.** | Photo by Rachel Jessen

great Scandinavian migration to the Midwest, and their cardamon rings (a type of coffee cake) were a staple of nearly any family kaffeeklatsch. Ask a modern Dane, Swede or Norsk to play word association with cardamon, and chances are he or she will respond with "bestemor," "bestemor," "mormor" or "farmor"—the Scandinavian words for grandmother.

So with Christmas as a time of family memory, cardamon looms large in my repertoire of holiday nostalgia. And it fits the Yuletide: Its gentle spiciness and sweet, slightly exotic backdrop puts it in good company with the season's more familiar nutmeg and cinnamon.

Despite my fond memories of the spice, my grandmother's two signature cardamon Christmas creations were not my favorites. Nina, as we called her, always made a loaf of her cardamon bread for Christmas morning, but as a kid, I found it a bit dry, and like my brothers, I assiduously picked out the citron pieces. As I grew a little older and as Nina's age lessened her kitchen exploits, my mom

TRY THIS  
AT HOME

### MOM'S CARDAMON BREAD

Makes 2-3 small loaves

2 eggs [Egg replacer works fine.]  
1 2/3 cups sugar  
2 tablespoons apricot jam or orange marmalade  
2 cups flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1/3 cup plus 6 tablespoons half-and-half [I use soymilk, and it works fine.]  
1 stick melted butter or margarine  
1 tablespoon cardamon [I double this measurement.]  
2 tablespoons raisins [I add more.]

Cream eggs and sugar well. Add jam. Alternate flour and baking powder with half-and-half and butter. Add cardamon and raisins. Bake at 325–350°F for one hour in two or three small loaf pans.

### NINA'S KLEJNER

1 cup sugar  
½ cup butter  
3 eggs  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
3-4 cups flour (enough to be able to roll dough)  
4 tablespoons cream  
1 teaspoon ground cardamon

Cream butter, adding sugar gradually. Add eggs one at a time. Sift flour, baking powder and salt then add to butter, egg and sugar mixture. Mix well. Add cream and cardamon. Roll thin and cut in diamond shapes. Slit in middle and pass one end through hole to twist dough. Fry in fat at 370°F degrees for 2–3 minutes or until brown.



took over the cardamon bread duties. She came up with a recipe—or perhaps altered my grandmother’s—that was more to my liking: Moister and a touch sweeter, it is the recipe card I now pull out once the Thanksgiving

**CARDAMON IS ACTUALLY NATIVE TO THE FORESTS OF INDIA. EXACTLY HOW IT GOT TO THE FROZEN NORTH OF EUROPE ISN'T CERTAIN, THOUGH MANY SOURCES AGREE THAT VIKINGS BROUGHT IT HOME FROM CONSTANTINOPLE.**

pumpkin pie is in the rearview mirror of holiday festivities.

Nina’s other Christmas cardamon standard was klejner (pronounced KLI-ner). “Klejner” roughly means “slender,” which describes the flattened, thin dough it is made from. But klejner are deep fried, so there is nothing slender about them when they hit the waistline. Before its fat bath, the rolled-out pastry dough is cut into diamond shapes with a slit in the middle;

one end is pulled through the slit to create a twisted cookie. Not all klejner recipes call for cardamon, but both Nina and my mom loaded them up with the spice—Nina sometimes even using whole seeds. In the end, klejner are not especially sweet to the taste, at least to my childhood sweet tooth, so they weren’t my favorite Christmas cookie, but the flavor is indelibly imprinted in my holiday DNA. Since we almost never eat deep-fried anything at my house, I haven’t tried making them myself. But the call of cardamon is strong this year, so maybe I will give it a whirl (or a twist).

Ironically, cardamon is hardly native to Scandinavia. Having grown up with it as my quintessential Danish flavor, I was flabbergasted the first time I ran into a cardamon seed pod in some rice pudding at an Indian restaurant (which we didn’t have in Rockford, Ill. in the 1960s and ‘70s when I was growing up). Cardamon is actually native to the forests of India. Exactly how it got to the frozen north of Europe isn’t certain, though many sources agree that Vikings brought it home from Constantinople. Nonetheless, my familial

affection for Scandinavian cardamon has been enriched by learning of its mysterious provenance in ancient East–West international trade.

Since cardamon is one of the most expensive spices, I had the idea a year or two ago of trying to grow some cardamon at home. I was disabused of that notion when I learned that I would essentially need to recreate a tropical rainforest in my house year round—Guatemala is currently the biggest producer and exporter of cardamon.

By the time you read this, I will have made several loaves of this year’s holiday cardamon bread. Christmas is a time of remembrance of childhood places and experiences past, of traditions and heritage retreating further from present memory, of loved ones lost. It is a time to conjure what we wish to hold dear through the next journey around the sun. For me, the call of cardamon is most powerful at this season of the year. Glædelig Jul. **IV**

*Thomas Dean \*will\* make klejner this year, fat or no fat.*



# RATE IOWA CITY BUSINESSES

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## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

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## SMOKE SCREEN: PART II

As more states pass progressive marijuana legislation, what can Iowa learn before our laws become obsolete?

BY CAROL DEPROSSE AND CAROLINE DIETERLE



**O**n Nov. 5, several U.S. cities voted to legalize recreational use of marijuana: Lansing, Jackson and Ferndale, Mich. and Portland, Maine. Lansing mayor Virg Bernero backed the measure there, which received 62 percent of the vote, saying the “public is far ahead of politicians on this issue,” and in Portland, 69 percent of voters approved legalization.

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These cities now join a host of other cities and states across the country in decriminalizing marijuana to varying degrees. All told, 20 states have some form of decriminalization and legalization laws with varying restrictions regarding possession amounts, growing, selling and using, which generally mean, “not in public.” While many states only allow use of marijuana for medical purposes, in 2012, Colorado legalized possession of pot under one ounce for anyone 21 and older, Washington passed a decriminalization and tax initiative with revenues going toward healthcare and substance-abuse prevention and education, and the District of Columbia is poised to decriminalize personal use and possession.

### WHAT’S THE MATTER WITH IOWA?

In the ‘60s, gambling was still illegal in Iowa and liquor had to be bought at state-run establishments where purchases were monitored—but arrests for marijuana smoking

were low on the governmental priority list. Now we have casinos and people with gambling addiction, and the news is full of questions about what to do about excessive alcohol consumption, yet we are throwing people in jail for growing or using marijuana.

Consider the case of Bradley A., a 38-year-old Iowa City man arrested Oct. 2 and charged with a controlled substance violation and failure to affix a drug tax stamp—a Class D felony—for growing six marijuana plants in his home. For his personal use as he claims—or not, as law enforcement believes—six plants is not a large quantity of marijuana; but the law requires that a drug tax stamp be affixed to each one, and no one who grows pot would apply for a tax stamp. What we know of Bradley A.’s situation is that he wasn’t buying from the drug cartels, he wasn’t enriching drug lords and he wasn’t bothering anyone. No good comes from this arrest except for the statistics gatherers for next year’s Johnson County Drug Task Force’s (JCDTF) application to renew its annual appropriation under the Edward R. Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program.

Why are we making such a big deal about personal use of marijuana when our three most recent Presidents have admitted to smoking it? Clinton said, “I didn’t inhale;” G.W. Bush, “I was young and foolish;” and Obama, “I inhaled frequently—that was the point.” Clearly, smoking pot does not preclude one from attaining the highest office in the land—and being re-elected—so why are we rounding up people and tossing them in jail for doing it? In fiscal year 2012, approximately 14 percent of jail beds in Johnson County were taken

by people charged for use of drugs—mostly marijuana, according UI professor John Neff.

But, instead of proposing progressive marijuana laws like other states, new jails and even more stringent legislation are proposed. A 2013 Pew Research Center poll showed that 48 percent of respondents said they had smoked pot at some point and 12 percent of adults report having smoked marijuana in the past year; Johnson County has about 110,000

### IF LEGALIZED, COULD MARIJUANA BECOME IOWA’S NEXT CASH CROP?

Photo by Bob Doran

adults, which means that roughly 13,200 have smoked approximately one-half ounce of pot on average in the past year. If at least 13,200 people feel like they could be targeted for arrest on marijuana charges, a new jail will remain an item on the Johnson County government’s wish list. Until there is a change in the law or in law enforcement practices, those opposed to the jail only need to get a ‘No’ vote by the many who feel threatened by possible arrest for engaging in a practice they don’t deem harmful to anyone. Decriminalization would reduce the current demand for jail beds by 12-14 percent, and a smaller jail proposal would likely be more palatable to voters.

In the Iowa legislative session last spring, HF 468 was proposed by law enforcement, which would have *increased* the penalties for not affixing drug stamps. This bill originated in the Office of Drug Control (ODC), which is responsible to Gov. Branstad, and ultimately did not pass. Medical marijuana bills introduced in the House by Rep. Bruce Hunter (HF 22), and Dem. from Dist. 61 (Des Moines) and Iowa City’s Sen. Joe Bolkom (SF 79) were not allowed to get out of committee for a vote and Gov. Branstad has promised to veto any bill that lessens marijuana penalties. He also wants to strip the Iowa Pharmacy Board of its power to allow medical marijuana.

### SO, WHY DOESN’T IOWA ADOPT LEGISLATION SIMILAR TO OTHER STATES?

Eureka Springs, Alaska, for example, passed

**YOUR TOWN NOW >> CONT. ON P. 30**





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## MINOR INDULGENCES: SCROOGE EDITION

Can a trip to the Co-op inspire a holiday attitude adjustment?  
BY LUKE BENSON



**"E**at, drink and be merry" is a familiar holiday toast, but did you know that there's a second, somewhat morbid half to the saying that explains the reason *why* we should imbibe and rejoice? In case you were unaware, the phrase in total goes: "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

So there: Put that in your holiday pipe and smoke it.

I've been a bit Scrooged lately. The holidays are upon us once again and I've felt generally lacking in glad tidings, comfort and joy.

I know I'm not alone in this feeling: Naturally bubbling optimists aside, it seems more and more people's attitudes towards the holidays are anything but jolly. I've heard countless friends say they "just don't have the holiday spirit." Perhaps it's backlash to the unreasonable level of holiday exuberance we've been held up to by movies and holiday

Christmas specials. Or maybe the commercial underpinnings of the marketed collective merriment make the whole thing seem like a farcical excuse for retailers and credit card companies to stuff their own stockings. We're all so damned busy, broke and checked out—not to mention ear-blasted by shitty holiday jingles—all I have to say is "Bah! Humbug!"

Hoping to alleviate my Scroogery (and give my love a break from my grumbings), I decide to stop by the one place in Iowa City that, to me, embodies the qualities of the seasonal spirit year round: New Pioneer Co-op.

Having managed to negotiate the temperamental door system, I step inside and, green basket in hand, walk towards the technicolor produce section. Grabbing two acorn squash and imagining the evening's meal (bake one hour at 425°F, add butter, maple syrup, crumbled Iowa Maytag Blue Cheese, balsamic reduction and toasted pumpkin seeds—mwa!),

I feel my mood begin to improve. This little boost gets supercharged when, walking down Aisle 1, I snag two Ecto-Cooler-inspired Cobra Verdes. I'll sleep better tonight knowing these caffeine-filled little dandies will be waiting for me in the morning.

Humming to myself as I round Cheese Corner, I snag a block of Manchego, Le Roule and the fantastic, mustardy Red Dragon, and also a mini-bottle of Segura Viudas for my sweetheart. Up next, the cracker aisle where I grab a box of Flackers (nutty, flax seed crackers) and then a pepper and garlic Olli Salami to be dipped in spicy mustard. From there, I fill up my basket with a few house staples: olive chips and cottage cheese (amazing combination), Amy's Corn Meal Crust Pizza (the best frozen pizza ever), a box of La Croix and one of those pumpkin cookies everyone has been raving about.

The weeks supplies accounted for and my basket nearly full, I end my trip the spirits aisle. Normally when it comes to shopping, I prefer to be left alone, but I make an exception when it comes to chatting with Joseph, the New-Pi beer-case overlord. He's a wealth of knowledge, and, unlike many beer salespersons who are good at stating clever abstractions that say nothing but sound appealing ("It's very potent, but not overly so!"), Joseph can accurately describe the qualities, complexities and proper pairings for whatever beer or wine you might be interested in.

### A BIT OF BUBBLY LIFTS HOLIDAY SPIRITS. | Photo by Rachel Jessen

High off the promise of a delicious dinner and comforted by knowing we have groceries for the week, I round the corner in a much better mood—which rapidly deteriorates as I'm confronted with the grocery line from hell.

There they are: every dim-witted-check-writing-child-screaming shopper in Iowa City, taking forever, intentionally not bagging their own groceries and needing to know what the date is. While I wait, I begin calculating how expensive everything in my basket is and start thinking about how the \$7.99 I'm spending on free-range tofu could go to starving families or Christmas presents—goddamn the holidays anyhow.

But then something happens. Call it a holiday miracle or a visit from Marley's ghost—but for some reason I stopped that train of thinking and asked myself, "Is there another story that could be told?"

And like that, the whole scene changed



from being a tortuous line straight out of Dante's imagination to a beautiful arrangement of well-intentioned people excited to get home to have a well-cooked meal and glass of wine. And then I saw a timelapse of all the

**NORMALLY WHEN IT COMES TO SHOPPING, I PREFER TO BE LEFT ALONE, BUT I MAKE AN EXCEPTION WHEN IT COMES TO CHATTING WITH JOSEPH, THE NEW-PI BEER-CASE OVERLORD.**

people who had come here over the years—customers and employees: There's young Patti—store mom even then—and steadfast Thrasher. There's me, cashiering and laughing with Mick, Keegan and Eric. And now there's Beard-Boy, Sweet Sheila, and then I see Kevin Olish and Emily Palmer, and my heart is struck and I realize that ...

"Hello—open on 5!"

... that I had become the jerk holding up the rest of the line.

Shaken from the strange reverie, I toss my items on the counter, banter as I bag up my groceries and bid the cashier a good night the way I have a thousand times before and likely will a thousand times again.

As I walk home, bags full of groceries, I feel different. Unlike Scrooge, I've never been visited by ghosts or spirits; but every now and then, there is something that steps in and lets me know when I could be doing things better. These last few years I've spent more time staring at screens than I have talking to friends; more time worrying about the bill than I have appreciating the meal; more time intending and less time doing. In short, I've been a Scrooge with my time, energy and attention.

I hadn't thought of it until now, but it's worth noting that the first thing Scrooge does after his transformation is buy a meal for a friend he'd treated unkindly. Rounding the corner and heading towards my house, I make a silent vow to myself to follow his example as I head into this new year by making a conscious effort to reach out to friends and loved ones and to eat, drink and be so very merry.

Happy Holidays. **lv**

*Luke Benson's New Years resolution is to learn how to cook. You're invited over for dinner.*

## SNOWSTORM 2013

AUGUST SCHELL BREWING COMPANY | NEW ULM, MINN.

**W**hile some breweries release the same, traditional holiday seasonal year after year, others keep consumers on their toes by always brewing something new. Anchor Brewing's Christmas Ale is most well-known for surprising beer drinkers each year, but I always look forward to Schell's Snowstorm. The 2010 weizenbock and 2012 biere de garde were superb, and Snowstorm 2013, a "Belgian Style Golden Ale" brewed with chamomile and coriander, is just as good in its own way.

Think snifters and tulips are too fancy for Schell's beers? Think again! Serve Snowstorm 2013 in one of these bulbous glasses. The color is clear gold with a light haze. Two fingers of dense, fluffy white head will leave lacing along the glass as it settles slowly and evenly.

The smell is spicy with lots of clove, coriander and a good dash of pepper. Slowly, aromas of fruit begin to emerge: A hint of teasing apple makes way for banana. There is a little strawberry in the background and a scent of bubblegum becomes prominent. The chamomile offers a subtle, sweet grassy aroma.

The flavor of Snowstorm is very similar to the smell: There is clove, coriander and pepper up-front, and apple is followed by banana and bubblegum. Though far from overpowering, the spice lingers and remains prominent throughout each sip. The fruits really shine in the aftertaste. Much as it did for the smell, the chamomile offers a grassiness, but it is mostly overshadowed by the spice. The alcohol is completely masked and overall the beer is a smooth and soothing drink. **lv**



**SERVING TEMPERATURE:** 45-50°F.

**ALCOHOL CONTENT:** 7 percent ABV.


**FOOD PAIRINGS:** Salmon, chicken, tangy cheeses and spicy Thai cuisine.

**WHERE TO BUY:** Schell's beers are widely available—Snowstorm 2013 is available at most area beer retailers. Get it while supplies last.

**PRICE:** \$8 per six-pack.

*Casey Wagner lives in Iowa City.*

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# MONEY TALKS

Can political contributions be classified as free speech?  
 BY VIKRAM PATEL AND MATT SOWADA



**T**he Supreme Court has had yet another campaign finance case on its docket this session: *McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission*. As in similar cases, the decision has hinged on how the Court views the relationship between money and freedom of speech, particularly whether or not donating money to political campaigns is protected by the First Amendment.

**MATT SOWADA:**

I've come to a horrible realization: The Supreme Court is correct in suggesting the spending of money is best viewed as a form of speech. We understand that the First Amendment protects more than just written

and verbal communication. A law prohibiting someone from wearing a crucifix, hijab or Star of David would certainly be seen a violation of somebody's right to express themselves. What is a campaign contribution but a communication that you endorse a particular candidate or policy? This seems to me to be well within the scope of "speech," broadly understood. Now, bear in mind that I'm not necessarily saying that we shouldn't set restrictions on contributions. If particular kinds of speech are harmful enough to society we can and do limit them. We might decide that certain species of political spending are deleterious enough to the country that the law must intervene to prevent them. However, if we do, we should be honest

in what we are doing: limiting an individual's ability to communicate.

**VIKRAM PATEL:**

Freedom of speech definitely covers a wide range of activities, but the ways in which we interact with money seem to diverge greatly from those covered activities. First, all of our transactions are regulated in some fashion. Whether it's investing (where there are extensive regulations) or simply buying a gallon of gas (where there are federal excise taxes), every financial transaction has some level of government involvement. We don't see the same level of involvement with speech.

Secondly, campaign contributions have been protected as speech because giving money to a candidate has been described as a way of expressing support for a candidate similar

---

**"AS LONG AS MONEY IS CONSIDERED SPEECH ... NO CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAWS ARE SAFE."**

*Photo by Rachel Jessen*

to actually vocalizing support for that candidate. However, this comparison doesn't hold up in other situations. It is perfectly legal to express support for a terrorist organization but giving money to the same group is illegal. It is perfectly legal to express agreement with a judge's decision but expressing that agreement with a large cash gift is illegal.

**MATT:**

Well, your last point seems like an argument in my favor. If expressing support for a terrorist group or contributing to a political campaign were as likely to result in physical violence as writing a check to Al-Qaeda then they would be illegal, too. I think the reasoning

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behind banning financial donations to terrorists is the same that lead to laws against yelling “fire” in a crowded theater or calling upon a radio audience to attack somebody. It’s usually illegal to speak in a way that is obviously likely to cause immediate bodily harm.

While your second point feels like a non-sequitur, your first point is much more convincing, though mostly for what it implies. The fact that society allows government to interfere with financial transactions far more aggressively than it allows government to interfere with speech suggests that that we see the spending of money as fundamentally different from speech. I think you’ve talked me down from the ledge now. Perhaps money is not necessarily speech. Out of the theoretical realm and into the practical: Can you think of any way of limiting campaign contributions that might pass the Court’s scrutiny?

**VIKRAM:**

Passing the Court’s scrutiny is the hardest part of this issue. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court disagrees with me with regard to the role money plays in our society. In 2010, the Supreme Court struck down large parts of campaign finance law with the ruling in Citizens United. With the 2011 ruling in McComish v. Bennett, the court struck down matching funds for publicly financed candidates. McCutcheon v. FEC decides the fate of aggregate limits for campaign donations, and it doesn’t look promising. In a very short time, the Court has dismantled decades of campaign finance reforms, a trend that seems likely to continue.

The Court has been very protective of free speech, which you and I have generally agreed with the Court on. However, the protections that we honored so much are now what is driving the erosion of campaign finance law. This is going to be depressing to say: As long as money is considered speech (to say nothing of the Court’s determination that “corporations are people”), no campaign finance laws are safe. The situations where we limit speech are extreme and the only political situation that could possibly rise to that level is blatant bribery. Unless the court overturns the protection of campaign contributions as speech, campaign finance reform is completely dead. **lv**

*Matt Sowada and Vikram Patel, former hosts of American Reason, bring monthly political, social and ethical musing to Little Village.*

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## SUNDAY NIGHT BLUES

Vic takes an uncomfortable late-night ride. • BY VIC PASTERNAK



Sundays blow gentler breezes around the taxi shack, the pace slow and steady, our money for easy work. People don't much fuck around on Sundays, like it's a rule.

With his back to me, Captain Jerry Nicodemus mans the dispatch helm as if bent to an organ. At his left, our two main phone lines plus ashtray and smokes. At right, the business radio and desk mic, plus a sideline in reserve. His Levi's hang like drapes and nicotine stains his fingers; his eyes are pursed as if from combat the glow of which has faded. Such is the veneer of his 30 years in the chair.

Mainline rings and he answers, flowing into his dispatcher's mantra: "Where are you? ... Going where? ... How many passengers? ..."

Between his phones is a tilted wooden cubby like two ice-cube trays slapped to sides. Each driver is given two slots, one for a badge and another below for stowing call tickets. As Jerry sucks calls off the phones, he writes orders on tickets and then radios the call to the next driver in rotation, sticking the ticket in its right place.

Sounds like an easy juggle but it's not.

"So you don't need a taxi, ma'am? ... We'll

carry packages for you, but we don't do that sort of thing."

Ringing off, he says: "She wanted an 'escort,' like she called it."

The old man works every Sunday for his observation of a Friday sabbath at his temple, a triple-offshoot from Church of God Int'l. They speak in tongues, craft rationales for burning the Quran, and believe the earth's age to be 6,000 years. Or so I've gleaned from the mind-blowing newsletters cycled into our other shop literature. Me and the old man get along fine because we share the understanding that I am irredeemable. We don't talk Jesus or we don't talk at all.

Mainline rings and he runs his mantra all over again.

When he rings off this time, he holds the ticket out at me and says, "You ain't up in rotation but this'n's for a man of your caliber."

The ticket shows the address of our local massage parlor.

"Go to Deli Mart 5 and get a packet of snack crackers and bring them there."

"Snack crackers?"

"Regular snack crackers, 'orange with the cheese,' she said."

"Just one packet of snack crackers?"

"Hookers get munchies too, kiddo. But she's also got a call for you there so move ass."

So I go to D-5, buy the crackers, then drive over to the redhouse and get out to pound on the door. KNOCK HARD, somebody has Sharpied over the knob.

But here I get spooked by a slick coming out of the shadows.

"You my taxi?"

This must be my other call, a dude throwing lonesome airs.

"Hang on, buddy. I got snack crackers to give the lady."

Inside the redhouse—for enquiring minds wanting to know—is a dentist's waiting room on low lighting. A couch, potted peacock feathers in the corner, a small counter up front for the till, and a short hallway marked by four numbered doors. The door on the john hangs open at the end and its toilet hisses.

The lady of the house must have heard me for she appears out of Door #3 with two

**"HOOKERS GET MUNCHIES TOO, KIDDO. BUT SHE'S ALSO GOT A CALL FOR YOU THERE SO MOVE ASS."**

**- CAPTAIN JERRY NICODEMUS**

*Illustration by Josh Carroll*

brassy guys in tow. She's a farmgirl in city-girl makeup and a belly shirt that shows black hairs growing on her navel.

"This must be our cabbie," says one of the guys.

"And you get my snack crackers, Vicky?"

She always calls me Vicky. Paying with a five, she tells me to keep the change while the two guys give her three c-notes and tell her the same.

Back at my taxi, I see Lonesome Dude has decided I'm his cab after all and so occupies the front seat. The brassy guys complain the cab belongs to them but I smooth the waves and figure out they're all going the same direction, the guys to a hotel in Coralville and Lonesome Dude to a farm out yonder.

It's a weird trip. Lonesome Dude chews a lip while the two in back brag about riding motorcycles across country. They aren't for-real bikers, instead wearing Eddie Bauer leathers and puffing Cohibas, the kind of rich white assholes that confuse Eric Clapton for a legendary bluesman.

Lonesome Dude doesn't like them either. He grinds boot heels into the mat and squeezes his hands on his seat, popping eyes like his



head is ready to explode.

The two in back roll on, sniggering, “When she took that negligee off, or whatever it was—fuck me,” the other blowing a fart through his lips before they both burst laughing.

“I can smell her ass on my hand.”

“Your hand smells like my balls.”

I draw into their hotel where the guy paying me says to keep the change. Then he walks off leaving the door hang open so I scream wheels out of there and let inertia shut the door.

Lonesome asks, “Can I smoke?”

We both light up and drive into the country, jumping on the gravel out toward Cosgrove, rolling along without speaking and Lonesome staring hard out the window like he’s hoping to burn a hole in the sky with his eyes.

He lives on a farm with its barn built against the road and the yard parked with haycarts and skidloaders. The farmhouse is gothic dark and now two dogs come barking despite their master hollering at them to quit.

Lonesome climbs out to pay his fare and to tip me a fin. Then he bends to look at me.

“She ain’t coming home tonight.”

“Who ain’t?”

“The bitch what used to live here.”

He points back toward town, back toward the redhouse, and I know who he means. Lonesome can’t burn a hole in the sky with his eyes but his few words have sucked the wind out of me.

“It’s tonight I find out how she’s been filling the fridge. Told me she was working at a all-night dry cleaner, now how about that.” **lv**

*Vic Pasternak has been driving a taxi in Illinois City, Ohioa, for over a decade, ruining his chances for a solid career and shortening his lifespan. He enjoys fishing, preying, chain-sawing and long walks alone.*

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## HOLIDAY CRAFTACULAR

At WALOC, reigning DIY royalty display their handmade holiday wares.  
BY FRANKIE SCHNECKLOTH



Chances are if you've lived in or been around Iowa City for a while, you've heard rumor of What a Load of Craft (WALOC)--our local, cutting-edge, alternative craft fair. Now a staple of the holiday season and the perfect option for doing the bulk of your holiday shopping, WALOC was started in 2006 out of sheer necessity. At that time, there weren't places like that focused largely on local handmade goods, Etsy didn't exist and Iowa City was rather bleak with no outlet for its growing number of alternative crafters. So Susan Junis and Grace

**NOW A STAPLE OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON AND THE PERFECT OPTION FOR DOING THE BULK OF YOUR HOLIDAY SHOPPING, WALOC WAS STARTED IN 2006 OUT OF SHEER NECESSITY.**

Locke Ward decided to create their very own punk-rock, DIY craft fair as a place to showcase their own work as well as other local artists, crafters and musicians.

Initially, any artist looking to participate was granted a booth, but as the fair has grown and expanded, it's become a juried show with over 90 applications submitted this year.

### BE THAT COOL FRIEND AND GIFT A WALOC ORIGINAL.

*Photo courtesy of Andrew Kingsbury*

Submissions are filtered through the WALOC review panel that selects the best crafters out of the bunch. Their current space at the Johnson County Fairgrounds houses 35 booths, but this year, expect to see close to 50 vendors gettin' cozy with each other as the show offers vendors both full and half booths.

While many Iowa crafters will be in attendance, WALOC also welcomes vendors from around the country. You'll find three of my favorite vendors attending this year's show and selling their creations--which all make great gifts for you or someone else. Here's a sneak peek:

#### ANDREW KINGSBURY, DECADENCE

Ames, IA  
[etsy.com/shop/DecadenceStyle](http://etsy.com/shop/DecadenceStyle)

Andrew got his start creating jewelry by cutting up leather belts from thrift stores. He sells reconstructed jewelry for both men and women. When you trot past his booth, look for leather cuffs, necklaces and earrings, and

**CRAFTY >> CONT. ON P. 18**

GET  
CRAFTY!

*The holiday season brings many arts and craft markets to the area; make sure to check them out!*



#### EASTSIDE ARTISTS

DEC. 6-8 | 312 COLLEGE ST.  
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*flavor of the month: December*  
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## &gt;&gt; CRAFTY CONT. FROM P. 14

recycled or salvaged pieces. Using his unique eye for potential, he breathes new life into discarded objects and brings value to relics from the past.

Crowd Favorite: Leather cuff bracelets decorated with vintage items such as drawer pulls or old beer bottle openers.

My pick: That ruler bracelet would look nice on my wrist, yeah?

**GENEVRA BELL, GENEVRA BELL  
ILLUSTRATION**

Fairfield, IA

etsy.com/shop/genevrabell

A newbie to WALOC, Genevra sells original illustrations, prints, cards and ceramics. You can also commission custom pet portraits of your own furry friend dressed up in fancy attire. She draws on endless inspiration from illustrated children's books and the tiny magical details of those imagined worlds to create some terribly adorable little critters.

Crowd Favorite: A print of a tiny mouse asleep in a walnut shell.

My pick: Gregory Pickles print. It's a rabbit wearing a suit! C'mon, you guys!

**DANNI TRESTER, INNAD**

Madison, WI

innad.etsy.com

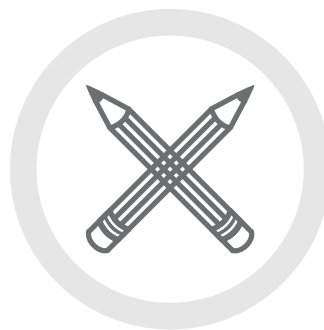
Two-year WALOC veteran, Danni puts her textile design degree to good work creating wallets, backpacks and pocket-sized notebooks. With a bold taste in pattern and color, Danni's products truly stand out and are great for ladies and fellas alike.

Crowd Favorite: Ultra Slim flat wallets

My Pick: Totally want her printed notebooks and one of those bad-ass backpacks.

What A Load Of Craft 10 happens Saturday, Dec. 14 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Be sure to stop by for musical treats from local performers, delicious food and a bunch of cute loot from the vendors. **lv**

*Frankie Schneckloth will be there.*



# LANDLORD STORIES

It's already time to decide. In August 2014, will you stay or will you go? *Little Village* seeks landlord stories good, bad and otherwise worth sharing—and reading!—before you make the call.

Please send work in any genre (up to 2000 words) for publication in special issue, out Feb. 8, 2014. All those published will be paid \$50, regardless of length.

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P L E A S E   S E N D   B Y

# DEC. 31

*Spoken Word Wednesdays*

Uptown Bill's Coffee House

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facebook.com/groups/wednesdaysUB



## RUBBLEBUCKET RISING

As their music finds new audiences, Rubblebucket moves forward with energy and grace. • BY YALE COHN



A fan once tweeted one of the best descriptions of Rubblebucket's music I've ever read: "Listening to Rubblebucket is kind of like dressing up as a starfish and cartwheeling down a rainbow." Soaring vocals punctuated by guaranteed-to-get-you-dancing horns and percussion are kept rooted by thoughtful yet quirky up-tempo lyrics. Their recorded albums, as impressive as they are, really exist to justify their live shows, which leave concertgoers sweat-drenched, smiling and giddy.

Rubblebucket's co-bandleaders Alex Toth and Kalmia Traver started playing music together as undergraduates at the University of Vermont, and two years after graduating in 2008, they self-released their first album *Rose's Dream*. Since then have gained a considerable and growing following across the country, including right here in Iowa City. I chatted with lead-singer and saxophonist Traver and trumpet player Toth while the west coast leg of their tour was hitting high gear.

**LITTLE VILLAGE:** *I saw your tour kick off show in New York, back in October ... Afterwards you told me, "Man, I just had one of those moments where I felt like 'I don't want to make music anymore.'" All creative types have moments like that ... how do you push past that?*

**ALEX TOTH:** At a certain point, you have to remember that it's your job, and that you have to be committed to it and dedicate a certain amount of time each day to working on it, to writing, to going into the studio and trying new things. Once you get moving, and a natural flow takes over and you find your groove, [that kind of] moment will just take over and it will be there. You can take a break, get some exercise, do some yoga, that kind of thing, and come back to it after a while, maybe even work with other folks ...

**LV:** *In the past, you were personally handling almost every aspect of the business of the band yourself, but now you have people for a lot of these roles. What's that like, having*

*more people involved in the day-to-day as the band's success has continued to grow? Is it a relief, to step back and delegate, or is it just that many more people you feel like you have to be responsible for?*

**AT:** It's important, at a certain point, to be able to step back and just let go, and let other people handle these things. I used to handle every single element myself: booking, promotion, we have to wake up at this time and be here at that time, all that. After a point, it really cut into my ability to really just focus on the music ...

2013 was a big year for the Brooklyn-based band. They had a busy summer touring season, including opening for Mumford and Sons, filming a special for PBS's *Infinity Hall Live* and releasing a new EP, *Save Charlie*. In the midst of it all, this past June, Traver was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. She completed chemotherapy in September and the band hit the road a week later for their fall tour.

**LV:** *[Recently] you made a very public announcement that you had been diagnosed with*

### RUBBLEBUCKET PLAYS BLUE MOOSE TAP HOUSE ON FRIDAY, DEC. 6.

Photo by Adrianne Behning

*cancer. You just finished chemo, and are now on the mend ... What role, though, has music itself played in helping you recover and giving you the strength to fight this illness?*

**KALMIA TRAVER:** Besides [music] being my whole life? That's an interesting question, on a lot of levels, because I feel like when you have cancer it puts everything into focus and you have to ask yourself, "Am I going to keep doing what I'm doing?" And "Is what I'm doing what might have lead to this?" And you have to decide. And for me, making music really is my life, and to go out there, on tour, now, even if it might not be the 100 percent healthiest thing—it's what I do. It's where I'm happiest, and having that creative outlet, and being able to connect with our fans and play music and sing and dance—that's so important to me. Being put in this position, with this Wow! Huge illness! is a time when I had to ask myself: "Is this what I'm supposed to be doing?" And the answer was always, "Yes."

**LV:** *Have you heard from other folks who've had cancer or faced other big challenges in their lives who you've inspired? ...*

**KT:** Not so much yet because we're only just now getting back on the road, but I did hear from a lot of people who had had their own battles with this illness and they inspired me so much. If there's people out there that I've inspired as well, then I'm grateful for the opportunity to return that energy because, you know, that's what's it's all about.

**LV:** *I've been a fan ... even my 74-year-old mother liked you when she saw you on Jimmy Kimmel's show [in July 2012]. When your new video ... for Save Charlie came out, it premiered, of all places, on NPR's website. How has your audience changed or grown over the years?*

**KT:** Yeah [premiering on NPR] was really cool, and I think [our audience] has grown, over time. We always had a certain following, age-wise, but that's growing as we tour more ... It's great to be able to connect with so many different kind of people, who all really just want to dance and have a good time and it doesn't matter really who they are, or how old. As long as they want to really enjoy themselves, we're happy to play for them and grateful for the chance to do so.

**LV:** *What's next? Your last two releases, Oversaturated and Save Charlie were both EP's, but I know you were focusing on writing a whole bunch even before this cancer thing. Can we expect a new full length album out sometime soon?*

**KT:** That's the plan. We were working on a bunch of stuff, and still are, but the EP's are a great way to get something out there to our fans and connect with them in between larger projects and we can't wait to get a new album out with just a ton of fun new songs.

The good news is that Iowa Citians don't have to wait to hear their fun songs: Catch Rubblebucket when they play Blue Moose Taphouse on Friday, Dec. 6. **lv**

*Yale Cohn really likes talking with people, and he probably woke up earlier than you did today.*

## KEEPING THE HOLIDAYS HOT

Celibacy is no way to celebrate the season. • BY CARMEN MACHADO



**L**et's be honest: When we think of the holiday season, it's not exactly the sexiest time of year. Family, too much rich food, "O Christmas Tree" on an endless loop, shopping crowds, snow and ice and early sunset, endless travel: It's exhausting and stressful. Here are some tips to keep your holidays as sensual and pleasurable as the rest of the year.

### KEEP YOUR CHAPPED SKIN SOFT AND YOUR BODY RELAXED

The winter winds are not kind to anyone, and there's nothing worse for sexytime than dry, cracked skin and chapped lips. Be good to yourself: Use a good lip balm, avoid the too-hot showers that'll parch your skin further and moisturize before bed and throughout the day. Ask your someone special to help you with the hard-to-reach places—you never know where that'll end up.

Also, the weight of winter—stress, bulky

### STEALING AWAY FOR STRESS RELIEF WILL MAKE THE HOLIDAYS MERRY. | Photo by Rachel Jessen

winter coats, muscles contracted against the cold—can wreak havoc on your body. Make sure you're getting, and giving, some wonderful massages.

### TURN UP THE SPACE HEATER AND BEAT THE DARKNESS

If you feel like your warm flannel footie pajamas are getting in between you and your lover, invest in a small space heater to warm up the bedroom for a few hours. That way, you can put on something slinky without ending up with goosebumps and hard nipples for the wrong reasons.

And if the early darkness is making you exhausted, try tackling a romp in the sack right after work, or early in the morning, just after

sunrise. Sometimes having light in the sky makes all the difference in the world.

### RECLAIM FAMILY TIME FROM YOUR FAMILY

Holiday time is family time, but there's something about fighting with your parents about your life choices while your significant other laughs quietly into their spiked eggnog that can really kill the mood. Make sure that you take time to yourselves to de-stress, vent and take advantage of your childhood bedroom.

You can even make it into a game. Did your brother fail to stop talking about his study abroad, your sister call you a loser, your mother ask you if you really want that second piece of pie and your dad criticize your career choices, all within two hours? Bingo! Retreat from the havoc with your darling for a "nap" or "walk."

### LET YOUR PRESENTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

Has your significant other been hankering after a particular adult toy, harness or swing? What better time to give it to them? Just make sure that they aren't opening it up at Aunt Marge's house in front of the entire extended family.

Not paired up with anyone? That doesn't mean you can't give yourself that high-end Swedish vibrator you've been eyeing. Hell, you can even wrap it just after Thanksgiving and let the anticipation drive you wild all month.

### GET OUT OF TOWN

There's nothing wrong with abandoning the frigid Midwest and squabbling in-laws and going somewhere warm. Use that holiday vacation time and find a beach where the sand is as white as snow.

Enjoy. **IV**

*Carmen Maria Machado is a fiction writer and essayist whose work has appeared or is forthcoming in AGNI, The American Reader, Tin House's Open Bar, Five Chapters, Best Women's Erotica 2012, VICE, The Paris Review Daily, The Hairpin, The Rumpus, Los Angeles Review of Books and many other publications. She is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she was a Dean's Graduate Fellow, and the Clarion Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers' Workshop.*

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## AT STAR'S END

After over a decade of writing horoscopes for *Little Village*, Dr. Star talks about his life in the stars, his final column and the future.

BY RUSSELL JAFFE



**"T**his is the interview I never expected to give," Dr. Star says at a table in a busy cafe. He is bundled for the cold in earth tones drinking coffee. Dr. Star is a *Little Village* staple and a figure beloved by readers since the paper's inception in 2001, but he is retiring from his position as the magazine's astrologer and this will be the last issue that includes his horoscopes.

"There was always a sort of crypto-quality about Dr. Star, for two reasons, both equally weighty," he says. "One was that I started this when I still had a number of personal connections to the U of I history department, which had [in the early 2000s] just invested all this time and effort into turning me into a good, rational, empirical historian. It's a skill I treasure, a wonderful gift to be trained that way. But I couldn't face them knowing that their recent history graduate was doing an astrology column!"

"Secondly, I never expected to be going this long in *Little Village*. I was one of the original

writers there at the beginning [of the publication], and I was concerned about being asked to do astrology charts all the time, because it's labor intensive for me. Between not wanting to offend the sensibilities of the history department and keeping my privacy, I never expected to be speaking openly like this, using my own name!"

Uncloaked from within his patterned tapestry of celestial prescience, Dr. Star is Carl Boudreau, a scholar who joined the Transcendental Meditation movement in the early '80s when he was living in Rhode Island. Later, he moved to Fairfield where he had a cosmic epiphany.

"I had just completed the morning's meditation program in the men's Golden Dome, and I was hit, almost by a gust of invisible wind, or a lightning bolt, by this notion that told me I needed to go to graduate school!"

He ended up at the University of Iowa. "I learned to think empirically and rationally, almost learning to think all over again," he explains. "I learned to reason historically. You

need to train and cultivate your intellectual mind with other intellectual minds. Once you've gone through a PhD program, the world starts looking very different. I really became an admirer and respecter of historians, but there was no way, in my mind, that I'd be a historian. It was an elaborate exercise in self-development."

### PLANETARY ALIGNMENT

"Becoming an astrologer is a hard thing to explain to your mom," Carl laughs with the confidence of an infinite possibility of laughter.

"I was monumentally over-educated," Carl says of his path to astrological enlightenment, or at least supreme intrigue. "I had studied religious studies, history and was well read in a lot of better esoteric texts. Read a lot of stuff about metaphysics; had a doctorate. I also had a pronounced intuition, like an ESP—something I never consciously developed, but was there. And I learned to read things critically and analyze them ... I'd been taught to be an observer of the real world and history. Intuitive, empirical, differential and inductive logic. Astrology is part of my reality, and it's hard to explain that ... to people who ridicule it.

"Then I think there's a whole other level if

### DR. STAR'S IDENTITY WAS REVEALED AT LITTLE VILLAGE'S CREATIVE WEEK EVENT.

Photo by Rachel Jessen

you're into meditation or spiritual practices or schools of thought, and you look at the architecture of astrology, you'll find that astrology ties in directly to the most practical ways to observe life's purpose."

### IN DEFENSE OF ASTROLOGY

"I've never had a chance to defend astrology openly," Carl explains, "as it's, by definition, fringy stuff. I have an old history professor who walked by me in Java House doing a reading of a chart and he just laughed openly.

"We astrologers—or users of intuition, explorers of new-age or alternative psychology or notions of reality—have a name for people who judge: 'dogmatic materialists.'

"In astrology, if you look at a chart, it's a framework by which you can organize and systematize these levels of cognitive development and apply it to any conceivable body of field of knowledge. Aside from strictly logical or mathematical thinking, everything fits into astrology. It's a universal language. Everywhere you go, you'll find people with some feel for



astrology. It's in the background of nearly every field ... it's a universal connector.

"I was able to use it to harness my own cognitive faculties and reach a broad audience. If you don't just stand there and patooey, 'BAH, ASTROLOGY!'—suppose these things do correlate with real events. I think that if you can get a person past dogmatic materialism and debunking and get down to basics, it's surprising how many people who have an appreciation for this, even if they keep quiet about it.

"It's hard to find people in academic circles who give credence to astrology. I think people really are locked into this parody of logical, mathematical thinking, mostly ideologues, sound very logical to themselves. Their reasoning seems syllogistic, but it's mostly brute, macho, intellectual bullying with a logical patina. They've hammered illogical things into logical-seeming forms. It's a very slippery business ...

"It's not their goal to come to an understanding, it's their goal to dismiss you. It's usually very naïve people who throw arguments [against astrology] at you. These guys have the most simplistic logical/mathematical understanding of what reason and argument is; my experience with academics is that their particular compromise with reality and the tenets of reason is the only one that's acceptable, not realizing that most fields have made their own compromises for the particularities of those fields' understandings.

"But that's my defense of astrology," he concludes.

## PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Now that Dr. Star is done writing for *Little Village*, where in the universe will Carl Boudreau go?

"I've started doing life purpose readings now," he says. "I used to do them, but people would ask me questions about what to do with problematic relationships, finances, job choices...

"I once sat down with a woman. She said, 'I know what financial people think of this transaction. I want to hear what an astrologer thinks.' People have used me as a Magic 8 Ball; they'd never want to hear what I said, they'd want one piece of information to blow open everything. Finally, I just stopped. This was around 2006, 2007...

"I then began to understand the theory of astrology on its own terms, to see its inner workings and that you could, by doing a particular

kind of reading, help people maximize their potential.

"You come into this life and you really do have a life purpose written in your chart. If you go in that direction, you'll maximize all this potential and minimize negatives. This connects with the goal of meditation: to synchronize your life with your life goals! You harmonize life. This is a real thing."

In his time (and space) beyond *Little Village*, Carl looks forward to continuing his practice of giving personal readings rather than general, brief charts. "Rather than take money to answer specific questions, I would ask a modest fee to design these questions to tell them what they NEED to know, and I [devote] five to six days to devising a chart for them. I have a waiting list of about 50 people, and each reading takes about a week. Devising a chart is like writing a research paper. You have to research, draft and internalize material. It isn't until several stages later where it all clicks. You can't just sit down in an hour and make it all click."

"Now I'm retired," the former Dr. Star says with a smile, "and something I've wanted to do is meditate, to focus on meditating beyond the flow of noise from work life. What I've hoped to do is more rigorously systematically meditate, instead of using it as a tool for dealing with daily life. Meditation accesses your own mind's supercomputer; it helps you organize your life. It's a kind of life navigation. That's its intended purpose.

"I saw this column as a labor of love. It was one of the stays of my existence. I got a lot of really good feedback. I can't count the number of people who have told me that my column has helped them through difficult times. I really conceived of it as a way to broadcast love. That may be corny, but that's why I did it. I can't say what it meant to me to hear, as I once did at the Tobacco Bowl, a young man open the *Little Village* and shout, 'Yes! Dr. Star says I'm gonna pass this exam!' It was a very conscious, literal labor of love, and now I need to devote more time to the readings, to delve more deeply into the theory and practice of astrology."

Carl Boudreau blogs, answers questions and takes readings at [carlboudreau.blogspot.com](http://carlboudreau.blogspot.com). **lv**

*Russell Jaffe is a symbiotically autonomous man doing symbiotically autonomous things.*

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## ROYAL DIALOGUE

Will Oldham discusses performing solo, the Everly Brothers and his gospel influence. • BY IAN MCCUSKEY



**LV:** *Do you find yourself struggling against the expectations of the crowd? You have a large swath of material to draw from, and you've worked on a lot of different projects with a lot of different people, but it seems like when people go to see Will Oldham or Bonnie "Prince" Billy, that they may have a set expectation of what it's going to be like ... Is that a conflict for you?*

**WO:** No. I know that there probably are some kinds of expectations, but ... I almost feel like at this point there is the expectation that surprise is going to be built into the experience, be an integral part of the experience for

**SCAN WITH THE LAYAR APP TO WATCH BONNIE "PRINCE" BILLY PERFORM LIVE ON KEXP.**

*Photo courtesy of KEXP*

**B**onnie "Prince" Billy, the musical brainchild of Louisville-based artist Will Oldham, will take the stage at The Englert Theatre on Sunday, Dec. 15, bringing along an oeuvre that spans over 20 albums in as many years. But that doesn't even begin to describe Oldham's entire career as a songwriter and performer, which started with the alt-country efforts in the 1990s and has included recent collaborations with Matt Sweeney, Dawn McCarthy and Tortoise. I recently reached Oldham by phone, to speak about solo performances, an artist's persona and the Everly Brothers.

**LITTLE VILLAGE:** *It looks like you're just doing a few days just through the Midwest in December?*

**WILL OLDHAM:** Yes, in the Midwest I'm doing four or five in December. I've been going out on these three to five day trips for the past couple few months and the next couple months.

**LV:** *Are you performing by yourself, or do you have other musicians who will be joining you?*

**WO:** No, by myself. Though, for all of the

shows the Bitchin' Bajas are going to be playing as well.

**LV:** *Do you prefer performing solo, as opposed to being with a band?*

**WO:** I'm trying to learn to like it. It's nice traveling with people, and having people to play with, play off of and to share aspects of the show before, during and after with. There's nobody to share aspects of the show with when you play by yourself, but I know that there are things to learn from playing on one's own.

**LV:** *When you are playing by yourself, how does it change your approach to the material? How do you look at what you want to do when you perform alone?*

**WO:** I don't know... actually, I don't know how to answer that question. Oftentimes, when these trips are three to five shows, I will, for myself, try to make the set significantly—if not completely—different each night. Sometimes I'll repeat one or two songs over the course of four or five days, but it's trying to learn who the audience is through their reactions to what I play.

everybody in the room. I think years ago there was [expectation] ... It's been so long that I've been making records and playing shows that it seems at this point I don't believe there are a lot of preconceptions about what the show will be like.

**LV:** *Earlier this year you had released a record with Dawn McCarthy of Everly Brothers' songs. What drew you to them, and especially to the lesser-known parts of their catalogue?*

**WO:** I've always listened to them my whole life, and here and there we've covered a song or two of theirs, at different times. Dawn suggested at one point when we were on tour together six or seven years ago—we were playing separate sets—and we started playing "So Sad (To Watch Good Love Grow Bad)" just during her set or between sets. And then like a year and a half ago she said that she bought a *Greatest Hits* cassette, and that her and her daughters were listening to it all of the time in their truck. I've been digging deeper and deeper into their catalogue over the past 20 years, and found all these wild jams, and some specifically that I thought maybe we should record. And when she asked I just got terribly

excited, because I knew that she didn't quite know what she was asking. So I started sending her the songs I thought we could do, and indeed she did get quite stoked.

**LV:** *I've been re-listening to some of the recent Bonnie "Prince" Billy records, and noticed that there is a gospel element throughout. Is that some place you end up automatically when you are writing, arranging and recording? Is it a conscious effort, or do you just go there automatically?*

**WO:** I think it's somewhat automatic. It's definitely something that isn't ignored, or I don't

**... THERE PROBABLY ARE SOME KINDS OF EXPECTATIONS, BUT ... I ALMOST FEEL LIKE AT THIS POINT THERE IS THE EXPECTATION THAT SURPRISE IS GOING TO BE BUILT INTO THE EXPERIENCE, BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYBODY IN THE ROOM.**

**-WILL OLDHAM**

try and stay away from it. I think its just part of what is important to me about music, or music that I listen to.

**LV:** *In terms of you performing other people's music, you're now in the position where people are recording your music, taking your songs and reimagining them, performing them. What is that experience like, the role reversal of having other people record and perform your songs?*

**WO:** It is a role-reversal. In a lot of ways, it's the point. I think it's the pinnacle of knowing that the songs have a place in the world, when someone else feels like they could sing it. It's what you want your kids to grow up to do.

**LV:** *Can we expect some new Bonnie "Prince" Billy material soon?*

**WO:** I'm going to keep making records until I can't make records anymore. Hopefully enough people buy them so that we can make another one—and people have, which has been one of the best parts of the past 20 years. **lv**

*Ian McCuskey is from Cedar Rapids, lives in Nashville and misses you very much.*

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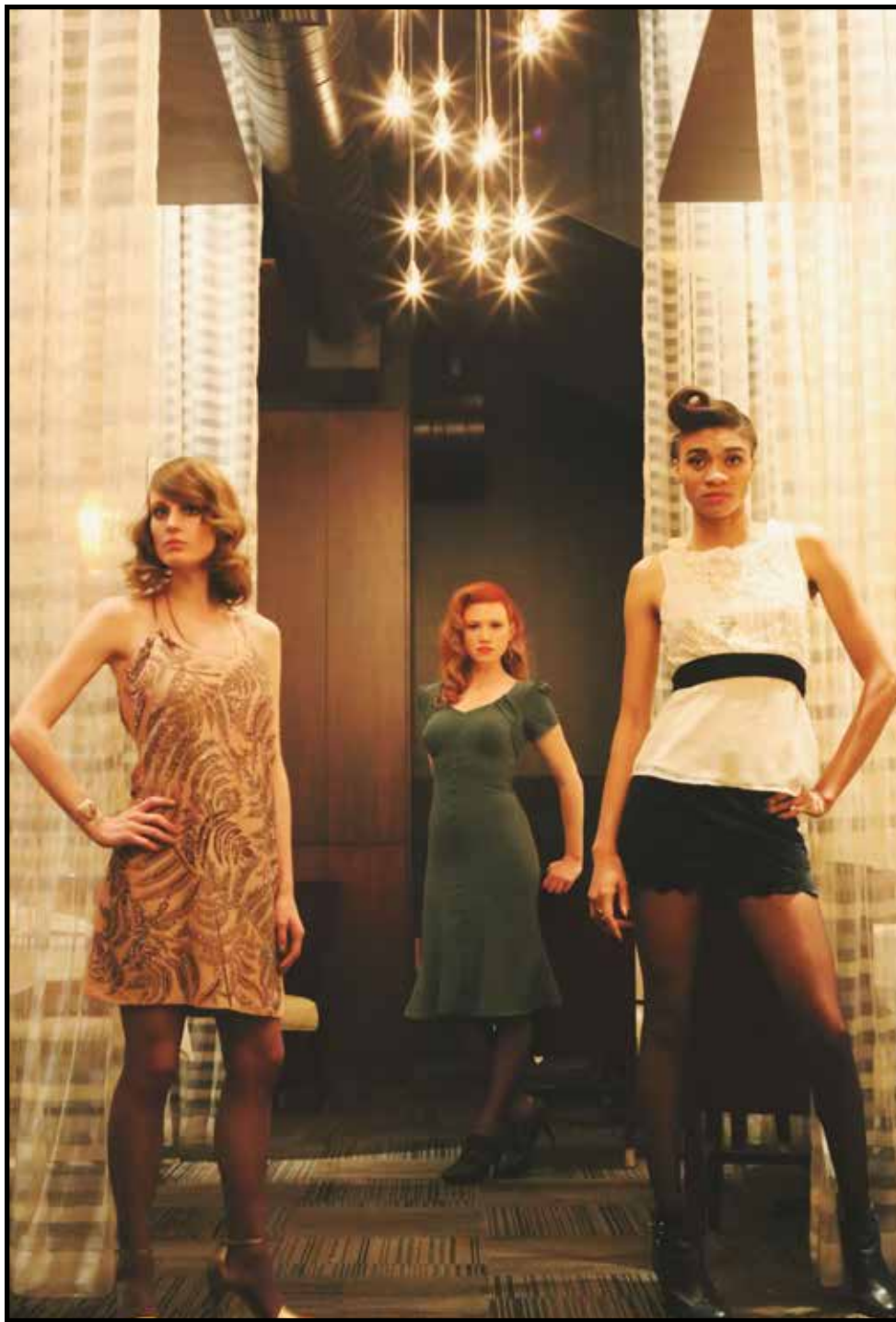
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## &gt;&gt; YOUR TOWN NOW CONT. FROM P. 6

a "Cannabis as Low Police Priority" initiative six years ago. Under this ordinance, local law enforcement is directed to issue a summons in lieu of a criminal arrest for adults age 18 and over that are found in possession of up to one ounce of marijuana or marijuana paraphernalia. Marijuana offenses will be punished by a fine, community service or drug counseling and education, but will not be punishable by arrest. For a state with the worst record in the nation (according to a 2013 American Civil Liberties Union report) for incarcerating African Americans more than whites for marijuana possession, why doesn't Iowa at least consider adopting an ordinance similar to Eureka Springs?

Furthermore, in Iowa we have some of the best land for growing marijuana in the nation and can't even legally grow hemp, while all over the country other states are seeing the profits rising in both marijuana and hemp industries where these have been legalized. Colorado's 2013 passage of legislation to tax marijuana is projected to bring in \$2 billion over the next five years. Kentucky is poised to reassert itself as the leader in hemp production that it was before federal prohibition, and marijuana is now the leading cash crop in California agriculture. Legalization in California likely will save taxpayers up to \$200 million per year in law enforcement costs and yield several billion dollars in increased economic activity (spin-off industries, hemp production, tourism, etc.) and sales taxes. If common sense and a desire to reduce jail and prison populations won't motivate the cowardly, ill-informed, sheep-like, re-election-craving ninnies in the legislature to revise Iowa's draconian marijuana laws, perhaps dollar signs and sheer greed will.

There is a statewide election next year. The Legislature or Johnson County should put some form of a marijuana initiative on the ballot (complete legalization, medical marijuana or decriminalization of personal use and possession of small amounts) and see what happens. If nothing else, it would ratchet up voter turnout and motivate younger people to register and vote.

Iowa led the way in the Midwest with same-sex marriage. Let's do it again by legalizing marijuana. It's drought resistant and thrives without industrial fertilizers or pesticides—Iowa's product might well become as famous as Maytag Blue Cheese. **lv**

*Carol deProsse & Caroline Dieterle*  
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# PRO TIPS

**SEASON'S GREETINGS DEAR FRIENDS!** It looks like it's "that time of the month" for *Little Village*—the time for Pro-Tips with Wayne Diamante! My goodness there's a lot going on: cold and flu season, the holidays and cold and flu season. Have you been washing your hands? Did you get a flu shot? **HAVE YOU SEALED YOUR BUBBLE?!?!** If you don't have a bubble don't worry about getting one, it's already too late. I've been in mine since October and will emerge no earlier than the last week of April. If you weren't using a rebreather three weeks ago you're already a flu zombie: Don't touch my stuff. But if you have a question, or would like "advice," let me know at [askwaynediamante@gmail.com](mailto:askwaynediamante@gmail.com).

Dear Wayne,

*My husband and I are celebrating Christmas and I'd really like to do something special. He doesn't like travel or dining out, so I'm thinking something sexy, any ideas?*

*Thanks,  
Charity*

Dear Charity,

These days, the hottest thing in sexy is vajazzling. For the uninitiated, to vajazzle is to have one's mons Venus waxed and then bejeweled with a crystal appliqué in a fancy pattern that reflects your personality. For example, maybe you're into politics? You could get a donkey, or an elephant, or a Peeing Calvin peeing on something you want to disrespect. It might seem a little weird, at first, to have a sinister Calvin peeing on something above your vuh-jay-jay, but that's politics for you. Some of the gentlemen out there might be thinking, "Gee, ladies get to have all the fun." I mean, you can't exactly jewel up the peen, you know, for practical considerations. Well, never fear! As of today, I am launching my own line of genital marquerie called Boodazzle. That's right, your husbo can wax his ass crack and rosebud and Boodazzle it to his heart's content. For as little as 30 dollars and an awkward afternoon in front of a mirror, his tradesman's entrance will look like the disco he's always imagined it to be.

Wayne

Dear Wayne,

*I often have trouble peeing in front of other people at urinals. Is that weird? Do you have any advice on overcoming this?*  
*Sincerely,  
Jim*

Dear Jim,

Totally not weird. It's called stage fright and it happens all the time to different people in different situations. It is a type of performance anxiety and the best way to overcome it is to stand your ground and face it. Every time you use a urinal you should drop your pants to your knees, extend your arms and make double pistol-fingers at your penis and calmly, confidently declare "Showtime." Maybe you pee, maybe not, but whatever happens it will be on your own terms.

Wayne

Dear Wayne,

*I'm looking for a hobby. Something not too involved, and definitely nothing with a lot of equipment. Also, I like sitting. Sometimes I cry. Any ideas?*

Wendy

Wendy,

Fortunately for advice columnists, most people are pretty plain and have relatively simple problems; however, you are a real gem. I have the solution for your oddly specific problem: Lifetime Network fan fiction. It's perfect for shut-ins with active imaginations. Here, let's get started:

*Good looking (lawyer/doctor/drifter) (Vanessa/Rick) has a (heartbreaking/secret/troubled) past and wants to (start over/lay low/find next victim) in a small town in New England. (He/She) (falls in love with/finds next victim in/is murdered by) a local shopkeeper. It is also Christmas time.*

Wendy, that literally took me 30 seconds to write and it's enough drama for, well, a lifetime. If that doesn't do it for you, there is marching band fan fiction. Look into it.

Wayne



## CELEBRATE THE OLD, RING IN THE NEW

Enjoy classic favorites and unexpected gifts this month in theatre.  
BY JORIE SLODKI



**D**ecember has the potential to be a quiet month for theatres: People leave town, and who would even want to venture into the cold when you can stay in, curled up under a blanket, drinking a concoction of hot chocolate mixed with melted peppermint patties? For those who go stir crazy in the winter, however, there are gems this month out there if you're willing to seek them out—whether you are in the holiday spirit, or in the mood for more experimental fare.

### THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES, OR FIVE BEANS FOR JACK

*Iowa City Community Theatre*

The world of fiction is full of fan theories that inject excitement into long-time classics. In Iowa City Community Theatre's upcoming kid-friendly show, playwright David Foxton speculates on a connection between two popular fairy tales. In his version of events, the same pair of tricksters is responsible for the Emperor's unorthodox wardrobe and Jack's

purchase of magic legumes! While Jack and the Beanstalk is a fairy tale of British origin and *The Emperor's New Clothes* was first popularized by Hans Christian Andersen, audiences can still enter a magical world where giants—physical and mental—are cut down to size. Directed by Krista Neumann, this show will delight family members of all ages . . . who may even be able to participate in the action.

The performance runs Dec. 6-8 and 13-15 at the Johnson County 4-H Fairgrounds. For more information, visit [iowacitycommunity-theatre.com](http://iowacitycommunity-theatre.com).

### A CHRISTMAS CAROL HOLIDAY CABARET

*City Circle Acting Company of Coralville*

If you have a hankering for Christmas entertainment, pull yourself away from Hallmark movies to see two productions from City Circle. For a more traditional theatrical experience, they offer Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. First published as a novel in

### WILL THE EMPORER BE CAUGHT WITHOUT ANY CLOTHES ONCE AGAIN? | Photo by Rachel Jessen

1843, the story has been adapted for TV, opera and even graphic novels. Though it has been a Christmas tradition for everyone from Mr. Magoo to the Muppets, this tale of regret and second chances contains poignant lessons that are appropriate all year long.

If you prefer your Christmas cheer to have more of an edge, City Circle is proud to present its Holiday Cabaret. See a variety show that includes music, dancing and short scenes based on holiday themes. Performers include the Coralville Central Elementary Cougar Chorale and the Fabulous Hawkettes. There will be two performances each night—a "Nice" version at 7:30 p.m. . . . and a "Naughty" version at 10:30 p.m.

A Christmas Carol runs Dec. 13-15 and 20-22. Holiday Cabaret runs Dec. 14 and 21. Both shows are at the Coralville Center for the

Performing Arts. For more information, visit [citycircle.org](http://citycircle.org).

**TRU**

*The Old Creamery Theatre Company*

For its final Studio Stage show of 2013 Old Creamery Theatre Company takes on the iconic American writer Truman Capote in the one-man show, Tru. Known for such novels as *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and *In Cold Blood*, Capote had an enigmatic personality that artists have attempted to capture ever since his death in 1984. In Tru, actor Jeff Haffner will portray Capote during one lonely night in his apartment in 1975.

Tru premiered on Broadway in 1989 featuring Robert Morse, who is best known as the original J. Pierrepont Finch in the musical *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, and for his current role as Bert Cooper in the TV drama *Mad Men*. Morse went on to win a Tony award for his acting in Tru, as well as an Emmy for recreating the role in a performance on PBS.

The performance runs Dec. 5-22 at The Old

Creamery Theatre in Amana. For more information, visit [oldcreamery.com](http://oldcreamery.com).

**MFA DIRECTOR PROJECTS**

*University Theatre*

For the most varied subject matter this December, check out the University of Iowa Theatre Arts Department. During the first two weekends of the month, the MFA Directing students will be presenting their first productions at the university. If their inaugural selections are any indication, the Corridor can look forward to provocative, involved work from this class in upcoming years. The plays will include:

*Desire Caught by the Tale* by Pablo Picasso. Yes, THAT Pablo Picasso. It turns out that he was much less popular as a playwright than as a painter. His foray into farce has been performed rarely since it premiered in 1944.

*Pvt. Wars* by James McLure. A drama about three soldiers recovering in a hospital during the Vietnam War, the play premiered as a one-act at the Humana Festival in Louisville, Ky. before McLure expanded it into its current



two-act version.

*Fur* by Migdalia Cruz. In a twisted apocalyptic update of *Beauty and the Beast*, a love triangle develops between a pet shop owner, a furry woman and an animal trapper.

The Playwright, written and directed by Mario El Caponi Mendoza. In this original work, a San Francisco playwright's life unravels against a backdrop of economic crisis.

Performances run Dec. 5-7 and 12-14 in UI's Theatre B. For more information on specific show times, visit [theatre.uiowa.edu](http://theatre.uiowa.edu). **lv**

*Jorie Slodki earned her MA in theatre research from University of Wisconsin, Madison, and has past experience in acting, directing and playwrighting.*

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## QUIZ SHOW QUEST

What does it take to be a contestant on *Jeopardy!*? • BY A.C. HAWLEY



**T**his past August, I was on *Jeopardy!*, wearing all blue from the waist up and looking for a way to be faster with the signalling device (if you call it a buzzer, the producers will hit you with a ruler). Getting to the point where I was standing on a soundstage at Sony Studios in Culver City, Calif. took a very, very long time. My *Jeopardy!* journey started back in 2006.

### QUALIFYING

The first step towards getting onto *Jeopardy!* is taking a 50-question qualifying exam. In the olden days, taking this test meant travelling to a major city and sitting in a room with a bunch of other people while taking an exam. By 2006, interested parties could take the exam online, free from the constraints of other prying eyes. When I took this test for the first time seven years ago, I thought I would do well because I had watched the show for years, but my first test ended in flames like a Spanky Spangler stunt.

For those who really want to get on *Jeopardy!*, dedication is everything. My first failure began a cycle of six years of me registering for the test and four years of me actually taking it (I slept through one and forgot about the other). Each time I took it, it got a little better. By the time I took the exam in January of this year, I thought that I killed it. My suspicion was confirmed when I got invited to a regional audition in May.

### DRESSING TO IMPRESS

The regional audition is much like going

to audition for a play. You've got to stand out to impress the producers—who ultimately decide your fate. I went into my audition wearing blue jeans, an old oxford shirt and dirty, beaten-to-shit white Vans. While I certainly looked terrible, I passed the new exam, played a very good practice round and talked about my love of Bravo reality television shows, which seemed to deeply impress one of the producers. Ultimately, being myself may have led to my success at the auditions.

### WAITING

At the end of the audition, the producers tell you that you are in the pool of eligible contestants for a year and a half—I did not stay in the pool that long. A month and a half after my audition, I was contacted by one of the show's producers, who told me that I had been selected for the show. After trying to do get on *Jeopardy!* for such a long time and finally succeeding, this was a particularly exciting and satisfying moment in my life.

### MEETING THE COMPETITION

When my filming time came around in late August, I went out to Los Angeles. Once I arrived at the *Jeopardy!* studio, the other contestants and I were checked by security and ushered into the green room. Everyone was absolutely jazzed to be getting this rare opportunity, and the excitement could be felt when we walked onto the set for the first time: It was a place that none of us believed we would ever be.

*Jeopardy!* contestants come from all backgrounds. I met engineers, lawyers, librarians

and there was even a poet named Fidelito who had graduated from the Writers' Workshop in the 1990s. When he found out I was from Iowa City, we talked about his old haunts. Everyone's collective enthusiasm and positivity made the experience easier, and lessened my nerves.

### THE UNEXPECTED CHALLENGE

While eyeing up the competition was really the easiest part of the experience, the hardest part of *Jeopardy!* was having to watch other people play. When I tell this to people, they think it's because I'm nervous to play. Nerves were 10 percent of my struggle. The other 90 percent was keeping my mouth shut. As any-

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one who watches *Jeopardy!* knows, the best part of the show is yelling out the answers. Since the crowd is mic'ed, you can't say anything because it will be picked up. Sitting through four games of this was extremely difficult for me.

### IN JEOPARDY!

When my game came around at the end of the day, I was relieved because I finally got to play. To be honest, I don't remember much about my experience on the show except four things: I didn't know about the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), I read too much into a question that referenced *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, I didn't remember as much from *The Americans* as I thought I did and I never remember that Indonesia is a country in the world.

The whole game went by like a blur with moments of frustration and elation scattered throughout. I knew answers and got them right, but I couldn't tell you what they were. By the time I fully got my bearings and felt comfortable, the game was over and I was in third—not quite able to fulfill my dreams of being a *Jeopardy!* champion and getting into the Tournament of Champions. But, if there was any upside to being third, it was hearing host Alex Trebek tell me that he was impressed with my game play. That truly was the best part of my *Jeopardy!* experience. **IV**

*A.C. Hawley has not actually watched his episode of Jeopardy! He might watch it someday.*



## PEE-WEE'S CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE

Paul Reubens discusses inclusive casting, celebrity guests and an eye-popping new restoration of his Christmas special. • BY KEMBREW MCLEOD



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EXTRA CONTENT



**W**hat's today's secret word? Christmas! AAAAAHHHHH! This year marks the quarter-century anniversary of *Pee-wee's Playhouse Christmas Special*, perhaps the most mind-bending holiday special ever aired by network television. "I really wanted to do something around the holidays," Paul Reubens tells me, "so it seemed like doing a Christmas special would be a lot of fun."

Reubens was inspired by the many holiday shows he grew up with, which he filtered through his singular aesthetic. "I loved Charlie Brown," he says, "the Rudolf ones—the stop motion ones with Burt the Beagle—and the King family."

Reubens's *Christmas Special* may share its DNA with those programs, but it certainly is not your typical holiday special. A dinosaur family celebrates Hanukkah, Randy the puppet rants about how "Christmas is just a commercial exploitation for big business trying to capitalize on consumer guilt," and let's not forget the running joke involving Pee-wee Herman being given multiple fruitcakes. At the end of the special, two buff construction workers use those brick-like desserts to build an annex to the playhouse—what Reubens

jokingly calls "the fruitcake room" in the DVD commentary track.

In addition to regular *Pee-wee's Playhouse* cast members like Lawrence Fishburne, who played Cowboy Curtis, Reubens's *Christmas Special* features an oddly eclectic group of guest stars: Cher, Magic Johnson, Zsa Zsa Gabor, k.d. lang, Oprah Winfrey, Charo, Joan Rivers, Grace Jones, Whoopie Goldberg, Little Richard, Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello—among others.

The hour-long special is an eye-popping gumbo of stop motion animation, cartoons, puppets, guest star turns and live action antics. The opening sequence itself is a work of art: Clocking in at just over three minutes, it begins with a prelude theme written by composer Van Dyke Parks. (It replaced the show's regular opening music, a cover of Martin Denny's "Quiet Village," which arguably helped kick off the "exotica" music revival of the 1990s).

The tranquil animated prelude—which features a snow-covered Playhouse and its surrounding landscape—is followed by a madcap dance number featuring the UCLA Men's Choir dressed as U.S. Marines. It is Reubens's favorite part of the special. "I just liked that it goes on for so long," he says. "I like that

when you list all the stars and all the inhabitants of the Playhouse, it just goes on and on and on and on. It's so fast and energetic, and I just think it's so funny that there are so many people in it."

The guest star turns by Cher, Grace Jones, Charo, Little Richard and others are certainly colorful, but Reubens bristles at the suggestion that the guest stars were selected for their camp value. "Because we still know them now," he says, referring to the fact that many of the guest stars continue to be recognizable icons, "it would indicate that they are more legendary and classic, than just campy."

"It was an unbelievable roster of talent," Reubens adds. "We had a big list of who to choose from and who was available, and we

**"TODAY'S SECRET WORD IS, 'YEAR!' NOW, YOU ALL KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN ANYONE SAYS THE SECRET WORD, RIGHT CHER?" - PEE-WEE**

just went down the list and picked out the people we most wanted—and got every single one of them."

The small screen can barely contain the guest stars' exuberant charm. Grace Jones, who is delivered to the Playhouse in a crate by Reba the Mail Lady, sings a goth-disco version of "The Little Drummer Boy." Her shiny chest plate and headpiece are out of this world, as is the song's backing track, which was reportedly arranged and recorded by David Bowie. Oprah Winfrey beams in via videophone, Little Richard attempts ice skating and Cher drops by for the day's secret word—"year"—provided by a robot named Conky 2000.

I previously invoked the term "eye-popping" to describe *Pee-wee's Playhouse*, but starting next year, viewers will run the risk of having their eyeballs permanently dislodged from their sockets. "The *Christmas Special* is going to come out, along with the entire *Playhouse* series, on Blu-ray," Reubens tells me. "It's being remastered now."

"The show was never seen on film," he says. "The show was shot on film and transferred to tape and edited on tape, and all the effects were done on tape. Then the entire show was put on another tape to broadcast, so there

are three or four generations of quality that are lost on every episode. So we went back to the original film elements, and the company I'm working with has recreated every edit in every single show, and recreated all the effects from all the original elements—which we were lucky to have kept.”

“It looks unbelievable. It's so extreme, people are going to freak out when they see it,” Reubens adds. “The detail and clarity and color is amazing.” This means that Gary Panter's set design, the stop motion animation and other details will come alive in psychedelic high definition. It's the kids show equivalent of being upgraded from cough syrup to mescaline.

When *Pee-wee's Playhouse* debuted in 1986, it looked like little else on Saturday morning television—which is why the show appealed to kids of all ages, from preschoolers to grad students. “There weren't a lot of live action shows for kids when my show came on,” he says. “Most other shows were animated, so just having a live person host the show was a little bit unusual at the time. Although my show was a throwback to the shows I grew up on.”

The retrofuturistic look of *Pee-wee's Playhouse* had a lot to do with its mixed-media format. The segments featuring Pee-wee and the cast are interspersed with cartoons, puppets, stop-motion animation and the occasional musical number. “It was a blend of different elements that I liked from different shows,” Reubens recalls, “It seems like *Captain Kangaroo* and *The Mickey Mouse Club*—they had different segments they would cut to. Lots of different mediums and elements were used in other shows, and they were all things I liked so I just tried to blend them all together.”

Another thing that made *Pee-wee's Playhouse* so forward looking was the diversity of the cast—in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and even body type. “That was something I went out of my way to do,” he says. “I would argue that it's as diverse as anything on television right now, if not more.” Take for example the recurring *El Hombre!* segment, which stars a Latino superhero. What made the cartoon so unique—especially for a network television show in the 1980s—was that it was aired entirely in Spanish, with no subtitles.

“I thought that if you spoke Spanish and you were watching my show,” he explains, “here was something only you understood. You had a disadvantage for most of the show if you didn't speak English, but then it was sort of reversed. And if you were English-speaking and you saw a cartoon that was only in Spanish, it would open your eyes and ears to the concept of another language.”

From Jewish dinosaurs to black cowboys, a joyful inclusive spirit permeates *Pee-wee's Playhouse Christmas Special*. Twenty-five years after CBS unleashed Paul Reubens's technicolor winter wonder dreamscape on the world, viewers are still picking up pieces from their blown minds. **lv**

*Kembrew McLeod would like to thank his son Alasdair, Pee-wee's biggest fan, for choosing to obsessively watch Pee-wee's Playhouse instead of Barney. And thanks to Paul Reubens for recording a personalized Pee-wee birthday message for Alasdair's third birthday.*

## HEY MIKE! WHAT'S A GREEN TIRE SHOP?



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## TANGLED UP IN BLUE

Looking beyond the controversy of *Blue Is the Warmest Color*.  
BY SCOTT SAMUELSON



Let me begin by giving my opinion on all the controversies surrounding the seven-minute-long lesbian sex scene in *Blue Is the Warmest Color*. My opinion is that it's not worth my time to have opinions about silly controversies.

The French title of Abdellatif Kechiche's new movie, which is playing at the newly-opened FilmScene beginning Dec. 6, translates as *The Life of Adèle*, which I prefer to *Blue Is the Warmest Color*, an artsy mishmash of *Fifty Shades of Gray* and *Orange Is the New Black*. The movie really is about the life of Adèle, and by that I mean you feel your way into her existence in an almost unprecedented way.

The story opens in school, as Adèle and her fellow high-schoolers try to parse a text by Pierre de Marivaux, the great French novelist and metaphysician of love. They fumble awkwardly with it, as we always do when we're asked to interpret a work of profundity. Adèle soon finds that she's in the same boat with herself: She has to interpret her own unfathomable erotic depths. The movie follows Adèle in her discovery of her lesbian sexuality and jumps through several years of her love affair with Emma, whose dyed-blue hair inspires the English title of the movie.

Great coming of age movies—Louis Malle's *Murmur of the Heart*, Kimberly Peirce's *Boys Don't Cry*—tend to find a way of making sexual identity feel intensely intimate yet utterly strange.

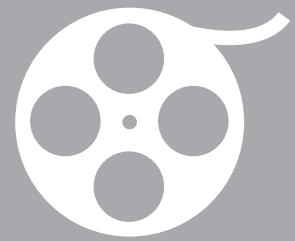
**A CONTROVERSIAL WINNER OF THE CANNES PALME D'OR, BLUE EXPOSES THE COMPLEXITIES OF OUR OWN LIVES.** | Photo by Racel Jessen.

But what makes *Blue* such a unique emotional experience is how Kechiche gets us to experience Adèle in so many ways simultaneously.

He often portrays Adèle as a child, almost like she's your child. He shows her stuffing her mouth with candy and trying to straighten her unruly hair. Multiple scenes are no more than her sleeping face. Even when we suddenly encounter her as a young adult, she's surrounded by children in her work as a kindergarten teacher.

Kechiche also portrays Adèle as an erotic object. The male director has taken some hits for staging her, particularly in the sculptural sex scenes, for his—and our—pleasure. But the objectification of Adèle is important. Let's face it: She is beautiful. And her being attractive is important for her character, just like it's important for us to experience others as beautiful.

Finally, Kechiche portrays Adèle as us. We fall in love not only with her but through her. In the final quarter of the movie, when Adèle is left desolate, I found myself subject to a similar desolation, something bigger than loneliness, where my own intimate memories filled the gaping emotional spaces on the screen.



N O W  
S H O W I N G



### Inside Llewyn Davis

Joel and Ethan Coen

NATIONWIDE, DEC. 6

Watch this, the latest Coen brothers-fest, to see if the main character, a glum folk-singer with a pregnant ex-girlfriend and a dead former singing partner, ever manages to crack a smile.



### Her

Spike Jonze

NATIONWIDE, DEC. 18

Spike Jonze gravitates once again to another grounded and rational concept. This one's the classic story about a totally normal Joaquin Phoenix and his super-conventional love-affair with an operating system. No oddball capers or bizarre mind-bending moments here!



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**BLUE IS THE WARMEST COLOR  
DELVES INTO THE BEAUTY AND  
CHAOS OF LOVE. (PICTURED:  
ADÈLE EXARCHOPOULOS AND LÉA  
SEYDOUX) | photo by Platon**

---

In one of those final moments, as Adèle is crying in front of her estranged lover, snot runs down her nose. Anybody who's been through the ringer of love knows just how she feels. But you also want to wipe her nose. That scene crystallizes our experience of her as simultaneously child, lover and self. Any director would have demanded tears, but the snot is a touch of brilliance.

*Blue* isn't without its faults. A scene that involves the symbolism of eating oysters is, let's just say, less than subtle. Worse, when the movie strays into philosophical and political issues, particularly pertaining to the conflicting social classes of its main characters, it verges on the banal Marxism that afflicts many French films. Luckily, such moments are rare.

As much as its sex scenes get talked up, the movie is really a love story, with all love's accompanying spiritual and physical chaos. The long sex scenes between the main characters work dramatically because anybody who's been in love knows how the alpha and the omega of the universe can be synonymous with the body of your beloved. But the most intense erotic moments take place outside the bedroom, in charged conversations, on a park bench, at a picnic, even when they're alienated from each other and yet still crackling with eroticism.

The movie's believability is largely due to the outstanding performances of Adèle Exarchopoulos as Adèle and Léa Seydoux as her blue-haired lover Emma. I fell in love with both of them. I fell in love through both of them. It's no surprise that the Palm d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival was awarded to Kechiche and them as a trio.

Let me end by saying that I saw *Blue Is the Warmest Color* at Filmscene's newly-opened venue. In a sold-out theater, with exposed brick walls, I sat with a glass of wine and watched lesbian sex and a heartbreaking love story on a surprisingly big screen. What more do you want? **IV**

*Scott Samuelson teaches philosophy at Kirkwood Community College and blogs about music with his son at [billyanddad.wordpress.com](http://billyanddad.wordpress.com).*



## ELITE 8: THE 2013 ALBUMS OF THE YEAR

Andre Perry (Mission Creek, Englert Theatre) drops his third annual guide to the year's top albums. • BY ANDRE PERRY



2013 was a fertile year for music. Rap came strong with ASAP Rocky's debut, the El-P and Killer Mike *Run the Jewels* collab and more toughboy posturing from Pusha T. Disclosure kept the dancefloor hot with its improbable '90s house flashback while Rhye kept bedrooms steamy with their Sade-inspired R&B jams. Janelle Monae stepped forth with a more cosmic sort of soul, less fringe than Ms. Badu, but as quirky and fun as the original godfather: Prince.

Rock stayed real with entries from post-punk revivalists Savages and self-revivalists My Bloody Valentine. Arcade Fire continued their descent into the middle of the road with big anthems and "important" lyrics so unironic and self-unaware that even James Murphy couldn't save their record; and why would he—everyone's getting paid. Despite Arcade Fire's college try, the true composers *did* show up—Tim Hecker, Oneohtrix Point Never and Julianna Barwick—presenting strong sets of ambient and fractured sounds.

Given this great year of music, we put together a list of eight albums that we think are essential works from 2013—a collection of albums that we encourage you to sit down with, listen to and consider deeply as the winter holiday approaches. We concede that, on some level, lists are ridiculous but hopefully our annual Elite 8 will offer a springboard for discussions which will lead to the discovery of new and old music.

### 8. Low | *THE INVISIBLE WAY*

Quietly overlooked this year, veteran

rockers Low dropped a beautiful, restrained record with Jeff Tweedy's tasteful production touch all over it. The swell of acoustic guitars, thick harmonies and rumbling tom drums lend these songs a folky tinge that pairs magnificently with the band's slowcore sound. It's difficult to signify how a band that has made a career out of beauty is any more compelling on their 10th studio album; but when the sweeping choruses rush by on "Just Make it Stop" or the measured and molten outro of "On My Own" slowly erupts, it's clear that this is an album marked by convincing, startling emotion.

### 7. KURT VILE *WAKIN' ON A PRETTY DAZE*

Best suited for long drives or Sunday afternoon inertia, this album unfolds with 11 sun-glazed guitar jams that highlight Vile's impressive six-string strengths: his slippery, versatile soloing, alluring acoustic picking and remarkable knack for penning chord-based riffs. The subtle psych feel of the record takes cues from Vile's old band The War on Drugs—he lifts the progression from *Slave Ambient*'s "Brothers" for "Air Bud"—and the effect is a breezy, deceptively intricate journey that pays off with every subsequent listen.

### 6. PARQUET COURTS *LIGHT UP GOLD*

While the solo on "Yr No Stoner" sounds like it was beamed in from a *White Light/White Heat* outtake, the chief influence here is the legendary slacker rock of Camper Van Beethoven (CVB). Almost any of *Light Up*

*Gold*'s ragged pop gems could have found a home on CVB's 1985 debut *Telephone Free Landslide Victory*, though Parquet Courts also establish their own signature punk energy through their balance of break-neck rhythms and squealing guitars with well-crafted hooks. The mellow turn of "N Dakota" spins post-teenage angst into jagged Americana beauty while album centerpiece "Stoned and

### 2013 WAS A GREAT YEAR FOR MUSIC, BUT KANYE WEST'S NEWEST ALBUM STANDS ALONE.

Starving" captures the purview of the New York struggling artist in a slightly subdued, yet slightly urgent voice.

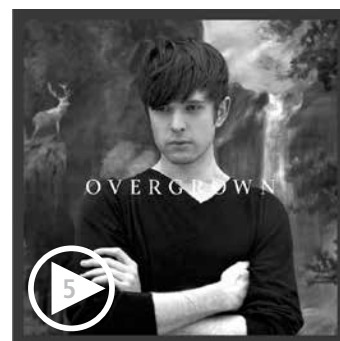
### 5. JAMES BLAKE | *OVERGROWN*

Blake continues to expand on a genre of music seemingly of his own creation: the atmospheric convergence of electronic soul, downtempo and hip-hop. While the influences are recognizable, the sum of their parts is unique—Blake's own personal alchemy. His music casts a haunting fog over the listener: We can feel the tension in the creeping synths and blue-note harmonies—but there is a clear promise of hope in both Blake's reflective lyrics and his tendency for euphoric plateaus. Lead single "Retrograde" remains one of the year's best songs and is the blueprint upon which the rest of *Overgrown* is built: a collection that can deal staggering emotional depth in both its sparest and fullest moments.

### 4. THE FIELD | *CUPID'S HEAD*

Mining old records, obscure instruments and other forgotten sounds as the basis for samples that unfold into sprawling minimal techno gems, The Field's Axel Willner has forged a reputation as one of the best—if not the best—in his genre. Each of Willner's albums has been a meditation on the power of repetition: With its twisting, ever-shifting sounds his debut explored the many faces of a sample and his second effort *Yesterday and Today* reckoned with the pairing of sampled sounds and live instrumentation.

On *Cupid's Head*, it seems Willner is



looking closely at the lifespan of a sample. The six songs here, running about an hour in length delve into absolute density as the sounds are stretched to stunning conclusions. Along the way, Willner builds his tracks with subtle, almost imperceptible changes. The effect is remarkable, especially evidenced on the brooding expanse of “They Won’t See Me” and the alternating liberation and claustrophobia that is “No. No ...” As Willner continues to master and shape the boundaries of minimal techno, *Cupid’s Head*, alongside his previous efforts, is another classic.

### 3. DEERHUNTER | *MONOMANIA*

Stepping away from the tattered dream-pop of its predecessors, *Monomania* finds Deerhunter evoking its dirtiest, grungiest sounds yet. Dirty but not sloppy, this band is writing songs with sharp focus. The structures are tight and the arrangements—shifting between wild noise and lilting guitar beauty—are precise and calculated. While the rest of the band’s influence balanced out frontman Bradford Cox’s vision on previous records, this album seems to be his more than anyone else’s; though the ensemble can’t be ignored—their talents graduate this music from the bedroom vibe of Atlas Sound (Cox’s solo project) and reposition it as mainstage rock and roll. The crowning moment here is the title track: “Monomania” unravels from an overdriven garage pop nugget into a full-on

elliptical psych jam that eventually resolves in the unsettling roar of a motorcycle engine.

### 2. VAMPIRE WEEKEND *MODERN VAMPIRES OF THE CITY*

*Modern Vampires of the City* is Vampire Weekend’s best album and, in the realm of indie-pop, the best album of the year. Now in their late-20s, and five years removed from their self-titled debut, principle songwriters Ezra Koenig and Rostam Botmanglij demonstrate impressive amounts of maturity in their compositions, arrangements and lyrics.

Most of the tracks here are accomplished A-Sides, full of rich sonic explorations and detailed, compelling character studies. Alternating between upbeat rockers like “Unbelievers” and “Diane Young” and the wintry balladry of “Step” and “Hannah Hunt,” this is a well-paced, well-balanced journey that feels like a guided tour through the existential crises of the young, educated and upper-middle class. But nothing about it is arrogant or cloying: These guys are just writing about what they know and they are writing about it with poise and insight. The swirling harpsichord and hip-hop percussion of “Step” feels so much like New York they should play it when you land on the tarmac at LaGuardia—you just can’t hate them for moments like this or the propulsive piano outro to “Hannah Hunt” which owes more than a little debt to the lazy-afternoon Manhattan atmospherics pioneered by The Walkmen.



SCAN THIS PAGE WITH  
LAYARTO HEAR TRACKS  
FROM THESE ALBUMS

If you didn’t like Vampire Weekend the first two times around it’s unlikely that you’ll completely fall for them on this latest record, but at the very least you will regard them from a distance with respect—after all, this band has always been the musical equivalent of Noah Baumbach, and if you’re not buying the aesthetic you’re just not buying it. The fact remains, few other collectives working with guitars and traditional song structures will match the precision, catchiness and mastery of the slightly populist, slightly arty pop achieved on *Modern Vampires of the City*. Now let’s head back to the Vineyard before we miss that last ferry ...

### 1. KANYE WEST | *YEEZUS*

This record stands above all other rap and pop records of 2013 and it’s not because of West’s over-the-top, borderline ridiculous, egomaniacal posturing. Rather, *Yeezus*’ power lies within its effective and progressive production and in West’s lyrical content, which is more unique than anything else in the rap game.

Almost entirely void of rhymes about gangster shit or living on the streets, *Yeezus* offers a compelling glimpse into the mundane life



of the rich and famous. The biggest dramas to be found here are not dope-slinging or bullet-dodging myths but instead treatises on binge drinking and drugging, decadent and crumbling relationships, and the occasional post-hangover reflections on the classism and racism that our anti-hero both abhors and indulges. Life and death isn't really at stake here—it's just a bear market of human emotion *interpreted* as a matter of life and death.

Taken as a whole, it's all quite genius: both that West is able to break away from the popular constraints of rap lyricism and still be popular *and* that he is able to tackle our mundane crises—conflicts of the interior—which apply not only to the rich but to most of the rest of us, too. Beyond the humor and eye-rolling reactions to our hero's arrogant claims, we do leave this record with a reaffirmation of western society's key problems: our inability to communicate and connect with one another, our insatiable addiction to the cancers of capitalism and commerce and the stifling awareness that we are still racist and classist as fuck.

And then there's the music. Aside from his usual attention to detail and high production values, West makes great use of his guest singers and tweaks his synthesizers, guitars and samples in all the right ways. The song structures elevate themselves beyond typical verse/chorus formats; some tracks begin on familiar footing but then spiral off into hypnotic third movements (the guitar solo/Frank Ocean outro of "New Slaves"), whereas others deconstruct and reform themselves over a singular musical theme (the ever-pulsing "Hold My Liquor"). Elsewhere, the piano/synth-horn dirge "Blood on the Leaves" nestles itself in three minutes of vocoder musings before West even begins to rap—and even then his verse is only a minor element of the song. His experimentation with classic structures sometimes places our focus on everything but the rhymes—the samples, the sounds—while also making it much more noticeable when he does, in fact, drop a verse.

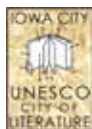
Many critics expressed that *Yeezus* breaks into unpredictable, foreign territory, making it West's most difficult record to access: They missed the point. *Yeezus* is West's most focused, stringent effort to date: It encapsulates the best of his grandiose experiments on *808s and Heartbreak* and *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* into a concise, explosive record. **lv**

*Andre Perry lives and works in Iowa City.*

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## CHILL VIBES

Much like snowflakes, no two December shows are the same.

• A.C. HAWLEY



**W**e've reached the end of another year of music here in Iowa City. There have been some unforgettable shows by new visitors like Killer Mike and returning acts such as Quintron and Miss Pussycat.

This month offers the same diversity of artists that we've been seeing in 2013—they all bring a different style. One is a legend of the indie folk scene. Another is a band that defies classification. Finally, we have an artist who breathes new life into a genre that can,

sometimes, be a mockery of itself.

**BONNIE "PRINCE" BILLY w/ BITCHIN BAJAS // THE ENGLERT // DEC. 15 // 7 P.M. // \$17.50 ADVANCE, \$20 DAY OF SHOW; ALL AGES**

Bonnie "Prince" Billy is the recording name of Will Oldham, a Kentucky-born singer-songwriter. Oldham has been a fixture of the independent folk and country music since 1993 thanks to his various Palace projects (Palace Brothers and Palace Music are the

**VIENNA TENG PLAYS CSPS DEC. 8.**

Photo by Mel Andringa

best known), which have risen to legendary status over the years. Bonnie became his stage name in 1998 and has become the moniker for Oldham's output since then. His music—both the Palace projects and Bonnie "Prince" Billy—shares many characteristics with The

## C A L E N D A R

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## Music

### ONGOING:

**MONDAYS: Open Mic with J. Knight** *The Mill Free, 8 pm*

**TUESDAYS: Blues Jam** *Parlor City Free, 8 pm*  
**Lower Deck Dance Party** *Iowa City Yacht Club \$2, 10 pm*

**WEDNESDAYS: Free Jam Session & Mug Night** *Iowa City Yacht Club, Free, 10 pm*

**THURSDAYS: Open Mic** *Uptown Bill's, Free, 7 pm*

**Daddy-O** *Parlor City, Free, 8 pm*

**Gemini Karaoke** *Blue Moose Tap House, Free, 9 pm*

**FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS: The Vault Dueling Pianos** *The Vault-Cedar Rapids Free, 9 pm*

**SUNDAYS: Sunday Happy Hour and Open Mic** *Cedar Ridge Winery, Free, 3 pm*

**Blues Sunday** *Checkers Tavern Free, 8 pm*

### WED., DEC. 4

**BUKU - Madhouse Vol. 1** *Blue Moose Tap House, \$8, 8 pm*

### THURS., DEC. 5

**Folk Night** *Little Bohemia, Free, 6 pm*

**Sing-Along Messiah** *Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$10-\$12, 7 pm*

**Casey Donahew Band** *First Avenue Club, \$15+, 8 pm*

**The IC Kings and Les Dames du Burlesque Holiday Show** *The Mill, \$8, 9 pm*

### FRI., DEC. 6

**First Friday Jazz (Gail Williams Quintet)** *Opus Concert Cafe, \$12, 5 pm*

**Nick Stika** *Cedar Ridge Winery, Free, 6 pm*

**Bob Dorr and Blue Band** *Campbell Steele Gallery, \$20, 7 pm*

**The Great Bluegrass Herons** *Iowa Theatre Artists Company, \$15, 7 pm*

**UI String Quartet** *Riverside Recital Hall at UI, Free, 7 pm*

**Kirkwood Community College Choirs** *Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$7-\$12, 7 pm*

**Savannah Jack Band** *Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, Free, 8 pm*

**Rubblebucket** *Blue Moose Tap House, \$12+,*

*9 pm*

**Rumpke Mountain Boys** *Iowa City Yacht Club, \$7, 9 pm*

**Skeeter Lewis & the CR Allstars** *Parlor City, Free, 9 pm*

**House of Escher** *The Mill, \$6, 9 pm*

**Thin Hymns** *Trumpet Blossom Cafe, Free, 9 pm*

**Jon Wayne and the Pain** *Gabe's, \$7, 10 pm*

### SAT., DEC. 7

**Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis** *West High School, \$10-\$40, 12 am*

**Irish Sessions** *Uptown Bill's, Free, 4 pm*

**Saul Lubaroff Jazz Duo** *Trumpet Blossom Cafe, Free, 6 pm*

**Back Home Boys** *Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon, Free+, 7 pm*

**The Great Bluegrass Herons** *Iowa Theatre Artists Company, \$15, 7 pm*

**UI String Quartet** *Riverside Recital Hall at UI, Free, 7 pm*

**Kirkwood Community College Concert Band** *Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$7-\$12, 7 pm*



Microphones, Devendra Banhart and Vetiver. In particular, they share his fondness for delving into the sounds and structures of American music.

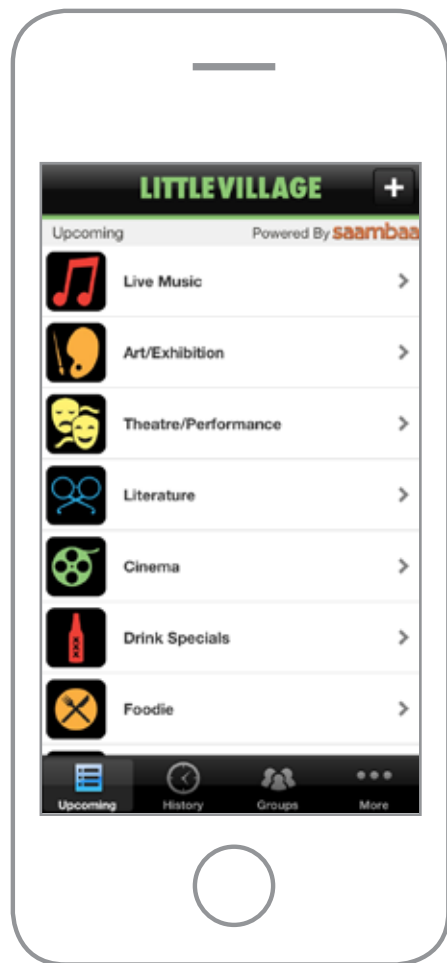
For The Microphones—who later became Mount Eerie—the Americana sound became a launching point for noisy experiments and long-form storytelling. Oldham keeps his project considerably more grounded. Rather than branching off into weirdness, Oldham uses his songs to explore the inner workings of our psyches, actions and experiences here on Earth. His penchant for clear, emotional storytelling fits well with his brittle yet pleasant croon, which recalls the Appalachian folk tradition in both its clarity and its affectivity. The result is music that is as haunting as it is touching. With each strum of his guitar, it becomes clear why Oldham has become an elder statesman in the indie community.

**RUBBLEBUCKET w/ RICH AUCOIN & THE OLYMPICS // BLUE MOOSE TAP HOUSE // DEC. 6 // 9 P.M. // \$15; 19+**

Rubblebucket are not strangers to Iowa City. The Brooklyn-based band have made multiple

appearances here in Iowa City since their first visit during the Mission Creek Festival. While talking about their history is pretty straightforward, describing their music is a much more complicated procedure. It is not because it is esoteric, dense or heavily experimental. If anything, their music is visceral and in-the-moment, making people want to dance and get into the groove.

The difficulty with their music comes from the fact that it defies classification. Rubblebucket does not fit into one neat category. They merge psychedelic elements with dance music and a variety of other sounds including reggae and Afrobeat. Sometimes when you hear lead singer Kalmia Traver blow on her saxophone, it feels like the spirit of Fela Kuti is in the room, commanding the proceedings. At other times, the band can have the dub-style rhythms of old Lee “Scratch” Perry mixed with the otherworldly aspects of early Oneida. There are even more contrasts in sounds that appear during their sets. Given these various styles, the challenge of classification becomes apparent. While they do not classify very well, the large crowds that come out for them and their continual return to our



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**Marbin** Iowa City Yacht Club, \$6, 9 pm  
**Steve Grismore & Co.** Clinton Street Social Club, Free, 9 pm  
**Magnetos** Parlor City, Free, 9 pm

## SUN., DEC. 8

**Awful Purdies Family Brunch Show** The Mill, \$10, 11 am  
**Acoustic Christmas Concert** Iowa Theatre Artists Company, Free+, 2 pm  
**Chamber Orchestra** Riverside Recital Hall at UI, Free, 3 pm  
**Christmas in the Valley** Cedar Valley Bible Church, Free, 6 pm  
**Vienna Teng** Legion Arts CSPPS Hall, \$20-\$40, 7 pm  
**Center for New Music Ensemble** Riverside Recital Hall at UI, Free, 7 pm  
**Dana T & Har-Di-Har** ps\*z, Free, 8 pm  
**Andy Hayes** Blue Moose Tap House, \$7-\$10, 9 pm

## TUE. DEC. 10

**Jazz Repertory Ensemble** Englert Theatre, Free, 7 pm

**Mimosa** Blue Moose Tap House, \$15-\$17, 10 pm

## WED., DEC. 11

**Tribute: A Christmas Tradition** Paramount Theatre, \$33-\$38, 7 pm  
**Festival of Carols** Englert Theatre, Free, 7 pm

## FRI., DEC. 13

**Jazz After Five** The Mill, Free, 5 pm  
**Adam Beck** Cedar Ridge Winery, Free, 6 pm  
**Diplomats of Solid Sound** Campbell Steele Gallery, \$20, 7 pm  
**Leann Rimes** Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, \$40-\$60, 7 pm  
**Allan Craig Miller** Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, Free, 7 pm  
**Frankie Ballard** First Avenue Club, \$10, 8 pm  
**Gloria Hardiman** Iowa City Yacht Club, \$10, 9 pm  
**Joe & Vicki Price** The Mill, Free, 9 pm  
**Ambushed** Parlor City, Free, 9 pm  
**Good Gravy** Gabe's, \$7, 10 pm

town show that Rubblebucket and Iowa City get along very well.

**VIENNA TENG // CSPS (CEDAR RAPIDS) // DEC. 8 // 7 P.M. // \$20-40; ALL AGES**

Vienna Teng is an artist who has been featured on major programs such as *Late Show with David Letterman*, *Mountain Stage* and *CBS This Morning*. Her music ranges from folk to pop to country with a bit of classical and jazz thrown in for good measure. Her lyrics are heartfelt and take inspiration from many different people and places. For example, a song from her 2004 album *Warm Strangers* is sung from the perspective of a girl who died in a car crash. Others are inspired by her travels and experiences throughout the world. A solo artist, she tells her tales with the help of her piano—but this is not the only tool in her arsenal.

Her other tool is a loop pedal. Given her more adult-oriented, a loop pedal—the stalwart of experimental and electronic bands across the globe—seems like a weird thing to

use. But, in the hands of Teng, the loop pedal is used with the same grace as it is by James Blake. She builds her vocals over themselves and supplements them with a cappella beats and other sonic effects. Her effective looping and judicious use of alternative effects create a new twist on the sometimes stale genre of adult contemporary music, making her stand out in the huge mass of singer-songwriters.

**THE FEZ // THE ENGLERT // DEC. 31 // 8:30 P.M. // \$20 ADV, \$25 DAY OF SHOW; 19+**

While it has been maligned as the genre for yuppies, yacht rock encompasses many excellent artists including Hall and Oates and Michael McDonald. Another band that is frequently connected to yacht rock is Steely Dan. Their mix of jazz and rock created classic albums like *Aja* and inspired legions of fans who pay tribute to their music. Fifteen such people live here in Iowa City.

Coming together under the name of The Fez, these 15 folks have played in a variety of local bands including Big Funk Guarantee,

**THE FEZ'S PRIMARY GOAL IS TO FAITHFULLY RECREATE THE SOUNDS OF STEELY DAN, WHICH IS A DISTINCT CHALLENGE WITHIN ITSELF DUE TO ITS INTRICACY.**

OSG, Insectoid, Dr. Z's Experiment, Jumbies and Public Property. The Fez's primary goal is to faithfully recreate the sounds of Steely Dan, which is a distinct challenge within itself due to its intricacy. Given that The Fez is full of sublime musicians, this is a challenge that they take on and pass easily. Replete with midnight champagne, rocking to the smooth jams of The Fez would be a nice way to ring in the new year. **lv**

*A.C. Hawley has a radio program called The Chrysanthemum Sound System, which airs from 10 p.m. until the Witching Hour on Thursdays on KRUI 89.7 FM. More information can be found on Facebook and at [chrysanthemumss.tumblr.com](http://chrysanthemumss.tumblr.com).*

C A L E N D A R

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**SAT., DEC. 14**

**Lynne Rothrock's Christmas Cabaret** Iowa Theatre Artists Company, \$25, 2 pm

**The Lennon Sisters** Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, \$17-\$37, 7 pm

**Saturday Night Music: Erin Ebnet** Uptown Bill's, \$5-\$10, 7 pm

**Lynne Rothrock's Christmas Cabaret** Iowa Theatre Artists Company, \$25, 7 pm

**Opera Scenes** Englert Theatre, Free, 8 pm

**Terry McCauley** Parlor City, Free, 8 pm

**Allan Craig Miller** Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, Free, 8 pm

**Chris Brooks** Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon, \$5, 9 pm

**Evergreen Grass Band** Iowa City Yacht Club, \$6, 9 pm

**Dave Moore and the Outskirts of Town** The Mill, \$8, 9 pm

**Mad Monks** Gabe's, \$5, 10 pm

**SUN., DEC. 15**

**Bonnie "Prince" Billy** Englert Theatre, \$17.50-\$20, 7 pm

**WED., DEC. 18**

**The Oak Ridge Boys Christmas Show**

Paramount Theatre, \$29-\$49, 7 pm

**No Bird Sing** Gabe's, \$5-\$7, 10 pm

**THURS., DEC. 19**

**George Jazz Trio** Campbell Steele Gallery, Free, 6 pm

**Ugly Sweater Christmas Party** The Mill, \$3 /

Free with non-perishable food donation, 9 pm

**FRI., DEC. 20**

**BF Burt** Cedar Ridge Winery, Free, 6 pm

**Winter Solstice at Ushers Ferry Historic**

Village Ushers Ferry Historic Village, Donation, 6 pm

**Holiday Spectacular** Paramount Theatre, \$19-\$49, 7 pm

**Christmas with Erin Bode** Campbell Steele Gallery, \$20, 8 pm

**Dennis "Daddy-O" McMurrin** The Mill, \$7, 8 pm

**Brass Transit Authority** Parlor City, Free, 9 pm

**It's About Time For a Dance Party Extravaganza (ft. DJ Omatic, Wolf Mixer)**

Gabe's, Free, 9 pm

**SAT., DEC. 21**

**Holiday Spectacular** Paramount Theatre, \$19-\$49, 2 pm & 7 pm

**Silver Wings** Parlor City, Free, 8 pm

**Euforquestra's Home for the Holidays Show (ft. Candymakers & Whistleblower - Crisis Center Benefit)** Gabe's, \$10 - \$200, 8 pm

**Kevin Gordon** The Mill, \$12 Advance / \$15 Day of Show, 8 pm

**SUN., DEC. 22**

**Community Band** Englert Theatre, Free-\$5, 2 pm

**THURS., DEC. 26**

**Belladiva** Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, Free, 7 pm

**FRI., DEC. 27**

**Bad Girl No Biscuit** Cedar Ridge Winery, Free, 12 am

**Big Lott Holiday Jam & Open Mic** The Mill, Suggested donation \$10, 7 pm

**Jason Stuart Cobalt Blue** *Parlor City, Free, 8 pm*  
**Belladiva** *Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, Free, 8 pm*

**SAT., DEC. 28**

**Catfish Keith** *The Mill, \$10, 8 pm*  
**Mustang Sally Band** *Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, Free, 8 pm & 10 pm*  
**South East Side Effect** *Parlor City, Free, 8 pm*

**DEC. 29-30**

**Past Masters** *Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, Free, 7 pm*

**TUE. DEC. 31**

**NYE Punk Show** *Trumpet Blossom Cafe, Free, 11 am*  
**New Year's Eve Family Bash 2013** *Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$7, 2 pm*  
**New Year's Eve with Dueling Pianos** *First Avenue Club, 8 pm*  
**New Year's Eve Party featuring The Fez** *Englert Theatre, \$20-\$25, 8 pm*  
**Zeta June** *Iowa City Yacht Club, Free+, 9 pm*  
**House of Large Sizes** *Gabe's, \$15-\$100, 9 pm*  
**New Years Eve Dance Party** *Blue Moose Tap House, Free, 9 pm*  
**Night People** *Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, Free, 9 pm*  
**Wylde Nept** *The Mill, \$10, 4 pm*  
**New Years Eve Party** *The Mill, Free, 9 pm*

**FRI., JANUARY 3, 2014**

**First Friday Jazz** *Opus Concert Cafe, \$12, 5 pm*  
**Billy Heller** *Cedar Ridge Winery, Free, 6 pm*  
**Mississippi Band** *Parlor City, Free, 9 pm*

**SAT., JANUARY 4, 2014**

**Irish Sessions** *Uptown Bill's, Free, 4 pm*  
**17th Annual Elvis Tribute and Benefit** *Gabe's, \$5, 7 pm*  
**Evan Stock Band** *Parlor City, Free, 8 pm*

**TUE. JANUARY 7, 2014**

**Slices: Performance & Pie** *Uptown Bill's, Free, 6 pm*

**Art/Exhibitions**

**ONGOING:**

**THROUGH DEC.22: Cultures in Clay:**  
**Puebloan Vessels** *Old Capitol Museum Free, All Day*  
**People of the North Star Exhibit** *Old Capitol Museum Free, All Day*  
**New Forms** *Iowa Memorial Union at UI, Free,*

*All Day*  
**THURSDAYS: Artvaark** *Uptown Bill's Free, 6 pm*

**WED., DEC. 4**

**Art Bites ~ Bertha Jaques: Eye on America** *Cedar Rapids Museum Of Art, Free, 12 pm*  
**Handmade for the Holidays** *Iowa Artisans Gallery Free, All Day*

**THURS., DEC. 5**

**Tom Quach** *Campbell Steele Gallery, Free, 7 pm*

**FRI., DEC. 6**

**Emotions in Motion - Photo Show Body Moves** *Fitness and Wellness Center, Free, 5 pm*  
**UIMA First Friday** *Hotel Vetro, Free, 5 pm*

**SAT., DEC. 7**

**Holiday Thieves' Market** *Iowa Memorial Union at UI, Free, 10 am*  
**Christmas Studio Sale** *Of the Earth Studios, Fine Art by Nancita Werneti, Free, 11 am*

**SUN., DEC. 8**

**Holiday Thieves' Market** *Iowa Memorial Union at UI, Free, 10 am*

**MON. DEC. 9**

**Paint Drink & Be Merry with Vino van Gogh** *Blackstone, \$38, 6 pm*

**TUE. DEC. 10**

**Talking Lines** *ps\*z, \$150, 6 pm*

**WED., DEC. 11**

**Paint Drink & Be Merry with Vino van Gogh** *Brown Bottle, \$38, 6 pm*

**FRI., DEC. 13**

**Emotions in Motion - Photo Show Body Moves** *Fitness and Wellness Center, Free, 5 pm*

**SAT., DEC. 14**

**Marcia Wegman** *Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Free, 11 am*  
**What a Load of Craft** *Johnson County Fairgrounds, Free, 11 am*

**Mon. Dec. 16 Paint Drink & Be Merry with Vino van Gogh** *Bluebird Cafe, \$38, 6 pm*

**TUE. DEC. 17**

**Paint Drink & Be Merry with Vino van Gogh** *The Mill, \$38, 6 pm*

**WED., DEC. 18**

**Paint Drink & Be Merry with Vino van Gogh**

*Brown Bottle, \$38, 6 pm*

**TUE. DEC. 31**

**New Years Eve Party** *The Mill, Free, 9 pm*

**Cinema**

**WED., DEC. 4**

**Holiday Movie Night** *The Mill, Free, 6 pm*

**SUN., DEC. 8**

**Movies@MNH: "A Bug's Life"** *Museum of Natural History at UI, Free, 2 pm*

**FRI., DEC. 20**

**The Story of Solutions** *Prairiewoods, Free, 12 pm*  
**The Iowa Way** *Englert Theatre, \$5, 5 pm*

**SUN., DEC. 22**

**A Christmas Story** *Paramount Theatre, \$5.50-\$10.50, 2 pm & 7 pm*

**Theatre/Performance**

**ONGOING:**

**THROUGH DEC. 22: Away in the Basement, A Church Ladies Christmas** *Old Creamery Theatre \$18-\$27.50, 3 pm*  
**Coming of Age in Chore Boots** *Riverside Theatre Iowa City, 7 pm*  
**Miracle on 34th Street** *Theatre Cedar Rapids \$10-\$35, 7 pm*  
**Tru** *Old Creamery Theatre \$18-\$27.50, 7 pm*  
**The Velveteen Rabbit** *Old Creamery Theatre \$8.50, 11 am*  
**It's A Wonderful Life** *Starlighters II Theatre \$15-\$16, 7 pm*  
**The Nutcracker** *Englert Theatre \$14-\$26, 2 pm & 7 pm*  
**Away in the Basement, A Church Ladies Christmas** *Old Creamery Theatre \$18-\$27.50, 7 pm*  
**The Emperor's New Clothes** *Iowa City Community Theatre \$8-\$16, 7 pm*  
**A Christmas Carol** *Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$12-\$27, 7 pm*

**MONDAYS: Catacombs of Comedy** *Iowa City Yacht Club \$3, 9 pm*

**TUESDAYS: Slices: Performance & Pie** *Uptown Bill's, Free, 6 pm*

**WEDNESDAYS: Spoken Word** *Uptown Bill's Free, 7 pm*



**THURS., DEC. 5**

**Tim Miller** Legion Arts CSPS Hall, \$16-\$20, 7 pm  
**Collaborative Performance** Space Place Theatre at UI, Free-\$12, 8 pm

**FRI., DEC. 6**

**Dances of Universal Peace** Prairiewoods, \$15-\$100, 6 pm  
**J.R. Brow** Penguin's Comedy Club at The Vault, \$14-\$16, 7 pm

**DEC. 6 - 7**

**Collaborative Performance** Space Place Theatre at UI Free-\$12, 8 pm

**SAT., DEC. 7**

**Broadway Buddies** Iowa Children's Museum, 9 am  
**J.R. Brow** Penguin's Comedy Club at The Vault, \$14-\$16, 7 pm  
**Comedy for Charity 5** The Mill, \$5, 9 pm

**DEC. 12 - 14**

**UI Dept. of Dance Graduate/Undergraduate Concert** Space Place Theatre at UI Free-\$12, 8 pm

**FRI., DEC. 13 - 14**

**Gabriel Rutledge** Penguin's Comedy Club at The Vault, \$15-\$16, 7 pm

**SAT., DEC. 14**

**Holiday Cabaret** Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$10, 7 pm & 10 pm

**SUN., DEC. 15**

**Fairy Tales with a Twist** Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, Donations, 6 pm  
**Mamma Mia!** Paramount Theatre, \$53 - \$73, 7 pm

**MON. DEC. 16**

**Mamma Mia!** Paramount Theatre, \$53 - \$73, 7 pm

**THURS., DEC. 19**

**Irish Christmas in America** Legion Arts CSPS Hall, \$30-\$35, 7 pm

**DEC. 20 - 21**

**Michael Thorne** Penguin's Comedy Club at The Vault, \$12-\$14, 7 pm

**SAT., DEC. 21**

**Fairy Tales with a Twist** Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, Donations, 10 am  
**It's a Wonderful Death** Cedar Ridge Winery,

\$50 (Dinner + Performance), 6 pm  
**UI Youth Ballet and School of Dance Event** Space Place Theatre at UI, Free, 7 pm

**SUN., DEC. 22**

**UI Youth Ballet and School of Dance Event** Space Place Theatre at UI, Free, 2 pm  
**Was the Word** Englert Theatre, \$10, 7 pm

**SAT., DEC. 28**

**The Funk Daddies** Campbell Steele Gallery, \$20, 7 pm  
**National Theatre Live: Frankenstein** Englert Theatre, \$15-\$18, 7 pm

**TUES., DEC. 31**

**Polyester Blend** Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, Free, 5 pm  
**Jim Wand** Penguin's Comedy Club at The Vault, \$17.50, 7 pm & 10 pm  
**Illusion** The Vault-Cedar Rapids, \$10, 9 pm

**JAN. 3 - 4**

**Chris Boom Boom Johnson** Penguin's Comedy Club at The Vault, \$12.50, 7 pm

**Literature**

**WED., DEC. 4**

**Jim McKean** Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Free, 7 pm

**THURS., DEC. 5**

**Bridges to Contemplative Living** Prairiewoods, \$5, 6 pm

**FRI., DEC. 6**

**Dennis Green** Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Free, 7 pm

**THURS., DEC. 19**

**Bridges to Contemplative Living** Prairiewoods, \$5, 6 pm

**Educational**

**ONGOING:**

**THURSDAYS: Senior Tech Zone** Iowa City Public Library Free, 10 am  
**Thursday Night Lineup: Holiday Mansion Tours** Brucemore \$7-\$15, 6 pm

**WED., DEC. 4**

**Setting up Payroll Workshop** BioVentures Center, \$45, 6 pm

**THURS., DEC. 5**

**Rembrandt and Dou: Rivalry in Self-Portrayal** Art Building West at UI, Free, 6 pm  
**Margaret Beck, Department of Anthropology** Museum of Natural History at UI, Free, 7 pm

**FRI., DEC. 6**

**Doodlebugs Mobilize** Cedar Rapids Public Library - Ladd Library, Free, 10 am

**TUE. DEC. 10**

**Knitters and Stitches** Prairiewoods, Free, 9 am

**WED., DEC. 11**

**Lean Six Sigma Network Meeting** Kirkwood Training and Outreach Services, 7 am

**Foodie**

**ONGOING:**

**SATURDAYS: Iowa City Winter Farmers Market** Iowa City Market Place/Sycamore Mall Free, 10 am  
**SUNDAYS: Farmers Market** Johnson County Fairgrounds Free, 11 am

**WED., DEC. 4**

**Iowa Gifts Sampling** New Pioneer Co-op, Iowa City, 4 - 6 pm

**THURS., DEC. 5**

**Open House** Bread Garden Market, Free, 5 pm

**FRI., DEC. 6**

**Parents Night Out** Robert A. Lee Recreation Center, \$7-\$10, 4 pm  
**Iowa Gifts Sampling** New Pioneer Co-op, Coralville, 3 - 6 pm

**SAT., DEC. 7**

**Iowa Gifts Sampling** New Pioneer Co-op, Iowa City & Coralville, 10am - 1 pm

**MON. DEC. 9**

**Paint Drink & Be Merry with Vino van Gogh** Blackstone, \$38, 6 pm  
**Cocktail Classes** Devotay, \$30, 6 pm

**DEC. 9 - 16: COFFEE WEEK**

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## WED., DEC. 11

Paint Drink & Be Merry with Vino van Gogh

Brown Bottle, \$38, 6 pm

## MON. DEC. 16

Paint Drink & Be Merry with Vino van Gogh

Bluebird Cafe, \$38, 6 pm

## TUE. DEC. 17

Paint Drink & Be Merry with Vino van Gogh

The Mill, \$38, 6 pm

## WED., DEC. 18

Paint Drink & Be Merry with Vino van Gogh

Brown Bottle, \$38, 6 pm

## Kids

### ONGOING:

**THROUGH DEC. 22: Tannenbaum Forest**

Amana Colonies Free

**Santa Times Amana Colonies, Free, 6 pm**

**Mondays: Toddler Storytime** Iowa City Public Library Free, 10 am

**Wednesdays & Thursdays: Preschool**

**Storytime** Iowa City Public Library Free, 10 am

**Fridays: Book Babies** Iowa City Public Library Free, 10 am & 1 pm

**Saturdays: Family Storytime** Iowa City Public Library Free, 10 am

**Sundays: Art Adventure: Clay Play!** Iowa Children's Museum Free, 2 pm

**Family Storytime** Iowa City Public Library Free, 2 pm

## SAT., DEC. 7

**Broadway Buddies** Iowa Children's Museum, 9 am

**Kid's Day** National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library, Free, 9 am

## FRI., DEC. 13

**Family Fun Night** Mercer Park, \$0-\$1, 6 pm

## SAT., DEC. 14

**Tipton Old Fashioned Christmas & Tour of Lights** Downtown Tipton, Free, 5 pm

## SUN., DEC. 29

**Harlem Globetrotters** US Cellular Center, \$20-\$75, 2 pm

## TUE. DEC. 31

**New Year's Eve Family Bash 2013** Coralville Center for the Performing Arts, \$7, 2 pm



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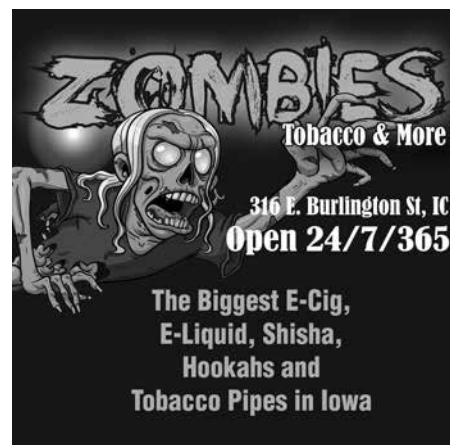


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# Community

## ONGOING:

**WEDNESDAYS: Wednesday Women**

*Prairiewoods Free, 10 am*

**Pub Quiz The Mill, \$1, 9 pm**

**THURSDAYS: Trivia Night The Bent Bucket**

*Free, 7 pm*

## WED., DEC. 4

**The Corridor Business Journal Presents:**

**An Entrepreneurial Forum** *National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library, Free, 7 am*

## THURS., DEC. 5

**Open House** *Bread Garden Market, Free, 5 pm*

**The Salt Company** *Englert Theatre, Free, 8 pm*

## FRI., DEC. 6

**Prelude to Christmas** *Amana Colonies, Free, 10 am*

**TechBrew** *The Vine Tavern, 5 pm*

## SAT., DEC. 7

**Prelude to Christmas** *Amana Colonies, Free, 10 am*

**Comedy for Charity 5** *The Mill, \$5, 9 pm*

## SUN., DEC. 8

**Prelude to Christmas** *Amana Colonies, Free, 11 am*

## TUE., DEC. 10

**Iowa Mobile Developers Meetup** *Bioventures Center, 6 pm*

## WED., DEC. 11

**Kirkwood Training and Outreach Services**  
*Kirkwood Training and Outreach Services, 7 pm*

## SAT., DEC. 14

**Seeing Is Believing: Visio Divina** *Prairiewoods, Free, 10 am*

**What a Load of Craft** *Johnson County Fairgrounds, Free, 11 am*

## TUE., DEC. 31

**Lectionary-Based Faith Sharing** *Prairiewoods, Free, 10 am*

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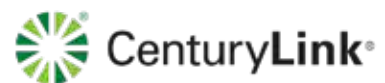
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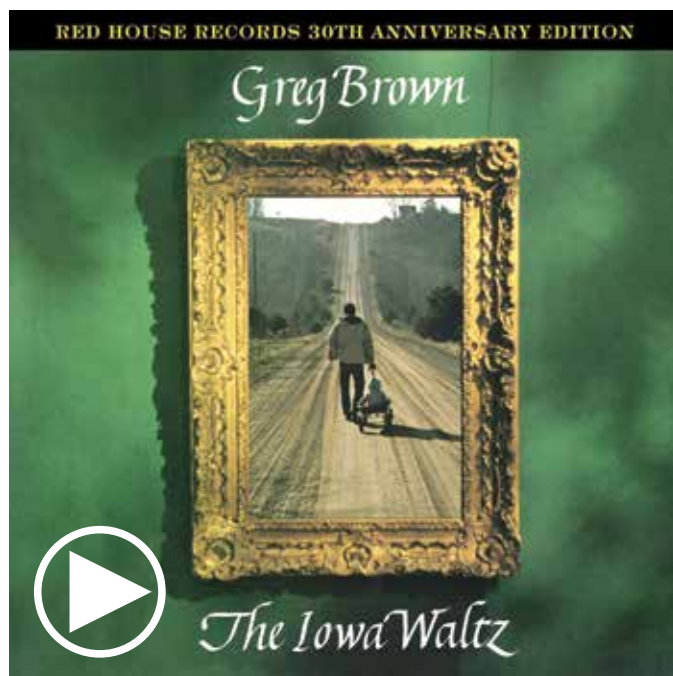
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**BUFFALOWS**

*Woe Isn't Me*  
buffalows.bandcamp.com

Buffalows is Landon Strause, Brooks Strause and Adam Bolts. The Brothers Strause are best known for the formidable Old Scratch Revival Singers, a very freaky, psychedelic take on old time gospel revival. Buffalows has a simpler sound, centered in old-timey country music. I'm not sure who writes the songs, but I hear some of Brooks' infallible roots-pop ear for melody. The simple acoustic (except for pedal steel guitar) arrangements and close harmony serve the songs well.

What these songs bring to my mind is the Grateful Dead, circa *Workingman's Dead*,

when they pulled back from psychedelia and got in touch with their folksy roots. Like the Dead, the Buffalows appropriate the sounds of country music and make it into their own weird thing. The simple chord progressions of folk music are twisted up just enough to sound fresh, without becoming overtly strange.

Back in the '70s, when "hippie" became passé, the counterculture folks appropriated the term "freak" for themselves. This came out of Tod Browning's infamous horror movie *Freaks* and was meant to encompass both willful strangeness and a sense of a minority culture pitted against the mainstream. The Buffalows are in a sense next-millennium freaks who've found a way to make the

familiar weird and the weird familiar. And that's what really makes this EP special: the countrified nostalgia for a hallucinatory past.

*Kent Williams*

**GREG BROWN**

*The Iowa Waltz*  
30th Anniversary Edition

It is apropos that I'm writing this while sitting in a quiet corner of a warm house during the holidays, revisiting Greg Brown's 1981 album *The Iowa Waltz* with the smells of cooking food and the distant bubbling chatter and laughter of relatives in the background. I'm struck by how different *The Iowa Waltz*

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## THE 12 DAYS OF RHYME TIME

**THE BLUESY, LOOSE AND DARK-AT-TIMES SOUND OF *FREAK FLAG* AND *HYMNS TO WHAT IS LEFT* IS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND ON *THE IOWA WALTZ*, WHICH FEATURES A MORE HOMESPUN, BREEZY AND FLOORBOARD-CREEKY STYLE OF FRONT-PORCH FOLK.**

sounds from Brown’s current work, almost 30 albums later.

The bluesy, loose and dark-at-times sound of *Freak Flag* and *Hymns to What Is Left* is nowhere to be found on *The Iowa Waltz*, which features a more homespun, breezy and floorboard-creeky style of front-porch folk. And it’s this face of folk that was the launch of many other records. Bob Feldman, after being deeply moved by one of Brown’s performances in 1982, took over the fledgling label that the musician had started and reissued *The Iowa Waltz* as its first record in 1983.

Thirty years later, Red House is still influential with a rich history of important folk releases. So, in celebration of their auspicious anniversary, they are releasing a remaster of the album that started it all. On their reissue of *The Iowa Waltz*, they have improved the sound by bringing the vocals up out of the mix, while still maintaining a field-recording ambience.

It seems that 30 years later, *The Iowa Waltz* still has that uncanny ability to capture the seemingly lost, folksy-homey vibe that Iowa represents for many and for me rushes in when I’m with family during the holidays. **IV**

*Michael Roeder is a self-proclaimed “music savant.” When he’s not writing for Little Village he blogs at playbsides.com.*

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**Happy Holidays Rhyme-Timers!** Out of respect to all races, religions and creeds I usually try to keep the content of these puzzlers as universal as I can, but I just couldn’t resist devoting a puzzler to arguably the most obnoxious of all holiday carols: “The Twelve Days of Christmas.”

As always, listed below are synonyms for two words that rhyme followed by the number of syllables in each of those rhyming words. Your challenge is to figure out those two words based upon the clues provided. So for example, “antiseptic jingle” (2, 2) would be “sterile carol.”

Make sense? Then here, in no particular order, are the 12 days of rhyme time.

**BY LUCAS BENSON**

**Spastic Musician (5, 3):** HYPER , PIPER

Tranquil Chicken (1, 1): \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

Bird Ardor (1, 1): \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

Band Adornment (1, 1): \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

**Happy Blackbird (2, 2):** JOLLY , \_\_\_\_\_

Ganders Whimsy (1, 2): \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

Fowl Ammo (2, 3): \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

Damsels Vocations (1, 1): \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

**Rulers Districts (1, 1):** \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

Numbskulled Percussionist (2, 2): \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

Underworld Damsels (2, 2): \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

Trumpeter Détente (1, 3): \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

**ANSWERS FROM THE LAST EDITION OF RHYME TIME:**

*Gratitude Speech (5, 3): Appreciation Oration*

*Envelop Goodwill (2, 1): Embrace Grace*

*Acknowledgement Ritual (4, 3): Recognition Tradition*

*Thankfulness Ecstasy (3, 4): Gratitude Beatitude*

*Horn Heaven (5, 4): Cornucopia Utopia*

*Larger Dinner (2, 1): Increased Feast*

*Sufficient Goods (2, 1): Enough Stuff*

*Substantial Illustration (2, 3): Ample Example*

*Affiliation Affection (5, 4): Consanguinity Affinity*

*Pleased Papa (2, 2): Happy Pappy*

*Conclave Chitchat (3, 3): Gathering Blathering/Reunion Communion*

*Sublime Offspring (3, 3): Resplendent Descendent*

*Cicero once said, “Gratitude is not only the greatest of the virtues but the parent of all others.” Put more succinctly, what are two rhyming words that summarize what Cicero’s highest virtue was and how it was ordered. (1, 1): Thanks Ranks*



## HAS A STOPPED CLOCK EVER REALLY HELPED SOLVE A CRIME?

*In detective fiction, a common plot device is the broken clock or watch that tells the time of the murder. Does this ever happen? Has a broken clock or watch ever been admitted as evidence in a murder trial to show the time of the crime?*

—Oscar Colombo, Maryland

This is one of those tropes future consumers of vintage whodunits are going to find unintelligible. It's not like we don't use timekeeping devices anymore; on the contrary, I'm still waiting for clothing manufacturers to resize that little pouch in a pair of pants to fit the pocket watch known as an iPhone. However, the day will surely come when someone reading Agatha Christie's 1963 novel *The Clocks* (the murder victim is found surrounded by clocks stopped at 4:13) is going to say: A clock with stopped hands? What the hell is that?

Be that as it may, we found many real-life murder cases where a stopped timepiece had been used to determine the time of death:

- In 1867 Joseph Humphrey was found dead near Yuba City, California, having been attacked by an unknown assailant with a hammer. The time of death was fixed by a silver watch with a broken crystal in the victim's pocket, showing about 11 PM.
- In 1919 taxi driver Doslva Cote was waylaid and beaten to death while en route between Worcester and Clinton, Massachusetts. Although his automobile was taken, his money and watch were not. The watch had stopped at 3:30 AM and restarted when shaken, thus likely indicating the time of death.
- In 1935 Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Coleman of Spotsylvania, Virginia, were murdered and thrown into a well. One clue left behind by the killers was an antique eight-day pendulum clock stopped at 8:20, apparently when the cabinet door was opened to search for money.

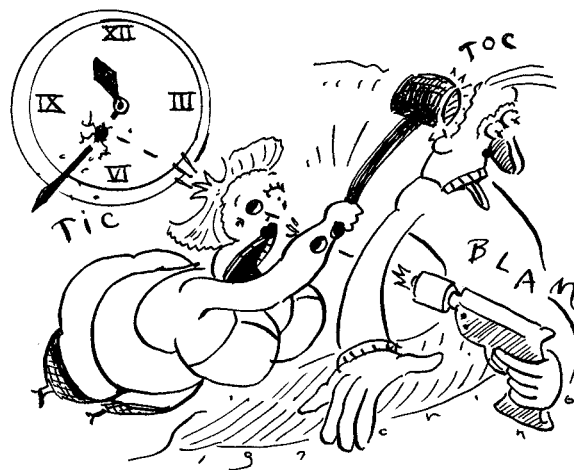
In other instances, a stopped watch figured in a murder trial:

- In 1857, Charles Little of Rochester, New York, was murdered by his brother-in-law Ira Stout for allegedly mistreating his wife, Stout's sister Sarah. (The fact that Littles had discovered his wife and BIL were having an incestuous affair may have been a contributing

factor.) Sarah and Ira lured Charles to a nearby riverbank one night, where Ira bludgeoned him with an iron mallet and shoved his body into the water. When Ira was tried for the murder, a piece of evidence against him was Charles's broken watch—stopped at 8:40 PM, the time of the killing.

- In 1954 not one but two damaged watches were involved in one of the most famous murder cases of the 20th century: that of Dr. Sam Sheppard, accused of beating his wife, Marilyn, to death. Watch one, which belonged to Marilyn, was initially reported to have stopped at 3:12, presumably indicating the time of death; later, though, one investigating officer said it had read 11:30, and a police evidence photo showed it reading 8:05. Watch two, belonging to Sam, was covered with blood and found in a green bag on a bluff overlooking Lake Erie, near the Sheppard home. This watch had stopped at 4:15, apparently when water got into it. Sheppard claimed this had happened innocently prior to the murder, and that he then got blood on the watch (which he evidently was still wearing in the middle of the night even though it was broken) while checking his wife's pulse. The alternative theory seems to be that after killing his wife, Sheppard threw the bloody watch into the lake, then thought better of it. Sheppard was convicted and imprisoned but acquitted years later after a second trial.

- In 2004 Ivan Camacho was found dead in a remote part of southern California with multiple stab wounds and other injuries, wearing a smashed and bloody wristwatch stopped at 3:19 AM, which investigators took to be the time of death. Camacho had last been seen alive at 2:45 AM with his friend Ricardo Machuca, and Machuca was next seen at about 4 with a fresh cut on his finger. Machuca was found guilty of first-degree murder.



In the aforementioned cases, the broken timepiece wasn't pivotal in convicting a criminal. But we found one where it was:

- In 1941 Merrill Joss was tried in Maine for the bludgeoning death of his wife, Luverne. Witnesses testified that Merrill said he'd left the house at 8 PM and returned at most 12 minutes later to find Luverne dead. But her watch, broken and bloodied, was stopped at 8:16. What's more, Merrill didn't call the police until 9:03, 47 minutes after the watch had stopped. He was convicted and sentenced to prison.

Despite advancing technology, dramatists still resort to the stopped-watch gambit. In a recent episode of the TV series *Criminal Minds*, for example, a serial killer places a watch stopped at 6:22 on victims' wrists. This seems a bit musty. Surely in an era of ubiquitous metadata and mobile devices with accelerometers, a modern Poirot might determine not just the time and place of a victim's death, but the force of the fatal blow. —CECIL ADAMS

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

## CURSES, FOILED AGAIN

- Authorities thwarted a high school student's plan to kill a classmate after he warned the intended victim on Facebook that he was bringing a gun to school to "pop" the boy. Several students saw the threat and alerted the school. Police arrested Thomas Braasch, 19, of Alsip, Ill. (*Chicago Sun-Times*)
- Troy Foster Mitchell, 47, was in the process of robbing a bank in Modesto, Calif., when another teller called out, "Hi, Troy." The teller recognized Mitchell because he'd been in the bank a month earlier to apply for a car loan. After Mitchell made off with \$5,000, bank officials showed Mitchell's application form to police, who arrested him at the address he'd given. "Most people make more of an effort to hide, wear a mask or have a getaway vehicle," Lauren Horwood of the U.S. Attorney's Office said, "but he had nothing." (*Stockton's The Record*)

## WEARABLE FOOD OR EDIBLE FOOTWEAR

Police who arrested Rachel Gossett and Frank Lucas for having sex in a Waffle House parking lot in Loganville, Ga., said the woman was so drunk that when she "finally got dressed she attempted to put a cheeseburger on her foot as if it were a sandal." (*The Huffington Post*)

## WRONG ARM OF THE LAW

A 51-year-old police sergeant in Tokyo came under investigation after he tried to catch a bicycle thief by staking out a decoy bike. After camping out nine times, the sergeant at Denchoufu police station failed to make a single arrest. Meanwhile, while he was focused on the decoy, three more bicycles were stolen. (*Japan Today*)

## AVOIRDUPOIS FOLLIES

- Frenchman Kevin Chenais, 22, who weighs 500 pounds, was stranded in the United States after being denied a seat on his flight home because British Airways officials said he was too heavy. He tried to sail home, but the owners of the cruise ship *Queen Mary 2* denied him passage. Chenais finally made it to London's Heathrow airport when Virgin Atlantic agreed to fly him from New York at no charge, but when he tried to take the Eurostar cross-channel train home, officials refused to let him board. (*Agence France-Presse*)
- Some soldiers are resorting to liposuction because they're worried about passing the Defense Department's body fat test. It relies on neck and waist measurements and

can determine soldiers' military futures. The number of Army soldiers discharged for being overweight has jumped tenfold in the past five years to 1,815 last year. Service members who opt for liposuction have to pay for the procedure themselves. Dr. Michael Pasquale of Aloha Plastic Surgery in Honolulu said his military clientele has jumped by 30 percent since 2011, noting, "They have to worry about their careers." (*Associated Press*)

## ONE MORE REASON TO BE BITTER

After working four years as a chicken catcher in Northumberland County, Pa., Joshua Spickler was informed that his bonus was being cut because of a downturn in the chicken-catching business. He reacted to the news by developing a bad attitude, according to his employer, B&B Catching Service, which finally fired him after he failed to heed its warning to change his ways. Unable to find another job catching chickens, he claimed unemployment benefits. Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court denied his claim, concluding that his negativity constituted willful misconduct. (*Harrisburg's The Patriot-News*)

## HOMELAND INSECURITY

- Responding to a call of a man carrying a handgun at a shopping mall in Port Charlotte, Fla., sheriff's deputies locked down the building. They searched for the armed man for an hour before finding him. The weapon turned out to be a folded up apron being carried by a waiter at a local restaurant. (*United Press International*)
- After a man brought a Thermos-type container that he said he found on his lawn to a police station in Oklahoma City, officers told the man to leave the device outside and then called the bomb squad. X-rays revealed the device contained a burrito, according to Capt. Dexter Nelson, who recommended that people who find suspicious items not take them to police stations: "Call the authorities, and we will investigate it there." (*Oklahoma City's The Oklahoman*)
- Virginia state police compiled license plate numbers of millions of cars at political events, including rallies for President Obama and Sarah Palin in 2008 and Obama's 2009 presidential inauguration, according to documents obtained by the American Civil Liberties Union under the state's Freedom of Information Act. After the ACLU charged that this data collection violated attendees' First Amendment rights, state police official

Corinne Geller said the practice was necessary for public safety. "It's not unusual for a stolen vehicle to be used as a car bomb or as some way to infiltrate," Geller explained. (*The Washington Times*)

## IT HAPPENS

The Food and Drug Administration lifted restrictions on fecal transplants after poo-hooping them for years. The treatment attacks the intestinal bug *Clostridium difficile*, which can flourish when a person's natural intestinal bacteria are diminished, most often by antibiotics, and can cause relentless diarrhea. The procedure, introduced in 2005 and technically known as a fecal microbiota transplant (FMT), involves giving fecal matter from a donor to a recipient via colonoscopy. Acknowledging there's a "yuk" factor, Dr. Francis Riedo, an infectious disease specialist at EvergreenHealth in Kirkland, Wash., said that by the time patients come to see him, they're "so miserable, so desperate, they would try anything." (*Seattle Times*)

## THINGS THAT GO KABOOM

Police investigating the explosion of an unoccupied truck in Los Angeles learned that it was sparked by a man trying to get high on propane. The driver, who showed up at a police station hours after the blast with a burned scalp and face, explained that he was inhaling propane in the cab and tried to charge his cell phone by plugging the charger into the truck's auxiliary outlet, creating a spark that ignited the gas. The dazed man wandered away from the truck before police arrived, according to police Sgt. Glenn McNeil, who called him "the luckiest guy in the world." (*Los Angeles Times*)

## SEX IS ITS OWN PUNISHMENT

Washington state psychologist Sunil Kakar, 46, was suspended after he admitted giving a prostitute his laptop as collateral while he went to an ATM to get cash to pay her. He returned to find the woman had left with the computer, which contained personal and health information of his 652 clients. Police recovered the laptop from a pawnshop, but by then the Department of Health had had to refer Kakar's clients to new providers. (*The Seattle Times*)

*Compiled from mainstream news sources by Roland Sweet. Authentication on demand.*

# ASTROLOGY FORECAST: DECEMBER 2013

BY DR. STAR



**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 21 - Dec. 20) Sagittarians are undergoing a major lifestyle transformation. Everything and everyone is behind it. It's your future hastily making room for itself. Prospective changes threaten much that you value, though. Proposed changes to finances and family arrangements are especially concerning. The biggest danger is you'll stay silent about these concerns for fear of the concessions that might be required to satisfy them. Don't give up things you cherish by default. The cost of preserving them might not be as high as you think.



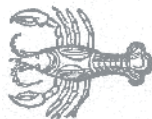
**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 21 - Jan. 18) Capricorn's first impulse is to manage people and events in the name of the greater good. But the levers of power are not within your grasp now. You might just have to let people do what they prefer in hopes they'll come around on their own. Do the right thing and trust that others will follow suit. In December, that is not just a pious wish, it's a surprisingly effective plan . . . and your only realistic option. The stars will ensure the outcome.



**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 19 - Feb. 17) At work, developing trends seem to conflict with your expectations. Working conditions, cash flow, long-term financial goals and such all seem problematic—but that's only if you look at the hard aspects. The supportive aspects offer a generous array of agreeable options. The key to success is an old-fashioned work ethic. Yes, the politics are annoying; the logistics are awkward. But if you just show up regularly and do the job, all that other stuff really will take care of itself.



**GEMINI** (May 20 - June 19) There's a lot of noise emanating from the front office. Maybe it's conjuring up thoughts of budget cuts, performance reviews, contract renewals, etc. But, no. It's about your notable ability to instill purpose and integrity in those you work with. If, out of concern, you chat management up about budgets and bookkeeping minutiae, you'll bore them. You'd do best to brush up on your people skills. Superiors and subordinates are anticipating morale issues and they're counting on you to calm and motivate troubled spirits.



**CANCER** (June 20 - July 21) There is more turbulence on the way, clearly. Just as clearly, Cancerians will be directly involved. Considering recent trends, you are probably prepping for yet another in a long series of power struggles. If you flip into battle mode, though, you'll start an unnecessary chain reaction—for nothing. Strike a practical, conciliatory tone instead and move forward. You will be stunned, and happily so, to discover just how many will be eager to follow your lead.



**LEO** (July 22 - AUG 21) Cooperate with the complex and powerful forces working in your favor. Calm fears that your dreams will go unfulfilled and your talents unrecognized. I'd issue a stern warning against dwelling on the negative possibilities, lest you miss an important cue from the positive side. However, success is so likely this month that you can dwell on the negatives all you want and still succeed. You'd end up feeling foolish, though, for worrying so much, especially if you do it aloud in public.



**FOR ALL SUN SIGNS:** December's vibes are deceptive. Challenges and opportunities are intertwined in delicate balance. If we focus too much on the challenges, we'll let the opportunities slip by. If we use the opportunities to evade the challenges, we'll leave important things undone—only to have to deal with them at considerable cost later. The irony is that December's aspects are forgiving. They look a lot scarier than they are. It would only take a modest effort to overcome them . . . if you act soon.



**PISCES** (Feb. 18 - March 20) You find yourself increasingly at odds with people across a broad array of issues, on practical grounds and on matters of principle. You don't need to resolve all these issues with all these people. Instead, you need to overcome the influence that others' mental and emotional lives have on you. In this instance, detachment is good. Actually, events and circumstances are offering you an opportunity to shape a more independent life. Indeed, they are pushing you to do it. Go with it.



**ARIES** (March 20 - April 18) How well you think things are going will depend a lot on whether you focus on the good news or the bad. Making the needed personal and financial adjustments could seem downright daunting. But if you focus on how much you can accomplish with a little extra effort, things look much brighter. It might not seem so now, but you'll end up in a much better place. The risk is not as great as it appears. Just let your conscience be your guide.



**TAURUS** (April 19 - May 19) December's vibes strongly support efforts to expand your circle of friends and, this time, create deeper, more rewarding and lasting ties, especially if you are straightforward about who you are. The planets are aligned to heal existing relationships and ensure that new ones aren't impaired by old habits and hangups. There's static in the background, especially with respect to finances. Things aren't as bad as they appear. Take whatever financial precautions make you comfortable, then devote yourself to your expanding social network.



**VIRGO** (Aug. 22 - Sept. 21) The difficult aspects in December are counteracted by numerous strongly supportive aspects. Virgos might feel tensions in important relationships. They might need to make some challenging financial choices. However, Virgo is so well-positioned in the astrological scheme of things that it's hard to see how they can be hindered for very long by anything. December's positive vibes seem designed to quickly resolve every issue standing between you and the better lifestyle you envision. There is a premium on honesty, though. Don't fib.



**LIBRA** (Sept. 22 - Oct. 21) December's good aspects come at Libra from a difficult angle; it's hard aspects hit Libra head on. In confronting the inevitable challenges, Libra must find solutions that don't exploit the opportunities but dodge legitimate challenges. It's partly a matter of doing the right thing, partly a question of being realistic and partly a matter of understanding what's really going on. You might also find yourself advising others to look much more closely at the sweet deal they think they just worked out.



**SCORPIO** (Oct. 22 - Nov. 20) The difficult and supportive aspects both affect Scorpio favorably. The solution to any issue, whether yours or someone else's, will come easily. The key is to tap your powers of intuition on behalf of yourself and others. You can help a great deal by gently taking the lead or quietly offering advice. You could use the natural advantage the stars have given you to coast through December, but then you'd only have to help people correct the mistakes they made while you were daydreaming.

# 5 ways to spend a \$60 Co-op gift card:

*a freshly made French baguette everyday for a month*

or

*32 servings of the best dang clam chowder in town*

or

**6 bottles of bubbly**

or

*sandwiches for all your friends*

or

## A Lifetime Membership to New Pi!

*Membership is a one-time investment & privileges extend to your entire household!*

