Iowa City folk hero Bill Sackter died 21 years ago, but his spirit lives on in a little place on Gilbert Street where the people are as good as the coffee—and just getting started.
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lyrics & book by Fred Alley
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OUR STORY SO FAR

THE PRESIDENT WARNS OF AN IMPENDING THREAT.

We have proof that Saddam is creating an army of giant mutant lizards that shoot laser beams out of their eyeballs. We can't wait for the smoking gun to come in the form of a bunch of giant lizards!

THE INEVITABLE WAR ENSUES. VICTORY IS QUICKLY DECLARED.

We have eliminated the grateful, rose-petals-tossing populace of Iraq from their leader-creating overlords!

A YEAR LATER, PEOPLE ARE STILL DYING.

WE EXPECT TO FIND THE LIZARDS ANY DAY NOW.

HAS HE BUT KNOWN THE TRUTH, WE SURELY WOULD NOT HAVE VOTED FOR THIS NOW-UNPOPULAR WAR.

BOTTOM LINE... TIME TO CLUTCH AT STRAWS.

MEMBERS OF HIS ADMINISTRATION PUT THEIR OWN CREDIBILITY ON THE LINE.

IT SAYS THAT THERE ARE MANY SPECIES OF LIZARDS IN IRAQ--AND SOME OF THEM GROW FAIRLY LARGE!

THE PUBLIC GROWS INCREASINGLY FRUSTRATED.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MUCH DAMAGE AN ARMY OF MUTANT LIZARDS CAN DO WITH THEIR LASER-SHOOTING EYEBALLS?

THE TRAGICALLY HIP

by TOM TOMORROW

THE TRAGically HIP

IN BETWEEN EVOLUTION

CD Reviews pg. 14

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Midsummer is often referred to as "silly season" in politics, particularly in election years, a time when, in absence of any real developments, speculations run rampant and trial balloons threaten to obscure the sun. This summer is certainly no exception. Though the Democratic National Convention will doubtless liven things up a bit by the time you read this, the perennial national debate on heat versus humidity is still taking precedence over that of Bush versus Kerry as I write. Still, an intrepid political junkie is never at a loss for long, and silly is as silly does, to wit...

NEW VISTAS IN SLOGANEERING: Rare props to Vice President Dick Cheney for summing up in two choice words what his administration stands for in a way that had previously eluded a team of PR flacks and bumper sticker merchants. And fuck you, too, Mr. Vice President. Glad you feel better.

BUSH STUMPED: We residents of the Midwest's "battle ground" states have been the lucky recipients of much presidential attention of late, with the president taking time out from his traditional months long Crawford, Texas, vacation to campaign extensively across the region. This has given us a remarkable opportunity to witness firsthand the evolution of the campaign strategies that the president hopes to parlay into what he hopes will be an actual legitimate election this time around.

One element of the president's stump speech in particular caught my attention. In what might have been a brilliant summation of his campaign's contents that his Democratic rivals are both short on political consistency and weak on defense, the president, speaking in Duluth, Minn., on July 13, took his opponents to task for voting in favor of the Iraq war and against an $87 million resolution to fund it. "Members of Congress," he said, "should not vote to send American troops into battle and then vote against funding them."

I say that this might have been brilliant in my firm belief that a thing cannot be both brilliant and total bullshit at the same time. Neither Senator Kerry nor Senator Edwards, nor indeed any other member of Congress, voted to "send American troops into battle." Instead, they voted to grant the president the authority to do so, on the understanding, carefully cultivated by the administration previous to the vote, that he would do so responsibly, with the cooperation of the international community, and, most importantly, as a last resort to the diplomatic efforts he assured them were ongoing. Instead, he chose to rush into war with a token coalition (composed of such international heavyweights as Honduras, Vanuatu and the Republic of Togo) on the flimsiest of pretexts.

As to the $87 billion funding initiative, the mere need for raising it stands as a stark testament to a war effort that was poorly planned and based on pie in the sky assumptions. It occurred months after US troops were already engaged, despite administration assurances that the war effort would largely be funded by Iraqi oil profits, and worst of all with no real accounting of how the administration intended to spend it. By not offering a blank check to the administration, Edwards and Kerry, and the rest of the dissenters to this boondoggle, were behaving as responsible senators in exercise of their oversight functions under the Constitution. Shame on the president for implying they should have done otherwise.

HOME TOWN BOY MAKES GOOD SUGGESTION: Kudos to former Iowa City walking landmark and
Here, August Is...

Here, August is fullness. Our backyard tomato plants overflow with red, juicy abundance. The zucchini multiply out of control; neighbors and coworkers avoid looking at us when we approach with an armload to share. The farmer’s market tables seem to be sprouting their own green largesse, there is so much harvest. Tables and trucks full of Muscatine melons pop up on street corners. Corn and soybean fields seem to be sinking under their own rich greenness.

Here, August is emptiness. Stores’ garden centers display wilting leftovers, ever-shrinking piles of bags of topsoil, mulch and composted manure. Retail shelves are cleared of swimming pool accessories, red-white-and-blue flags and picnic supplies. Should we plant fall spinach in that garden spot bare of thick, leafy green since early summer?

Here, August is thickness. Summer’s humidity plops in lassitude over our Midwest, the saturated air almost dank. We worry it will never leave. We tire and slow as we slog through the oppressive mustiness. The swimming pool’s water seems almost too slow, too. Did someone put a little bit of gelatin in there?

Here, August is nascent thinness. The raspberry bushes, as they deliver sweet red fruit, show gaps in their branches as they start to droop toward winter’s rest. The pepper plants’ leaves are past their shiny vibrancy. The lawn slows its manic growth, the tiny green spikes losing their muscle tone in middle age. In our backyard prairie patch, the fat purple of beard-tongue has given way to the delicate laciness of white aster.

Here, August is crisp and sweet. Huge watermelons are jailed in big wooden bins in the middle of the air-conditioned grocery store floor, ready to be sprung to give us a little summer sparkle as we slice the thick green hide and shove dark pink sweetness into our mouths. Juice trickles down our chins as we spit the seeds. Sugary corn cobs, eager to be baptized by creamy pats of butter, burst from hairy green blankets ready to be ripped off in squeaky splendor.

Here, August is quiet. July’s firecrackers are silenced. The frog in Ralston Creek near our house has given up its nightly song. Grasshoppers in tall grass click and buzz only occasionally. Last-chance vacations create vacant homes throughout our neighborhoods. In our university town, the summer students are gone. Downtown rests.

Here, August is stale boredom. We’re a little tired of the guilty-pleasure books we’ve been reading. We’ve been to Lake Macbride a hundred times already. The summer movie blockbusters are now all long in the tooth, and the theater’s bill of new fare is underwhelming. Weeding the garden—again—is a dreaded chore rather than a welcome act of paternal stewardship.

Here, August is cool-tinged. Moments flit by, in early morning or late at night, when a chilled crispness breaks through the warm, sticky atmosphere. Once in a while, when I let the dogs out at night, I think maybe a light jacket would have been a good idea.

Here, August is darkening. I suddenly notice that 8 p.m. is more black than dusky. Fewer bicycles crisscross the sidewalk and street in front of our house in mid-evening. Fingers of light through the windows no longer inspire our kids’ complaints that it can’t be bedtime as long as there’s still light.

Here, August is disappointment. The elongated prospect of endless time has turned to foreshortened days of missed opportunity. The exercise regime has dissipated. The progress on writing the new book has fallen short. The garage has not in fact, finally, this year, been cleaned.

Here, August is anticipating. We realize there is now something to pick at Wilson’s Apple Orchard, a preview of September’s bounty. As we travel there on Highway 1 toward Solon, we see a farmer tuning up the combine. Now and then I notice a hint of yellow on the margins of trees. As my kids and I ride our bikes through the Lucas Elementary playground and parking lots, we notice a few cars on the grounds, and a few teachers inside sprucing up classrooms. These seismic hints tell us life will change drastically in a few weeks.

Here, August is special. August is moments of revel, and moments of sloth. August is endings. August is transitions, as are all moments of life. LV
Imagine a school where the students take an active role in the production of their own food, from plant to plate. They till the soil, sow the seeds, pull the weeds, harvest, cook and enjoy the food. They compost the scrap. Students even feed cows, chickens and sheep—all this while receiving a first-class, college-prep education.

That’s not all. In an atmosphere that emphasizes personal responsibility as well as community cooperation, these high school students clean the classrooms, the bathrooms, the cafeteria and more. One week they are building a new classroom, the next they are sweeping the library, all right alongside the faculty, who participate in these work crews, too.

Students learn all the basics you would expect a school to teach: advanced math, English, foreign language, history, humanities, research and composition. They learn pottery, glass blowing, even (get this) fencing.

Lest you think this is some hippie commune, you should know that each student carries a notebook computer with school-wide WiFi internet access (students maintain the network, too).

Sound like a rich, East Coast private school, right? No, it’s right down the road in West Branch, Iowa. Is this a new idea? Yes, if “founded in 1890” counts as new. Sound impossible? Sound like a pipe dream? It’s not; it’s Scattergood.

The goal of Scattergood is to prepare students for college and for life by instilling in them the recognition of self-worth, a sense of global citizenship, growing spiritual awareness, a commitment to lifelong learning, the ability to live constructively in a community, and the skills to attain future academic and vocational success. It’s hard not to love a school that can do that. Of course, it is Scattergood’s philosophy of food that has me waxing poetic.

Scattergood believes that all work has dignity and is intrinsically rewarding, which happens to jibe perfectly with what I’ve been preaching in these pages: that cooking is not a hassle to be performed grudgingly. Rather, it is a sincere act of faith and love that should be performed with a certain reverence. Students at Scattergood learn the importance of this ritual from day one.

The 80-acre farm is run with a three-pronged approach. It is a “living lab” where nearly any subject can be taught. Biology to be sure, but also math, physics, history, sexuality—name a subject, it can be taught in the three-acre organic garden. The farm is also an economic enterprise, not only feeding the campus but also selling produce to New Pioneer Co-op and to individuals through Scattergood’s own Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. All this while teaching the students useful farm skills.

Among the many positive results of this: a 100 percent (that’s not a typo) college placement record. In fact, acceptance to college is a requirement for graduation. So no one can tell me that this can’t be done; I’ve seen it. And if it can be done in one school, it can be done in thousands.

Sure, the students pay a lot to go there, but nowhere near what the fancy East Coast schools cost, and not that much more than public school when you realize that room and board are included. Americans are currently only paying about $3,000 per student per year for a public school education. If society were willing to pony up a little more than $3K per student per year, maybe it wouldn’t have to spend $20,000 per inmate per year. Then that better education could lead to better teachers coming out of our colleges, which leads to better education and... well, you see where I’m going.

This could and should happen nationwide, to the great benefit of us all, because it would produce happier, healthier, more productive citizens in a participatory democracy, instead of just more mindless, conspicuous consumers.
Uptown Bill’s Small Mall

Iowa City folk hero Bill Sackter died 21 years ago, but his spirit lives on in a little place on Gilbert Street where the people are as good as the coffee—and just getting started.

**Story by Adam Witte, with Meg White**

**Photos by Mike Breazeale**

W e’re out of veggie dogs today,” the Commodore explains, rooting around the refrigerator of Uptown Bill’s Small Mall. “Sorry.”

John Coolidge is the commander in chief of Uptown Bill’s every weekday morning from 8am until noon. A perfectionist of the first order, Coolidge describes himself as “chief director of maintenance and food preparations at the Small Mall,” but you can call him The Commodore for short. Most people do.

He takes his work extremely seriously. “I just made the coffee, though,” he offers. “It’s really fresh.”

Somewhere in the neighborhood of middle age, John is tall and thick; his arms and fingers have the softly pudgy quality of a toddler’s limbs. His salt-and-pepper hair is beginning to thin, and his high-forehead coupled with heavy owl-rimmed glasses and bubble cheeks strengthen the impression of his being a giant, gentle child. A mental disability makes many things difficult for John, but tidiness and efficiency are not two of them. The glass case that fronts the coffee bar is filled with a carefully arranged assortment of candy bars, instant oatmeal and bags of chips. Towers of Cup-a-Soup loom Warholian behind the register; boxes of herbal tea bags form pyramids on racks. The attention to presentation and balance is perfect; John has had his hand in this as well. There are others who help, student and community volunteers and disabled employees, and John trains them as best he can, promoting them up his self-styled hierarchy from Left-Hand Man to Left-Hand Man First Class, to Right-Hand Man and so on. A person ambitious and attentive enough could one day become a commodore in his or her own right, but John has not met that person yet—there remains only one Commodore of Uptown Bill’s.

Fueled by a staggering amount of Diet Coke, John vacuums the carpets of the cafe area and then steers the Hoover into the adjoining room, which houses Bill’s Bookmart. Bookmart manager, Gretchen Gentsch, waves as he passes, then returns her attention to individually wrapping the stack of a dozen or more eBay sales that she must ship out later today. Perfectly round with a soft blonde pixie haircut, bookish glasses and the voice of a Disney princess, Gentsch had been working on her Master’s in Library Science at the University of Iowa when her disability made it increasingly difficult to continue with school. She joined the Uptown Bill’s crew as manager of the used bookstore with the best deals in town (and on the Web).

Toward the very back of the Small Mall, the Commodore gives the Tea Room’s carpet only a quick once over—it was vacuumed last night after the weekly Open Mic Night that Hatter manager Del Akkins organizes with Mud River Music Collective. Then John has to hustle back to the front cafe to ring up Mr. Ed for a Pepsi. Edmond Gaines operates Mr. Ed’s Super Graphics, the Small Mall’s computer enterprise, from the confines of his wheelchair—though anyone who has attempted to best him in chess knows that his frail appearance is deceptive.

More sweeping, more sales, trash collected and dumpedstered, and by 9am, his caffeine breakfast betraying him, John curls his arms on the glass counter and lays down his head for a quick between-customers nap, sleep-twitching like a cat in the sun.

Uptown Bill’s Small Mall at 401 South Gilbert is an “incubator for small businesses,” according to Tom Walz, Professor Emeritus in the School of Social Work at the University of Iowa and head honcho of the Small Mall. Walz sees Uptown Bill’s as a place where mentally handicapped people can get some job training, where recovering addicts can get a break, and where the community can become acquainted with those people it might prefer to ignore. His grand vision—developed over years of work and in partnership with the UI, Hollywood, Ronald McDonald and generous individuals both locally and nationally—can all be traced back to a man named Bill.

**Meet Bill Sackter**

When William Sackter was born in Minneapolis to a family of Russian immigrant Jews in 1913, life was already hard. Samuel and Mary Sackter lived above
Tom Walz sees Uptown Bill’s as a place where mentally handicapped people can get some job training, where recovering addicts can get a break, and where the community can become reacquainted with those people it might prefer to ignore.

but Bill was removed from the Sackter home and placed in the Faribault School for Feeble-Minded and Epileptics (originally called the "Faribault School for Idiots and Imbeciles" under the direction of the Minnesota State Institute for Defectives). Mary Sackter, an immigrant single-mother with little education, tried to work for Bill's release but was told in 1924 that her son was "hopeless" and destined for life-long custodial care. She moved to live with a sister in Detroit and never saw her son again. Bill received only two family visits during his life at Faribault: once by his mother just before her move, and once in the 1940s by an aunt there to visit another institutionalized relative.

One night, early in his stay at Faribault, Bill was awakened by his roommate Harold in the throes of a seizure. Bill hurried down the hall to shake the guard from his drunken stupor. When the guard came to, he beat and kicked Bill so severely for having roused him that a strip of scalp was torn from Bill's head. He would never be able to grow hair there again. A wound to his leg never healed properly and ulcerated for the rest of his life.

Though ostensibly a "school," Faribault worked only so hard to "educate" its charges. When Bill reached 14, administrators decided that, with his IQ of 47, further education would be worthless. He was shifted to the "work detail." Bill worked many menial jobs but was best at caring for the other patients. His concern for others had not been beaten from him by a drunken guard, and Bill fed, clothed, washed and talked to others in need until his release in 1964 at the age of 51.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, a reaction against institutionalization led to the community mental health movement, endorsed by the Kennedy administration. Thousands of patients in institutions were re-evaluated and released to community centers promised by the Kennedy initiative but unfunded by a contrary Congress. Thousands of mentally challenged individuals lived in halfway houses without care or counseling, and thousands more ended up homeless.

After his release, Bill Sackter lived in a halfway house for a few years but could do little to support himself, having received no marketable job training at Faribault. Eventually, he was given a job at the Minikahda Club, a Minneapolis country club. Bill worked the graveyard shift in the kitchen, drinking the dregs of the dinner buffet's 20-gallon coffee urns to stay awake, cleaning and preparing for the morning meal, then sleeping in a small room above the kitchen during the day. It was there that he befriended Beverly Morrow, a waitress at the club. Touched by his kindness and need, she shared Bill's story with her husband Barry. Though Barry had been a theater major, he had worked extensive-ly with a "Life Learning Credit" program at the University of Minnesota. The program, founded in the early '60s by radical young professor Tom Walz, allowed college students to earn credit for working with people in need in the Minneapolis community. That experience had made the Morrows sensitive to the needs of mentally challenged individuals, and after spending more time with Bill—even bringing him onstage to play harmonica with Barry and his friend Jack Doepke's band—the couple applied to become his legal guardians. The state granted their request and Bill moved in with the Morrows and their young son Clay. When his old professor Walz offered Barry a position at the University of Iowa, he accepted with one condition: Bill would need a job as well.

Meet Tom Walz

In his 72 years, there have been very few things at which Tom Walz has not succeeded—but he has been a monumental failure at retirement.

After growing up in a family of eight children in rural Minnesota, after serving in Germany during the Korean War, after earning a doctorate in Social Work, after spending years as the director of the United States Peace Corps in Honduras during the early '60s, after teaching at the University of Minnesota, after directing the UI's School of Social Work for many years, after working at the UI hospitals for many more, after publishing books and scholarly articles and poetry, Tom Walz "retired" four years ago.

And he blew it.

Three years ago, Walz opened Uptown Bill's Small Mall, and he estimates that he puts in 17-hour days between the Mall, writing, teaching the occasional course on writing or Gandhian principles of non-violence, and his woodworking business.

Though his thinning hair and perfectly manicured beard are snowy white, it seems impossible that Walz was born during the Hoover administration. His eyes sharp and magnified by bifocals into huge orbs of surprise, his hands made callused and powerful by years with lathe and saw and polish, his stick legs only showing the edge of fatigue when he climbs the stairs for the umpteenth time today. His wit is sharp and he is quick to laugh, usually at himself.

"I can't do it." Walz shakes his head in befuddled disdain. "I can't play golf for the rest of my life. I like working with crazy
"I can't do it." Tom Walz shakes his head in befuddled disdain. "I can't play golf for the rest of my life. I like working with crazy and retarded people."

and retarded people.” He chuckles. Walz has little time for the politically correct label du jour—his focus is on the work, not the image. He has no patience for the likes of the former university president who attended Bill Sackter’s funeral but would not cross the street for the reception afterward; for the administration who paid lip-service to Bill’s legacy but vehemently opposed rechristening North Hall as Sackter Hall; for folks who know how to talk about the disabled but never talk to them.

Walz has never had much patience for conventional wisdom or rules. When Barry Morrow arrived with Bill in 1974, there was no place in the School of Social Work’s budget to care for a mentally retarded man. Instead, Walz hired the “consultant” William Sackter at a modest salary.

“I filled out the paperwork, emphasizing his 44 years of ‘experience’ in the field of institutional mental health,” confides Walz. “I left the space for educational background blank. They bought it.”

After custodial work proved pointless and a stint in Walz’s woodshop disastrous (a minor fire broke out after paint brushes left to soak in paint stripper on a sunny windowsill heated to combustion), Walz discovered the passion for coffee Bill had cultivated on his graveyard shifts at the country club. He set up Bill in the hallway with a coffeemaker. Bill happily served the teachers and students of North Hall, and his open heart and simple joy made his table a popular meeting place. When the hall became impassable, the school made Bill move his café into a tiny closet space. When that proved too small, they gave him a classroom, and Wild Bill’s Coffee Shop was born. For the next eight years, Bill would hold court in North Hall, dropping in on the second-floor pre-school for story time and playing the “Too Fat Polka” on his harmonica, and generally brightening the day of everyone he came in contact with.

Which is not to say the university warmed to Walz’s ways. Even with Wild Bill’s covering its operating costs, he had to constantly defend its existence. When he accepted as a Master’s Degree candidate a man with a prison record, he had to explain himself. When the university signed an exclusive contract with Coca-Cola, Wild Bill’s defiantly served Pepsi. Walz could feel the paradigm of the university shifting from education as a process, to education as a product; an atmosphere where helping the mentally handicapped and recovering addicts was neither cost effective nor a public relations success.

Eventually, something had to happen.

**Barrymor and the clown**

Barry and Bev Morrow eventually left Iowa City to pursue Barry’s dream of writing for the big screen. Though Bill would miss his friend Barrymor (Bill’s memory for names was terrible, and he often called folks by an approximation he could remember, or simply “Buddy”), he stayed in Iowa City, living in Mae Driscoll’s boarding house. Rabbi Jeffery Portman, who Bar Mitzvahed Bill at age 67, became his new legal guardian. Bill continued to make coffee, greet the children and play his harmonica.

Barry wrote a script and sold it to CBS. The made-for-TV movie, *Bill*, starred Mickey Rooney as a mentally retarded man who escapes the cruelty of institutional life to share his gifts of kindness and simple wisdom with a very young Dennis Quaid. When it aired in 1981, it was a hit, tipping the Gallup scales with millions tuning in to watch. Millions more tuned in to the Emmy’s to see Morrow honored for his screenplay, and Mickey Rooney for Best Actor.

The real Bill Sackter became an instant celebrity and national icon in the fight for the rights of the disabled. He was given an award by then Iowa Gov. Robert Ray. He was invited to all the talk shows, to lead the halftime festivities of a professional football game, to a White House meeting with President Reagan. A sequel was filmed in 1984, and eventually became the biggest hit of 1985. But Bill died in 1986 just short of the halfway mark of filming. Walz decided to go ahead with the rest of the film. "Bill Sackter Days," and thousands of his local fans poured out their appreciation for this accidental hero. Barry Morrow became a national spokesperson for the rights of the handicapped. His college buddy and former garage-band mate Jack Doepke, who'd given up rock and roll to become the nationwide official Ronald McDonald, used his influence to help get the word out as well. What had begun as a humble experiment in kindness and understanding became a national sensation.

**The Mad Hatter**

Del Akkins never really stopped rebelling, and his leadership of Uptown Bill’s Mad Hatter Tea Room is just the latest leg on his road less traveled. After getting clean and sober, Akkins wanted a place where he and his friends could have tea—a clean, well-lit place free from the temptation of drugs and alcohol that had plagued Del for much of his younger days. A tea room, now that would be just the thing.

Never mind that Del is the 400-pound gorilla that can sit wherever he wants. Never mind that he drives a Harley-Davidson to pick up the tea, and the circle of friends dainty-sipping with extended pinkie fingers were once members of his motorcycle club. Never mind that he collects knives and swords and cooks the best cheesecake this side of Sara Lee. Del is a man comfortable with contradiction.

“I would park the Harley, and the boys would come in for tea,” he explains, non-chalantly, once again readjusting his hip sack across the huge expanse of his belly. Pushing back the skull-and-bones handkerchief to scratch the gray bristle of his hair, Del leans back in his chair. What could be more natural?

According to Walz, Del picked up some bad habits in Southeast Asia after his tour in Vietnam. When he returned to the United States, he spent time raising Harley-Davidson hell in Louisiana, and later hiding out on the West Coast, before returning to Iowa City to make a go at college. “I was not a good student,” Del admits. “But I was a great drinker.”

He dropped out of college, and started on a road to sobriety, albeit astride a chopper. For years, he looked for an alcohol-free hangout, and the Mad Hatter Tea Room became that haven: “A place for me and the boys to hang out,” but tea alone would not pay the rent. Knowing “a little about music,” Del created a performance space in the Tea Room and invited a gang of artists as contradictory as he to perform. The typical calendar finds room for the likes of Cranial Decay and Edie Carey, though not on the same night. Local greats Sam Knutson, Ben Schmidt and King Toad have made Hatter

**Tea Room and invited a gang of artists as contradictory as he to perform. The typical calendar finds room for the likes of Cranial Decay and Edie Carey, though not on the same night. Local greats Sam Knutson, Ben Schmidt and King Toad have made Hatter**
appearances, and Del supports local up-and-comers with a weekly open mic night, co-sponsored by JP Claussen of the Mud River Collective.

“Our crowd is different,” Del admits. “But we give a lot of people a place to go.” He has a special place in his heart for the Wednesday Heavy Metal Jam for local youth. “It is a safe place for them to be, where their parents know where they are, and they can do their own thing.”

And what’s more rebellious than that?

Ends and fragile beginnings
When Bill Sackter did not come down for breakfast on the morning of June 16, 1983, Mae went to his room to check on him and found him dead in his beloved easy chair. His ulcerated leg wound, a reminder of the beating he took as a child at Faribault, had resulted in a blood clot that stopped his heart. Bill was 70 years old.

Wild Bill’s stayed open, and Walz continued to run it with student volunteers and handicapped employees, but Bill’s example had inspired him to do more, go further. He opened a branch at the International Center, which lasted two years. He began encouraging entrepreneurs in his midst, helping his disabled co-workers to write grants to start their own businesses. Over the years, the distant cruelty of the bureaucracies got to him: the State of Minnesota threatened to sue Bill’s estate for the cost of his institutionalization. When they learned that Bill had earned nothing from the movies made of his life, and when Rabbi Portman made Minnesota’s intentions very public, they backed down. The University of Iowa City. The Community Mental Health Center will soon move from its longtime home on South College Street to the border with Coralville. Proposals for a homeless shelter call for building in distant, low-rent neighborhoods or near the city limits.

“There won’t be much left,” Walz worries. “If you are going to be in this location you are going to pay heavy rent, and location is everything, otherwise all we end up with is bars. They’ve driven out everything but bars.”

More than just making downtown safe for more bars and student apartments, more than simply saving these organizations money, this trend physically marginalizes the mentally and emotionally handicapped. As these services leave downtown for remote parts of the city, it will become easier to forget about these troubled souls, easier to stereotype their behavior and ignore their needs. Out of sight, out of mind. Without real, physical connection, genuine acceptance, understanding and community will be impossible.

The owner of the building that houses Uptown Bill’s has been patient and generous, and Walz helped secure Community Development Block Grants for the next three years, but rent is rent, business is business, and Walz wonders if the Small Mall will ever turn a profit. Walz does not draw a salary from Uptown Bill’s (he’s retired, remember?) and uses much of the profit from his furniture restoration business to cover the Mall’s debts.

“If 10 people a day chose to buy their coffee here instead of a convenience store, we’d be fine,” Walz explains.

For the next eight years, Bill would hold court in North Hall, dropping in on the second-floor pre-school for story time and playing the “Too Fat Polka” on his harmonica, and generally brightening the day of everyone he came in contact with.

The next Bill Sackter?
Fliers for the Blue Hat Club promise a “Portly Friendly” philosophy for the group’s daily 7:30am meetings, with the promise of miraculous weight loss simply through attendance. Though no one in the room risks malnourishment, the weight they all bear is more spiritual than physical—a karmic weight-watchers meeting, if you will.

No election made 74-year-old Dorothy Newmire club president; she is just the toughest. Today she stays only a moment before heading out to chauffeur folks in need around Iowa City. Walz refers to Newmire as a “Street Angel,” her soul unharmed by a potty mouth and checkered past.

“She is the kind that will drive you to church, but you won’t catch her coming in with you,” Walz chuckles. “She’s good, but crooked, unorthodox.” Waltz ventures that Dorothy may be the next Bill Sackter. High praise, indeed. For her part, Dorothy says of Tom, “Many people do not realize how good he is.” That seems hard to believe, and it turns out she’s referring to Walz’s guitar playing. “No,” Walz says, modest as ever, “I’m just a beginner.”
Ushers Ferry Folk Festival
Saturday Aug 14, 2004 4pm-10pm
Tickets: $20 adults, $6 kids, $5 kids
Contact Ushers Ferry Historic Village for more info.
5925 Seminole Valley Tr NE Cedar Rapids 319-286-5763

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BOOKS
The Polyphonic Spree makes me happeeeeee!

The Polyphonic Spree is a band of twenty-something gypsies who translate joy into music, delivering their orchestral punk rock gospel throughout the world, from Dallas to Chicago to Tokyo. Oh, and by twenty-something, I'm not referring to their average age; rather, the number of musicians in the group—approximately 24 on their second album, Together We're Heavy (Hollywood Records).

This record features a standard lead singer, bass, drum and guitar lineup, though it's augmented by harp, French horn, trumpet, cello, violin, viola, Moog synthesizer, Theremin, glockenspiel and (gasp for breath) many, many voices. This Texas-based orch-pop group, whose songs can clock in at around 10 minutes, is quite pretentious—though I should point out this isn't always a bad thing (after all, pretension only means you're shooting high). Anyway, the Polyphonic Spree never take themselves too seriously; they temper their Emerson, Lake & Palmer bombast with a tickling of the Partridge Family. ELP wedded to the Partridge Family? I know, for some who lived through the 1970s this sounds like the worst of all plastic surgery disasters, a Brady Bunch marriage made in hell, the kind of you've-got-chocolate-in-my-peanut-butter musical merger that makes some fans want to come to blows. "...it was much more than a hunch that this group of slackers would somehow form a family—that's the way they became the Polyphonic Spree." (My imaginary lyrics, not theirs.)

Tim Laughter, formerly of 1990s altmerock also-rans Tripping Daisy, formed the gleeful Spree in 2000, an appropriate year for a scraggly group of wild-eyed longhairs who look like members of a cult (ones who took the electric Kool-Aid acid test, Jim Jones style). Clad in white robes—wearing either Converse hightops or simply going barefoot, the official outfitter of hipsters and hippies, respectively—they unleash upon listeners a multi-instrumental, multi-vocal wall of sound that is both light and heavy. Their live performances are a sight to see, a spectacle that can win over even the most jaded of hipsters; there's lots of jumping for joy, literally. The
Polyphonic Spree inspire comparisons to the Free Design, a favorite group of mine from the late 1960s that specialized in LSD-laced adult contemporary countercultural bubblegum pop (yes, I know this is an incredibly specific sub-genre, but no matter). Their 1967 almost-hit, “Kites Are Fun,” sports what are perhaps the all-time stupidest lyrics ever to be exhaled from a sentient being’s mouth: “See my kite, it’s green and white/laughing in its distant flight/all that’s between us is a little yellow string/but we like each other more than anything...Kites are fun!”

In The Polyphonic Spree, The Free Design appear to have spawned a sunny family of hand clapping freakazoids recently dismissed in print as “Up With People wannabes.” Yikes. It’s a charge that is hard to refute, especially given that the Polyphonic Spree use bubble-making machines at their live shows. Bubbles! It’s the exact sort of at all seduced by the lush, multilayered instrumental beauty of recent albums by the Flaming Lips or Grandaddy (or, for that matter, oldies by the Beach Boys) will be susceptible to catching the Polyphonic bug. Otherwise, you might already be immunized. If you can make it through Together We Are Heavy’s eight-and-a-half-minute opening track, “A Long Day Continues/We Sound Amazed,” still wanting more—rather than yearning to strangle the lead singer, whose upper register voice kisses the sky—then it’s likely the rest of the album will draw you in with a big, warm hug. The aforementioned opening number compresses the essence of the group into one tidy (and yet sprawling) package: interweaving choral vocal arrangements, HUGE instrumental flourishes and tempo changes that go from the melancholic to the manic.

Yes, it’s a gimmick. But given that this trippy troupe has endlessly toured in display famously repudiated by the Prince of Fucking Darkness, Ozzy Osborne. (Fittingly, another brilliantly dim-witted tune by the Free Design was “Bubbles,” whose lyrics went “chewin’ bubblegum and blowing big bubbles, gettin’ rid of all my troubles.”) The Spree’s lyrics are similarly idiotic—“it’s the sun and it makes me smile” and “la la, la la, la la la”—but a) they’re conscious of this fact and b) if moronic lyrics disqualified our enjoyment of pop music, then there would be slim pickings, indeed. Time to turn in your Abba and Stooges records to the Taste Police.

Nevertheless, to loosely paraphrase Spinal Tap, there’s a thin line between pop and poop, and the Polyphonic Spree occasionally come close to sounding full of shit. The thing that saves them is the almighty melody.
O Canada

A slug of recent releases sheds light on those odd birds: the Canadians

Fred Eaglesmith, *Balin* (AML)

K.D. Lang's *Hymns of the 49th Parallel* (Nonesuch)

Gordon Lightfoot, *Harmony* (Spin Art)

The Tragically Hip, *In Between Evolution* (Zoe)

Various Artists, *A Tribute to Gordon Lightfoot* (Twangoff)

Various Artists, *Beautiful: A Tribute to Gordon Lightfoot* (Borealis)

It's summer in Iowa, the time of year when a young person's fancy turns to cooler terrains, the land of Moslon and Labatt, up north where geese grow fat and the bacon fries lean; you know, Canada. The year's Canadian music scene has been an exciting one, with our neighbors to the north circulating all sorts of musical goodies to US markets. This review will examine a half dozen or so recent releases to provide a sampling of what's out there, a taste to US markets.

This year's Canadian music scene has been active, with our neighbors to the north circulating all sorts of musical goodies to US markets. This review will examine a half dozen or so recent releases to provide a sampling of what's out there, a taste to US markets. This review will examine a half dozen or so recent releases to provide a sampling of what's out there, a taste to US markets.

K.D. Lang's latest release seems the logical place to begin as the adult alternative vocalist takes on an all-Canadian songbook with the appropriately titled, *Hymns of the 49th Parallel*, Lang covers classics by such notable Northern artists as Leonard Cohen ("Bird on a Wire," "Hallelujah"), Joni Mitchell ("A Case of You," "Jericho") and Neil Young ("Helpless," "After the Gold Rush"). She also sings material by younger Canadian artists like Jane Siberry, Bruce Cockburn and Ron Sexsmith. Lang phrases the lyrics carefully, annunciating each word like it was crystalline poetry. She employs sparse production techniques (she and guitarist Ben Mink co-produced the disc) so that the material sounds as if it were recorded in an old church rather than a recording studio. She's minimally backed up by just a handful of musicians on mostly acoustic instruments.

Anyone familiar with the aforementioned chestnuts by Cohen, Young and Mitchell knows that their narrators seek connection to something or someone outside the self. Their Canadian identity lends itself to feeling "Helpless" or like a "Bird on a Wire" or like Mitchell, wistfully drawing a map of Canada on a cocktail napkin while sitting at the bar. Lang's plaintive vocals stoically convey deep yearnings for love whether hiding in a "bombed out basement" (Young) or "watching the walls come tumbling down" (Mitchell).

Oddly missing from Lang's tribute to Canadian musicians is a song by the great singer-songwriter Gordon Lightfoot. More than a dozen Northern artists, including the Cowboy Junkies, The Tragically Hip, Cockburn and Sexsmith pay tribute to Lightfoot on *Beautiful: A Tribute to Gordon Lightfoot*. The various musicians select terrific items from throughout Lightfoot's five-decade career. Choice morsels include Blue Rodeo's lively rendition of "Go Go Round," Maria Muldaur's wry version of "The Same Old Obsession" and Jesse Winchester's satirically upbeat "Sundown."

Lightfoot is not resting on his laurels, recently releasing *Harmony*, his first new record in five years, which fits seamlessly into his canon of artful, folk-style pop music. Lightfoot has always affected the persona of a chivalrous gentleman, an errant knight troubadour, and he maintains it here. The best songs, like the salute to a muse "Inspiration Lady" and the travel anthem "River of Light," reveal his gallant Canadian sensibility through courteous, old-fashioned-style language and well-mannered phrasing. He's the hero who always comes to help but never comes to stay.

Another Canadian singer-songwriter Lang overlooked is the maestro of the rural working class, Fred Eaglesmith. Eaglesmith was also recently honored with a tribute CD, *The Songs of Fred Eaglesmith: A Tribute*, and his admirers come from across the globe and include Australian Kasey Chambers, Texan Slaid Cleaves and one-time Iowa Citian Teddy Morgan. Eaglesmith's songs about farm auctions, good dogs, stubborn men and ornery women seem located in the Northern countryside where independence and failure go hand in hand. Highlights include Robbie Fulks' hillbilly-style version of Eaglesmith's murder ballad "Flowers in the Dell," Mary Gauthier's cover of the rootsy weeper "Your Sister Cried" and Gurf Morlix's guitar-whipped, train-wreck rendition of the brutish "49 Tons."

Fred Eaglesmith has also continued to release good music. His live-in-the-studio *Balin* features high and lonesome bluegrass vocal harmonies and stringed instrumentation as if Eaglesmith's native Ontario
were located somewhere in Kentucky. Eaglesmith sings about poor farm folk who have to work for others or sell the family's homemade canned fruits to pay the bills. Unlike in most American songs about po' folk, Eaglesmith's po' folk resignedly accept their fate. They maintain their dignity and fight against the odds, but they know they are going to lose. The best songs include his odes to functioning farm machinery, "John Deere B" and "Small Motors," and the pragmatic apology "I Shot Your Dog." Eaglesmith's performance is homespun without being hokum, as he wistfully sings about those that work the earth for a living.

On the other side of the sonic spectrum lies the five-piece, hard-edged rock combo The Tragically Hip. Their latest release should make them the darlings of the American underground. Recorded in Seattle with producer Adam Kaspar (Pearl Jam, Foo Fighters, Queens of the Stone Age), In Between Evolution drips with sweaty urgency and sneered lyrics. The 13 songs rage against war and the evils of modern society. Vocalist and lyricist (and published poet) Gord Downie pens sharp-edged ditties that reveal the meanness inherent in everyday life. Like fellow Canadian rocker Neil Young, Downie refuses to accept the hypocrisy of leaders who instigate global hostilities and paint the atrocities in colors of glory and honor. On songs like "It Can't be Nashville Every Night" and "Meanstreak," Downie identifies himself as belonging to the society that wreaks havoc on the globe as well as its own citizens. He doesn't stand as a Canadian criticizing the United States. He just points out the nightmare world in which all North Americans live and create for others.

Don't confuse these songs with propaganda. The Tragically Hip make art out of global chaos. Consider the pounding poignancy of the aptly titled "Are We Family." Ably abetted by drummer Johnny Fay's steady beat, bassist Gord Sinclair's pulsating undertow and the biting twin-guitar interplay of Robby Baker and Paul Langlois, Downie sings, "It's only human to want and have everything that you got/and more often than not, take it to the nth degree/Here we go, give me $10 and a head start 'cause where he goes the puzzle's pulling apart/And here's the senior yelling calmly at the street, 'Are we family, or what?'

This ain't no "We are the World" or even "We are Family," it's a world of strangers who talk but never listen. It's the voice of Canadians in the wilderness, whether confused in the city streets or the back woods, looking for the metaphorical lost America of love. LV
Art/Exhibits

AKAR
4 S. Linn St., Iowa City, 351-1227
Group Show: Iowa Potters, Aug. 6-19.

Brucemore
2160 Linden Drive SE, Cedar Rapids, 362-7375
Animal House, honoring the exotic and local animals that have called Brucemore home, through May.

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art
410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, 366-7503
In-Formed by Nature, Mary Merkel-Hess; Slices of Life, Emily Martin; both through Aug. 29 • Villa to Grave: Roman Art and Life, 150 Roman objects—sculpture, frescoes, jewelry, furniture, coins and other decorative art objects—displayed in a recreated Roman architectural setting, through Aug. 25, 2005 • Mauricio Lasansky: The Nazi Drawings, through Sept. 12.

Senior Center
28 S. Linn St., Iowa City (unless noted otherwise)
Mark Lombardi: Global Networks, through Aug. 13 • Diana Phelps: Writers Trade, July 31 • Breechloader, Burnout, Aug. 27 • Mr. Baber’s Neighbors: The Solar String Band, Aug. 28 • Drums and Tuba, Aug. 29.

UI Hospitals and Clinics
Project Art of UIHC, Iowa City, 353-6417
A Cough Wish, The Lifestyle, Aug. 20 • Athletics Autonation (ex-Arab on Radar), Organz, The Vine, The Archer, Aug. 10 • Rollin’ Bones, The Phix, July 29 • The Black Mollys, Lyin’ Heart, Aug. 10 • Doghouse, Flashes, Aug. 26 • The Black Mollys, Lyin’ Heart, Aug. 10 • Banjo Delight, The Black Mollys, Aug. 17 • The Black Mollys, Lyin’ Heart, Aug. 10 • Doghouse, Flashes, Aug. 26 • (see Ward’s listing for more)

Faulconer Gallery
Grinnell College, 1108 Park St., Grinnell, 641-269-4660
Mark Lombardi: Global Networks, complex diagrams of influence showing how money, power and politics are intertwined in the global economy, through Aug. 1 • Danica Phelps: Writers Trade, combines the arts of drawing and accounting to document her financial and personal transactions, through Sept. 12 • Austin Thomas, addresses concepts of personal connection and self-awareness by creating environments for social interaction in which the viewer becomes a participant, through Sept. 12.

Iowa State Bank & Trust
102 S. Clinton St., Iowa City
Contemporary Quilts by Nine Iowa Quilters, quilts by Dieder Fleener, Sally Glass, Nancy Hollenbeck, Diane Lohr, Dawn McKenzie, Jackie Morrical, Mary Ott, Donna Sanders and Theresa Weihe.

Lorenz Boot Shop
132 S. Clinton St., Iowa City, 339-1053
Iowa City...And The World, oil paintings and limited edition prints by West Liberty artist Garth Conley, through Oct. 1.

Mt. Mercy College
Janalyn Hanson White Gallery, Cedar Rapids, 363-1323
Summer Student Art Exhibit, through Sept. 15.

Public Space One
6 1/2 S. Dubuque St, Iowa City
Ancient Cowboys, Mervin Dunham’s first public exhibit.
A-LIST

Pivot
Ongoing • UI Museum of Art
Good, old-fashioned experimental art is sure hard to find these days. Same goes for multimedia work. Beginning Aug. 25, the UI Museum of Art will begin to remedy the situation with this experimental work-in-progress video installation by Leighton Pierce, a renowned filmmaker and UI Professor of Cinema and Comparative Literature. Pierce is hands-down one of the most talented artists on campus. His body of work of experimental films is both brilliant and accessible, defying the usual expectations associated with the "experimental" genre. Now don't let this official descriptions scare you away: Pivot extends Pierce's interest in the relationships between sound/image, memory/emotion and time/rhythm. By creating complex visual and auditory patterns using a series of projected video loops and multi-channel sound, Pierce will provoke an engagement with the edges of memory, perception and emotional identification. This will be an active installation—the material exhibited will regularly change during the course of the show reflecting Pierce's exploration of his material within the gallery space. Through Oct. 17. 150 North Riverside Dr., Iowa City, 335-1727.

Irving B. Weber Days
Aug. 9-14 • IC Public Library
Check out the full schedule in the calendar under Festivals. There's lots going on, including not one, but two talks about historical barns, a presentation by IC treasure Lolly Eggers on the history of the IC Public Library. Plus an ice cream social with live music by the Salsa Band and a talk by Wayne Neuzil on the importance of the late IC historian Irving Weber. His importance to our past and present. Not to be missed!
UI Hospitals and Clinics
Project Art of UIHC, Iowa City, 353-6417
Collofton Atrium, noon (unless noted otherwise)
Erin Ponto, classical, pop and ragtime harp, Aug. 11.

UI Museum of Art
UI campus, Iowa City
Dan Knight, jazz piano, Aug. 6, 5pm.

Uptown Bill's small Mall
401 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 339-0401

Mud River Open Mic, Fridays, 6pm • Irish Slaw Session, Celtic jam (for more info contact Tara Dutcher, tara@schoolperformingarts.com). Sundays, 2-4pm • All shows 7pm unless otherwise indicated

Jeffrey Hedquist, July 29

Mud River Open Mic, Fridays, 8pm

Erin Ponto, classical, pop and ragtime harp, Aug. 11.

Colloton Atrium, noon (unless noted otherwise)

Jazz Under the Stars
Noelridge Park, Cedar Rapids
7pm

Sax Attack, Aug. 5 • Black and Blue, Aug. 22

Market Music
Chauncey Swan Park, Iowa City
5-7pm

Jason Reeves Aug. 4 • Mike and Amy Finders Band, Aug. 11 • Beggarman, Aug. 18 • Dave Moore, Aug. 25.

Music in the Park
Morrison Park, Coralville
6:30-8pm

Mike and Amy Finders Band, Aug. 5.

Project Art Summer Concert Series
UI Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa City, 353-6417
8th Floor Rooftop Terrrace/Café, noon

Banjo, bluegrass, July 30 • Mike and Amy Finders, folk and bluegrass, Aug. 6 • Stones in the Field, Celtic, Aug. 13 • Mike Zollo, R&B, Aug. 20 • Annie Gaines, Aug. 27.

Uptown Friday Nights
Greene Square Park, Downtown Cedar Rapids
5-8pm

Super Size Seven, July 30.

West Branch Concert Series
Village Green, West Branch
7-8:30pm

Small World, July 30 • Dale Thomas Band, featuring Melissa Spangler, Aug. 6, 7-11pm

Auditions/Opportunities
Theatre Cedar Rapids
102 Third St. SE, Cedar Rapids, 366-8592
Auditions for Disney's Beauty and the Beast, singers, dancers and actors wanted, Aug. 1-2, 7pm • Auditions for Magic 8-10 Minute One Acts for New Faces, first-time actors wanted, Aug. 4-5, 7pm.

Monster Design Studio
716 Oakland Rd. NE, Cedar Rapids, 365-1844
Monster Design Studio is putting together a master list of Cedar Rapids and surrounding area artists and artisans. Information will be available to anyone interested in following the artists' shows or hiring them for contract work. Artists will receive the list as well as be invited to make changes as often as needed to alert the public to their shows and exhibits. Contact Chris Warren at Monster Design Studio by email (monsterdesignstudio@yahoo.com) or the above phone.

Dance
Space/Place Theater
North Hall, UI campus, Iowa City
Kahraman/Near Eastern Dance Company, Aug. 27-28, 8pm.

Theater/Performance
The Java House
211 E. Washington St., 341-0012
WSUI's "Iowa Talks Live from the Java House," Fridays, 10am.

The Mill
120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City, 351-9529
Westergaard & Witaske, two-man improv production by Lightning in a Bottle's Nick Westergaard and Chris Witaske, Aug. 3, 10, 17, 8pm.

Old Creamery Theatre
Price Creek Stage, 39 38th Ave., Amana, 800-352-6262 (unless noted otherwise)
Price Creek Stage: Wed., Fri., Sat. 8pm; Thurs., Sat., Sun. 3pm. Depot Theatre: Thurs. 3 & 8pm; Fri. & Sat 8pm; Sun. 3pm

Always...Patsy Cline, musical drama tracing the true story of friendship between country music legend Patsy Cline and a housewife from Houston, through Aug. 15, Price Creek Stage • Amadeus, Peter Shaffer’s Tony Award-winning play about Mozart’s rivalry with court composer Antonio Salieri, through Aug. 15, Depot Theatre • The Spitfire Grill, a young woman arrives in a small Wisconsin town and is taken under the wing of Hannah, the owner of The Spitfire Grill, Aug. 20-Sept. 26, Price Creek Stage.

Riverside Theatre
213 N. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 338-7672
'04-'05 Season Preview, Aug. 29, 4pm.

Theatre Cedar Rapids
102 Third St. SE, Cedar Rapids, 366-8592
7:30pm Thurs.- Sat.; 2:30pm Sun
Big River, Tony Award-winning musical based on Mark Twain’s The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, through July 31.

Words
Cedar Rapids Museum of Art
410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, 366-7503

The Green Room
509 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 354-4350
Poetry Slam, Aug. 11 & 25, 9pm.

The History Center
615 1st Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, 362-1501
May’s Island/Kingston Walking Tour, experience the stories of the old town of Kingston and the history of CR’s unique island with History Center historian Mark Hunter, Aug. 14, 1-2:30pm, call to pre-register • “Czech Radio,” informal discussion with singer Millie Ortner and her memories of the golden age of radio, Aug. 15, 2-4pm • “CRANDIC on the Move!”, Jeff Woods, marketing manager for the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway Co. (CRANDIC), shares stories, artifacts and video highlighting 50 years of inter-urban passenger service between CR and IC, Aug. 17, 12-1pm.

The Java House
211 E. Washington St., 341-0012
WSUI’s “Iowa Talks Live from the Java House,” Fridays, 10am

Prairie Lights
15 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City (unless otherwise noted), 337-2681
All 8pm (unless otherwise noted). Broadcast live on WSUI (unless otherwise noted)
Lauren Grodstein reads from her first novel, Reproduction is the Flaw of Love, July 29 • Workshop grad Justin Cronin reads from his new novel, Summer Guest, July 30 • Minnesota mystery writer William Kent Krueger reads from Blood Hollow, Aug. 2.

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Senior Center
28 S. Linn St., Iowa City
"Change & Progress: A Century in Review, Part VI. Korea, McCarthy, Ike and Television," presented by Loren Horton, Aug. 9, 2pm • "Songs & Stories of Life (1960s-Present)," concert-lecture by folk musician Chey Ness, followed by a composer/audience discussion of the songwriting process, Aug. 18, 2pm • "Tribute to a First Lady: Eleanor Roosevelt," Janie Yates Reading, Aug. 20, 2pm • "The Ironmen of 1939," presentation by Alvin Schroeder about the Hawkeye football team of 1939, Aug. 26, 10am • "Words on War from the Masters of the Art," presented by retired Army Colonel Dick Fedderson, Aug. 27, 2pm.

Film & Video
Cedar Rapids Museum of Art
410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, 366-7503
Cleopatra: First Woman of Power, Aug. 28, 1pm.

IC Public Library
123 Linn St., Iowa City, 356-5200
Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land: U.S. Media & the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, followed by discussion, Aug. 4, 7-9pm, Meeting Rm A.

Festivals
Family Fun Day and Concert with James Coffey July 31, 1:30-6pm, Ped Mall, Iowa City
Face painting, crafts, games, costumed characters, popcorn and lemonade, performance by childrens recording artist James Coffey (3pm).

Hooverfest
Aug. 7-8, Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, West Branch, 643-5327 or 800-828-0475
Music (see Music listing), Hooverball tournament, exhibits, parade, fireworks, childrens activities, see www.hooverfestassociat.org for more info.

Iowa Renaissance Festival
Sept. 4-5, 11am-6pm, Middle Amana Park, Middle Amana Equestrian jousting, entertainment, food, artistic merchants, for more info: 641-357-5177 or gregfest@netins.net.

Irving B. Weber Days
Aug. 9-14, IC Public Library (unless noted otherwise), Iowa City, 356-5200
Aug. 9
"Early Iowa Chautauquas," Kathryn Hodson, UI Libraries Special Collections, 2pm • "An Evening with Captain Clark," Wayne Kobberdahl brings to life Captain William Clark from the Lewis & Clark Expedition, 7pm.

Aug. 10
"Iowa City's Salvage Barn," Roger Gwinup, Friends of Historic Preservation, 2pm • "Iowa City Businesses—Past & Present," walking tour, Ken Donnelly, Johnson County Historical Society, 6:30-8pm, tour begins at Weber Statue on Iowa Ave. and ends at Johnson County Historical Society exhibit space in Old Capitol Town Center.

Aug. 11
"If Barns Could Talk," Rich Tyler, 2pm • "History of the Iowa City Public Library," 2004 Irving B. Weber Days History Lecture by Lolly Eggers, retired library director, 7pm.

The Heart of Gold Band
Ggitch
Danny Jive & the Uptown 5
Glitch
Jensen Connection
Tea Leaf Green
Rebel's Advocate
509 s. gilbert, iowa city
354-4350
greenroom.com
Curses, Foiled Again

When police in Plainville, Conn., received an emergency call reporting a burglary in progress, officers arrived at the address provided and found Jack Peterson, 24, trying to rob a convenience store. Investigators said that Peterson had made the emergency call himself, intending to divert attention from the scene of his crime by giving a different address, but he mistakenly gave the address of the store he was robbing.

The FBI announced that bank robberies in Missouri dropped 36 percent in the past year since more than 230 banks there adopted a dress code declaring “no hats, no hoods, no sunglasses.” The policy gives clerks and surveillance cameras a clear view of people’s faces.

Heil to the Chief

President George W. Bush exhibits “sadistic tendencies” and suffers from “character pathology,” including “grandiosity” and “megalomania,” viewing himself, America and God as interchangeable, according to a new book by a Washington psychiatrist that offers “an exploration of Bush’s psyche.”

Not-So-Great Escape

A Malaysian prison inmate, who convinced guards that he was having trouble breathing, was handcuffed to a hospital bed awaiting treatment when he managed to escape. According to district police chief Muhammad Fuad Talib, the prisoner climbed out a fifth-story window and jumped to a ledge two floors down but lost his footing and fell the rest of the way to the ground. He broke a leg and ended up back in the hospital.

Bird Brains

At least 30 brown pelicans have crashed into sidewalks and roads in Arizona, according to the state game and fish department. Officials said that flocks of the endangered pelicans, which are experiencing a food shortage along the West Coast and have moved inland, mistake the shimmering of heat waves rising from paved surfaces for lakes and creeks. “They try to land on the water, but it’s asphalt, and it’s ‘Bam! That doesn’t feel so good,’” said Sandy Cate, director of the department’s wildlife center at Adobe Mountain in north Phoenix.

Girth of a Nation

Stanley Mordarsky, 55, fell to his death from a roller coaster at Six Flags New England because his pot belly kept the ride’s lap bar from engaging properly to restrain him, according to Massachusetts officials. Mordarsky was 5 feet 2 inches tall and weighed about 230 pounds. Six Flags said that because of the accident, it will bar super-sized patrons from the ride.

Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced a new rule that prevents men from making anonymous donations to sperm banks if they have had homosexual sex within the past five years.

Pyrotechnics Follies

Fans were forced to leave an indoor football game in Corpus Christi, Texas, after a pre-game fireworks show went awry and filled the coliseum with smoke. Emergency crews administered oxygen to several players and some fans with asthma, and at least two fans were carried out on stretchers to be treated for respiratory problems. The game was delayed 45 minutes.

Bring Back Hammers

Carpenter Raymond L. Tassinari, 22, died while using an air-powered nail gun at a job site in Plymouth, Mass., when one of the nails misfired and pierced his heart.

Construction worker Isidro Mejia, 39, stumbled on scaffolding at a job site in Los Angeles County, Calif., and fell onto a co-worker who was using a nail gun. The gun discharged, firing six nails into Mejia’s head. Doctors at Providence Holy Cross Medical Center removed the nails, including three that were embedded in his brain, and predicted a gradual recovery but noted that the patient had lost most of his English-speaking skills when one of the nails entered his frontal lobe.

Larcenous Animals

Police in Fairfax County, Va., said that after Ruth Breiner, 75, reported a series of thefts of ceramic figurines from her yard, they set up a video surveillance system. The culprit turned out to be a black Labrador retriever. Officer Sophia Grinnan explained that the tape showed the unidentified dog scooping up the small items in its mouth and trotting off.

Bob and Alexis Saskowski tied a yellow ribbon to a tree in the yard of their home in Bettendorf, Iowa, to show support for their son and other troops in Iraq. For eight months, the ribbons kept disappearing. Blaming neighborhood youths, the Saskowskis replaced the ribbons each time. Their sympathetic neighbors put up their own yellow ribbons, but only the Saskowskis’ ribbons kept disappearing. Finally, they set up a video camera. The culprit turned out to be a squirrel, which pushed the ribbon to the base of the tree, bit through it and ran off with it.
Dear Ruby,

I’ve been getting cold sores since I was a kid. My current girlfriend refuses to let me go down on her anytime I have one. I told her that’s ridiculous since cold sores are not STI’s (Sexually Transmitted Infections). What can I tell her to make her relax about it?

Sigh,

Curiously Crusty

Dear CC,

As we all know, cold sores are commonplace. Little kids get them all the time. The reason? Because they are highly contagious. So you don’t have to be sexin’ to catch one. While most of us have heard that there is more than one herpes virus and that they are not both sexually transmissible, our inside sources at the Emma Goldman Clinic inform us that some current health practitioners are saying the difference between the virus strains is little to none. Hate to break it to you, but your girlfriend is right. Contrary to popular belief, cold sores are indeed a symptom of herpes infection and can be passed from mouth to genitals quite easily. You don’t even have to have an open sore to pass the virus from one person to another.

If your main concern is getting your girlfriend to relax, then you could start by talking with her about the possibility of using oral-genital barriers. Three cheers for safer sex! If she’s up for it you could be slappin’ on the latex (or non-micro-wavable cling wrap) in no time. A good lubricant and a sense of humor are your best assistants for this job.

And while we’re on the subject of relaxing, I would like you to take a moment to do an internal check. It’s great that you are searching for accurate information, but please be sensitive and not create pressure on your girlfriend to do something she is not comfortable doing. Anytime someone tells me that I should “just relax” when I have very clearly stated a boundary—such as “I don’t want you to go down on me when you have a cold sore”—I generally start imagining the sound of my boots walkin’ out the door to fling my frisky treasures elsewhere. If you want her to relax, then respect her boundaries about her body and her choices around her life. She deserves your respect. It’s as simple as that.

Thanks for bringing this situation up, because being informed about STI’s is super-duper important in negotiating sex play. And so is hearing and being respectful of boundaries. So purrrrrr, my kitten, you’re doing a good job.

Love,

Ruby

We do not claim to have all the answers, but we do have extended experience, both personal and professional. Questions should be mailed to Ruby’s Pearl, 323 E. Market St., Iowa City, IA 52240, 319-248-0032 or emailed to rubyspearl@excite.com.
ARIES - You will find the independence of others more than a little provocative. But if you express your anger, it will only provoke more vexing displays of independence. Be especially cautious when dealing with willful youngsters. Remember that your goal is to re-establish order and stability. Also, remember that things just aren't going to work out with the team that will ultimately win. Though you might realize that events will just roll on over you, but you are not in a position to ignore or abandon one circumstance in favor of the other. Your personal happiness and security depend absolutely on bringing harmony and stability to both situations. Use your personal faith to strengthen your ties in both places. Infuse social interactions with the fortitude you derive from personal beliefs. Use this personal courage to build confidence and loyalty. In time, you will gain what you need to achieve in harmony and stability.

TAURUS - The planets are treating you with kid gloves, pushing you and encouraging you to make long needed adjustments in basic areas, including financial and living arrangements. You will have to use financial resources to leverage these overdue changes. Remain calm and confident throughout. You could be called on to mediate as conflicts between friends and associates heat up. It might also seem that events will just roll on over you, but you are with the team that will ultimately win. Though you speak from the background, your influence is considerable.

GEMINI - Inaction is not an option. Financial considerations partly enable and partly force you to take action despite the obvious difficulties and risks. Do not depend on luck this time out. You must be mindful of practicalities, but you cannot ignore the hopes and dreams of others, either. Lead others down that narrow path between what is wanted and what is possible. The situation is highly volatile and could easily lead to hostilities. Careful attention to the rules of etiquette and diplomacy will help you through many a tight spot.

CANCER - Rapidly unfolding events, constraining pressures and confusing prospects will affect your financial interests. However, your overall circumstances remain quite viable. Tensions will grow as associates strive to adapt to changing political and economic circumstances. You will play a key role in setting the tone and direction of events in your immediate sphere. Your intuition is sharp and others ignore your guidance at their own risk. Try to moderate as others strike out in unpredictable ways. You must be especially cautious when dealing with willful youngsters. Though you might realize that events will just roll on over you, but you are not in a position to ignore or abandon one circumstance in favor of the other. Your personal happiness and security depend absolutely on bringing harmony and stability to both situations. Use your personal faith to strengthen your ties in both places. Infuse social interactions with the fortitude you derive from personal beliefs. Use this personal courage to build confidence and loyalty. In time, you will gain what you need to achieve in harmony and stability.

SCORPIO - You must divide your efforts between neighborhood and domestic concerns and affairs at a distance. You are not in a position to ignore or abandon one circumstance in favor of the other. Your personal happiness and security depend absolutely on bringing harmony and stability to both situations. Use your personal faith to strengthen your ties in both places. Infuse social interactions with the fortitude you derive from personal beliefs. Use this personal courage to build confidence and loyalty. In time, you will gain what you need to achieve in harmony and stability.

LEO - You and many of your key associates are waiting for some insight into the future to help them make a whole, heaping handful of important life decisions. Unfortunately, your associates are quite inclined to overreact in perfectly maddening ways. You should be able to exercise a calming, steadying hand so that when that big opportunity comes, they will be better able to act on it effectively. You must also function as peacemaker and peacekeeper since tensions are bound to rise as August progresses. Intense discussions will lead to deeper understanding.

VIRGO - I guess you didn't need another shot-out with key associates over almost completely non-negotiable issues. Or how about dealing with another bunch whose ideas for change are so completely extreme that nobody could possibly live with them? You will, in the end, find it easy to compromise where you must and accommodate demands where you can. Your influence is so pervasive that is disturbing and disruptive to others will affect you harmoniously.

LIBRA - Librans will experience a wonderful combination of confidence, luck and—not especially toward month's end—and wide-ranging influence. Don't be too set on getting exactly what you want—allow the planets a little leeway. Don't be impatient with limitations, because they are working in your favor. Although you might not realize that, now. Do watch your temper, which should be quite easy for Librans. And mind the budget. The big catch is you might have to use all of your impressive planetary support to avert a meltdown among your far-flung associates.

CAPPED - Sagittarians must blaze a new trail and steadfastly avoid the path of least resistance. Don't rest on your laurels or escape into distracting and pleasant but empty flirtations. Try not to blow off too much steam in response to important challenges or frustrating obstacles. I grant you that, as yet, there is no clearly defined goal, let alone, a clear path toward that goal. But there is a great opportunity out there and powerful motivation. Work through each question slowly and carefully. Something good will emerge. Patience is the key.

CAPRICORN - Capricorns can't be limited emotionally by events going on around them right now. Dissension and open conflict proliferate in your environment. Local concerns conflict with long distance interests. Partners and associates continue to weigh you down with unsatisfying obligations. But the fact is you are managing to be quite effective in key financial areas. Professional involvements are proving very productive. You can't rightly ignore what's going on around you, but things might go better if you sidestepped conflict and worry for some relaxation and recreation, even a little adventure.

AQUARIUS - Things will continue to shape up and opposition will continue to lessen. However, to keep momentum, you must periodically adjust your goals. Most important, for now, are small changes to daily habits and routines. These will someday add up to major, positive changes in your personal life and in your standing in the world. You are also deeply, deeply absorbed in reassessing and renegotiating the terms of a very close partnership. You need to better understand how to balance your need for independence with your involvement in this partnership.

PISCES - Dreams, ideals, ambitions and lots of unknowns will keep the outlines of your life shifting. As a result, personal, professional and financial arrangements will remain in flux. This will give you the time needed to set and reset patterns before they harden into structures. That's good, since the inspiration about future possibilities will keep on coming. The big picture will be all the better when you finally emerge. All this could unsettle close partners and associates, who are already antis, not to mention testy. Be that as it may.

Contact Dr. Star at chiron@mchsi.com.

For more information, call 339-0401.


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