little village
Iowa City's News & Culture Magazine • September 14 – 30, 2001

FREE!

Power by the people  Email from Lake Wobegon  Hip-hop invasion
pg 4  pg 8  pg 15
Taking over the electric company
A group of Iowa City citizens is pushing to give local power provider MidAmerican Energy the boot and establish a city-owned utility. They say such a plan would cut rates, conserve energy and help the environment. Still, some are wary.
A reader emailed us asking for advice on how to use the new city-bus bike racks. Apparently, the devices are complicated enough to require a user’s guide:

All of Iowa City Transit buses except the Downtown Shuttle are equipped with a bike rack that holds up to two bicycles. The two bicycless can be loaded or unloaded independently and the process takes about 20 seconds. We have a user’s guide available and a demonstration bike rack available in our Downtown Transit Office so people can practice using it. Call Iowa City Transit at 356-5151 for information or to have a user guide sent to you.

Source: Ron Logsden, Iowa City Transit Manager

City-bus bike racks

Charity

The high holidays of Rosh Hashanah (Sept. 18) and Yom Kippur (Sept. 27) are coming, making the next two weeks the holiest time of the Jewish year. This makes it an appropriate time to help others. Moses Ben Maimonides, the great Spanish Jewish philosopher of the Middle Ages (1135-1204), rated the best ways to help those less fortunate. Here are his Eight Degrees of Charity:

There are eight degrees in the giving of charity, one higher than the other:
1. He who gives grudgingly, reluctantly, or with regret.
2. He who gives less than he should, but gives graciously.
3. He who gives what he should, but only after he is asked.
4. He who gives before he is asked.
5. He who gives without knowing to whom he gives, although the recipient knows the identity of the donor.
6. He who gives without making his identity known.
7. He who gives without knowing to whom he gives, neither does the recipient know from whom he receives.
8. He who helps a fellowman to support himself by a gift, or a loan, or by finding employment for him, thus helping him to become self-supporting.

Junk mail and telemarketers

To be removed from junk mailing lists write to: Mailing Preference Service, Direct Marketing Association, PO Box 9008, Farmingdale NY 11735-9008. To be removed from telemarketing lists write to: Telephone Preference Service, Direct Marketing Association, PO Box 9014, Farmingdale NY 11735-9014. You need to write separate letters for mailing and telemarketing and you must sign the letter in ink.

Whenever you receive a telemarketing call just ask, “Please suppress me, put me on the do-not-call list for both calls and mail.” “Suppress” is the key word. If you don’t use “suppress,” you may not get put on the do-not-call-and-mail list. When they suppress you, you have to put you on a do-not-call-and-mail list. Then from the day you request suppression the company has 14 days to stop all calls and mail for 10 years unless you change your phone number or address. If you have more than one phone number, request all phone numbers to be put on the list at the same time. If you want, keep a record of the date and company that suppressed you. If a company calls you back within the 10-year period they can be fined.

Courtesy: Northside Books, Iowa City
Taking over the electric company

A group of Iowa City citizens is pushing to give local power provider MidAmerican Energy the boot and establish a city-owned utility. They say such a plan would cut rates, conserve energy and help the environment. Still, some are wary.

In the depths of the Great Depression, a group of Iowa City citizens drew up a plan for a city-owned electric utility. The public fervor over the issue inspired debates, rallies and even art. Poems were composed and one women's group even wrote and produced a play on the subject.

Even though voters eventually passed the plan and the city received a huge PWA loan and grant, city fathers ended up changing their minds at the last moment. The reason was twofold: The electric company at the time, Iowa City Light and Power Co., lowered its rates and the city didn't feel confident it could pay back the loan. The council renewed a long-term contract with Iowa City Light and Power, despite public protest. One dissenting councilman called the council "a dictatorship, pure and simple."

Like they say, history tends to repeat itself. Flash forward 70 years to another group of citizens—this one perhaps a tad less boisterous but no less dedicated—who have taken up the cause, calling itself Public Power Initiative for Iowa City (PPI-IC). Members of the group meet regularly at a member's office, converging
around a large, glossy oak table to talk quietly and jot down ideas on brightly colored recycled notebooks. As of now, they are simply attempting to start a conversation about the potential for municipal energy in Iowa City.

“Everybody, coast to coast, is worried,” Jim Baker, of the Iowa City Siena Club, said during a recent PPI-IC meeting. Baker moved to Iowa City about a year ago after living and working in the Pacific Northwest, where he did policy work for various environmental organizations. “Up there, electricity is king,” he said. “You may have read in the newspapers about a little problem rolling blackouts and rate increases—that principal system here would reduce or eliminate this. That’s why the public didn’t fall into the panic board of directors. A municipal can pro

Such references to the energy crisis—“aggressive” in regard to whether energy should be provided publicly or privately. However, he said, energy efficiency programs are more likely with municipal utilities because, as already mentioned, they aren’t concerned with profit. For investor-owned companies, “mega-watts are megaprofits,” he said. “Public utilities view conservation as another service, as opposed to a profit loss. A municipal program answers first and last to its own customers, so it is more likely to meet their demands concerning energy efficiency and cleaner power sources.”

An Iowa tradition

“Public power is an Iowa tradition,” Kubby said. “It’s not a radical idea. It’s not an unknown. We have a lot of good examples. There are a lot of experts out there.” In fact, 137 Iowa communities rely on municipal power. Many got their start during the Depression when Congress passed laws requiring public utilities receive federal funding and began regulating the private electricity industry.

“Public utilities sprang up like weeds during the ‘30s and ‘40s, and even into the ‘50s,” Baker said. Harvey Wasserman writes about this in his book, The Last Energy War, describing how funding from FDR’s Public Works Administration “helped push rural co-ops into the continent’s farthest reaches.” (Rural co-ops are similar to municipal utilities in that they are publicly, not privately, owned. But they basically consist of a group of farmers getting together to buy electricity and aren’t owned by a municipality.)

From 1974 to 1992, Wes Birdall managed one of the more successful municipal programs in Iowa, an electric utility in Osage, Iowa, and has received much
Iowa City Public Power has scheduled a public discussion about energy for Sept. 15 from 11:30am at the Iowa City Library. They've invited Frye, an Iowa City attorney resigned from the Iowa Board; Bob Haug, the executive director of the Iowa Municipal Association; Jay Logel, of the Muscatine municipality; and Dale Helling, assistant to the Iowa City city manager, to talk about the status of consideration of the plan.

Not just for lefties

Iowa City attorney Jim Larew pointed out that Iowa communities using municipal electricity don’t correspond with a particular political stance. “You have Muscatine, which is a conservative town and Ames, which is liberal,” he said. “It would be a shame if this became a liberal-versus-conservative thing.”

Deciding whether or not to go with something that’s going to save money and be better for the environment seems like a no-brainer. However, the plan would cost some money up-front. First, there are the studies: The city would have to do a preliminary study for about $25,000 assessing the feasibility of a program—if it looks like it would be a cost-effective, etc. If the initial study looked favorable, they would commission a major study, which would cost about $150,000.

Secondly, there’s the question of up-front cost. Council member Mike O’Donnell said the costs of implementing such a program would be “astronomical.” (O’Donnell, by the way, said he does support signing a shorter franchise agreement with MidAmerican, if only to negotiate cleaner energy programs with the company.) “There’s a great deal of uncertainty,” he said. “What we need to know is, in the long run, is this going to pay off?”

While Baker said starting off with a mini-muni would actually cost very little (“In an increasingly deregulated market, you don’t even need to invest a substantial amount of money into transition,” he claimed), if the city decided to totally cut its ties with MidAmerican, the story would be a little different. For one thing, the city would have to pay the company a large sum for taking over transmissions. “Yeah, that could have some high front-end costs,” Baker admitted. Members of the group argue, however, that initial expenses could be recouped through the long-term savings and the potential ability to sell excess energy.

Birdall agrees. The Osage program cost $350,000 to start but continues to save the town $1 million a year. “In other words, it was a great investment,” he said.

Mayor Ernie Lehman said the loss of tax money now being paid by MidAmerican needs to be considered. He also said that if acclaim for his conservation practices.

“Energy efficiency was basically unheard of [in 1974],” he said. Birdall remembers how he first took the bull by the horns, chartering a plane so he could take infrared photos of the town. After circling the dark spots (which indicated heat loss) on the photos, he visited the homes’ owners one by one and persuaded them to insulate. Birdall also helped reduce electricity usage at a local sock factory by 29 percent and delayed the need for new electrical generation facilities in town.

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the plan involves some sort of flat rate for usage—a basic rate for both businesses and residential areas—he won't even consider it. Currently, businesses and residential areas sign separate contracts for electricity and operate with different rates. He said a flat rate would be the "kiss of death" for large industries that rely on discounts.

"We're already losing taxes from MidAmerican because they can build wherever they want to," Baker said in response to Lehman's concern about taxes. "And they usually build outside of Johnson County... That is the big advantage to a publicly owned facility. All of it would be city payroll. And future facilities could be sited here."

"I think Ernie has some legitimate fears," city council member and municipal energy advocate Steven Kanner said. "But if we look at it and it shows that it's horrendous, we're not going to do it. That's part of why you don't rush into it." Kanner agreed that industries usually benefit from deals with investor-owned companies. He pointed out that under the municipal model, the city council or governing board would have control over how industrial, commercial and residential rates would vary—and the governing body would be accountable to citizens, who could vote individual members off if they don't like their decisions. "As a city, you can determine what your priority is," Kanner continued. "Do you want to have lower prices for the city or for industry? ... You've got that local control."

Although Lehman has his reservations, he said if studies show that such a program would bring the promised 30-percent savings, it's "certainly something we'd look at." He pointed out that there will likely be much conversation about the subject in the coming weeks. "It's an interesting subject," he said. "But if we're going to be serious about it, we'd better get serious pretty quick. We're getting to a point where it's time to start talking about it."

Dennis Ryan, IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) delegate to the Iowa City Federation of Labor, said that his main concern with the proposal is workers' rights. "I don't think they should get a cut in pay if it does become a municipality," he said. "I don't think [workers] should lose any pay, benefits or power."

However people stand on the issue, they all acknowledge its newness and complexity, as well as how many questions remain unanswered. "We're all just stumbling around half-blind here," Ryan said. "...It's a huge issue... how it's all going to go down. And who knows?"
Prairie Home Passive-aggressiveness

Garrison Keillor returns once again to Lake Wobegon

Garrison Keillor works hard at maintaining his homespun, modest persona. The host of the highly successful National Public Radio show "Prairie Home Companion" and the author of nine books (including the bestsellers Wobegon Boy and Lake Wobegon Days and the newly released Lake Wobegon Summer 1956), takes pains to act humble. You don't need to be a psychologist, however, to see this as classic passive-aggressive behavior. Keillor brandishes his humility as a weapon to fend off criticisms of his work and himself.

Keillor, who recently underwent heart surgery, turned down a telephone interview but through his publicist suggested I interview him by way of email. This allowed Keillor to either ignore or partially answer questions he perhaps found unsavory, without my being able to follow up. Still, Keillor was gracious enough to grant the interview at all. Let's face it, a write-up for a small Iowa City publication isn't going to significantly affect the already well-known author's career or even the attendance at his local reading.

Responding to a question about what makes a person a Midwesterner, the self-proclaimed regional author wrote, "No Midwesterner I ever met talks comfortably about himself. Sheepishness and self-effacement are certainly Midwestern qualities, and I feel sheepish about talking to you about my relatives. Apparently you consider us weird. I don't. But there you are. In the end, I expect a sort of selfless honesty from Midwesterners, wherever they may be, in New York or London or Rome or Stockholm. We don't make more of ourselves than ought to be made." Keillor's answer was thoughtful and interesting, but it didn't answer the question, which asked, "Can urban kids in Chicago, Minneapolis, Detroit or St. Louis be considered Midwestern, and, as Midwesterners, what do they have in common with rural kids in places like Iowa?"

Strangely, nothing in my original question suggested that I considered he or his relatives weird. In fact, I never mentioned his relatives at all. Keillor's smug response concealed more than it revealed but did illustrate the author's xenophobia. The Midwest is his Midwest: white, Christian and country, like Keillor and his family. The rest of the Midwest is invisible or irrelevant.

There is nothing wrong with an author writing about his or her own vision based on his or her personal experience, but Keillor represents "the Midwest" to millions of Americans who have never been here. Keillor's characters personify the unflattering stereotype of us as gee-whiz self-conscious hicks and rubes. Take for example, Gary, the narrator of Keillor's latest book.

A 14-year-old boy who lives in Lake Wobegon, Gary belongs to a small group of evangelical Christians called the Sacred Brethren. During the summer of 1956, Gary comes of age as a writer and an individual amid the pathos and pleasures of small-town Minnesota. "The boy is me, myself," Keillor emailed. "The family is invented. The boy is the real thing." Keillor said he wrote about Lake Wobegon because "this town is where I'm from, and that's what writers come back to. We're tedious by nature. We keep going back to the root and scratching at it." Actually, Keillor hails from Anoka, Minn., now a bedroom community of the Twin Cities.

The most interesting character in Keillor's new novel is Kate, Gary's rebellious older cousin for whom he has a prurient crush. Interestingly enough, Kate has an Iowa City background of sorts. "Dave Moore made an album long ago that I still play all the time in my car, the one with "Shimmy Like My Sister Kate" [Jukejoints & Cantinas] on it," Keillor wrote. "The Kate in my novel comes from his shimmy song." The author also spoke highly of Iowa City musicians Greg Brown ("a hero of mine") and Bo Ramsey, both of whom Keillor knows from their appearances on "Prairie Home Companion."

Keillor is hawking a second book, as well: In Search of Lake Wobegon, which features photographs by Richard Olsenius and text by Keillor. The photographs depict scenes of small-town life in Stearns County, Minn., the region deemed most "Wobegonic" by Keillor.

The author skipped my questions about the marketing of Lake Wobegon paraphernalia and whether he was merely exploiting the Lake Wobegon phenomenon for the money.

He did, however, answer a question about the difference between writing for radio and writing for print: "It's all writing and it needs to be done, but with the radio..."
writing there's always the hope that improvisation will save the day, which it sometimes does. With print stuff, you're pretty much stuck with what you put down on paper.” Like with email, huh Garrison?

Still, both over the radio and in print, Keillor adeptly creates fictional universes where social reality and individual quirkiness butt heads to humorously reveal the deeper strata of emotions and needs that drive us as human beings. Keillor may be careful about what he says, but he’s also a damn good writer who knows how to spin yarns, both on the air and in books. And in the end, that’s what matters most.

**Poor Uncle Mose**

Elizabeth McCracken capitalized on the weird-uncle syndrome to create her latest novel

As research for her new novel, *Niagara Falls All Over Again*, Elizabeth McCracken spent hours watching and listening to comedy teams like Abbott and Costello to get a feel for the material she would eventually write for her own comedy team of Rocky Carter and Mike Sharp.

“It was sort of great,” said the 1990 Writers’ Workshop graduate in a phone interview. “It was one of the things that got me energized about the book.”

*Niagara Falls All Over Again* is a quite different book from what McCracken originally set out to write. A chance comment made by a relative sparked an idea that eventually became central to the novel.

“I actually have a Great Uncle Mose,” McCracken said, “and I was looking at old photographs of him when one of my relatives said, ‘Poor Uncle Mose. If he’d been born into a different family, he’d have gone into vaudeville and been a comedian.’”

Mose Sharp, née Mose Sharp—whose tale begins with a recounting of his life as a Jewish kid growing up with six sisters in Valley Junction, Iowa, in the early part of the 20th century—became the book’s narrator. The story he relates is essentially about tragedy rather than comedy. The book does include a few of Carter and Sharp’s “famous” routines, however, though not as many as an earlier draft.

“There used to be a lot more comedy routines in the book,” McCracken explained. “People who read the drafts told me they weren’t very funny, and I would say, ‘Yeah, but that’s sort of the point,’ and they would reply, ‘Well, you displayed that admirably.’”

Instead of focusing on routines, *Niagara Falls All Over Again* explores relationships, most notably that of straight man Sharp with his comic partner Carter—as well as with his father, sisters, wife and children. McCracken, who is herself of Jewish extraction, does a fine, understated job of considering Mose Sharp’s life as a member of the Jewish community, touching on such issues as his reaction to his sister’s marriage outside the faith, his mixed feelings about his proper role during World War II, and his self-awareness that the character he portrays is not Jewish.

Though Sharp manages to keep one surprise for readers to discover late in the book, foreshadowing is a key element in his storytelling. The tragedies that befall him are all clearly revealed prior to their chronological place in the tale. But McCracken’s decision to reveal them before they are fully explored is what gives her, via Sharp, the opportunity to examine them in moving and richly textured language. Rather than focusing on surprising the reader with the twists and turns of his life, McCracken’s narrator is able to unlock the hidden details and emotions of each experience. Of those calamities, only the first—the death of his beloved sister and first “partner,” Hattie, who falls from the roof of the family home—is particularly unusual in its details.

“At the sound of my voice,” Sharp writes, recalling his sister’s accident, “she turned, then wobbled. For a minute I thought her clumsiness was a joke. She wheeled her arms in the air. In her white dress against the gray sky, she looked like a movie, dappled and imprecise, clearly an actual person but not really moving like one.”

Each moment of joy and pain in Sharp’s tale is carefully polished to a sheen in which bittersweet insight is reflected. Throughout *Niagara Falls All Over Again*, the story of Sharp’s colorful life reminds us that the relationships that bring us the most joy and those that bring us the most pain are often one and the same.

The Sharps of Valley Junction live in what is essentially McCracken’s mother’s childhood home. The author’s maternal grandparents had a store in Valley Junction, Iowa, in the 1930s, and McCracken remembers visiting grandparents on both sides of her family in the town when she was a child. The historic business district of the original town is still known as Valley Junction, and on Thursday, Sept. 20, McCracken will read at the Farmer’s Market there.

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Corporate rock sucks
Premiering documentary's ideological bias oversimplifies the object of study

Music critic and UI communications professor Kembrew McLeod has produced a new video documentary criticizing the economic machinations of the music industry. (The video will have its first public showing Friday, Sept. 14 as part of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music conference hosted by the UI and has its official premiere at Minneapolis’ Walker Art Center in October.) Sonic Youth’s Thurston Moore narrates Money for Nothing: Beyond the Business of Pop Music, a 50-minute video featuring interviews with alternative musicians like Ani DiFranco, Michael Franti and Chuck D (of Public Enemy) and many clips of well-known artists acting as corporate shills. Money for Nothing insightfully examines how five major music companies, each a subsidiary of multinational conglomerates, control what gets heard over the airwaves, seen on your television, sold in stores and performed at your local arena. The idea here is that the pervasive influence of big money and the economics of monopoly capitalism have corrupted the integrity of rock music.

Gee, I thought all those record companies were putting out records for the love of the art. You mean they treat music, gasp, as a commodity? Well, shiver me timbers. Social and economic observers have long noted that a handful of companies control most of the products in the marketplace and that through concentration of ownership, the power belongs to fewer and fewer people. A recent article in the Chicago Tribune suggested this is even true in the illegal world of marijuana sales, where a few very large manufacturers in California now control a vastly disproportionate amount of the trade.
From the very beginning of rock 'n' roll, large corporations have controlled the music industry. Much of the best rock emerged on small labels (Sun, Chess, Specialty) that challenged the cultural hegemony of the popular-music business. The history of rock can be studied and mapped as a series of subcultures that rebel against mainstream values only to be incorporated as style into the larger culture, which is then rebelled against again, etc. During the incorporation process, the smaller labels and their artists are subsumed into the bigger businesses. While McLeod might argue that corporate control is worse than ever, he doesn't really prove this. In fact, as McLeod knows, the best rock has always come from the independent labels in reaction to mainstream music and society. Why does it matter that the economic entanglements of the mass media determine what's on 102.9-FM, or "MTV Total Request Live," or on sale at Wal-Mart? There is still room on the margins, whether it is the independent record stores, PATV or 89.7-FM.

McLeod's flick has an ideological bias that oversimplifies the object of study. The video begins with University of Illinois communications professor Robert McChesney prattling on about the importance of music to unify people in social movements for social justice and peace. Yes, music can bring people together, just ask any fascist. Popular music can be used for a variety of political purposes. To presume they are all good is naive at best. This liberal slant colors the journalistic integrity of the video. Despite all the discussion of rock capitalism by those interviewed for the film, there is not a single discussion with a representative from the corporate side. I don't believe all corporate rock is bad and all indie music is good, and Money for Nothing seems concerned more with preaching to the choir than challenging an audience.

Still, McLeod's video offers sobering insight into the effects that the corporate control of rock has over what we see and hear. In one of the most telling pieces of footage, we see Pearl Jam taking on (and losing to) Ticketmaster. If a big-hitter band like Pearl Jam can't make a dent in Ticketmaster's control over what gets seen and heard, then the company's power is truly entrenched. The film also offers an interesting discussion of how artists, like Moby, now use commercials for everything from cars to sneakers as a tool for getting their music heard. According to Money for Nothing, the ultimate goal of corporate rock is to make company officials and their stockholders rich rather than to develop and nurture new artists. Did anyone ever think differently?

"Little Village is a proud media sponsor of Riverside Theatre"
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For September 15 through October 15

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<td><strong>Biddy’s Updated Menu on Page X</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Zephyr Does A Lot More Than Copies!</strong></td>
<td><strong>Monday Blues Jam at The Green Room $1 Dom Bottles</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Rogue Dead Guy Pints at The Sanctuary</strong></td>
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<td><strong>75¢ Coffee Every Day at the DEADWOOD</strong></td>
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<td><strong>75¢ Dom. Pints</strong></td>
<td><strong>GIBB’S BEER GARDEN 25¢ TAP BEER</strong></td>
<td><strong>Get What Your Pussycat Needs at Ruby’s Pearl</strong></td>
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Brought to you by little village
Riverside Pesto ... A fountain of fresh garlic, sun dried tomatoes and fontina, on a bed of house basil pesto sauce, overflowing with mozzarella.

The Buddha ... The perfect balance of tomato slices, spinach, fresh zucchini and black olives, atop an olive oil and fresh garlic base, served with a triple crown of mozzarella, white cheddar and feta cheeses.

Vieable Garden ... Vegetable lover's delight. Tomato sauce layered with a hearty combination of garlic, broccoli, pineapple, jalapenos, green olives, mushrooms, red onions, tomato slices and mozzarella.

Obi-Ushkaa ... Barbecued chicken breast, parmesan, red onion and roasted peppers, sheathed in mozzarella, all layered on our house tomato sauce. "You will eat this pizza... and you will be rewarded."

The Duke ... A six gun salute of pepperoni, sausage, ham and beef, blanketed in mozzarella and white cheddar, on a tomato sauce base. This town's not big enough for more than one Duke.

Vegetable Classic ... Sweet 'n spicy Cajun Chicken Breast, Red Peppers, Onion, Mozzarella and White Cheddar on an Olive Oil and Garlic Base.

Vegetable Alfredo ... A delicious veggie alfredo combo of broccoli, onion, sun dried tomato, mushroom, jalapeno and garlic with white cheddar and mozzarella cheese.

The Meatball Parmesan ... This Italian classic is sure to please with red onions, parmesan cheese, meatballs, garlic and white cheddar, decorated with a layer of fresh sliced tomato. Mama would be proud!

Chicken Fajita ... Grilled chicken breast, roasted red onion, red and green peppers, mozzarella and monterey jack cheeses on a refried bean and garlic base. Served with sides of salsa and sour cream.

Chicken Alfredo ... Grilled chicken breast, onion, mushroom, artichoke hearts, alfredo sauce, topped with mozzarella cheese.

Veggie Fajita ... Roasted red and green peppers, zucchini, onion, mozzarella and monterey jack atop a refried bean and garlic base.

Pat Tony 'Ronj ... Flavor coutesy! Pepperoni, gorgonzola, gouda, white cheddar and red onion on an olive oil and garlic base.

Pesto Chicken ... Our house basil pesto sauce with grilled chicken breast, red onion, mushroom, feta and mozzarella cheese.

Little Green Martian ... Our house basil pesto sauce with zucchini, spinach, tomato, garlic and mozzarella cheese.

Veggie Alfredo ... A delicious veggie alfredo combo of broccoli, onion, sun dried tomato, mushroom, light jalapeno and garlic with white cheddar and mozzarella cheese.

Bagin Cajun ... Spicy Cajun Chicken Breast. Red Peppers, Onion, Mozzarella and White Cheddar on an Olive Oil and Garlic Base.

Cinco Fresno ... Mozzarella, White Cheddar, Monterey Jack, Feta and Parmesan Cheese a top your choice of our 5 sauces.

Medium ... $12.00  Large ... $16.00
Bjork

Vespertine

Electra

The release of a new Bjork record is always an eagerly anticipated event. While her fans hunger for new material to devour, the rest of us wait to see which direction her irrepressible eccentricity has taken her this time. Vespertine marks another station on her journey to perfect wackiness. Luckily, it’s much more than that. Her songwriting—especially her melodic sense—has never been better. There are art songs here that could stand quite well on their own, independent of the muttering, clanking beats. “Cocoon” is sublime, though I can’t imagine many singers being as comfortable singing about falling asleep in the midst of lovemaking.

Complementing the songwriting is perhaps the most left-field production ever to grace a major-label release. Bjork’s own laptop experiments are the core, but she’s also enlisted the help of electronic producers Matthew Herbert—whose latest record, Bodily Functions, is built on samples of noises made by the human body—and Matmos, who most infamously sampled the sounds of surgery.

Unlike Madonna, who chooses her collaborators to shore up her fading street credibility, Bjork selected her collaborators for their uncomfortably personal production techniques. They complement her hermetically self-involved themes of home and family. While most might think computer production impersonal and sterile, Bjork takes the contrary view—nothing is more personal than firing up the laptop, putting on the headphones and shutting out the world.

Her voice throughout is a marvel of idiosyncratic expressiveness, from a raspy, wavering whisper to pure, full-throated wail. That voice is contrasted and complemented on several songs by the pure tones of an Inuit girl’s choir and lush string arrangements.

Perhaps the supreme oddity of Vespertine is that it addresses home, family and innocent love without going slack. Most pop musicians who find domestic bliss run out of ideas; Bjork seems to have found a whole universe to contemplate from her kitchen table.

Kent Williams

The Yayhoos

Fear Not The Obvious

Bloodshot Records

Yeehaw! A full album of Southern-fried redneck rock ‘n’ roll from Dan Baird (ex-Georgia Satellites), Eric “Roscoe” Ambel (ex-Del-Lords) and company. Sweet and loud, pure and plowed, the Yayhoos call on the spirit of ‘80s “Freedom Rock” (“Get Right With Jesus,” “Wicked World,” “What Are We Waiting For”) while never straying too far from their Faces/Rod Stewart-based foundations.

Recorded in a North Carolina barn nearly five years ago, Fear Not The Obvious nevertheless burns like it was made just last night. Each Yayhoo takes a turn at lead vocals while Ambel (right channel) trades licks with Baird (left channel), the Stonestreet backing vocals making you unafraid to sing along. At times wistful (“Bottle And A Bible”) and wicked (“Baby I Love You”), the disc is slowed only by a late-in-the-game cover of ABBA’s “Dancing Queen,” which seems unnecessary. But by that point, who cares? Put it on repeat and do it all over again.

Joe Derderian

The Shams

Take Off

Orange Recordings

Now THIS is a rock ‘n’ roll record. It’s been awhile—too long—since I’ve come across a release so consistently strong. With Take Off, the Cincinnati-based Shams have expertly distilled and bottled the essence of every garage band that ever convinced you to pick up an instrument. They’ve taken the swagger and sneer from an aged Mick Jagger (“Rock ‘n Roll”), stolen every organ note ever played by ? and the Mysterians (“Scream My Name”), channeled Muddy Waters’ cool reserve and deep blues (“Not Right Now”), mixed in some teen-age kicks (the howling “Wolfman”), and topped this amalgam with a dusting of psychedelia (“I Get High”), cramming everything into a dozen glittering gems of garage rock—and on their debut album, no less. When The Shams tell you “it’s half past 12 and I’m already gone” (“1/2 Past 12”), you’ll know you’re gonna get there too.

Joe Derderian

Dominic Bisignano

Nausea

Self-released

With Iowa City’s musical heavyweights selling out the Mill at $20 a ticket, while just down the street another hard-working bunch of locals can’t fill the chairs at Gabe’s for $3, it’s about time someone stood up for the little guy. Enter Making Hey! frontman Dominic Bisignano, whose second collection of home-recorded mayhem is both a kick to the groin of the local musical elite and a blatant retaliation against Iowa City’s beloved roots-rock mainstream.

Full of everything-but-the-kitchen-sink instrumentation, quaint Zappa-esque arrangements, as well as blasphemous song titles like “Rugrats with Cancer” and “Dave Zollo takes his spirit to the water,” Bisignano’s Nausea takes its listener to the side of the tracks where Bo, Greg and Dave wouldn’t dare set foot. Amidst fifth-second one-word/one-note tracks and bizarre skits lurk a handful of gems that all but defy description. The album’s first offering, “Greg Brown, will you please be quiet, please?”, rides atop a marching-band rhythm and sleepy vocal harmonies before the beat turns inside out and upside down and an eerie synthesized bagpipe joins the party. And the magical ride into Bisignano’s psyche continues for another 20 tracks.

Perhaps to keep Nausea from falling off the deep-end into Captain Beefheart territory, the disc is anchored by a fingerpicked acoustic lullaby, “c’mere, boy”—a sweetly sung ode to love lost...although in this case (not that it makes a damn bit of difference), the lost love is a dog. At any rate, this second solo effort is a success, and with many of the tracks mirroring the lunatic arrangements of Making Hey!, any fans of Bisignano’s main gig should find something to wrap their heads around. For those looking to fight the stranglehold of Iowa City’s roots-rock bigwigs, six bucks is a small price to pay for salvation. Underdogs rejoice, you have a new hero.

Jeremy Erwin
The best hip-hop package tour to plow through the Field of Dreams since last year’s Jurassic 5/Dilated Peoples outing is the Def Jux/Rhymesayers tour, which’ll be rockin’ it at Gabe’s Sept. 15. Primo acts from the rosters of those underground hip-hop labels will be featured, including the precocious prince of rhyme Aesop Rock, the diabolical dynamic duo Eyedea & Abilities, Beantown’s Mr. Lif and the creepy cool of Cannibal Ox. All of these acts have releases that’ll soon be filling record bins, the best of which is Cannibal Ox’s Cold Vein (Def Jux). Cold Vein one of those special, magical albums that both tickles the ears and haunts the soul, especially during songs like “Iron Galaxy,” where the two Can Oxers rap, “You were a stillborn baby/Mother didn’t want you/But you were still born/Boy meets world/Of course his pops was gone.” Drenched in a wet, dubby sonic blanket sewn by former Company Flow producer El-P, their style is like a verbal ping-pong game that recalls Run-D.M.C.’s rhyme trading — only more otherworldly and interweaving.

Eyedea & Abilities’ excellent debut album, First Born (Rhymesayers), is filled with mid-tempo beats and textures that are both low key and minor key. However, the album’s standout song is “Big Shot,” a funk-laced track reminiscent of Jurassic 5’s bass-driven low riders, or old-school classics like the Treacherous Three’s “New Rap Language.” Aesop Rock’s fourth album, Labor Days (Def Jux), is one of the fall’s most anticipated releases, and while it doesn’t necessarily top his previous albums, it goes a long way toward validating the hype surrounding him. In short, he’s got the skills to pay the bills.

If you’re not in a hip-hop state of mind that night, you’ll want to check out Vortis, a ragged bunch of noise merchants who’ll be blowing eardrums during their aural demolition derby at the Green Room. The band’s most notable members include Chicago Sun-times rock critic Jim DeRogatis (who wrote last year’s Lester Bangs biography, Let It Blurt) and Michael Weinstein, a rocktacular 59-year-old professor of political philosophy (and author of over 20 books) whose bio describes him as having a stage presence somewhere between “Iggy Pop, Ice Cube and Gene Vincent.”

The following week, Sept. 22, Lucinda Williams and Ron Sexsmith will roll their car wheels into Iowa City for a much-anticipated date at the university’s IMU. Coming hot off the release of her cool new record, Essence (Lost Highway), Lucinda and company (a touring band that includes local legend Bo Ramsey on guitar) know how to kick out the jams and take care of business onstage, something that was euphorically obvious when I caught their set in Austin earlier this year. Even Essence’s quiet, pretty ditties like “Blue,” “I Envy the Wind” and “Lonely Girls” gain an added power live; it’s something that shouldn’t be missed.

Sexsmith is touring in support of the brand-new Blue Boy (SpinArt), a tougher and more fleshed-out record, sonically speaking, than his previous releases. Nevertheless, this Steve Earle-produced album still retains the introspective, melancholy tone of his previous releases; it’s just that Blue Boy jumps out of the speakers and lands in your lap more immediately. I’d also be remiss if I didn’t mention Austin’s finest indie-drone band American Analog Set, who will perform at the Green Room Sept. 29. Lastly, don’t miss the beatbox symphonies of Southern Cali’s Beat Junkies, who’ll be cutting it up on the ones and twos at Gabe’s Sept. 19.

The ultra-authenticity of the Beat Junkies and the sincere, emotive quality of Williams’ music are totally at odds with the values touted in the outstanding new book Bubblegum Music is the Naked Truth (Feral House), edited by Kim Cooper and David Smay. More than simply a book, it’s a manifesto — a defense of one of the most critically despised genres of all time. The tome is filled with the snap, crackle and popping prose of Chuck Eddy, Metal Mike Saunders and others, as well as lively, lovely rants by the likes of Peter Bagge, an archetypical 1990s hipster made semi-infamous by his underground comic, Hate. Bagge’s iconic status as an arbiter of cool makes even more hilarious, and convincing, his love of bubblegum music, especially when he launches into a biting analysis of why the Spice Girls’ Spice World matters. He writes, “I recommend this CD to everyone. If you buy it and don’t like it then I’d suggest you crawl into your sad little cubbyhole and listen to your wretched Bob Dylan (or Lou Reed or Nick Cave) records one last time before putting a bullet through your head and ending your miserable fucking existence.” An assistant-prof friend recently punched me in the arm at a party after finding out that the bootylicious track I put on, which she (and everyone else) unwittingly enjoyed dancing to, was none other than “Spice Up Your Life,” something that’s a testament to the unselfconscious power of this bubble-yummy-yummy-yummy-I’ve-got-love-in-my-tummy music.

Now that Britney and the Backstreet Boys have gotten all serious on our asses, the latest, greatest group of pube-poppers are Jump 5, on the Sparrow Music label (the Sub Pop of Contemporary Christian music). Filled with so much positivity and infectious energy it makes Up With People sound like the gloomy, doomy Bauhaus, the self-titled Jump 5 debut release is a wonder of hummable, hyperactive studio-craft, a whirling derish of catchy ear candy that sticks to the roof of your brain. Perhaps the only way of purging yourself of Jump 5’s good-time vibe is by bathing in the bloody mess that is Slayer’s God Hates Us All (American), their best album since 1986’s masterpiece Reign in Blood. A full-frontal assault on the senses, this disc delivers a cartoonish, yet compelling, sonic beat-down that is a welcome relief from the catharsis-core angst of nu-metal acts like Papa Roach, who forsake entertainment for the mundane pain of everyday life (booooooow-ing). Three cheers for Satan worship, virgin sacrifice and ritual murder!!!
The World Famous Beat Junkies, w/ the Visionaries
Gabe's • Sept. 19

Everyone is a DJ and no one is a DJ. With the growing revival of the four traditional elements of hip-hop (break­ing, painting, emceeing and DJing), the West Coast b-boy is coming back into vogue. The World Famous Beat Junkies, a crew of more than 13 of California's best turntablists, have been vinyl-wrecking together since the turn of the '90s. And like a perpetual motion machine, they don't show any signs of slowing—only growing.

Founded by crew president J-Rocc, the base clique is comprised of DJs Melo-D, Curse, Icy Ice, Symphony, What?! and Rhettmatic. Since then the crew's mass and notoriety have tripled, taking in a few of the now-disbanded Invisible Scratch Picklz members and unifying the bursting-at-the-seams Cali scene from Humble to the Bay. Stay power is a rarity in the fickle hip-hop mind, but one of the Junkies foremost traits has been their ability to stay in the scene via support and love.

Various members have been the driving production and scratch force behind such West Coast break-out groups as Dilated Peoples, Visionaries (also appearing), Q-Bert, LMNO, Lootpack and Jurassic 5, to name drop a few.

With so many scattered members, what can one expect from a collective showing of these scene torch-bearers? Most likely you'll hear a sound that would take a full orchestra to create. The Junkies work in the manner of a typical band: Babu and Melo-D handle vocal and guitar sampling, J-Rocc loops the percussion and horns, and Rhettmatic mixes the drumbeats. While techy heads will receive a tutorial on how to juggle and cut tempo, greenhorns will be engaged from the club-to-dancehall mixes with ever-quirky samples. And everyone in attendance can expect head-nodding whooplas.

Chris Wiersema

Mythos
9 S. Linn St., Iowa City, 337-3760
Ethnographic art, antiquities and museum copies; specializing in African, Mayan Indian from Guatemala and Asian, ongoing.

Northside Books
203 N. Linn St., Iowa City, 466-9330
Sunday Live!, all 2-3pm smallWorks 2001, paintings and drawings by Sook Young Kim, through September.

Red Avocado
521 East Washington St., Iowa City, 351-6088
Local Painting Exposition, through Oct. 1 • Water Dance, paintings by Sarah Clunis, through September • Weathered, locally wood-fired ceramics.

Ruby's Pearl
13 S. Linn St., Iowa City, 248-0032
Power of the Pussy, redaction of words and images used against women in today's society, works by Ruby's own Kymbyry, through September.

Senior Center
28 S. Linn St., Iowa City, 356-5220

Studiolo
415 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 341-8344
Sculpted Forms, paintings, drawings and sculpture by Des Moines artist Robert Sunderman, through September.

UI Hospitals and Clinics
Project Art of UIHC, Iowa City, 353-6417
Masks of China, an historical and contemporary view of Chinese mask traditions, through September, Main Lobby and Gallery B of the Medical Museum (take Elevator F to the eighth floor) • Jeni Reeves, paintings and children's book illustrations, through Oct. 1, PVAC; artist talk, Sept. 19, 12pm, PVAC Gallery 8 JCP • Joel Peck, intaglio prints, through Nov. 1, Boyd Tower West Lobby • Dennis Swanson, photography, through Oct. 31, Boyd Tower East Lobby.

UI Museum of Art
150 North Riverside Dr., Iowa City, 353-1727
Permanent collection exhibitions, ongoing • Temporary permanent collection exhibitions: Drunk: A Video Installation by Gillian Wearing, featuring "I Love You," a 60-minute single-channel video, shown Thursdays, 4pm, and...
Rock 'n' Locks
Green Room • Sept. 21
G Spot Hair Design proves it's the coolest yet again with this multi-media presentation of its fall portfolio. Plus, this year there's live music: local favorites Dave Zollo, The Trolleys and Jennifer Danielson will provide the "rock" to go with the "locks." The night will kick off with an intimate cocktail party, affording participants the opportunity to meet the stylists and see close-up the models who will be sporting the new styles during the western-theme fashion show later in the evening. 7pm-2am. Green Room, 509 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City.

Yat-Kha
CSPS • Sept. 25-26
Iowa just doesn't have enough throat singers. So we rely on Tuva, an autonomous region of Russian central Asia, to send us theirs. Yat-Kha is led by Albert Kuvezin, a protegé of Brian Eno and co-founder of world-music sensation Huun-huur-tu. According to Russian critic Artemi Troitsky, "There are two unique voices on Earth right now: Pavarotti and Kuvezin." But Yat-Kha ain't no opera. Their unique brand of folk-rock is distinguished by the traditional throat-singing technique that creates unusual dual- and triple-note overtones, seemingly by magic. As if that weren't enough, the group will provide live accompaniment to Russian director V.I. Pudovkin's rarely seen silent-film classic Storm Over Asia on Sept. 26. 8pm both nights. 1103 Third St. SE, Cedar Rapids. 364-1580.
**New Release from Trailer:**

**Bo Ramsey**

*in the weeds*

video produced by Sandy Dyas

featuring music by Bo Ramsey

"I can't imagine a better introduction to his work. If you're interested in music videos or you hate music videos, if you already love Bo Ramsey or think you might be ready to get started, check it out."

-puremusic.com

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**Clapp Recital Hall**

University of Iowa campus, Iowa City, 335-1160

Mezzo-soprano Katherine Eberle and pianist Shari Rhoads present a program of American songs, including the world premiere of Six Songs by Jeffrey Agrell, a fellow faculty member at the UI School of Music, Sept. 15, 8pm • Violinist Amy Appold will perform music for solo violin and sonatas with pianist Heidi Williams in this faculty/guest recital, Sept. 21, 8pm • Pianist Uriel Tscharp plays music of Schumann and Schubert, faculty recital, Sept. 22, 8pm.

**CSPS**

1103 Third St. SE, Cedar Rapids, 364-1580

Common Bond, with Zray, in conjunction with the Iowa Women's Music Festival, Sept. 15, 8pm • Pierre Bensusan, Algerian-born French guitarist, Sept. 16, 7pm • Mary Jane Lamond, Gaelic songs from the acclaimed Cape Breton singer, Sept. 17, 8pm • Yat-Kha, throat singers from Republic of Tuva, Sept. 25-26, 8pm • Dave Van Ronk, folk music legend, Sept. 29, 8pm.

**Gabe's**

330 E. Washington St., Iowa City, 354-4788

Def Jux, Aesop Rock, Mr. Lif, Rhyme Sayers, Proto Star and Frodoe, Sept. 22, 8pm • Beat Junkies, Sept. 19 • Nonpoint, Sept. 20 • Kita and Burnout (both featuring former members of Scrid), with 'Cuda, Sept. 21 • Boo Williams, Sept. 22 • Burning Airlines, Sept. 25 • Starch Martins, Sept. 29 • John Mayer and Shea Seger, Sept. 29 • Firewater, Sept. 30.

**The Green Room**

509 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 345-4350

Blues Jam Mondays, Latin Night Tuesdays

Harmony Riley, Sept. 14 • Vortis, Sept. 15 • Plug Spark with The Brave Firefighter, EF Seventy, Slats and Sanjay, Sept. 19 • Kelly Pardekooper, Ramsey and Brown, David Zolo and Andy Fleming, Sept. 20 • G-Spot Hair Design presents Rock n' Locks Hair Event featuring David Zolo and the Body Electric with The Trolls and Jennifer Danielson, Sept. 21, 7pm-2am • The Onlys with Grand Champion, Proto Star and Frodoe, Sept. 22 • DJ Espina, Sept. 26 • Clean Living with Soul Fusion, Sept. 27 • Skunk River Bandits with Blue Island Tribe, Sept. 28 • The American Analog Set with AM/FM, Sept. 29 • Paléo, Sept. 30.

**First Avenue Club**

1550 S. First Ave., Iowa City, 337-5527

Chris Cagle, Black Diamond, Sept. 28, 8pm.

**Hancher Auditorium**

UI campus, Iowa City, 335-1160

The UI Symphony, Sept. 19, 8pm • Al Jarreau, Sept. 21, 8pm.

**Iowa Memorial Union**

UI campus

Lucinda Williams, with Ron Sexsmith, Sept. 22, Ballroom.

**The Marketplace**

511 P St., South Amana, 622-3750, all

**Sundays, 1pm, through Nov. 4:** Jules Kirschenbaum: The Last Paintings, through Oct. 28 • Invention in Lithography, through Nov. 11 • Tour of European and American paintings led by Pamela Trimpe, curator of painting and sculpture, Sept. 13, 4pm • "Johns and Childhood," lecture on Jasper Johns by Richard S. Field, Sept. 30, 3pm • "The Ethical Dimensions of Documentary Photography," lecture by Linda Bolton, UI Department of English, Sept. 20, 7:30pm.

**The Mill**

120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City, 351-9529

Kelly Pardekooper and the Devil's House Band, Sept. 14 • Larry Myer, Sept. 15 • Brian Davis for City Council Fund-raiser, Kelly Pardekooper, The Trolls, more, Sept. 16, 7pm • Ben Schmidt, acoustic folk & blues, Sept. 21 • Brian McNeil & Shoe Money, Sept. 22 • The Maggie Drennon Band, Celtic rock, Sept. 23, 7pm • Open Mike, Sept. 24, 8pm • Greg Brown, Sept. 26, 7pm • B.F. Burt & The Instigators, Sept. 28 • Wyke Nept, Sept. 29.

**Mondays**

Iowa City, 358-0776

The Push Stars, Sept. 27.

**Northside Books**

203 N. Linn St., Iowa City, 466-9330

Sunday Live!, all 2-3pm

Bill Peterson, jazz piano, Sept. 16 • Doyle Buhler, punk blues from Denver, Sept. 23 • Paul LaFauce, Pam Neudorff & Deb Singer, classical guitar duets & trios, Sept. 30.

**Paramount Theatre**

123 Third St. SE, Cedar Rapids, 363-1888

Swing Out! The Big Band Show, with Hunter Fuerste and His American Vintage Orchestra, Sept. 15, 8pm • Cedar Rapids Symphony Masterworks Series, season opener with Linda Wang on violin, Sept. 22, 8pm, 366-8203 for tickets • "Keb' Mo', Sept. 29, 7:30pm • Sing for the Cure, Sept. 30, 7pm.

**Peabody**

Downtown Iowa City

West High Jazz Combo and musical stories by Mike Haverkamp, part of Stories 2000 Kickoff, Sept. 22, 11am-12:30pm, in front of the Sheraton Hotel • Johnson County Landmark Jazz Band, part of the Library Fund-raising Kick-off, Sept. 22, 6:30-8:30pm, WeatherDance fountain area.

**The Q**

211 Iowa Ave., Iowa City, 337-9107

Natty Nation, Sept. 15.

**Sal's Music Emporium**

624 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City, 338-7462

Starch Martins with Dick Prall, Sept. 28, 6pm.

**Sanctuary**

405 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 351-5692

Steve Grismore Trio, Sept. 15 • Thompson, Hatwich & Cuniffe, Sept. 21 • Anton Hatwich Trio, Sept. 22 • Saul Lubaroff Trio, Sept. 28 & 29.

**Serendipity**

702 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 354-4571

Orbital Lounge featuring resident DJs Jack the Lad, Agent Black and Andy K, every Saturday.

**Red Avocado**

521 East Washington St., Iowa City, 351-6088, all 6:30-9:30pm

Reality Trio, Jazz, Wednesdays • Acoustic Jazz, Thursdays • Annie Savage, harpist, Fridays • Mad River Duo, clarinet and guitar, Saturdays.

**Third Street Live!**

1204 Third St. SE, Cedar Rapids, 365-6141

Party Mix Specialists, Sept. 14 • Skin Kandy, Sept. 15 • Swing Crew, Sept. 21 • Rod Piazza and the Mighty Flyers, Sept. 23, 8pm • Caroines Spine, with Destrophy, Sept. 28.

**UI Hospitals and Clinics**

Project Art of UIHC, Iowa City, 337-9107

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Fall Music Festival, S Sgt. 10-14, 12-1pm, Roy
Carver Pavillon Courtyard (in case of inclement
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weather performances will move to Colloton Atrium): Kathy Ogden, Sept. 14 • Evan Mazunik, piano improvisations, Sept. 20, 12:15-1:00pm, Colloton Atrium.

UI Museum of Art
150 North Riverside Dr., Iowa City, 335-1727
Center for New Music, Sept. 28, 7:30pm.

The Union Bar
Iowa City, 319-339-7713
The Disco Biscuits, Sept. 19.

Uptown Bill’s Small Mall
401 South Gilbert St., Iowa City
Rafael Manriquez and Quique Cruz, celebrating Latin American Independence (Chile, Mexico, Brazil), Sept. 14.

US Cellular Center
370 First Avenue NE, Cedar Rapids, 363-1888
Slipknot, System of a Down, Rammstein, Mudvayne and No One, Sept. 18 • The Bellamy Brothers with Lacy J. Dalton, CR Area Firefighters Association Fund-raiser, Sept. 29, 7:30pm.

Kelly Pardekooper and the Devil's House Band, tailgate party, Sept. 29, 11am, Kinnick Stadium.

GUESS WHOSE TATTOO

If you know who is the bearer of this tattoo, be the first person to email us your name, address and phone number at little-village@usa.net and you'll win 2 free tickets to Riverside Theatre.

Good Luck!

little village
little-village@usa.net
THEATER

Iowa Women's Music Festival
Sept. 15, 12-5pm, Iowa City Upper City Park
Carol Montag, 12pm; Mad River Band, 1pm; CommonBond, 2pm; Zrazy, 3pm; crafts, food, etc.; for more information contact Laurie Haag, 335-1486.

Hancher Auditorium
UI campus, Iowa City, 335-1160
The Vagina Monologues, Obie Award-winning play by Eve Ensler based on interviews with 200 women. Sept. 14, 8pm, and Sept. 15, 2pm & 8pm (see related V-Week events under events section).

Iowa City Community Theater
Exhibition Hall, Johnson County Fairgrounds, Iowa City, 338-0443
Performances Fridays and Saturdays 8pm; Thursday, Sept. 20, 7:30pm and Sunday, Sept. 30, 2:30pm
Schoolhouse Rock Live!, musical based on the old educational TV spots, Sept. 14-29.

Old Creamery Theatre
39 38th Ave., Amana, 800-352-6262
Performances Wednesdays, Friday & Saturdays 8pm; Thursdays & Sundays 3pm

Paramount Theatre
123 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, 363-1888
Ragtime, Sept. 20, 7:30pm.

Riverside Theatre
213 N. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 338-7672
Performances Thursdays at 7pm, Fridays (except Sept. 28, no performance) and Saturdays at 8pm and Sundays at 2pm
I Love You, You’re Perfect, Now Change, off-Broadway smash musical revue, through September; Talkback post-performance discussion with the company, Sept. 14.

Art wanted for PATV’s Third Annual Silent Art Auction to be held Oct. 28 at First United Methodist Church, Iowa City; paintings, prints, photographs, pottery, jewelry, artist’s books and other unique pieces welcome; Interested artists should contact PATV, 338-7035, to donate work; PATV will air a program with all artworks, titles and artists’ names in the weeks leading up to the auction; first deadline for getting art on television is Sept. 20 (the earlier works get to PATV, the more times they will be seen).

Art wanted for “Art in the Lobby” Riverside Theatre exhibitions, call 338-7672.

Riverside Theatre accepting material for its festival of one-act plays, Walking the Wire, scheduled for Oct. 12-14, must relate to theme, “Morning and Evening,” and not be more than 10 minutes long, deadline Sept. 21, call 338-7672 for more info.

Original artwork for inclusion in IC Public Library’s ART-TO-GO, a collection of framed posters and juried, original artwork available for loan to library cardholders, open to artists living, working or exhibiting in the Iowa City or Johnson County area who have participated in at least one juried show, submit a slide of one framed, original artwork, accompanied by entry form available at the library, deadline Sept. 30.

The Mill
120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City, 351-9529
I.C. Improvs, improvisational comedy, Sept. 27.

IC Public Library
123 Linn St., Iowa City, 355-5200
Sept. 16: Sunday Writer’s Group Meeting, 1:30pm, Meeting Room C
Sept. 18: International Association for Near-Death Studies: Journey to Wholeness, Thomas Gates will speak about his extensive near-death experiences, 7pm, Meeting Room A
Sept. 19: The University of Iowa International Writing Program (IWP) presents a free panel discussion, “To Tell a Story, or, the Alternative Shapes of Narrative,” 3pm, large meeting room.

COMEDY

The Mill
120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City, 351-9529
I.C. Improvs, improvisational comedy, Sept. 27.

WORDS

The Mill
120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City, 351-9529
Talk/Art/Cabaret, performance art, readings, etc., Sept. 19.

Prairie Lights
15 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City (unless otherwise noted), 337-2681, all 8pm
Whitney Terrell, a graduate of the UI Writers’ Workshop, reads from his Kansas City novel, The Huntsman, Sept. 14.
Garrison Keillor reads from his new novel, Lake Wobegon Summer 1956, Sept. 18, 8:30pm, Clapp Recital Hall.
Bob Sayre, retired UI professor of English, reads from his new edition of Take This Exit, Sept. 20.

Elizabeth McCracken reads from her new novel Niagara Falls All Over Again, Sept. 21.
Sam Wiss reads from his first collection of poems, Everlasting Quail, winner of this year’s Bakeless Prize for Poetry, Sept. 25.
Jonathan Franzen reads from his new novel, The Corrections, Sept. 27.

UI Museum of Art
150 North Riverside Dr., Iowa City, 335-1727
“Johns and Childhood,” lecture on Jasper Johns by Richard S. Field, Sept. 30, 3pm.
“The Ethical Dimensions of Documentary Photography,” lecture by Linda Bolton, UI Department of English, Sept. 20, 7:30pm.

EVENTS

Stories 2000 Kickoff
Sept. 22, 7-9:30pm, Ped Mall in front of the Sheraton Hotel, downtown Iowa City, IC Library if rain.

Iowa First Lady Christie Vilsack will tell the story of why and how she founded Iowa Stories 2000 and about her vision for Iowa as a state for learners and readers; music by West High Jazz Combo and musical stories by Mike Haverkamp; Perry Ross, principal of Longfellow Elementary School and member of Vilsack’s Stories 2000 State Advisory Board will tell stories and serve as host. Other Iowa City area Stories 2000 events are planned for later this fall. Communities will host forums for those involved in literacy programs and others who are interested in finding out more about the literacy programs already available.

Library Fund-raising Kick-off
Sept. 22, 1-9:30pm, downtown Iowa City
All-day celebration of the expansion of the library’s downtown facility; 1pm: Iowa City Fire Department HART unit rapping demonstration, Sheraton Hotel Hotel, remarks by First Lady Christie Vilsack; Friends Foundation update of fund-raising campaign, WeatherDance fountain area, City Plaza 1-4pm: Construction fence painting, inside LeNoch & Cilek building, decorating plastic “hard hats” for kids, on the plaza; “Hard Hat Hooyar” silent auction, ICPL Meeting Room A 1-5pm: Vintage LP album record sale, ICPL Meeting Room C 2-4pm: Celebrity climb and climbing demonstrations, Planet X, Old Capitol Town Center: literary scavenger hunt, ICPL 6:30-8:30pm: Johnson County Landmark Jazz Band concert and dance, WeatherDance fountain area 8:30-9:30pm:

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Beyond the Summit screening, documentary about the 2000 Mt. Everest expedition in Nepal, which included Iowa City mountain climber Dr. Chuck Huss, City Plaza in front of the hotel.

V-Week events (in conjunction with The Vagina Monologues at Hancher Auditorium)

Self-Exam Workshop, Thursdays, Sept. 20, 6-8pm, Emma Goldman Clinic for Women, 227 N. Dubuque Street.

Robert A. Lee Community Recreation Center Ice-Cream Social, to introduce community to the non-profit organization, Sept. 16, 2-4pm, Robert A. Lee Community Recreation Center, 220 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City.

Robert A. Lee Community Recreation Center
City of Iowa City
Civic Center, 410 E. Washington St., Iowa City
(unless noted otherwise), 356-5236

Sept. 22: Community Council Formal, 6:30pm, Harvat Hall.
Sept. 19: Community Council Formal, 6:30pm, Harvat Hall.

The Crisis Center
1121 Gilbert Ct., Iowa City, 351-0140
Information Night, Sept. 18, 7pm.

IC Public Library
123 Linn St., Iowa City, 356-5200
Sept. 14: IC Meeting, USDE Star Schools Visit, 2:45pm, ICN Meeting Room D • Sept. 15: Iowa City Public Power Initiative & The Sierra Club present “Public Power: Option for Iowa City?”, forum to discuss the Iowa City/MidAmerican franchise agreement, 10am, Live on The Library Channel (Channel 10), Meeting Room A • Sept. 17: Iowans Save Meeting, 10am, ICN Meeting Room D; Iowa Paths Meeting, 2pm, ICN Meeting Room D • Sept. 18: Children at Home Quarterly Meeting, 1pm, ICN Meeting Room D; Making a Difference, 6pm, ICN Meeting Room D • Sept. 19: RTE Meeting, 3:30pm, ICN Meeting Room D • Sept. 20: ATAC Fall Meeting, 8:30am, ICN Meeting Room D; Johnson County Community Network: Monthly meeting, 3pm, Meeting Room B.

Uptown Bill’s Small Mall
401 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City
Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting, Mondays 6-7pm

Robert A. Lee Community Recreation Center
220 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 356-5100
Line Dance classes, Sept. 18-Dec. 18, Tuesdays, 7:15-9:15pm, fee is $3 at the door, pre-registration not required, for more information contact the IC Recreation Division, 356-5100 • Adult Art Classes, everything from magazine writing and guitar to printing and collage, call for more info.

Ruby’s Pearl
13 S. Linn St., Iowa City, 248-0032
Stitch n’ Bitch, bring your sewing, knitting or whatever and bitch or gab, every Wednesday, 6-7pm.

Iowa Football
VS Iowa State University, there, Sept. 15 • VS Penn State University, Sept. 29.

Little Village
little-village@usa.net
**STARS OVER Iowa City by Dr. Star**

**Forecast for September 15-30, 2001**

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19) You've worked out a tough plan to balance the sharply opposed demands of work and family and life. But you are about to get a second chance to work out a much better plan, much more in keeping with your heart's desires. Conflicts that seemed unresolvable are softening. Arrangements you thought were hardening are becoming fluid. Patience and perseverance now will repay you well later. Your partners will play a crucial if mysterious role. Money will stay tight though.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20) Progress toward that brighter future seems minimal. Remain patiently on course. Don't be discouraged by present limitations or the slow pace of events. Arrangements that were beginning to seem permanent will soon become fluid again. Events on the shop floor and in the front office will work together magically to improve your work situation. A vision of new possibilities will guide future changes. Meanwhile, fluctuations travel and self-improvement are all highlighted. Take an uplifting trip with an agreeable companion. Guide future changes. Meanwhile, flirtations travel and self-improvement are all highlighted. Take an uplifting trip with an agreeable companion.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 21) There are still big obstacles. However, discussions that seemed closed will reopen. Limitations that seemed permanent aren't. Resistance to your plans will soften. And an amazing stroke of luck will transform the whole picture. It is now possible to shape events to suit dreams and possibilities. You no longer need to choose between "realistic but grim" and "wonderful but risky" scenarios. It will take time and effort though. Life is seldom an all-or-nothing affair.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 22) Cancerians should like the next couple of weeks a lot. Some truly annoying conditions at work are due to clear up and some rather vexing personal concerns will ease significantly. You will get another chance to undo some karma. A new and agreeable energy will infuse your social life. Mysterious and unforeseen financial events will improve your home life. Home could even become the scene of profitable new endeavors. You are, however, at grave risk of enjoyable overspending and overeating.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug 22) I hope you don't mind just sitting around, surveying your kingdom and watching things happily and magically sort themselves out, because that, for the most part, is what the stars have in store for you for the next couple of weeks. True, pressure is building again along some old fault lines. At work, the annoyance factor is up. Still, you are well-positioned to handle it all and you can already see your way out of any approaching problem.

**VIRGO** (Aug 23-Sept 22) Virgos are taking the lion's share of the heat; Virgos should have the lion's share of the luck. It's only fair. You will soon make some very clever and fortunate moves with very positive effects on your job, your income and your home situation. The people who just tried to rain on your parade, unsuccessfully, are planning to try it again, soon. Your successes in the next couple of weeks will foil them good and proper before they even try.

**LIBRA** (Sept 23-Oct 22) The next two weeks should see another creative coup. This success will make a public splash and it will have solid, long-term importance. You will also begin to see triumphs in personal growth and self-development areas. You might want to revisit a locale to which you recently enjoyed a visit. Don't commit your money on expansion plans yet, though. Events will make new plans necessary. Finances will remain tight while the temptation to spend impulsively on home and career remains lively.

**SCORPIO** (Oct 23-Nov 21) Scorpios find themselves lost in a maze of contradictory concerns. The conflicts involve shared familial resources, individual earnings, the need for personal healing and renewal, difficult transformations in the lives of family and loved ones across generations. It has been relentless and it seems endless. A turning point, leading to an eventual, gradual easing is coming soon. You will conceive of a long-term plan that will help everyone concerned, including and especially yourself. Find their way to firmer ground.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov 22-Dec 21) Energy and ambition may have dipped slightly, but so have the irritability and annoyance factors. Affections might be a little strained, especially at work. Partnership matters are building toward another crisis, but it will be easier to handle this time. The ground is shifting beneath your feet, but you can definitely trust your instincts to get you through it. Sweeping changes in your environment and in the world will open doors and provide solutions where there were none before.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec 22-Jan 19) The planets are never against us; there are just easy and difficult points in planetary cycles. But there always comes a moment when the cycles shift decisively in our favor, and there always comes a moment when the cycles shift decisively in our favor. For Capricorns, that moment will come in the next couple of weeks. Don't be discouraged as pressure builds again on an overactive fault line. This time, things will go easier for you. You will develop an edge on the competition and enjoy a very lucky break or two besides.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan 20-Feb 18) There are powerful forces at work in your life. If you thought the recent cycle of changes was complete, you'll have to think again. The planets are gearing up for another round of big changes. This round opens with a vision of expanded possibilities. Behind this vision are forces that will shape the next cycle of changes in accordance with your vision. This is what being an Aquarius is all about. What...you aren't starting to wear out, are you?

**PISCES** (Feb 19-March 20) Some great financial luck will boost your confidence and ease your way, too. Powerful inspiration will bring calm and confidence. Partnership matters are benevolent influences. The seas are about to get rough again, but your ship is in much better shape than it was. You'll get a second chance at solving certain vexing problems with better odds of success. However, you've also passed a point of no return. Don't waste energy on regrets. Use it instead to build your future.
Curses, Foiled Again

Police in Brockton, Mass., charged James M. Jorritsma, 38, with holding up a coffee shop. When he fled, taking a cash register with him, two customers gave chase, easily catching him because he was slowed by the weight of the register and the cast he was wearing from a broken leg. Before calling the authorities, the two customers broke the suspect's other leg.

Kristopher Huie, 22, was arrested in Johnson County, Texas, for trying to steal a freight train. Sheriff Bob Alford said Huie got caught after he managed to start the engine but had trouble releasing the brake and radioed Union Pacific dispatchers for help. A passing conductor and engineer, alerted by the radio call, overpowered Huie and held him for the sheriff.

Two teen-agers were arrested in Covington, Ky., after a police sergeant interrupted them stealing money from a vending machine. The machine was in the bar portion of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge No. 1, which has the word "POLICE" in bold letters over the front door. Police Lt. Col. Jim Liles told the Kentucky Post the burglary attempt is the first anyone can recall at the lodge.

When North Carolina state police stopped Michael Dennis Long, 30, in Mecklenburg County for speeding, he also received a ticket for driving on a revoked license. Eight hours later, a sheriff's deputy in Davidson County arrested Long for doing 88 in a 70-mph zone and driving on a revoked license. He was released on a $5,000 unsecured bond. An hour later, he was stopped again and arrested for going 91 in a 70-mph zone, driving while his license was revoked and a seatbelt violation. After he was given a secured bond of $1,500, deputies discovered the car he was driving had been reported stolen and increased his bond to $10,000. "This guy is a complete idiot," Davidson County Sheriff Gerald Hege said.

Better to Curse the Darkness

A 15-year-old boy in Washington, D.C., was searching for a television remote control. When he looked under the bed, he used a cigarette lighter to see and set the bed on fire. The blaze quickly spread throughout the apartment and caused the evacuation of the 40-apartment complex.

Bad Luck Gets Worse

When someone found a wallet containing more than $2,300 in cash and turned it in to police in Watsonville, Calif., officers determined it belonged to Ricardo Landecho, 39. A further check revealed that Landecho was on parole for various drug-related offenses and that his driver's license had been suspended. They notified Landecho to come to the station to claim his wallet, but when he showed up with his teen-age daughter, a search turned up nearly a pound of marijuana, 33 grams of suspected methamphetamine and eight grams of suspected cocaine.

Neither Rain nor Gloom

William J. Henderson, who was the US postmaster general from 1998 to 2001, said he advocates privatizing the Postal Service, suggesting the government corporation raise its rates "at times of high demand" and lower them during traditionally slow times. His opinion piece in the Washington Post also questioned the Postal Service's obligation to "deliver everywhere every single piece of mail, which is not cost-effective." He recommended restructuring the Postal Service to make it employee owned through an employee stock-ownership plan.

Laurence Lyttle was fired from his job as a relief mail carrier in Isleton, Calif., after just two months when he failed to deliver the day's mail because he went for a joy ride. Authorities said Lyttle was involved in two hit-and-run incidents: crashing into a fence near a marina and backing over a water main at a trailer park. While investigating the incident, postal officials discovered an outstanding warrant for Lyttle in San Mateo County for failure to appear. "He had a lot of training," Isleton postmaster Richard Weberson said. "We had high hopes for him."

Johnny on the Spot

When police in Morro Bay, Calif., received a report of a man struggling to get out of a Porta-Potty being towed on a small trailer at 40 mph, they found the man was an inmate from California Men's Colony. Police Officer Rick Catlett said the prisoner wasn't trying to escape. He was part of a road crew working along Highway 1 who stopped to use the portable toilet moments before a city truck drove off with it. Rick Grantham, who alerted the police, said he spotted the man opening the door and yelling "Hey! Hey!" to get the driver's attention.

A 63-year-old Austrian man was trapped for more than three days in a portable toilet after fleeing from muggers in Vienna. When his assailants began chasing him, he spied the mobile lavatory and locked himself in, according to the Kurier newspaper, but they flipped the toilet over and the door face down so he couldn't get out. "He screamed again and again for help and banged against the walls," a police officer told the paper, "but nobody heard him because it was a very busy crossroads." After spending 80 hours in the cramped plastic container while outside temperatures neared 90 degrees, the man was rescued when he managed to break open one of the vents and flag down a passer-by.

Baby Driver

After a teen-age girl in Toronto completed her driving test, the examiner told her to park the car while he issued her driver's license. As she pulled into the parking lot, the car went out of control and hit four vehicles, then spun around and hit two more and a pedestrian, who was taken to the hospital with leg injuries. The teenager also suffered minor leg injuries. The driving instructor was treated for shock. He also changed his mind about issuing the girl her license.

Compiled from the nation's press by Roland Sweet.
What color is the sky in your world?