

# Rapid River

## ARTS & CULTURE MAGAZINE

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**Or is that just a Fairy Tale?**

DECEMBER 2006  
Vol. 10 No. 4  
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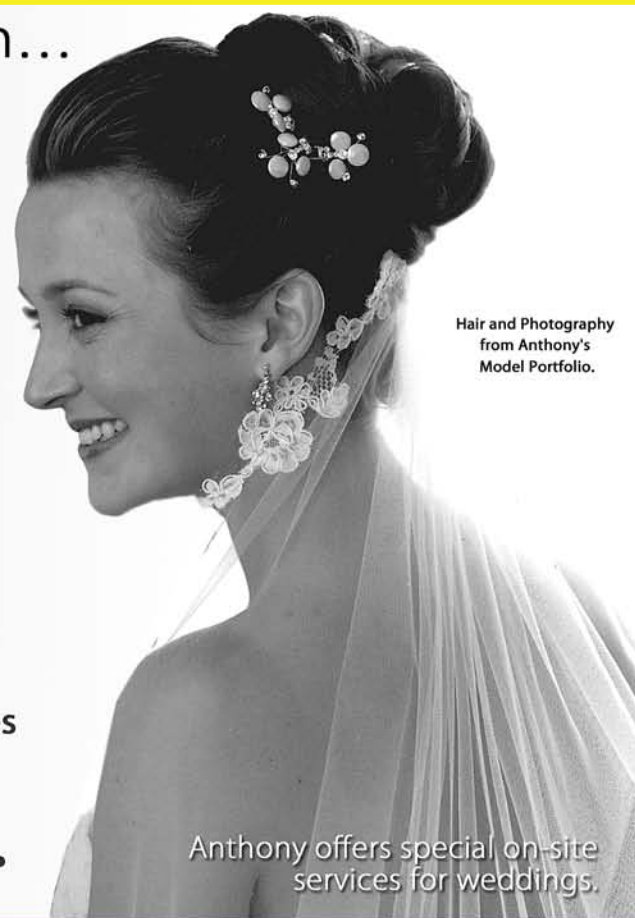
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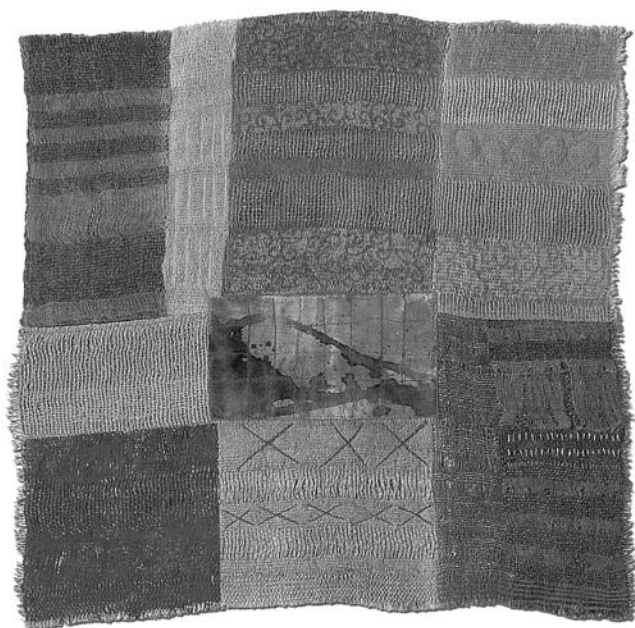
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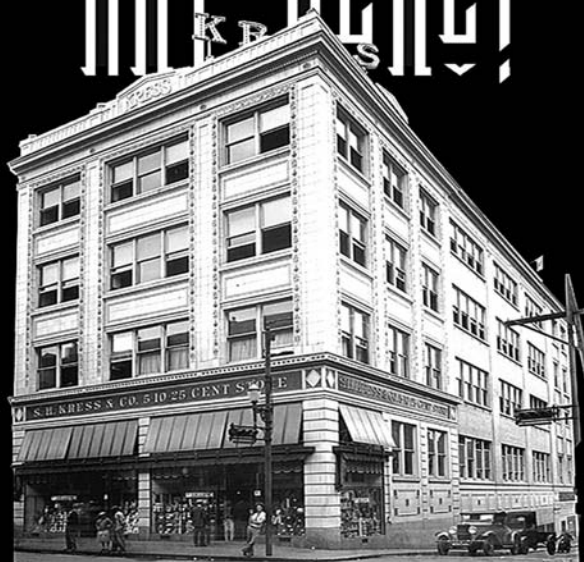
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# Rapid River®

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## COVER



Standing: Councilman Brownie Newman, Councilman Bryan Freeborn, Councilwoman Robin Cape, Councilman Carl Mumpower. Seated: Vice-Mayor Holly Jones, Mayor Terry Bellamy, Councilman Jan Davis

## City plans new Area Center for the Performing Arts

BY ALLEN TUCKER

"Is there ever going to be an Asheville Area Center for the Performing Arts?"

Though this has been a topic of discussion off and on for about 30 years, the current round of efforts goes back to late 2002. Now, four years later, there are those who are optimistic that significant progress has been made and that we're at the threshold of a significant breakthrough in making this a reality. There are others who insist that, though we know a lot more about performing arts centers (PACs) that we did four years ago, we're not one step closer to having one.

Where, exactly, are we now? How did we get here? Do we move forward? If so, how? To date, hundreds if not thousands of pages have been generated on this topic. One fairly brief article can't begin to thoroughly review the history,

players, and variables involved. But, it may be possible to sort through much of this information and come up with a few critical questions, maybe even suggestions.

First, let's not assume everyone knows all about PACs.

What is a PAC? Most of us are familiar with Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. If so, forget about them. In two significant ways, it's not really what we're talking about. Lincoln and Kennedy centers are huge complexes with multiple, specialized venues within them: a large concert hall, an opera house, a recital hall, two or three theaters of varying size, etc. When a city the size of Asheville builds a PAC it is primarily one, multi-purpose venue that is designed to accommodate symphonic

**'Center' continued on pg. 26**

## ASHEVILLE GALLERY OF ART



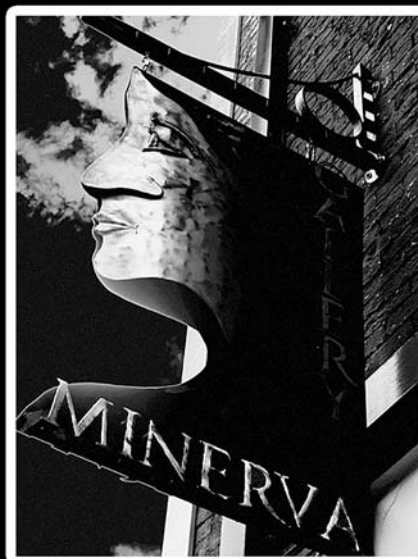
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## HOLIDAY

# A free down home Christmas concert at the Folk Art Center

BY NEIL HARRIS



The Blue Ridge Orchestra

The Blue Ridge Orchestra will offer its annual holiday concert on Sunday, Dec. 17, at 3pm at the Folk Art Center. The concert is being presented as a musical gift to the community; it is free and open to the public.

The program will include medleys of familiar holiday classics, including excerpts from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite* and Handel's *Messiah*. The orchestra will be joined by Voices in the Laurel, a choral group featuring talented children and teenagers from the western North Carolina area.

Voices in the Laurel, now in its 11th season, is comprised of three performing groups for children ranging from the third through the 12 grades. Members hail from all over the western North Carolina region

and are trained in singing techniques and reading music. They perform challenging repertoire in different languages, dialects, and styles, including music from a variety of musical eras. The Blue Ridge Orchestra is delighted to be partnering with this talented group of young people.

The Blue Ridge Orchestra is under the direction of Ronald Clearfield, an Asheville area cellist, composer, recording

artist, and conductor.

The orchestra is composed of western North Carolina musicians ranging from talented high school players to veteran professional musicians. The group presents

five concerts each

year in Asheville, including masterworks programs, a holiday concert, a family concert, and presentations of *Peter and the Wolf* in conjunction with the Asheville Ballet.

This holiday concert is free and open to the public. Come early to do some Christmas shopping at the Folk Art Center, home to a diverse array of unique

arts and crafts from local and regional artisans. The Folk Art Center is located on the Blue Ridge Parkway, easily accessible from I-40 or Tunnel Rd. For directions, visit [www.southernhighlandguild.org](http://www.southernhighlandguild.org). For more information on the Blue Ridge Orchestra and Voices in the Laurel, visit [www.blueridgeorchestra.org](http://www.blueridgeorchestra.org) and [www.voicesinthelaurel.org](http://www.voicesinthelaurel.org).

## If you go:

**WHAT:** Blue Ridge Orchestra's Annual Holiday Concert  
**WHEN:** Sunday, Dec. 17  
**WHERE:** Folk Art Center  
382 Blue Ridge Parkway  
Asheville

# 'Santaland Diaries' returns again to ACT

BY NEIL HARRIS

Asheville Community Theatre announces the fifth remount of their smash hit *The Santaland Diaries* by David Sedaris, adapted for the stage by Joe Mantello.

Tom Chalmers will once again don the pointed shoes of Crumpet the Elf for Asheville's newest holiday tradition. *The Santaland Diaries* will be directed by Josh Batenhorst, who joins the *Santaland* team for his ACT directorial debut.

Described as "one terrific talent" by Jim Cavener of the *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Chalmers is the former Artistic Director of NYC's Gotham City Improv/ Groundlings East and has studied with the

Groundlings, Second City, and comedy icon Del Close. Josh Batenhorst makes his ACT directorial debut, though he recently directed *Birth* as a part of the NC Stage Company's Catalyst Series. Chalmers and Batenhorst first collaborated in *Hometown Security*, a short film which was awarded Best Film in the 2005 Asheville 48 Hour Film Project.

*The Santaland Diaries* sold out nearly every seat when it was performed in 35below, the intimate black box the-



Tom Chalmers

atre underneath Asheville Community Theatre. With the move to the larger venue of the Mainstage last year, ticket sales were just as staggering.

"Last year, we weren't sure how the show would translate to a much, much larger space, but it was a huge success. We went from 700 to 1200 audience members," explains Program Director Jenny Bunn. "Tom Chalmers brings a fresh energy and sense of fun to this piece. He

has taken the show in a different direction and made this piece his own."

David Sedaris rose to fame on NPR's

"This American Life" and has published several volumes of hilarious essays, notably "Naked," "Me Talk Pretty One Day," and his most recent "Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim."

When Sedaris read the essay version of "The Santaland Diaries" during an installment of "This American Life," it generated one of the largest and most enthusiastic responses from the listening audience that NPR had ever experienced. A dark comedy, *The Santaland Diaries* follows a Macy's department store elf throughout the duration of the Christmas season. Full of dry insights, Sedaris comments on the best and the worst of people and culture during the holiday season.

Reservations are strongly recommended for this production.

*This show contains graphic language and is not recommended for children. The Santaland Diaries is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc.*

## If you go:

**WHAT:** 'The Santaland Diaries'  
**WHEN:** Dec. 14-16, Thursday-Saturday, 8pm; additional late-night performance Saturday night at 10pm  
**WHERE:** Asheville Community Theatre, 35 E. Walnut St., Asheville  
**TICKETS:** \$10 all performances.  
**INFO:** (828) 254-1320



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Featured Artist: Ursula Gullow  
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# MOUNTAINS OF ART

## Is there a national hunger to create?

BY BYRON BELZAK

There's something going on across America.

It's only a subjective perception, but it seems as real as rain, and maybe as right, but I certainly don't claim to understand it.

What is it? It has to do with the arts and crafts – and who knows what. Just consider the millions of folks who have made Michael's a fortune by buying craft supplies. Or take all those small independent businesses that have also cashed in big with those who appear nearly addicted to making scrapbooks. While their habit is not as dangerous as taking crack, it's probably equally expensive.

From coast to coast, great numbers of artists and artisans of every genre and skill level are selling their work in

countless arts and craft festivals. Increasing numbers of artists seem to be offering creative workshops, and people seem to be signing up in greater numbers (not that there is anything wrong with that).

Karaoke was big years ago and, most incredibly, it remains big. Who knows why? And don't you know that ballroom dancing has become nothing short of powerful in every metropolis or one traffic light hamlet across this great nation.

Personal expression is everywhere in the good ol' US of A these days. Just check out your neighbors' huge Christmas light displays that would make any airline pilot proud, albeit confused, on where to land.

Yes, across America you can't avoid this cacophony of creative outbursts.

Even the most bored of drivers waiting for a freight train to pass can't help but notice that the boxcars are a veritable parade of graffiti and pop art. What I want to know is who has the paint, much less the time and inclination to risk going to jail, just because you want to tell the greater world out there what's on your (gang's) mind?

And does it seem to you that teenagers are picking up guitars and drum sticks and forming garage bands like it was the 60s all over again? Recently I found myself showing my 16-year-old some old Bob Dylan chord progressions – not because I wanted to impress him, but because he actually asked me how to do something that I actually know how to do. Now what's that all about?

There may be answers. A local artist who always has something interesting to paint – and say – thinks she has drawn a bead on this subject.

"It started with Ben Franklin turning from a regular dime store into a crafts center," said Asheville artist and former art teacher Lisa Ringelspaugh-Irvine, a.k.a., Lisa Ring, well-known painter of cityscapes across the eastern seaboard.

"I think there is a national hunger within people. They want to create something, anything. They want to do it with their hands. They want to hold it in their hands. It's a need that they have, and they don't even realize that it's just the artist in them

them that wants to get out."

But why do such great numbers of Americans have such a strong urge to create?

"I think there is a national hunger within people. They want to create something, anything. They want to do it with their hands. They want to hold it in their hands. It's a need that they have, and they don't even realize that it's just the artist in them that wants to get out."

— Lisa Ringelspaugh-Irvine

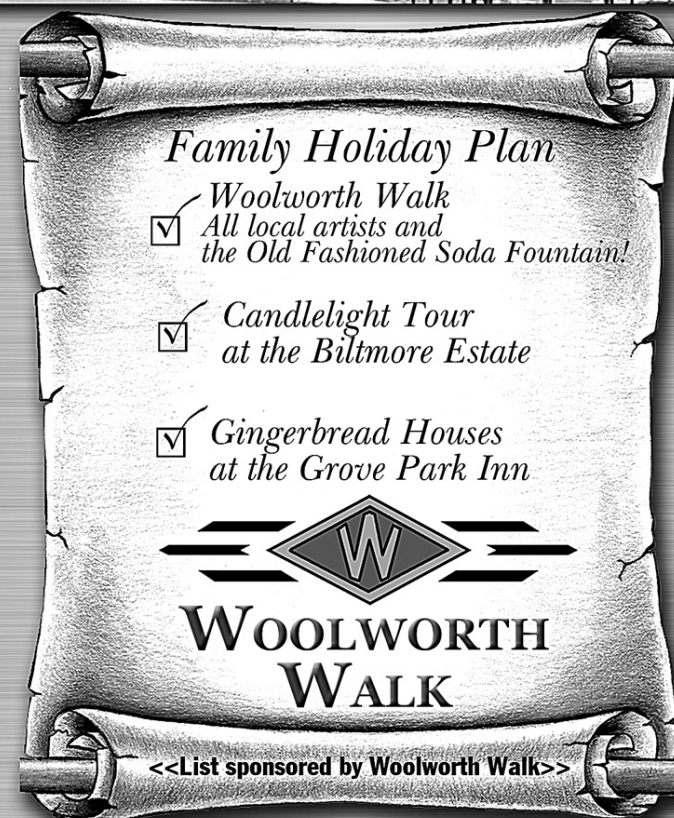
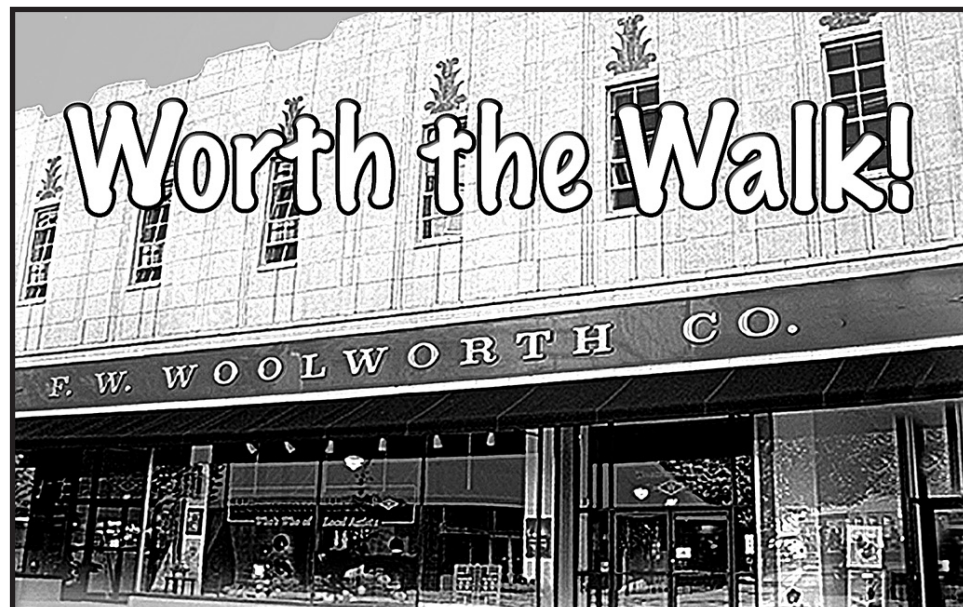
"Because everything is so bland now," said Lisa Ring. "When they work, people go to a job where everything is pretty much by rote. Companies don't really want them to think or want to know how to improve. They don't want to hear their opinions. They just want them to come in and put in their time and go home like little drones."

I can tell Lisa Ring is on a roll. She gets that way sometimes, and it's fun to listen.

"So here you have this whole cadre of people who have no creative outlet. Well, yeah, they've bought everything under the sun, and that didn't satisfy them. They made the babies, and did that whole routine, and that didn't satisfy them. So they are looking for something that's out there, and it's a creative side that they haven't explored. And they don't even realize how following their creative side satisfies."

Lisa Ringelspaugh-Irvine just might become one of the guests, if not host, of "The Arts Hour," a proposed new local show that might air on public access URTV-20 sometime in 2007. We'll see. She's good enough to make people laugh and think at the same time, as is Asheville artist and sculptor Vadim Bora, who has more than once threatened to put on a local art exhibit, entitled "The Starving Audience Show." At least us art addicts would come.

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"Who's Who of Local Artists"

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## HUMOUR

# The Newberry incident

BY BILL QUAM

I'm a creature of habit. The reason that I like to stick to a routine is that I know what to expect.

Every time my wife Cheryl and I take a long trip in the car, we've always stopped to eat at Subway. It's fast. It's easy. I know what sandwich to order. When Cheryl demanded we stop and eat a sit down meal on our last trip from Charleston, SC to Atlanta, I knew no good could come of it.

There it went. We just passed the exit to Prosperity, SC. More importantly, that was the exit with a Subway restaurant just a quarter mile down the road.

"Oh quit complaining," Cheryl snapped. "You are going to love the cute little downtown area and restaurants in Newberry."

My wife decided our sit-down dinner would be in Newberry, SC. Personally, I didn't care if the town of Newberry was pictured next to the word "cute" in Webster's. By my calculations, this side trip was going to add possibly one hour to a six-hour car ride. As I turned off on the Newberry exit, there was nothing more I could do. I decided to go with the flow

and enjoy the meal.

I must admit, Newberry WAS a cute little town. We drove through the historic area and into the downtown. We found an old bookstore or library that had been converted into a restaurant. This looked like the perfect place to eat. When we stepped inside, the place had charm, ambience and a tasty menu. "I am the first to admit when I'm wrong," I whispered after we were seated. "This was a great idea!" Cheryl gave me one of those "of course it was" smiles.

After we finished a delicious meal, I told Cheryl to pay the check while I used the men's room. As I walked to the end of a long hallway, I noticed there was one unisex bathroom. I also realized that my stomach was rumbling and I might be busy for a little while. After I finished my business, I flushed the toilet and headed to the sink to wash my hands. While washing my hands, I glanced at the toilet bowl. My heart almost stopped cold.

The water was quickly rising to the top of the bowl. They're few instances in life when fear and suspense slowly build to a crescendo. Getting married and over-

## Performing Artist Workshop: Marketing and Knowing your Audience

Thursday, December 14, 2006 5:45 pm — 9:00 pm  
Asheville Area Arts Council, 11 Biltmore Ave. Asheville, NC

The workshop will be led by John Loyd and Peggy Baldwin of Loyd Artists ([www.loydartists.com](http://www.loydartists.com)), agents for performing artists, and a panel of experienced performing artists.

Participants will discover how to identify and target their audience, become aware of the ins and outs on booking and showcasing, get promotional material info, learn about video/audio demo needs, and find out about the roles of agents, managers, and publicists. There will be a question and answer session to meet your personal needs and to ask the pros, Loyd and Baldwin.

**Registration and \$20.00 fee (includes dinner) is required by Friday, December 8, 2006.**

**Please contact Sharon Oxendine [sharon@mtnmicro.org](mailto:sharon@mtnmicro.org) 828.253.2834 for more information or to register.**

This seminar is a part of the Artist Seminar Series — a collaboration between: Asheville Area Arts Council, Mountain Microenterprise Fund, Arts2People, Handmade in America and the Small Business Association.



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## HUMOUR

flowing a public toilet are two that come to mind. I frantically searched the bathroom for a plunger. The water rose perilously close to the top. I found a plunger under the sink and just as I went for the plunge ... the water stopped, with just a few trickles dripping over the edge. I didn't even have time to catch my breath when somebody knocked on the door and asked in a muffled voice, "Hey, are you almost finished in there?"

Before answering, I eased the plunger slowly and began to pump. Thankfully, the water was beginning to recede. "Gimme a minute," I yelled. I had already made up my mind to race past whoever was at the door. When the water was half way down in the bowl, there was another knock. "C'mon, hurry up!" the woman cried. In a moment of panic, I went for the flush. What a big mistake!

Everything in the bowl came up and over the top with a vengeance. Whoa, my new Nikes were almost toast. Like the kid with his finger in the dike, I couldn't stop the ensuing flood. I raced to the door and opened it. I lowered my head and bumped into the woman at the door. "What is your problem!" she quipped. I looked up and to my shock it was Cheryl. "Don't go in there," I

mumbled as I walked quickly down the hallway. Cheryl ignored my warning and stepped into the bathroom anyway. Just then, another patron turned the corner and headed past me to use the bathroom. Like any sane husband, I decided to get the heck outta Dodge.

Knowing that the check had been paid, I decided to wait for my wife on the sidewalk in front of the restaurant. About two minutes later, Cheryl burst out of the door. "I'm gonna kill you!" she huffed.

"You can kill me in the car," I answered as we ran to our car parked across the street. I happened to look in my rearview just after screeching my tires and peeling out of town down Main Street. I saw our waitress, the restaurant manager and the woman who followed Cheryl into the bathroom looking up and down the sidewalk for the gruesome perpetrators of this vile bathroom crime.

We have resumed eating at Subway on every road trip since that fateful day. And to this day, I'm told a "Wanted" poster hangs above a single, white toilet in a restaurant in downtown Newberry.

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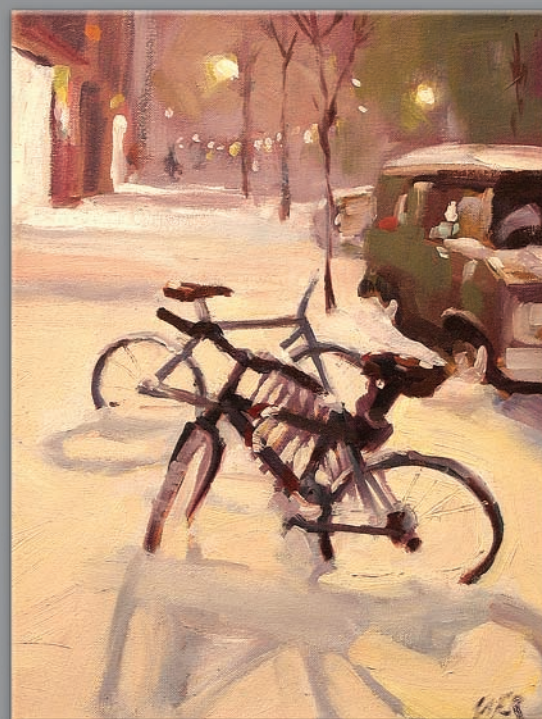
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Margaret Dyer. *Bikes in the Snow*. Pastel. 16 x 12 in.

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Caroline Ellis *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, 2005

## MUSIC

# Contemporary NC Bluegrass delivers the goods this holiday season

BY JAMES CASSARA

The NC based Steep Canyon Rangers have carved out a unique niche in the world of bluegrass music, creating a sound that portends the future while honoring the past.

On the strength of that commitment the band has enjoyed a remarkable level of success during 2006, capturing the coveted Best Emerging Artist by the International Bluegrass Music Association on the strength of their *One Dime at a Time* release, spawning a number one single on Bluegrass Unlimited's National Survey. Most recently was a guest spot on the Grand Ole Opry; quite an honor



The Steep Canyon Rangers

bestowed upon a band formed in the stairwells and kitchens of Chapel Hill.

From diverse musical backgrounds friends Mike Guggino, Charles Humphrey, Woody Platt, Nicky Sanders and Graham Sharp established a style that

combines early bluegrass sounds with original material.

The band, while becoming favorites on the bluegrass circuit, have also gained a sizeable fan base among devotees of Americana and rock-n-roll. Such an eclectic audience has enabled them to play a variety of venues while introducing their distinctive bluegrass style to music lovers of all stripes.

The quintet formed during the late '90s, when all of the members were still enrolled at UNC. The impetus for forming the band evolved out of a weekly shindig hosted by the local Mellow Mushroom Restaurant. Capturing the ear of noted producer Curtis Burch the band recorded their debut, *Old Dreams and New Dreams* in 2001. It's a timely collection of largely traditional tunes playing homage to the band's influences.

Their next release, *Mr. Taylor's New Home*, went the opposite route: Recorded in a Chapel Hill studio operated by Jerry Brown the 2002 release features predominantly original material along with a couple of bluegrass standards. Following that release the band entered into an extensive period of touring, zigzagging throughout the Southeast while sharing stages with such artists as Doc Watson, Jimmy Martin, Peter Rowan, Rhonda Vincent & the Rage, Donna the Buffalo and Norman Blake.

Festival appearances included the Doc Watson Festival, Bluegrass Under the Elm, and the Brushy Mountain Jamboree. While concentrating largely on this region the group has also ventured out to the Rocky Mountain Bluegrass Festival in Colorado.

While the individual players are all fine musicians the band takes great pride in their performing as a unit. The focus is on the song, delivering riotous numbers such as the secretive "Green-Eyed Lady" in a brief three minutes. It's an approach that has so far been wildly successful, beyond even the aspirations that emerged on a lovely fall day under a Carolina blue sky in Chapel Hill.

### 2 days of

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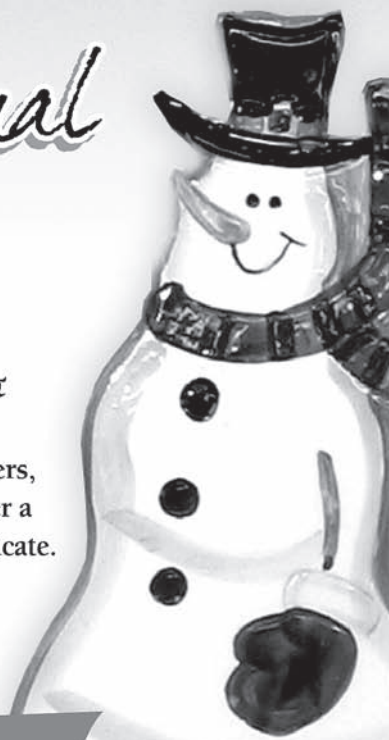
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### If you go:

WHAT: Steep Canyon Rangers  
WHERE: The Orange Peel  
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INFO: \$10/advance \$12/doors.  
Ages 16+ (828) 225-5851



## LIVEMUSIC

# Dave Rawlings steps into the spotlight Dec. 5

BY JAMES CASSARA

While best known as the long-time musical partner to Appalachian tinged songstress Gillian Welch, Dave Rawlings is a formidable musician in his own right.

From the start, his multi-instrumental approach has been the anchor of the duo's performances, the perfect counterweight to Welch's laconic drawl.

The two first met some 15 years ago while they were both attending the Berklee School of Music in Boston. The pair shared a love of traditional country and bluegrass songs and, after honing their skills in local open mic showcases, they began performing regularly throughout the country.

Landing a prestigious gig opening for Peter Rowan in Nashville, they were spotted by musician and producer T-Bone Burnett. Burnett, whose love of traditional sounds has earned him numerous Grammy Awards, assisted Welch and Rawlings in landing a record deal.

With Burnett producing, they cut 1996's starkly beautiful *Revival*, an album split between bare-bones duo performances (some even recorded in mono to capture a bygone sound) and more full-bodied cuts featuring legendary session men like guitarist James Burton, upright bassist Roy Huskey, Jr., and drummers Buddy Harmon and Jim Keltner.

Suddenly Rawlings and Welch found themselves amongst the elite of the then burgeoning Americana music scene.

Her sophomore album, *Hell Among the Yearlings*, might have been billed a Gillian Welch album but Rawlings' mark became even more pronounced. His trademark slide work, harmonies, and inventive tunings elevated the songs in remarkable fashion.

The two began concentrating on side projects, including the fabled *O Brother Where Art Thou* and *Songcatcher* as well tribute albums given over to Dwight Yoakim and Gram Parsons. Rawlings began stretching out a bit, offering superlative support to albums by Ryan Adams and Mark Knopfler while making plans for the pair's third effort. *Time (The Revelator)* was yet another step forward, indicating a maturation of song craft not yet heard. Steady touring, guest appearances keep the two busy but in 2003 they found time to record *Soul Journey*, their



Dave Rawlings

second release on their own Acony Records label. Since then the pair have laid low.

Rawlings has concentrated on a variety of projects, but none seem as dear to his heart as The Dave Rawlings Machine.

Rawlings is being typically coy about the band and

its direction but given his resumé this is certainly one show not to be missed.

## If you go:

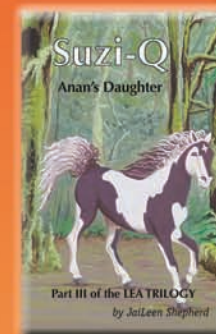
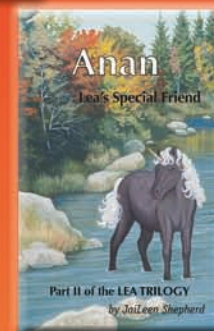
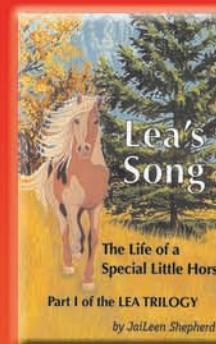
**WHAT:** The Dave Rawlings Machine (with special guest NOT to be announced!)  
**WHERE:** The Grey Eagle  
**WHEN:** Tuesday, Dec. 5  
**INFO:** Tickets are \$10. Doors open at 7:30, show starts at 8:30pm. Call (828) 232-5800

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**Shawn Mullins' 'Better Days' are here**

BY JAMES CASSARA

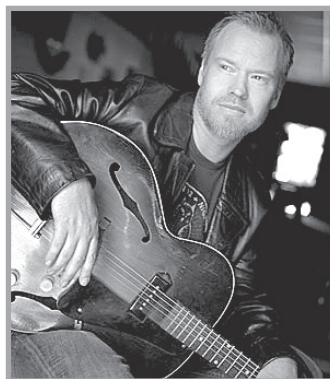
It simply wouldn't be fall with the redoubtable Shawn Mullins making a stop at one of his favorite venues.

The Atlanta-based folk-singer and songwriter has long considered this area a second home. The old Grey Eagle location (in Black Mountain) was one of the first established music halls he performed in and, as the artist is fond of saying, "Some of my best memories come from those early shows."

For those who might be arriving late, a bit of history: Shawn Mullins was serving as a member of the US Army Airborne Infantry Division when he released his first self-titled cassette on his own SM label in 1989; following the release of 1991's *Ever Changing World*, he left the military to pursue music on a full-time basis. After three years spent fruitlessly searching for a record deal, playing local clubs while holding down a variety of day jobs, he established the SMG label in an effort "To do things my own way on my own terms."

In the interim Mullins released a pair of albums (1992's *Better Days* and 1994's *Big Blue Sky*) before cutting a pair of homegrown live companion discs recorded jointly with his old friend Matthew Kahler. Mullins returned a year later with the solo *Eggshells*, the first of his albums to garner true national attention.

1998's *Soul's Core*, his debut album for major label Columbia, "broke open the doors and changed my life." The singer scored a Top Ten hit with the single "Lullaby" and soon found himself performing on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* as well as *Late Night With David*



Shawn Mullins

Letterman.

The album eventually went platinum, paving the way for *The First Ten Years*, an anthology of his early work, along with national and European tours. In fall 2000, Mullins released the official follow-up to *Soul's Core*, *Beneath the Velvet Sun*. The album gained strong reviews but failed to match the commercial success of its predecessor.

As his contract with Columbia expired the label released the misnamed *Essential Shawn Mullins* (a hasty gathering of easily available songs) before releasing his contract. Not surprisingly Mullins' association with Sony (the parent label for Columbia) didn't last long.

His sophomore release for the label never found its audience, and with 2005 not quite finding eclectic singer/songwriters in vogue he found a more comfortable and logical home at Vanguard. Home to many of the artists Mullins worshiped, the company thrived on, and had a successful history, promoting other artists with idiosyncratic folk and folk-rock styles. The feeling was obviously mutual: his newest effort, *9th Ward Pickin' Parlor*, is the most decisive and fully realized effort of his career.

With basic tracks recorded in a pre-Katrina New Orleans studio (hastily abandoned as the storm approached) Mullins crafted a diverse offering that encompasses folk, rock, Celtic and country, often interlocking in the same tune.

He channels early Black Crowes territory on the gospel-laced "Faith," while giving a personal spin to the self-penned murder ballad "Cold Black Heart."

Mullins expands his instrumental repertoire throughout: Mandolin plays a prominent role in "Homemade Wine," a moody story-song ballad about leaving a town and a life behind that takes advantage of the singers' deeply expressive voice, while "All Fall Down" finds its rocking heart in late era Beatles.

The disc's first single, the harder-edged "Beautiful Wreck" is co-written by his Thorns' mate Pete Droge and is superior to anything on that short-lived side project. Mullins goes traditional religious on the waltz-timed "Lay Down Your Swords, Boys" while returning to his laid back roots on the bluesy "Solitaire."

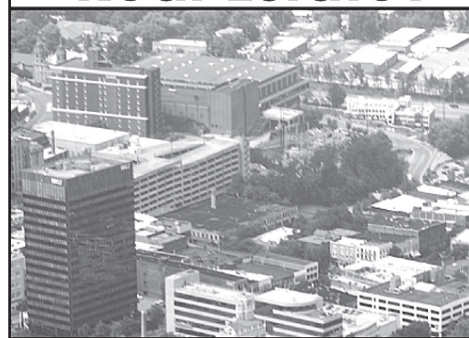
He closes out the album with a moving version of "House of the Rising Sun", a song clearly intended to be his tribute to New Orleans, the city whose dusky atmosphere has subtly contributed to Shawn Mullins' most poignant, cohesive and diverse album.

Mullins has been eagerly presenting the new material on stage. His last appearance at the Eagle, some six months back, premiered a few songs but relied heavily on old favorites.

There's no telling what this show might entail but there is one certainly; Mullins will give the fans an evening of extraordinary music that connects deeply with the Soul's Core of his many local followers.

**If you go:**

**WHO:** Shawn Mullins (with supporting act Clay Cook)  
**WHEN:** Saturday, Dec. 2.  
**WHERE:** The Grey Eagle  
**INFO/TICKETS:** \$12 in advance \$15 day of show.  
(828) 232-5800

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## PERFORMANCE

## Christmas with the Asheville Choral Society

BY ALLEN TUCKER

The Asheville Choral Society is kicking off its 30<sup>th</sup> season with a gala Christmas celebration — a feast of both music and food.

"I'm very excited about this concert for a number of reasons," explains Music Director Lenora Thom. "First, the chorus continues to grow in both size and quality. As a result of having more than triple our average number of auditions this fall, our roster has grown from 105 to 150. More important than quantity, of course, is the fact that the quality of the sound has taken a major step forward."

"We also have a wonderful soprano soloist, Anne O'Byrne, performing with us," continues Ms. Thom. "Anne is an extraordinarily gifted singer. She's



Music Director Lenora Thom

appeared throughout Europe and America, in numerous operatic roles and in concert, with conductors such as Simon Rattle, Franz Welser-Möst, and Donald

Runnicles."

The Christmas program includes Puccini's *Gloria*, Jonathan Willcocks' *Magnificat*, and Z. Randall Stroope's *Hodie*, all stirring, celebratory expressions of the season. In addition, there will be a number of Christmas classics such as *Masters in This Hall*, *Past Three A Clock*, and *For Unto Us a Child is Born*.

The ACS gala weekend concludes Sunday after the concert with a *Traditional European Christmas Feast* at The Flying Frog Restaurant. Chef Vijay Shastri promises that this six-course extravaganza, a benefit for the Asheville Choral Society, will be a Christmas dinner to remember.

*Christmas with the Asheville Choral Society* will be performed Saturday, Dec. 16 at 8pm and Sunday, Dec. 17 at 4pm at the Central United Methodist Church, 27 Church St., Asheville. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students. Call (828) 299-9063 to

order tickets by phone.

The *Traditional European Christmas Feast* is Sunday evening, December 17, at The Flying Frog Restaurant. Dinner is \$75 plus beverage, tax and gratuity. Call (828) 254-9411 for reservations.

## If you go:

**WHO:** Asheville Choral Society  
**WHEN:** Saturday, Dec. 16, 8pm and Sunday, Dec. 17, 4pm  
**WHERE:** Central United Methodist Church, 27 Church St., Asheville.  
**INFO/TICKETS:** \$20 for adults and \$15 for students. Call (828) 299-9063 to order tickets by phone.

## HOLIDAY THEATRE

## 'A Wonderful Life' plays at NC Stage

BY BETH GOSSETT

This holiday season experience a beloved holiday story — with a twist.

*It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*, by Joe Landry, is a new stage adaptation of the classic movie.

Directed by Frank Capra and starring Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed, *It's a Wonderful Life* was a flop in 1946. Decades later it has become a holiday tradition, airing on television every December.

In this clever adaptation, playwright Joe Landry gives new life to the familiar story by setting it in the studios of the fictional WBFR Radio on Christmas Eve, 1946. The five hard-working radio actors of WBFR portray dozens of characters from the movie, switching effortlessly between voices.

Underscoring the radio drama is a live sound effects artist, who uses the old-fashioned techniques of radio shows like *The Lone Ranger* or *The Shadow*.

The play stars Lauren Fortuna, Jonathan Frappier, David Novak and

The cast of *It's a Wonderful Life*

Willie Repoley, as well as newcomer Kathryn Temple, making her NC Stage debut. Sound effects are provided by Chris Holleman, a local electrical engineer and musician who plays banjo, guitar, accordion and fiddle with the inter-

nationally-touring Asheville-based band Mock Turtle Soup.

Directed by Hans Meyer who has directed *The Glass Menagerie* (2004) and *All My Sons* (2006).

All the trappings of a 1946 radio station add to the feel of the show, including full period costumes, "Applause" and "On The Air" signs, vintage microphones, and a table filled with a huge variety of props used for making live sound effects.

"There is something about getting to see the sound effects happen in front of your eyes," says Meyer. "I'm amazed at the variety of sounds that the right people can get out of everyday objects. It is its own kind of theatrical magic. I think this show will have some surprises for people

who know the Capra movie well."

Special enhanced performances: Friday, Dec. 8 is Friday Night Insight, featuring a talk-back immediately after the show.

Saturday, Dec. 9 is the Saturday Night Gala, with a champagne reception following the show.

## If you go:

**WHAT:** 'It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play'  
**WHEN:** Dec. 6 - 17. Wed. – Sat. 7:30pm, Sun. 2pm. Wed. Dec. 6 is Pay-What-You-Can Night (\$5 min.)  
**WHERE:** Walnut St. one block off Haywood St., next to the Rankin Ave. parking garage.  
**TICKETS:** (828)350-9090; \$15-\$23;

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# Year-end wrap-up of great CDs

BY JAMES CASSARA

*Be it given one star or five if it gets mentioned here you can bet it's worth at least a listen. Let me know you're out there: email me at JJCassara@aol.com with your comments and receive a disc or two absolutely free. I even pay the postage! This time around it's an end-of-the-year wrap-up, kept succinct as to squeeze in as much as I could.*

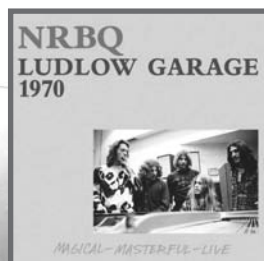
## NRBQ 'Ludlow's Garage' Sundazed Records

Right out of the box NRBQ were a different kind of band with an approach and attitude all their own. Wildly unpredictable, often chaotic, endlessly inventive and non-stop fun, NRBQ quickly became one of those you-have-to-see-them-live-to-understand-their-greatness bands that never quite managed to capture their particular genius in a studio setting.

Steeped in everything from deep soul to out-there jazz to roots rock & roll to harmonic pop to whatever oddball stuff came into their orbit, NRBQ shed rock's heft, threw their collective influences into the hopper, shuffled them around and created something new and refreshingly original-and that approach has never been altered. This January 1970 concert recording found the original Q — augmented, as they have often been, by horn players Donn Adams and Keith Spring-in sizzling form at Cincinnati's Ludlow Garage.

Among the faithful it's circulated via bootleg for years but the official release is a stunning reminder of just how sweet fate can be-that such like-minded players (hailing from Kentucky, the Bronx and Miami) could not only serendipitously find one another, but use their collective the-hell-with-preconceptions attitudes and encyclopedic musical knowledge to their advantage is a blessed thing.

At Ludlow, on a bill with blues guitar master Albert King, NRBQ unleashed all of their madness on a crowd undoubtedly comprised of those who'd already been indoctrinated, those who'd soon be bowing at their altar, and those who'd spend the set scratching their heads. After all, this was a band that slid easily Doo Wop to gospel to jazz and right into rhythm and blues (not to mention audacious rock and roll) without missing a beat. As musicians, they were peerless-you can hear the template for the secret behind the band's long run in the looseness that characterizes their playing here. Whether covering Little Richard's ripping "Rip It Up," the Billy Stewart soul ballad "Sitting in the Park," or hammering through a nine-minute epic expansion of Terry Adams' "Kentucky Slop Song," (in which the horns take off on a Dixieland-



gone-crazy ride) these guys never fail to keep things lively. Staley's drumming is muscular yet a bit loopy (in a good way) and Spampinato's bass provides a solid but melodic anchor. Gadler, meanwhile, proves a commanding singer who avoids rock clichés. A year later, changes would begin within the lineup, and by the mid-'70s Gadler, Ferguson and Staley were all gone, and NRBQ became the long-running quartet of Adams, Spampinato, guitar giant Al Anderson, and drummer Tom Ardolino. But that's another story for another time. This Ludlow show is the earliest official live Q on record, and as such is an essential document, not to mention one righteous set of live music. \*\*\*\*

## Robyn Hitchcock 'Ole' Tarantula' Yep Roc Records

In 2004, Robyn Hitchcock's loose and folk inflected *Spooked* saw the creepy-crawly loving eccentric enlisting the unlikely help of David Rawlings and Gillian Welch. This time around he's backed by REM stalwarts Peter Buck, Scott McCaughey, and Bill Rieflin along with his former Soft Boys mates Kimberley Rew and Morris Windsor, Faces keyboardist Ian McLagan, Harvey Danger's Sean Nelson, and ex-President of the United States of America Chris Ballew. A small army indeed, but a tasteful one. *Ole! Tarantula* sounds like a trip back to the iconic singer/songwriter's early A&M days. Long, Byrds-inspired harmonies, jangled electric guitars, and random bursts of piano, harmonica, and saxophone pepper the collection in fits, seasoning Hitchcock's already delicious wordplay with exactly the right amount of spice. Opener "Adventure Rocket Ship" sounds like a lost track from the early years, the kind of confident psychedelic rocker that at one time spilt from the anti-bard's leafy pen like battery on rice paper.

In the warm, weird, and nostalgic "Belltown Ramble," he manages to rope an Uzbek warlord, email, R.E.M., and Orchestral Maneuvers In The Dark into a motor-mouthed stroll through town and time must be heard to be believed. It's that perfect balance of sadness, vitriol, and absurdity that makes Hitchcock such a legendary social commentator. He's the jester, the king, the convict, and the executioner all wrapped up into one. \*\*\*1/2

## Maria McKee 'Live Acoustic Tour 2006' Cooking Vinyl Records

While she's become significantly more productive since leaving the major labels behind, a new album from Maria McKee is still a rare and welcome event, and this

modest but beautiful live disc is no exception. Recorded during a stop on a short American road trip McKee undertook in 2006-no date, city, or venue listed -it features McKee accompanied only by her own guitar and piano (friend Susan Otten adds some lovely harmonies) confirming that McKee's voice and muse are still serving her well. She's has always had a powerhouse voice capable of keeping up with a full rock band, but *Live Acoustic Tour 2006* shows she also has the good sense to know when to let loose with an operatic fury and when to dial down a more subtle approach; she very rarely oversteps her bounds here preferring to investigate the nooks and crannies of the songs to moving effect. McKee primarily focuses on her own material, ranging from her Lone Justice years to her most recent studio efforts but she also throws in some well-chosen covers, including three songs written by her late brother Bryan MacLean (including a lovely interpretation of "Orange Skies" from Love's *Da Capo*) and a version of "In the Long Run" from Beyond the Valley of the Dolls that may have started as a joke but plays quite sweetly as a homage to '70s LA rock. And when McKee sings "Breathe," "High Dive," or "A Good Heart," there's little question that she's a major artist with a wealth of talent as both a songwriter and a vocalist, and even in the most simple of circumstances she delivers a performance that's moving and deeply evocative; in short, this isn't just another stopgap live album. (And don't skip past the unlisted cover of Neil Young's "Barstool Blues.") \*\*\*\*

## Charley Pride 'Anthology' BMG Heritage

There have been plenty of Charley Pride collections issued throughout the years, but none better than this. Over the course of two discs and 40 tracks, *Anthology* spans his two decades with RCA, from his first single "Before I Met You" in 1966 to 1985's "Down on the Farm." Between those two songs are all of his biggest hits-from "Just Between You and Me," to "The Easy Part's Over and right into "Is Anybody Goin' to San Antone?" Since Pride was a constant presence at the top of the country charts during these two decades, some massive (and damn good) hits, particularly some the late '70s and early '80s sides but while not everything that should be is here what is included is more than choice. Simply due to the constraints of the compilation even at two discs there are only so many songs that can fit on this set. Even with the absence of these hit singles, *Anthology* is as fine a classic country collection as was ever assembled: the liner notes are con-

'CD's' continued on next pg.



## POETRY

## DECEMBER POETRY NEWS By Jeff Davis

## AT THE CENTER: FINDING THE WINTER'S PEACE

Unlike some mammals, we don't hibernate.

We do, though, at this time of year, when the season brings a still peace to the outer world, move inside, into our dwellings and into the core of our own beings, hoping to find peace in the stillness, the dark, peace to carry us through the difficult days until Earth's dance brings us around to spring again, and a new season of endeavor. Silent night. Holy. Or not. We huddle inside our shelters with our own kind, and hope for peace with them. Soon the hymns will ring out – "Peace on earth, good will toward men." Far away, a war rages, and destroys lives not unlike our own every day. And sometimes the lives of our sons or daughters, our wives or husbands, brothers or sisters, mothers or fathers. Taken. We may wish for peace there, too.

It's a curious word, "peace." Lexicographers tell us it reaches back, like most of the words in our language, to a deep old root in the language we refer to as Indo-European, a root whose stem seems to surface in several directions, all of them bound, as it were, to the fundamental idea of binding, of fastening. So the Latin "pax," a binding together by treaty or agreement, whence all the uses Christianity has made of the language of peace, in the context of the binding together of a community of believers. "Pax vobiscum. Et cum tu spiritu," they said. *Peace be with you. And with your spirit.* But it's also pagan – quite literally; the pagan originally was a peasant, bound to a delimited place, a piece of land, from the Latin "pagus," a boundary staked out on the ground, from the same root. Likewise from that ancient source the Latin "palus", the stake fixed in the

ground to mark that boundary, whence we derive our "palisade", defined by a wall of such stakes, "impale", an unhappy use of such a stake, and even "travail" and "travel", which passes such stakes, such milestones, as may mark the course of the journey.

On Dec. 15, some of Asheville's finest poets will gather at the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center to explore the meanings they find in this rich word "peace" and speak from their own understandings of what this season holds.

Thomas Rain Crowe, John Crutchfield, Laura Hope-Gill, Gary Lilley, Rose McLarney, Sebastian Matthews and I will be, with any luck, warming spirits till they're proof against winter.

Years ago when I went to Buffalo it was also in a time of war, another war. Notwithstanding the war and winters colder than any I'd ever dreamed, I found Buffalo humanly the warmest city I'd ever known. Perhaps it was my youth, or the common circumstance of so many of us in and around the university there, far away from wherever we'd come from, no matter how close geographically it might have been; in that clime we quickly found ourselves several states of mind removed from anywhere before. Or perhaps it was just that the natives of that place knew how to hunker down with each other, to find a peace together no matter the kind of blizzards raging outside, and we managed to learn enough of the land's customs to emulate their strategy. No telling. But memories of those days have

lit the way into winter for me ever since, and still offer a map through the desolate season, the dark time.

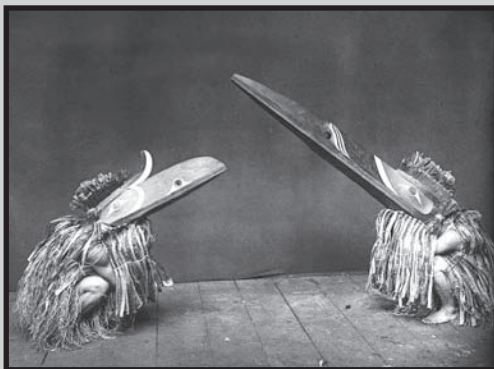
When it came time for me to do the "field work" my graduate program required, one of the things that drew me from Buffalo to the coast of British Columbia was that the Kwakwaka'wakw people (you might know them by the name commonly used for them till the 1980s, Kwakiutl), with whom I'd proposed to study, had, by all accounts, an exuberant way of getting into winter as well. For them, it was the sacred season. They worked all spring and summer to accumulate stores of food for the winter, gathering berries by the basketsful, drying (and now canning) salmon by the ton, and then, as the days grew shorter, they readied themselves for winter. They assumed their sacred names; "Eddie Wallace" say, became "Him Who Stands High as a Mountain." And then it was time to celebrate, pull out the regalia, and gather to celebrate the first dance of the winter, "When the Masks Are First Brought into the House."

Until the herring and Steelhead began running the next spring, they'd spend the weeks in feasting, hosting reciprocal parties (the English, using a Chinook word, referred to them as *pot-latches*), asserting by performances their claims to dances and honorific names, contending in generosity, one clan inundating another with gifts, and being inundated in return.

No one could have starved to death;

it was a system of distribution, as an economist might say, that insured that sustenance and the necessities of life reached even the most humble members of the group, however bad the external weather.

Here in our mountains, now barren of leaves, winter presses down upon us, so let's gather together, break out the masks, and make some joyful peace together as we head into winter. With the help of our poets and musicians, we'll get our spirits warm enough to live in concord no matter what snow, rain, wind and chills try to trouble us between now and spring.



Kwakwaka'wakw dancers holding a winter celebration dance which has been done for centuries.

## If you go:

**What:** Poets Read for Peace, a Celebration

**When:** Friday, Dec. 15, 8pm

**Where:** Black Mountain College Museum + Art Center. 56 Broadway, Asheville

**Admission:** \$7 or \$5 members and students with ID. More Info [www.blackmountaincollege.org](http://www.blackmountaincollege.org).

*Poet and computer consultant Jeff Davis is a board member of the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center. E-mail Davis at [jeffbdavis@gmail.com](mailto:jeffbdavis@gmail.com). For more info visit [naturespoetry.blogspot.com](http://naturespoetry.blogspot.com)*

'CD's' continued.

cise and insightful, the photos place the viewer at the seen and the music is equal parts inventive and imminently listenable. ★★1/2

Stoll Vaughn  
'Love Like A Mule'  
Shadow Dog Records

If a young man had spent his days and nights listening to '60s centrist folk and '70s boogie blues, he might have come up with something like "Alright" on Stoll Vaughn's latest effort. Fortunately Vaughn can also sound contemporary, pulling at various times from The Wallflowers to early period Wilco. All of

these elements mix quite nicely on the easy-rolling "Savior," delivered with an pleasant combination of acoustic guitars, organ, and drums, and on a handful of other self penned tunes. With the discs onslaught of words, it might have been nice if the listener had been provided with a lyric sheet to anchor the experience but at least Vaughn enunciates clearly. Despite some unfortunate lyrical sexism (one of the regrettable points picked up from Dylan), the music; well sung solid folk-rock arrangements, make *Love Like a Mule* a decent though rather predictable neo-classic rock diversion. ★★1/2

Jim Reeves

'Essential'  
RCA/Nashville Legacy

This is a repackaged reissue of the BMG Heritage's 2003 compilation containing a different title and cover art, but bearing the same forty tracks and liner notes. Given that there has been no shortage of Gentlemen Jim Reeves compilations over the years, owing no doubt to his deserved reputation as the most imperative pure country crooner to ever emerge from music city, the necessity for another is certainly debatable. Despite the merits of previous collections-ranging from cheap budget line toss ups to Bear Family's absurdly comprehensive 16-CD set- much of Reeve's output remains unavailable to the

general public. In this regards Anthology serves a vital need, spanning 40 tracks over two discs. The set begins with his first big hit, 1953's "Mexican Joe" and ends with "Angels Don't Lie," which charted in 1970, six years after his tragic death. Reeves had plenty of hits even after 1970; he appeared on the Billboard country charts regularly for 20 years after his death-and he had so many hits during his lifetime that they can't all be condensed into one manageable collection. Still what makes *The Essential Jim Reeves* so good is its expert song selection. ★★





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MILBERG FISHER DISCUSSES HER  
MEMOIRS, 'IN BALANCHINE'S  
COMPANY'**

**TUES., 12/12, 7PM: MALAPROP'S  
BOOK CLUB HOSTED BY MARY PARK  
FORD, WILL MEET IN THE CAFE  
TO DISCUSS 'SATURDAY' BY IAN  
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OF 'ATONEMENT' NEW MEMBERS ARE  
WELCOME TO JOIN.**

**THURS., 12/21, 5:30PM: WOMEN  
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FOR WOMEN. NEW MEMBERS ARE  
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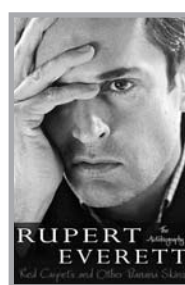
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## BOOKS & PAGES

### Tell all book falls short on the nitty-gritty

'Red Carpets and Other  
Banana Skins'

**By Rupert Everett**  
**Reviewed by Beth  
Gossett**



Rupert Everett, best known for his role in *My Best Friend's Wedding*, is one of those actors who everyone is curious about, but whom no one really learns much about via the media.

Everett's new autobiography, *Red Carpets and Other Banana Skins*, takes readers inside his life and his thoughts from his childhood through current time.

Everett describes for readers his early life in England with his family and pinpoints the exact moment when he knew he was gay. As he recounts, his mother and nanny took him to see his first movie, *Mary Poppins*, at age 6. For Everett, it was as if the world opened up in a whole new way for him. After seeing the movie, he began daydreaming that he was the child of Julie Andrews...and maybe even Mary Poppins herself, and he began wearing his mother's discarded red tweed skirt to accentuate the daydream. That's when he knew who he really was and embraced it.

The book contains passages about

Everett's life as a young drama student, young romances with stars like Ian McKellen, flirtations with Rudolph Nureyev, his bawdy life in Paris, life in the theatre, his interesting life around the world, his up and down movie career, his meetings and greetings with such heavyweights as Madonna, Sean Penn, Richard Harris and Sharon Stone, his flirtations and addictions with drugs, sex and alcohol and how it all made him the person he is today.

*Red Carpets and Other Banana Skins* is sure to make people sit up and take notice of other folks in Hollywood and how they "really" are. Everyone knows that Madonna is a huge diva who's bratches are a bit too big for her, but this book further illuminates that description of her through Everett's personal acquaintance with her. Everett has no problem with telling it like it is, so I'm not sure how other Hollywood-types will embrace this book, but then again, who cares, the story is about Everett...not them.

While the book is wholly descriptive about the life of the writer, it's almost too descriptive in that it digresses in several passages. It's one thing to describe an experience of being in one's first play, first romance, first movie, first...whatever, but a reader does not need every detail of every single experience of one's life. Most people don't even want to know that much even in a conversation about

someone's experiences. Perhaps the entire purpose of *Red Carpets and Other Banana Skins* was intended to be Everett's way of honoring each and every experience he's had in his life and making the memories as vibrant and emotion-filled as he could muster through literary means.

Perhaps Everett's autobiography is intended more to be his memory book than it is to be entertainment for the masses, for while it was interesting to read about Rupert Everett, the man, the actor and the world advocate, I'm not sure that I was entertained by what I read. That is not to say that there were not some humorous passages or entertaining banter, it simply was not what I expected when I picked the book up and sat down to read the autobiography of Rupert Everett. I think I was expecting some of the background I read, but I also think I expected more exciting gossip and anecdotes about the life of a Hollywood actor. I think I was looking for more dish and less self-explanation.

If you are expecting this book to be a tell-all, larger than life look at Hollywood, you will be disappointed. If you go in reading the book to get a perspective on the life of a very vivacious man who is dedicated to a life of acting then *Red Carpets and Other Banana Skins* will be an exceptional read for you.

### Great guide book to see all of Asheville and WNC

'The Ultimate Guide to Asheville  
& The Western North Carolina  
Mountains'

**By Lee Pantas**  
**Reviewed by Beth Gossett**



Lee Pantas, with his Asheville guidebook entitled, *The Ultimate Guide to Asheville & The Western North Carolina Mountains*, has been able to take all the books previously written on the area, and what to do and what to see while you're here, and condense it into one easy to read, easy to access reference guide.

Whether you're looking to move to the area and settle down, take daytrips to the area or take a week or more and vacation in the Asheville area, this book has the information you need. While giving useful information on who to contact in the area for places to stay, eat and things to do, employment, relocations

services, places of worship getting around the area and giving people a basic lay of the land, Pantas also offers up some interesting historical bits about Asheville and the surrounding areas.

Want some information about Bele Chere? There's a whole chapter just on that subject alone. Need to satisfy your fine arts fix? Check out Pantas'

chapters on art and crafts galleries and then use one of his handy-dandy maps to help you get to where you need to go. Staying at the Grove Park Inn? Want to know what to do there and around the Inn...this book will tell you all about it.

Did you know that Asheville has been designated an All-America City? I sure didn't...and I've lived here a little more than two years! While you think that Asheville would capitalize on this designation, as far as I can tell they haven't. I've never seen sign one that advertises that around the area...and that seems like that would be a major tourist plus. That is to say, Charleston, SC was denoted an All-

America City and they played that up tremendously, but I digress. That being said, find out in Pantas' book why and what gave Asheville such a wonderful distinction.

Concerned about the environment of Western North Carolina? *The Ultimate Guide to Asheville & The Western North Carolina Mountains* has an entire chapter on that very issue and who and what groups are doing to keep our mountains and waters pristine and protected.

If you're looking to go to college or university in the Asheville area or have any medical procedures done at an area hospital, learn all you can in Pantas' chapters on these subjects. They're sure to give you great information and resources if you want to do some additional research.

So, to recap if you're looking for a travel book to really tell you how to travel in Asheville, *The Ultimate Guide to Asheville & The Western North Carolina Mountains* is the quintessential book for you.



## THEATRE

## Flat Rock Playhouse holds beloved holiday classic

BY NEIL HARRIS

**T**he *Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, written by Barbara Robinson, is the story of a family of incorrigible children who hear the Christmas story for the first time and help everyone else rediscover its true meaning.

When the Herdmans show up at the church Christmas Pageant tryouts — everyone is horrified. Why? Because they are horrible children. They steal, burn down buildings, and terrorize the neighborhood. When the Herdmans find out that they can get treats if they go to Sunday School, they show up and volunteer to be in the annual Pageant, and insist upon playing the main characters. The town thinks they belong in the care of the local police. But to everyone's surprise, the Herdmans pull it off. True, it's in their own style. In the end, the Herdmans, who have never heard the Christmas story and don't understand what all the fuss is about — appreciate the true meaning of Christmas better than the children who have been hearing the Christmas story since birth. Even the adults in the show are touched by the simple faith of the Herdmans and end up praising them for making this "the best Christmas pageant ever."

Your family will love the story of how the Herdmans and their community learn to work together. The *Best Christmas Pageant* is a fun show with a great lessons to teach, lessons of kindness, honesty, courage, and friendship. This is a chuckle-around-every-corner-action-packed account of how one town deals with the biggest Christmas-pageant challenge in their history.

Directed by Betsy Bisson, the cast of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* is made up of over 50 talented students from Henderson County. In addition to the student performers, a team of adults from the community round out the cast. The production of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* is supported in part by an award from The National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art.

Flat Rock Playhouse is pleased to foster the educational and artistic growth of our community's children and hopes that participation in its YouTheatre programs encourages a life-long appreciation of the arts. Now under



What happens when the Herdman children show up at a church Christmas Pageant?

construction is the YouTheatre Education Center. This project is the first Capital Campaign to ever be undertaken by Flat Rock Playhouse.

For information about the YouTheatre Education Center please contact Dale Bartlett, Development Director, (828) 693-0403 ext. 209.

Executive Producers Tom and B J Ramer and their Family present *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* onstage two weekends. The week of Dec. 8, evening shows are Friday and Saturday at 7:15pm, with matinees on Saturday and Sunday at 2:15pm. The week of Dec. 14, evening

shows are Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 7:15pm, with two matinees on Saturday, Dec. 16 at 10:15am and 2:15pm; and a Sunday matinee at 2:15pm.

Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$6 for students and children and can be purchased at the Playhouse box office by calling (828) 693-0731.

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## FEATURE POET

# The poetry of Jaye Bartell

EDITED BY JEFF DAVIS

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: We feature poets, some known, some not, who've provided a body of work that seems to merit more complete articulation than a single poem could provide. Our poet this month is Jay Bartell.

Bartell was born in Massachusetts and has since lived and worked in Asheville and in Friday Harbor, WA; shortly after his appearance here, he's on his way to Buffalo, NY. Curator of Asheville's now discontinued Fresh Air Reading Series, he is currently a contributing editor of *Capgun*, a New York-based publication. His work has appeared (or will appear shortly) in *Cutbank*, *Rivendell*, *Capgun*, *The Ampersand*, and is viewable always at: [www.makesabird.blogspot.com](http://www.makesabird.blogspot.com).

Poets wishing to submit work for future publications should send at least three poems to [jeffbdavis@gmail.com](mailto:jeffbdavis@gmail.com) or [poetry@rapidrivermagazine.com](mailto:poetry@rapidrivermagazine.com)

## 10<sup>th</sup> annual Poetry Contest.

**Any unpublished poem 35 lines or less is wanted!**

**5 winners.**

**Dinner for two at Tripps.**

**Go to the ALO Opera.**

**Books from Malaprop's and CDs from Karmasonics!**

**More Prizes to come — stay tuned!**

Deadline Dec. 8th. Winners will be notified by Dec.

16. Winning poems will be printed in the Jan 2007 issue. Reading fee: \$5 for five poems. More info call (828) 646-0071.

Good luck!

Send poems to:  
**Rapid River Poetry Contest**  
85 N. Main St.  
Canton, NC 28716

Muggy

*Your eyes do not  
alter,  
stones over which  
passes the water.*

*Lashes, bank-side  
grasses,  
comb motes from  
blinks of winds.*

*And by your nose's  
bridge,  
mark of a step of a  
vision that entered in,*

*passed through the  
water,  
silt on the stone,  
that softens the stone.*

Boundaries

*Land's cove  
crumbs of stone  
lines from the  
landing*

*trace perimeter*

*Surroundings  
of water  
define the  
water, specify  
the water.*

*Cup on the table  
a lake down the way  
edges are the fences  
from which names  
arise, define the manner*

*of drinking  
of fording  
of wading  
of swimming  
or drowning*

*for lack of attention  
to shore's definition.*



Jaye Bartell

Jared and Duncan Dancing

*The radical act  
is showing the facts  
of oneself when  
there are others optional  
repressive or else  
transparently truly  
a wish to be free  
a circumspect finesse  
in the flesh  
on one's own bones*

Makes a Bird

*Wind in a holly berry  
makes a bird conceal.*

*We'd seen one another  
seeing one, an other.*

*First, wind moves, then  
holly berry, move, Raven*

*old leaf shuttling in  
with air still now you're  
here.*

*Wind in any company  
often confuses sociality.*

Driving with Duncan

*His elastic mind  
truly proposes a way*

*to go is  
circular  
circuitous*

*gently,  
as a tree's  
aging spins a  
round line*

*outward  
outward*

*ripples etched  
coming centrally*

*and this is our progres-  
sion.*

Ah, Sam  
For Sam Adams

*take the carried foods.  
eat the carried foods.  
canteen, burlap, prickles...  
me suddenly become  
cowboy type  
can grin despite  
there's no cows  
spurs, other regalia,  
even a horse at all-  
except by a measurement  
inclusive of ache,  
the distance and span  
of the trip made  
to disperse or  
accept through use  
the lonesome ember.*

Sketch: Haywood St.  
(Then Shall Break)

*Elm trees  
widows of  
elm leaves*

*I cannot now remember  
how earlier in the year  
this street appeared*

*when a marriage held  
together-bough to bud,  
blooms, show of natural*

*actual togetherness then.  
Separate, we separate  
only from an old formation.*

*"And then shall your light...  
"And then shall your light...  
"And then shall your light...  
"And then shall your light..."*

*"break."*

Parting Words  
for Kathy Godfrey

*You  
were not once one thing  
but many interactions  
grass  
lashed under mud over rock  
at the river, or  
furrowed shale of oak bark  
ribbon of May ivy.*

*...walking away from me  
the pastoral comforts are  
piss to the nose? Although  
the natural facts of which you are  
reflection could fan your fearful leav-  
ing  
with breeze that lifts ash seed  
from dandelion  
shuttles dust  
toward new fire.*

*You are going to Spain.  
I am not going to Spain.  
The time is improper. More  
I don't have a ticket for the ship.  
It's sad? It is then that I am leaving  
since I am not leaving.*

*Shapes will not glut  
memory, but the odor  
of oranges we ate that  
afternoon with no  
sentimentality as distance  
has created, swells, and colorfully  
oranges elicit a sense of health,  
when peeled the pocks of the rind  
spray the joy that groves allow  
and inside, cells of fruit  
have such fresh wetness  
that moistens the dry mind.*

*I am brushing back the rind  
of my hair, and taking a wedge  
of memory from the sectioned globe  
I see your face's presence and  
eating the odor of your laughter  
remembered is not sour.*

Pigeon with Broken Foot

*We're not doing well  
having, formerly,  
free of mar  
flown,  
landed-  
press press  
contacting pavement,  
slight hustle  
quick to  
again to  
flight.*

*Now: poverty,  
maimed while requiring  
strength, as all the time.*

*The others,  
no scathes  
chase us,  
and they are despicable  
fucks  
harrowing the damaged  
which in the them, latent  
too will wreck.*



# OPERA

## Asheville Lyric Opera Education Series presents Menotti's 'Amahl and the Night Visitors'

BY DENNIS RAY

Students are the heart of the education system — its whole purpose and its major resource.

How can their potential be nurtured and tapped as schools work toward more active learning, and higher standards and expectations?

Getting students out of the classroom to learn first hand a project from start to finish is one way.

The Asheville Lyric Opera and the Asheville high school choral program offers performances this December designed to further music and arts education in schools and in the community. ALO works directly with teachers, parents and young people in a collaborative effort to create programs that make opera accessible and appealing to everyone. This presentation, Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, was made available to area students grades 3-12 as a cultural and artistic introduction to opera and classical music. Students worked and performed along side professional singers and directors and artistic staff.

Learning from doing and seeing shows the student what it takes to create and finish a major project. Start strong, follow through, finish strong. If all the pieces are there, then the project will be finished. As with anything, it's the creating that is more important than the end result.

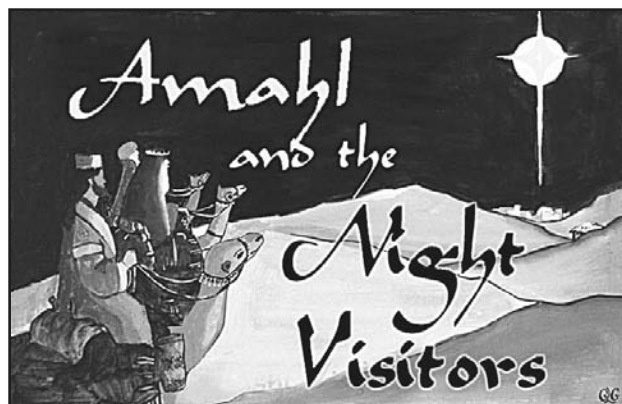
Area school students got the opportunity to study with professional opera players and to now perform in front of a live audience.

"Over the past eight years the community has given so much to the Asheville Lyric Opera company, it's only right we constantly give back," says Director of ALO, David Starkey. "The students have been amazed at how much goes on behind the scenes of a major production. I'm extremely pleased with how well they are all doing. It's going to be a incredible show. It's really going to be quite stunning."

Starkey, who also will be directing this year's performance adds, "We plan to do a different one act opera each year with the local schools."

ALO performed Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* for four seasons (2001-'04) as a main stage production, casting professionals (except for the roles of children), at Diana Wortham Theatre.

"Now we're bringing *Amahl* back," Starkey says, "as an introduction to our Educational series. It's such a wonderful story and we felt since so many people grew up with this opera on TV and you can't watch it anymore, that it would be the perfect production to begin with."



Original ALO artwork by Gloria Gaffney

- o Students will understand the importance and relevance of Classical music and American opera by studying this quintessential American opera by Menotti.
- o At the high school level, students have the chance to work with opera professionals in their own educational environment.
- o Students in Asheville High School's choral program will play the roles of Amahl, the Page and the Shepherds and Shepherdesses.
- o Asheville High School's Choral Director will play the role of the Mother, providing a direct professional faculty connection to these young artists.
- o Asheville Lyric Opera mentors a year long apprenticeship with one of the Asheville High School students who will also perform in the opera. This student has also prepared an educational study guide as a supplement to the students attending the opera.
- o Students from the surrounding Asheville area who participate in the Asheville Lyric Opera's Vocal Arts Program will join the cast of Shepherds and Shepherdesses.
- o Students of Asheville High School's Theatre Department will have the opportunity to assist in preparing and operating the technical elements of the production.

**AMAH AND THE NIGHT VISITORS (OPERA IN ONE ACT) FIRST PERFORMED CHRISTMAS EVE, 1951, BY THE NBC TELEVISION THEATER.**

One of the most popular of American operas, Menotti's work is performed throughout the country every Christmas season. It's the first opera ever written expressly for television, and it was replayed on NBC every year until the original video

recording was lost.

The story is about a young physically challenged boy (Amahl) and his mother who are faced with hunger and cold in their small hut. The boy who is quite imaginative tells his mother he has seen a bright star in the heavens. A new star that has never been there before. She thinks little of this since he has told her so many stories in the past.

Three Wise Men, on their way to Bethlehem, stop at the hut and ask to be taken in for the night. Amahl and his moth-

er welcome them and their Page as well as they can, and are much astonished at the splendor of their robes and the wealth of gifts they are carrying with them. When Amahl's mother realizes that the Three Kings are looking for a newborn child and that the expensive gifts are all destined for him, she becomes bitter and envious. She cannot understand why at least some of these gifts could not be given to her own child, who is so poor and sickly.

While the Three Kings are asleep, the mother steals some of the gold from them only to be caught red-handed. When she explains she needs the gold to feed her starving child, she is readily forgiven. With great tenderness they try to explain to her who this newborn child is and how much he needs the love of every human being to build his coming kingdom. Touched by their words, she not only gives back the stolen gold, but wishes she could add a gift of her own. Amahl impulsively hands the Three Kings his wooden crutch, his most precious possession, and in so doing he is miraculously healed.

When dawn appears, the Three Kings prepare to resume their journey. Amahl begs his mother to let him join them, and he is finally allowed to follow the Kings to Bethlehem to adore and give thanks to the Christ Child.

### THE CAST:

**Vicki Hogan (Mother)**, soprano, assumed the position of choral director at Asheville High School beginning in 2005. An active vocalist as well as choral director, Hogan performed numerous leading roles in the Oklahoma City Lyric Theatre for four seasons and was a featured soprano soloist with the semi-professional choral group Lawton Pro Musica in Oklahoma City.

**Lucas Gregg (Amahl)** was last seen in *Shelton Laurel* at Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre (SART). Other SART roles include *Lost In Yonkers*, *The Adventures of Dottie in Waterland*, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Annie Get Your Gun* and *Pinocchio*. He appeared in *Shadowlands*, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and *Midsummer Nights Dream* at Mars Hill College. Gregg is a 7th grader at Asheville Middle School. Lucas' voice

can be heard in many local, regional and national television and radio voice over spots.

**Dylan Wheeler (Amahl)** played and sang in Evergreen Community Charter School's *Embe* Marimba band for three years. He has performed at LEAF and Rotary Club Meetings with *Embe*. He has performed at NC Stage Company in a school Shakespearean play and has performed several middle school plays. Dylan is a freshman at Asheville High School.

**Aaron Schnurbusch (Kaspar)**, lyric tenor, has performed Goro from *Madama Butterfly*, Lippo Fiorentino in *Street Scene*, Brighella from *Ariadne auf Naxos* and the Anführer in Kurt Weill's *Der Zar läßt sich photographieren*. Recently, he has been performing with the ALO chorus and Education and Outreach program.

**Timothy Wilds (Melchior)**, a native of Asheville, NC, is an accomplished and experienced performer in concert and on stage. He regularly performs with Fuma Sacra, the ensemble-in-residence of Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ, under the direction of Dr. Andrew Megill. He has most recently performed the roles of Morales (*Carmen*), Fiorello and Ambrosius (*Barber of Seville*), Benoit and Alcindoro (*La Bohème*), Elder MacLean (*Susannah*) with the Union Avenue Opera Theatre of St. Louis, MO; two productions of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* in the role of Melchior for DaySpring School of the Arts in Maryland Heights, MO and Krusina (*Bartered Bride*) and Papageno (*Magic Flute*) for the Masterworks Festival in Houghton, NY.

**Roberto Flores (Balthazar)** arrives on the Asheville stage after years of performing Musical Theatre and Opera in Florida, New Jersey and Virginia.

**Cameron Gregg (Page)** was last seen at Asheville High School in *Play On*. At the Reid Center, he appeared in *The Physicists* and as Buddy in *The Diviners*. Also at Asheville High School, he played Cornelius in *Hello Dolly*. Professional credits at the Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre (SART) include young Jim in *Shelton Laurel*, Jay in *Lost in Yonkers*, *The Lion the Witch and The Wardrobe*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, Pedrolino in *Pinocchio Commedia*, and ensemble in *Frankie*. At New American Theatre in Illinois, he was a Lost Boy in *Peter Pan*. He played Young Cain in the Mars Hill College Theatre Arts Department's production of *Children of Eden*. For Asheville Community Theatre, he was in *Falsettos* and *Babe the Sheep Pig*. At Carolina Day School he was Peter in *Peter Pan* and played Johnny Screech in The Wrecking Crew's production of *The Adventures of Dottie in Waterland*. Cameron is a 10th grader at Asheville High, and his voice can be heard nationally, regionally and locally for numerous radio and television voice over spots.

Dec. 16: 2pm and Dec. 18: 7pm  
\$15 per adult / \$6 per student/child  
Where: Asheville High School Auditorium. (828) 236-0670  
info@ashevillyric.org  
Visit www.ashevillyric.org



# Haywood County Arts Council



Juan Peñamejia



Veronica Proano

## Latin Palette:

Artistas de Las Montañas exhibit

Featuring artists of Latino or Hispanic descent who are living in Western North Carolina.

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Gallery  
86

## FEATURE

# Life diamonds of South Africa

By BYRON BELZAK



The diamond cutters of FestDiam and independent American jewelers, including Jewels That Dance, help support the Refilwe community foundation near Johannesburg that directly helps impoverished and orphaned South Africans.

If there is one town full of people who are aware and care about what goes on in the world both near and far to them, it's Asheville.

One of Asheville's best known independent jewelers, Paula Dawkins, owner of Jewels That Dance, was driven to know the truth about the South African diamonds she buys, crafts and sells.

"Asheville is a politically hot town, so you need to know what you're talking about," said Dawkins in an exclusive interview with *Rapid River Magazine*. "So it was important to us to see what was really happening and what was going on in the country from where we buy our diamonds."

### I NEEDED TO KNOW

"I needed to know," said Dawkins. "How can I professionally and ethically work with diamonds? I can't lie to my customers. I can't lie to myself. How do I rationalize selling this product given the lifestyle of this town and of myself? How do I do that?"

That's why she and store manager Marlene Clevenger recently made the 30-hour airplane trek and spent two weeks touring South Africa, known for its legendary diamonds and a history of racial strife, and remains a mystery to most in the US.

"We get such mixed reports over here about these countries," said Dawkins. "We hear the workers are exploited, that they aren't getting good wages, that diamonds are stolen and sold and the money is used

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Teapot by Kaaren Stoner



# FEATURE



In South Africa, Jewels That Dance owner Paula Dawkins cradles 3,000 carats of diamonds in the rough valued at approximately \$2.4 million. She knows firsthand that she offers her customers only socially responsible diamonds that are carefully tracked by The Kimberly Process developed by DeBeers.

to kill people in wars. So that's part of the reason why we went there."

PROFESSIONAL ALL THE WAY  
Paula Dawkins explained that while

'Diamonds' continued on pg. 35

## NOT "BLOOD DIAMOND"

What Dawkins and Clevenger discovered instead was a country that was not at all of the horror stories told by some and now depicted in a new action movie of conflict and intrigue, entitled "Blood Diamond," starring Leonardo DiCaprio.

"The great example of how the diamond industry has been good to the people is in South Africa and Botswana," said Dawkins. "These two countries are democracies. Their governments have mandated that the diamond industry must give back to their people."

Said Clevenger: "There are a lot of immigrants coming into South Africa and Botswana, because it's a promise land of sorts. That's why there are shantytowns, but that's a first step. They have a shot at being part of the middle class there."

Added Dawkins: "These two countries are building a middle class. Diamonds are the biggest export they have. It solves a number of issues within the countries."



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# WINE & DINE

## Support your regional wineries: Childress Vineyards - plus: Nouveau Night Roundup

BY MICHAEL PARKER

As the number of wineries in NC approaches 60, it is high time to consider what that says about quality and potential from our region's soil and talent.

Jokes about NC wines are no longer funny.

Childress Vineyards, in Lexington, heavily invested in the southeast end of the Yadkin Valley American Viticultural Area. Ground broke for the impressive, 35,000 square foot Tuscan-style facility in September 2003. It opened eleven months later, and promptly produced 15,000 cases. They buy grapes from regional growers as they cultivate their own vineyards.

Minimal exposure to Childress wines tells a lot about the winemaker's focus and skill. The 2005 Viognier is made in a Rhone style, true to its French heritage, avoiding the trendy, overly floral, fat style more common in Viognier from California. A red made from Sangiovese speaks very well for the growing region. The grape is commonly blended in other parts of the world to mask hardness and acidity, but this North Carolina Sangiovese is too good to blend.

Winemaker Mark Friszolowski is a Long Island native, and there gained special experience. One of the few things North Carolinians would admit having in common with New Yorkers is a general skepticism of their local wines. Friszolowski has repeatedly broken that barrier in his career.

Impressively, Friszolowski apprenticed under renowned international enologist and viticulturalist, Dimitri Tchelistcheff, one of the world's most skilled winemakers. Instead of submitting a résumé for his current position, he sent in a case of his wine. Now, as then, his products show he is the right man for the job.

The winery is the namesake of



Richard Childress, a native North Carolinian and NASCAR team owner, whose team included the nearly-immortalized Dale Earnhardt. Childress remarked, "It's been a dream to locate a winery in my native state and in the county that has been so good to me and my racing business."

Not only is this part of a revival of NC's winemaking past, it is an amusing reflection of NASCAR's roots. Stock car racing evolved specifically in response to Prohibition. Fast cars outran the feds as they shipped alcoholic beverages to a public stupidly deprived by lawmakers who pandered to a powerful temperance movement. Today, powerful funding from professional racing fortifies a mission in world-class winemaking, over yonder in Yadkin Valley.

The racing connection is a somewhat tangled discussion where stereotypes want to fly: pickup beds supporting giant coolers of domestic beer and derriere compete with the lofty air-conditioned viewing boxes of a presumably wine-and-cheese crowd.

That highlights the balancing act that such a wine supplier has to manage. Downplaying wine's stuffy image is necessary to increase demand and spread the joy, but maintaining wine's image as one of the finer things in life is essential to quality control and satisfying those buyers as their wine knowledge grows.

Fortunately, the Childress following is mostly focused on what the winery was built to do: produce world-class wines. Enhancing that experience is the visitor-friendly villa and winemaking complex. Inside, a well-trained, unpretentious staff

in the tasting room. In the dining room and terrace serve the food of Executive Chef David Thomas, personal chef for the Earnhardt racing family.

97 years have past since North Carolina ranked as the nation's leading producer of wine, a bragging right that ended when the state went dry in 1909. Today, the state ranks 12<sup>th</sup> in wine production and 10<sup>th</sup> in grape growing. Clearly, rank does not necessarily indicate quality. Quality indicates quality. In Mark Friszolowski's words, "A restaurant cannot put out a bad meal, and a winery must release a good wine every single time."

[www.childressvineyards.com](http://www.childressvineyards.com)

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### NOUVEAU NIGHT - WELL DONE!

This year's Nouveau Night was once of the two best in my eleven years of going. This rather pricey wine tasting is not as much about the wine as it is a big social event, and local independent restaurants lend a lot of high-quality support. Many thanks are due to the organizers.

### WORTH THE MONEY. RECOMMENDED CHILDRESS WINES :

STARBOARD, PORT-STYLE DESSERT WINE (\$14). This was the glass that put Childress on my map. True to form, I was blown away when told this is entirely made from rabbiteye blueberries. Impossible, but an absolute bargain.

CABERNET FRANC, RESERVE 2004 (\$25). This red reminded me of the success of reserve Cab-Franc bottlings here in Asheville. It seems the grape has found a good home in North Carolina, and in this case delivers a bolder, complex wine.

SANGIOVESE (\$17). From the Summerfield vineyard of Richard Childress's partner, Greg Johns, this red was too good to blend. Expect medium body and softer, rounded fruit.

VIIGNIER 2005 (\$15). This white wine grape is another that grows well in our state. Friszolowski's style is a wise departure from the bigger west coast styles and more closely resembles a white Rhone. Some time in oak is evident, and the fruit is more pleasant.

PINOT GRIS 2005 (\$15). A particularly citrus-y style makes this white wine a pleasant thirst-quencher. Lightly floral, plus a little something else on the nose.

SPARKING WINE - STAY TUNED  
Production of their first is underway, so remember this in the meantime: Biltmore Estate excels at sparkling wine. Their regular has always been good, and their Brut, Vintage Brut, and Brut Rose are all very well done. Many people still wait for improvements in several of their regular reds and whites, but Biltmore fizz is always a good buy.

## TASTING EVENTS!

### December Tastings

Champagne Tasting, Wed. 12/6, 7pm. Seated. \$30

Wine Dinner at the Left Bank, Thurs. 12/14, 7pm. \$60 inclusive. Call (828) 251-5552 for Reservations

White & Red Bordeaux Tasting, Thurs. 12/20, 7pm. \$25 Seated

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# FOODREVIEWS

## Want a little mussel? Bouchon has the best town!

BY SECRET REVIEWER

**Bouchon**  
62 North Lexington  
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828-350-1140  
[www.ashevillebouchon.com](http://www.ashevillebouchon.com)  
Hours: From 5-till Mon. -Sat.

Bouchon is a quaint little gem the heart of downtown Asheville. This is one of those restaurants to put on your "must try" list. Walking into Bouchon is like going to a rustic French village café. The menu is delightful and amusing in that all items listed are in French and English, but the French also has the phonetic pronunciation so you get a French lesson while you drool over the details.

It shows they do not take themselves too seriously.

### THE DETAILS:

- Ambiance-Relaxed, warm and inviting with casual French décor. There are about 15 tables plus courtyard dining when weather permits.
- Cleanliness-Very clean and well kept.
- Sanitation Rating-98 with no critical violations.
- Service-The service is excellent; I

The mussels are fresh, plump and tender. But that is not all, you also get their famous Frites (french fries) which are incredibly crisp and tender. I consider this meal to be a culinary orgasm!

never have to wait for a thing. The chef makes the rounds to see how everyone is enjoying their meal.

- Food-Simple and elegant. The menu is limited but not lacking. Soup, salads, cheeses, crepes, pate, in addition to a steak, chicken, pasta, and seafood selection.

- Price range-Small plates \$5-9, Big plates \$8-18.

### MY FAVORITES:

- The mussels are the best in town! There are three choices, Parisienne with white wine and shallots, Bruxelloise with Chimay beer and mustard, plus the Mediterranean with saffron, tomato and white wine. The mussels are fresh, plump and tender. But that is not all, you also get their famous Frites (french fries) which are incredibly crisp and tender. I consider this meal to be a culinary orgasm!
- The smoked trout little plate is very tasty. It is a plate of crackers topped with an aioli and smoked trout. I usually do not like the fishy taste of trout but this was perfect.
- The Escargot Bourguignon is delicious with the garlic butter sauce and bread for dipping. Bouchon is probably the only place in town to try this French delicacy.

- The salads are great especially the Grand Pere with thick bacon and walnuts and an evening special salad with asparagus and blue cheese dressing.
- The desserts are delectable. I love the chocolate orange pot de crème and will always order it first if available. Then the chocolate mousse and an evening special dessert titled the African Queen. This is a fillo pastry encasing a creamy banana filling topped with a caramel cream sauce. It is luscious!

### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- Open back up for lunch hours.
- Update the menu eliminating the typographical errors.

### THE BOTTOM LINE:

- Bouchon is truly a little gem of a restaurant in their culinary skill, quality of service, and relaxing atmosphere to dine with friends and family.
- Check out their menu online and keep in mind the specials change daily.
- Make reservations.

22 listed  
wines  
— 16 new

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## HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

## 'A SWANNANOA SOLSTICE' — ANNUAL HOLIDAY CONCERT

**G**rammy award-winning, multi-instrumentalists Al Petteway and Amy White celebrate the winter holidays and the release of their new CD *Winter Tidings*, in *A Swannanoa Solstice* 7pm Sunday, Dec 17 at Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place in downtown Asheville.

In this annual event, world-renowned musicians Petteway and White with special guests Robin Bullock, Doug Orr, Andy Irwin, The Twisty Cuffs, and The Warren Wilson College Chorale, share holiday songs old and new, religious and secular, in a warm and intimate winter concert in the theatre. The trio embraces all manner of seasonal sounds and festivities and they perform well-mastered Celtic and Appalachian songs and music on guitar, mandolin, fiddle, piano, Celtic harp, Irish bouzouki, vocals and world percussion.

Through music and storytelling, Bullock, Petteway and White explore shared winter traditions with energy, color and lyricism. The melodies played by Petteway, a virtuosic acoustic guitar-

ist who favors an altered tuning, draw from a broad variety of cultural influences from Middle East tonalities to Scottish jigs.

White, on piano, mandolin, guitar, Celtic harp and percussion, draws on her classical background to create harmonic arrangements. Bullock, a multi-instrumentalist who plays the guitar, fiddle and bouzouki is hailed as a master flat picker whose style skillfully embraces Celtic music.

This year's special guests include



Winter snow on trees. Photo by Al White

Warren Wilson College President Doug Orr who opens the show with lyrical poetry; members of the Warren Wilson College Chorale directed by Dr. Milt Crotts; The Twisty Cuffs, local Cape Breton-style stepdancers; and Andy Irwin, a singer-songwriter, comedian, thespian and storyteller. *A Swannanoa Solstice*

is presented annually in partnership with The Swannanoa

Gathering at Warren Wilson College.

*A Swannanoa Solstice* features instrumental renditions of holiday songs from Petteway and White's new album *Winter Tidings*, a collection of songs that gives new life to traditional holiday classics such as "Joy to the World," "Star in the

East" and "Christ Child's Lullaby," an ancient Gaelic carol still sung at midnight masses in Scotland. Other selections include traditional mountain melodies such as "While Roving on A Winter's Night," and "Wondrous Love" and a few original pieces such as "Into the Light" written by Amy White. The performance concludes with a special arrangement of "Coventry Carol" featuring members of the Warren Wilson College Chorale.

**WHO:** A SWANNANOA SOLSTICE

**WHAT:** MAINSTAGE ENCORE SERIES

**WHEN:** 7PM. SUNDAY, DEC. 17

**WHERE:** DIANA WORTHAM THEATRE AT PACK PLACE

**TICKET PRICES:** REGULAR: \$28; SENIOR: \$26; STUDENT: \$23; CHILD: \$10

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Inside BlackBird Frame & Art

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Sallie Ellington Middleton

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## COVERSTORY

## New 'Area Performing Arts Center' could boost local economy

'Center' continued from pg. 5

and choral concerts, opera, dance, theater, chamber music all in the same theater. The majority of these PACs seat between 1600 and 2400 people. This model does have its compromises; for example, a multi-purpose theater may have excellent acoustics, but not quite as fine as those of a concert hall. Finally, in addition to the main performance space, it's not unusual for these smaller PACs to include one small venue as well.

Another difference is in programming. If you look at a schedule for Lincoln Center, you'll see that symphonies, operas and the like are their mainstay. If you look at the schedule of a multi-purpose venue such as Asheville would build, you would likely conclude that it should be called a performing arts *and* entertainment center. Among the symphonies and chamber music, you would find an equal or greater number of events such as touring popular/rock/country/jazz vocalists and groups, musical theater, comedy acts, and on and on. If you turn from their performance schedule to their financial statements, you'll find that entertainment events are usually the dominant contributor to revenue and profitability.

Currently, the only space in Asheville comparable to the above would be the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium, which, along with the arena and exhibition hall make up most of the Asheville Civic Center. Unfortunately, there is unanimity among the professionals consulted that upgrading Thomas Wolfe Auditorium is not an option. The small size of the stage, lack of backstage areas, and lack of accessibility for larger productions must be corrected, but the exterior walls of the building and limitations on the potential building footprint simply preclude this. In other words, if you upgrade the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium, you won't have a performing arts center; you'll have an upgraded Thomas Wolfe Auditorium.

So, what do we do? Enter, in late 2002, a small group of interested citizens organized to research and promote the development of a PAC. This group, reorganized in 2004 as the Asheville Area Center for the Performing Arts (AACPA), commissioned feasibility and marketing studies; made numerous site visits to comparable cities and facilities; obtained detailed input from various architects, acousticians and planners; developed preliminary designs and financial plans; and prepared a final report of recommendations for moving forward. All of this was done at no cost to the taxpayers.

Essentially, the PAC proposal was for adaptive reuse of the arena and exhibition hall spaces within the existing civic center. The first step would be to build a new arena, after which the vacated space would be converted into the PAC.

This report was presented to city council in the fall of 2005 and things, apparently, started to get interesting. According to Dr. Battle Haslam, then a member of the AACPA board and one of the presenters that day, there was "a total lack of interest" when they made their presentation. "There seemed to be a lot of interest for a new arena, but not for a performing arts center."

The city council's response was to appoint a new task force to study the issue and report back to the council in six months. The six months became eight and the report was made in May, 2006.

The report of the task force proposed two options, the original adaptive reuse proposed by the AACPA plus an option for building a new, standalone PAC. The main site under discussion was next to city hall, just south of the park. City council expressed a preference for this site, which they own and would consider donating, to be used for the PAC rather than the new arena. Also, they seemed to favor a concept whereby, working with a commercial developer, a mixed-use facility might be built. Mixed-use refers to an approach where some combination of retail and professional spaces, condos and the PAC could be combined, thus reducing the public cost of the facility. The final result was that the city council simply voted to accept the report but made no decisions and took no specific actions. However, the recommendation for the adaptive reuse of the civic center appeared to be running a very distant second in a two-horse race.

Some members of the AACPA board were now extremely frustrated, feeling that after three years of AACPA work and eight months of work by the city's task force, the council had simply decided to do nothing. Dr. Haslam, again expressing his frustration, "The city council is not willing to take the lead or give, even in principle, an endorsement. They wouldn't say 'yes' and they wouldn't say 'no.' That's my definition of paralysis." Dr. Haslam has since resigned from the board.

Sidney Powell, a past president of AACPA who resigned from the board in June of this year, offered a pointed assessment. "The only stumbling block is city's abject refusal to move forward. I think our city council just doesn't get it. I don't think they have ever dealt with a project of this magnitude. I don't think they understand the total benefit it would provide to



Bronze statues outside of the current civic center.

the entire community. I don't think they fully appreciate the impact of the arts on the economic development of Asheville."

Jan Davis, one of the city council members to serve on the task force, offered several observations on the current situation. "There has not been an uproar from the community. This does not rank has one of the highest priorities on their list. We can't afford to just build a facility for people to listen to the symphony ... For the average east or west Asheville family with 2.2 kids, the symphony is not their highest priority. Some would call this social welfare for the rich."

When asked what was needed to move forward, Mr. Davis replied, "Money ... The committee (AACPA) has to show more than just wanting it. In Greenville, the Peace family came forward and gave two large endowments. We need our Peace family or a group of people (to do this)."

The current AACPA, under the leadership of president Joyce Dorr, remains committed to working with the city to make the PAC a reality. "City councils are not usually the lead on these projects. Eventually, funding may come from a number of sources: private, both individual and corporate, city, county, state and even federal. But, with the PACs we visited there was typically a lead gift – from the private sector – that got things going. And then multiple private gifts come next."

How much money are we talking about for a standalone PAC? At this stage, most estimates seem to run in the \$75 - \$85 million range, not counting the cost of land and parking. In addition, the PAC would need an endowment of at least \$10 million to support its operations going forward. With a project this size, an effective lead gift would need to be \$10 million, possibly \$20 million.

So, what are the pieces of this puzzle that need to come together? As a number of people mentioned, it's a complex problem. Stated a little differently, it's a complex of large and small problems needing to be solved. With zero inertia, even small problem seems large ... deal breakers, so to speak. With momentum, however, those same problems seem to get solved.

At the risk of presumption, here are a couple of unsolicited questions or observations that might contribute to moving the effort forward.

First, it is probably correct that the majority of citizens either know little or nothing of the campaign for a PAC, or consider it elitist and of little value to them. The reality is it's an "arts *and* entertainment" venue, potentially serving a broad base of people in Asheville and beyond. Rather than just substantiating this with marketing surveys, is it not possible to, in effect, market this concept to these very people. The result would be to both broaden the base of support for the PAC and to get rid of that "elitist" tag.

Second, even though such projects as this are not typically initiated and led by city councils, isn't there still a place for leadership? Are there not those who appreciate the potential value – culturally and economically – to the community? Of course that doesn't imply committing enormous city resources in spite of the lack of broad community support. It may well, however, suggest an active leadership role in cultivating an appreciation of the value of a PAC. In the meantime, AACPA and possibly others are pursuing those very sizable lead gifts from people and organizations that are inundated with just such requests. Where would they rather invest their philanthropic dollars? In a city where the leadership is seemingly sitting there waiting for the money to fall in their laps? Or to a city where the leadership has demonstrated a clear appreciation of the value of a PAC and is doing everything in its power to make that a reality.

**For more information, visit [www.ashevilleperformingarts.org](http://www.ashevilleperformingarts.org) or [www.ashevillecivic-center.com](http://www.ashevillecivic-center.com) and click on "Civic Center Task Force."**



## HEALTH

# Tai Chi now on local channel 20 URTV

BY MICHAEL CLARK

**N**eed to soothe away the stress of your day? Interested in Tai Chi, but can't seem to fit regular classes into your schedule or budget? Curious about this form of "meditation in motion" and want to know more for free? A new television show helps you learn this ancient health exercise right in your living room.



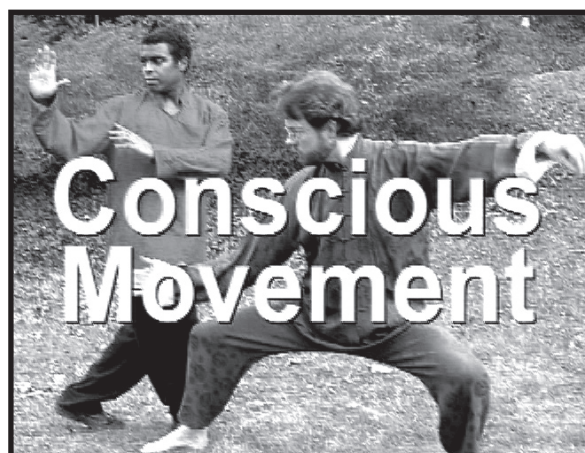
Michael Clark

the *Mountaineer*, *Rapid River Magazine* and *New Life Journal*. We have given demonstrations and free classes to the community by organizing and supporting the local celebrations of World Tai Chi Day ([www.WorldTaiChiDay.org](http://www.WorldTaiChiDay.org)), Chinese New Year and Conscious Movement Day.

A television show aimed at taking these powerful mind-body exercises to the people was the logical next step.

In each 60-minute program, Conscious Movement shows you simple ways to relax, have fun and take care of your body at the same time. The core of the show is Tai Chi and Qigong (pronounced "chee gung"), Chinese exercises that combine gentle movement, meditation, self-massage and relaxed breathing. Tai Chi is a moving meditation that brings balance and inner peace. Research has shown that it relieves stress, lowers blood pressure, increases immune function and improves flexibility.

The first show begins with Tai Chi Three, a simplified Tai Chi form that anybody can learn that takes only two minutes to practice. Each month, we will review the forms you have already learned, while adding new material to keep it interesting. From time to time, we will add interviews and mini-classes from other teachers, as well as footage



Accem Scott and Michael Clark soothe away stress on *Conscious Movement*.

from conscious movement events and our travels to China.

We are open to including all styles of conscious movement, including Tai Chi, Qigong, yoga, dance, NIA, martial arts, drumming and related arts. If you teach these arts, or know someone who does, contact Michael@HeavenAndEarthTaiChi.com to discuss a video shoot. This show does *not* focus on showing what a "master" can do. Instead, your proposal should be for a 5-10 minute segment teaching viewers how to perform simple exercises themselves.

If you miss a show or want a permanent copy, you may order DVDs of each program at the e-mail above. Give yourself the gift of conscious movement today and learn mindful practices that last a lifetime.

## VISIT MAGICAL ANCIENT MEXICO:

A Journey of Personal Transformation in the Modern World

Michael Clark and 5 international teachers lead you on an exciting travel adventure combined with a powerful inner journey. Practice Qigong and similar mind-body exercises from Toltec and Mayan traditions in the power spots of Mexico's ancient civilizations: pyramids, monuments, caves and beaches. Strengthen your connection to Nature and enhance your personal growth. Bilingual English/Spanish. No experience necessary. Complete Tour: 22 days, Feb.17 - March 10, 2007, \$3,240. Yucatan segment only: 11 days, Feb 28 - March 10, 2007, \$1,700. Contact: Michael Clark (828) 252-6851, Michael@HeavenAndEarthTaiChi.com. Full details at [www.MexicoMagicoAntiguo.com](http://www.MexicoMagicoAntiguo.com).

# Motivating your diabetic

BY MAX HAMMONDS, MD

**E**veryone knows "Ralph." He is 57, has had type 2 diabetes for over eight years, is overweight by 80 pounds, has high blood pressure, and loves to eat. He has never paid much attention to his disease and has never tried very hard to control his diabetes. "Ralph" has begun to develop some chest pain on walking further than ½ mile and has tingling sensations in his feet. "Ralph" is about to become another statistic.

Everyone knows "Ralph." There are 21 million "Ralphs" with diabetes in the US and the number is increasing by 1.5 million every year. Why? More than half the American adults are overweight throughout most of their lives, which leads to insulin resistance, which leads to type 2 diabetes, which leads to the complications of diabetes.

The disaster of diabetes is that it doesn't kill you immediately; it makes you

miserable. The increase of cholesterol and triglycerides in obesity plus the effect of diabetes on the small blood vessels of the body lead to a 73% increase in incidence of high blood pressure with an accompanying 2-4 times increase of heart disease and stroke. Diabetic small blood vessel disease also increases the incidence of blindness, kidney failure, peripheral nerve damage, dental disease. Diabetes accounts for 44% of all kidney failure cases and 60% of all non-traumatic lower limb amputations. Eventually most diabetics die of a heart attack - at a rate of about 5 times the normal population.

Because there are so many "Ralphs", everyone knows "Ralph." "Ralph" has struggled with his weight since his mid-twenties. Now that he is in his fifties, he has given up trying. He doesn't know that it's possible to control his diabetes and, in many cases, to make his diabetes go away entirely. He thinks that it's not worth the effort, being unaware that the same complications of type 1 (juvenile) diabetes attacks the type 2 diabetic. He thinks that

the control of his disease is the job of his physician.

Yes, there are good medications that can make the body more sensitive to its own insulin. There are medicines that can lower blood pressure, make the platelets of the blood less sticky, decrease cholesterol and triglycerides. Physicians are being exhorted by their professional education programs and hounded by their HMO organizations to bring their diabetics under control. And in many cases the physicians have made some good progress toward that goal. But in the end, type 2 diabetes is a disease of choice, of lifestyle. "Ralph" can control his own diabetes and the disastrous risks that accompany it in three ways:

1. He can change his diet. The typical American diet contains 37% empty calories (without nutritional value) - 19% hidden fats (added fats in cooking and at the table) and 18% hidden sugars (in soft drinks, baked goods and prepared cereals, and desserts). These extra calories increase "Ralph's" weight, add nothing

to his nutrition, raise his cholesterol, and increase his insulin resistance.

2. He can lose weight. By changing his diet and increasing his exercise, "Ralph" can drop the 80 extra pounds he carries which, in many cases, will reverse the effect that fat cells have on insulin resistance and eliminate the diabetes all together

3. He can work with his physician to track and control his blood glucose levels which will decrease markedly (over 60%) the rate of complications he may experience.

Yes, everyone knows "Ralph." He may be a precious loved one - or he may be you. Encourage "Ralph" to care for himself. Assist him in making the life style choices that can make a such a difference in his life. Help him find a physician whose treatment regimen includes life style educational assistance as well as medications.

Pray for "Ralph." The results are infinitely worth it.



## WHAT TO DO GUIDE™

## EVENTS/CLASSIFIED — DECEMBER

TO PLACE EVENT /  
HAPPENING WITH  
RAPID RIVER ART MAGAZINE

Any “free” event open to the public can be listed at no charge up to 30 words. For all other events there is a **\$9.95** charge up to 30 words and **10 cents** for each additional word.

**160 word limit per event.**

Deadline is the 19th of each month. Payment must be made prior to printing. Email Beth Gossett at: [ads@rapidrivermagazine.com](mailto:ads@rapidrivermagazine.com) or mail to: 85 N. Main St, Canton, NC 28716. Or Call: (828) 646-0071 to place ad over the phone.

## DISCLAIMER:

Due to the overwhelming number of local event submissions we get for our “What to Do Guide” each month, we can no longer accept entries that do not specifically follow our publication’s format. Non-paid event listings must be 30 words or less and both paid and non-paid listings must provide information in the following format: date, time, brief description of what your event is and any contact information. Any entries not following this format will not be considered for publication.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Transylvania Community Arts Council invites local and regional artists to participate in the exhibit “A Sense of Place.” This will be on view at the Transylvania Community Arts Center, Jan. 16–Feb. 23. A reception for the artists will be held Jan. 19. Artists who would like to exhibit their work may deliver work to the Arts Center, Jan. 9, between 10–4pm. Artists may pick up an application at the Arts Center or call for more information. Transylvania Community Arts Center is located at 321 South Caldwell Street, in Brevard. For more information (828) 884-2787 or visit [www.tcarts.org](http://www.tcarts.org).

Sound Garden Gallery, 4 Eagle St., downtown Asheville seeks artists interested in monthly shows. call Linda at (860) 338-1354.

**\$250.00 Grand Prize** and be featured in the Jan. Rapid River TAAS-Gallery Ad, \$150.00 for Second Place. Enter into the TAAS-Gallery Christmas Ornament Competition & Fundraiser. Final deadline is

Dec. 9. Raising money for Hospice of McDowell County and collecting toys for Project Christmas. For information stop by the gallery in downtown Old Fort, call (828) 668-1070 or visit our website [www.taasg.com](http://www.taasg.com)

**Call to Artists and Handcrafters**—Submit your application now and pre-qualify to become a TAAS-Gallery member we will have new spaces available in Jan. As a member you will have access to the on-line inventory manager. Our gallery members say it’s the best tool they have ever used. For information stop by the gallery in downtown Old Fort, call (828) 668-1070 or visit our website [www.taasg.com](http://www.taasg.com) Get your space, get your webpage, get to TAAS!

## ART

**TAAS-Gallery** Featuring Fine Art by Denise Geiger, Martha Raines and Toni Tarte. See this exclusive collections of original water colors, oils and pastels that capture the superlative of nature the essence of light and encompass comforting landscapes forms. TAAS-Gallery is home to more than 40 local artisans and crafts people. Well worth the drive just down the road in Old Fort more info: (828) 668-1070 [www.taasg.com](http://www.taasg.com).

Dec. 1–2—This holiday season give your friends and family original and unique gifts hand crafted by UNC Asheville art students. UNC Asheville’s Art Department will hold its annual Holiday Ceramics and Art Sale from 4–7pm Dec. 1, and 10–2pm Dec. 2, in University Gallery, located on the first floor of Owen Hall. The sale is open to the public.

Dec.1—Opening reception for the Senior Art Exhibit at 5:30pm. On display in the Spiers Gallery will be photos, paintings and sculptures by art major students graduating in Dec. The exhibit will run through Dec. 15. Admission is free. Regular gallery hours are 8–3pm, Mon.–Fri. or by appointment by calling (828) 884-8211.

Dec. 1—Waynesville Gallery

Association hosts Art After Dark, it’s popular monthly gallery stroll. The season continues through December. Participating galleries remain open until 9pm giving downtown diners and strollers the opportunity to enjoy shopping after 5pm. Many galleries will also be hosting artist receptions, provide live music and serve tasty treats. The galleries of the For further information please check out the Waynesville Gallery Association website at: [www.waynesvillegalleryassociation.com](http://www.waynesvillegalleryassociation.com) or call (828) 456-3517.

Dec. 2–3, 10–5pm—The free Toe River Studio Tour takes place in and around Burnsville, Celo, Spruce Pine, Little Switzerland and Bakersville, North Carolina. About 125 artists and craftsmen in every medium will open their studios for browsing and buying. An artists reception will be held Dec. 1, 5–8pm. [www.toeriverarts.org](http://www.toeriverarts.org) or (828) 682-7215.

Dec. 7–9—Haywood Studios of Haywood Community College will hold its 30th Annual Christmas Show and Sale beginning Dec. 7. There is no admission to this juried crafts sale which will be held in the lower level of the Student Services Building at HCC. The show will run Dec. 7, 5–8pm with a reception. Dec. 8, 10–8pm. Dec. 9, 10–6pm. Haywood Studios is a student organization of Haywood Community College, a public institution located in Clyde, NC. Call (828) 627-4670.

Dec. 8–Jan. 31—The Red Clover Gallery presents William Jameson and Anne Jameson. Dec. 8 reception to meet the artists from 6–9pm. The Red Clover Gallery is located in downtown Landrum, SC at 214 Rutherford St. (864) 457-3311. [www.redclovergallery.com](http://www.redclovergallery.com)

Dec. 15–Jan. 15—Woolworth Walk presents the exhibit “Open Hearts.” A reception where the public may meet and support these wonderfully creative individuals and view their work on Dec. 17, 2–4pm in the FW Front Gallery. Woolworth Walk, 25 Haywood St. (828) 254-9234.

Through Dec. 30—Four exhibitions open at Blue Spiral 1. Scott Upton & John Nickerson. Engaging abstract paintings from Scott Upton and glass objects and sculpture by John Nickerson. Style + Function: National Ceramics, Linda Arbuckle, Guest Curator Invitational. Brigid



**HOLIDAY INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE** Asheville’s Klezmer Band, Chicken Soup, with master dance teacher, Erik Bendix, presents an evening of folk dancing, Saturday, Dec. 16 at the Jewish Community Center, 236 Charlotte St. Doors open at 6:30pm, dance instruction at 7pm. Call (828) 648-4523.

Burns: Intersection. Paige Hamilton Davis: Passages. 38 Biltmore Ave. in downtown Asheville. 10–6pm, Mon–Sat. Call (828) 251-0202 or visit [www.bluespiral1.com](http://www.bluespiral1.com).

Through Dec. 15—Kelly Welch and Linda Cheek will show at The Red Clover Gallery with a reception Nov. 10, 6–9pm. The gallery is located in downtown Landrum, SC at 214 Rutherford St. (864) 457-3311. [www.redclovergallery.com](http://www.redclovergallery.com)

Through Dec. 12—Woolworth Walk exhibit “From Dirt to Flowers”. A reception where the public may meet the artists and ask about their work will be held on Nov. 17, 2–4pm. Woolworth Walk, 25 Haywood St. (828)254-9234.

## ART CLASSES

**Woolworth Walk Art Classes** held at 25 Haywood St. Pre-registration encouraged. Come in or call (828) 254-9234.

**Drawing & Painting with Lorelle Bacon:** Weds. 1–3pm and 3:30–5:30pm Adults, Children, Teens Beginner through Advanced. Fee: \$50 (four 2 hour classes). On-going (828) 669-7215.

**Intermediate Jewelry Workshop:** Wed. 1:30–4:30pm. Fee: \$289.00 for 8 sessions.

**Open Studio:** 12 hours: \$54; 24 hours: \$108; 36 hours \$162.

## ATTRACTIONS

**Carl Sandburg Home**—located three miles south of Hendersonville off the Greenville Highway/Rte. 225 (formerly known as US 25) on Little River Road in Flat Rock. Guided tours of Carl Sandburg Home are provided throughout the day at a cost of \$5 per person. Children are free. Park Service passports are accepted and sold. The grounds are open to the public from 9–5pm.

**Wolfe’s Angel**—Author Thomas Wolfe’s first novel was *Look Homeward, Angel*. In the book there are constant references to an angel statue carved from Italian marble. This is the angel Wolfe placed in American literature. Thomas Wolfe’s father, W.O. Wolfe, sold the statue to the Johnson family to mark the family plot in Oakdale Cemetery. The angel is holding a lily in her left hand and extending her right hand upward. Oakdale Cemetery is located on Hwy. 64 W., just a short distance from downtown. The statue is protected by a wrought iron fence, and there is a historical marker located on the highway.

**Henderson County Farmers Curb Market**—All items sold at the market must be either hand-made or locally grown. The sellers are 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generation vendors offering a variety of goods such as: crafts, baked goods, jellies, plants, flowers, toys and product. The market has been in operation since 1924. Hours are from 8am–2pm Tue., Thurs. and Sat. from Apr.–Dec. The market is located on the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. and Church St. For additional infor-



# WHAT TO DO GUIDE™

mation call (828) 692-8012.

**Western North Carolina Air Museum**—is the first air museum in the state of North Carolina known as the “first in flight” state. The museum features award winning restored and replica antique and vintage airplanes. The hours are (weather permitting) Mar.-Oct. Wed. and Sun, Noon-6pm and Sat. 10am-6pm. Nov.-Feb. Wed., Sat. and Sun, Noon-5pm. The museum is located at the Hendersonville Airport. For more information call (828) 698-2482 or go online at [www.wncairmuseum.com](http://www.wncairmuseum.com).

**Apple Wedge Packers**—visit the facility in Hendersonville for production tours and to experience the local tradition of apple packing. View the most modern grading and packing equipment including an electronic sorter that photographs each apple four times to determine the best color quality. If time permits, load a 50-seat wagon for a guided trip into an apple orchard and sample the homemade apple cider. There is an admission charge for tours. For more information call (828) 685-8349.

**Southern Appalachian Radio Museum**—The Southern Appalachian Radio Museum is the only radio museum open to the public in North Carolina where you can see and hear radios of long ago plus an amateur radio station. Donations appreciated. Located at A-B Technical Community College in Asheville, Room 315 of the Elm Building. Hours 1-3pm on Fridays while school is in session, tours (828) 298-1847

## COMMUNITY

Dec. 19, 7pm—Awards Ceremony TAAS-Gallery & Old Fort Chamber of Commerce are having the Christmas Ornament Competition and Fundraiser (COCAF) Awards Ceremony. During a one hour program see who one the high-stakes contest and join in the fun and Christmas spirit. Listen to our story teller and a variety of local Christmas carolers. Open to the public admission is free. For more info (828) 668-1070 or visit [www.taasg.com](http://www.taasg.com).

**Ongoing Tuesday Night Self-Healing Support Group**, based on the work of Dr. Michael Ryce [www.whyagain.com](http://www.whyagain.com) Everyone Welcome! Love Offering. 6-8pm at Mystic Journeys Sacred Space, 333 Merrimon Avenue (828) 253-4272

**Community Beware**—Asheville Fire & Rescue has received reports of an individual who is posing as

one of AFR's Fire Marshals. All of Asheville Fire & Rescue Fire Marshal's are uniformed, wear badges and can present identification at all times. If someone has a question of the validity of a Fire Marshal's identity, they can contact Asheville Fire & Rescue at (828) 259-5640 to verify. Anyone that has, or may have had, contact with a person of questionable profession should report this to our investigating officer Buddy Thompson at (828) 777-8931. For additional questions regarding this release, please contact Fire Marshal Wayne Hamilton at (828) 768-0129.

**Ongoing**—Professional Parenting, the largest community outreach program sponsored by Appalachian State University, is looking for a few good foster parents. Professional Parenting is a non-profit agency who will train and license families for children in the NC foster care system. If interested, please call (828) 236-2877 for further information.

**Ongoing**—Volunteer at the Smith-McDowell House. Asheville's past needs you now. All ages, backgrounds, talents needed to assist with Museum's public programs and preservation of Historic House and Garden. Information: Tammy Walsh (828) 253-9231 or [smh@wnchistory.org](mailto:smh@wnchistory.org).

**The Waynesville Parks and Recreation Department** would like to help by offering a FREE program to you. It's called "Rec Reminder" and it's very simple. The department will contact you via email one week prior to a deadline for a class, program or special event that it is sponsoring.your email address will not be given out to any other individual or organization. (828) 456.2030 or email [wrcdirector@charter.net](mailto:wrcdirector@charter.net). Also, please indicate age for email:12 and under,13-19, 20-49, 50 and up or all of them.

## DANCE

Dec. 6-10—The Asheville Ballet presents *The Nutcracker* at Diana Wortham Theatre. Showtimes are 7:30pm Wed.-Sat., and 2:30pm Sat. and Sun. Regular tickets are \$25-40, students \$20-35, and all children \$15. For information call Ann Dunn, Director at (828) 258-1028. For tickets call the box office at (828) 257-4530.

Dec. 16—Holiday International Folk Dance Asheville's Klezmer Band, Chicken Soup, with master dance teacher, Erik Bendix, presents an evening of folk dancing at the Jewish Community Center, 236

Charlotte St. Doors open at 6:30pm, dance instruction at 7pm. Call (828) 648-4523.

## FUN WITH LEARNING

**Colburn Museum**

Every Wed.—Free admission to the museum 3-5 pm.

**Continuing Exhibits:**

**The Hall of Gems and Minerals**—The Colburn is renowned for its permanent collection of gem and mineral samples from around the world. Kids can touch and marvel over the amazing differences between soft minerals like talc and hard ones like quartz while adults oooh and ahhhhhh over priceless cut and faceted gemstones.

**The Grove Stone Earth Center**—Explore our planet with hands on materials explaining plate tectonics, volcanos and the mysteries of the Earth's core.

**A Richness of Resources: History of Mining in WNC**—This fascinating interactive exhibit leads visitors of all ages through the rich history of WNC's unique mining industry. Set off the detonator and discover what a mine looks like inside, then take a look at the valuable minerals you might find in your own backyard.

**Weather, Climate and You**—See how you'd look on TV as a weatherperson, measure the wind's speed and learn more about the destructive power of hurricanes.

**Rock and Mineral ID!** Ever wonder just what that weird rock you found is? Think you have a meteorite, a diamond or possibly a fossilized dinosaur bone? Ask the expert! Phil Potter, the Colburn Museum's tame geologist, will examine and identify any rocks and minerals you bring in on Wednesdays between 3-4pm. Best part? It's free with Museum admission!

**School and Homeschool Programs** are starting up! Call the Colburn today to make sure you're on the mailing list for the brochure or to schedule your field trip to one of WNC's most popular and educational facilities.

**Seeking Volunteers!** The Colburn is currently accepting volunteer applications. Join the fun at Asheville's hidden treasure; help museum visitors at the front desk and in the gift shop. Call the museum for more info!

All classes below are sponsored by The Health Adventure. For info please call (828) 254-6373, Ext. 329 to register and prepay or visit [www.thehealthadventure.org](http://www.thehealthadventure.org)



For the 32<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year, The Asheville Ballet presents *The Nutcracker* December 6-10 at Diana Wortham Theatre. Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. Wednesday - Saturday, and 2:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Regular tickets are \$25-40, students \$20-35, and all children \$15. For information call Ann Dunn, Director at (828) 258-1028. For tickets call the box office at (828) 257-4530.

[thehealthadventure.org](http://thehealthadventure.org)

**Ongoing**—Home-School Happenings offers innovative educational programs to students learning at the kindergarten through eighth-grade level. Classes are held on the second Wednesday of every month at 1:30-2:30pm throughout the school year.

**Fabulous Fridays** provides youngsters age three to six with unique programs that encourage and stimulate development while having fun. Motor skills, language, vision, social skills and creativity are all encouraged in these classes. Fabulous Fridays are \$5 per person for members; \$7 per person for nonmembers. Caregivers are admitted free of charge. Upcoming classes include:

**Dec. 1—Numbers & Hues.** Counting and colors is what we are all about on this day. We may know the names of our colors, but what happens when we mix blue and green together? What surprises appear when we melt and mix crayons together? Our fingers help us figure out just how much fun

learning can be with numbers and colors.

**Jan. 5—Teddy Bear Picnic.** Treat your bear to a picnic at our place for a fun day of play! Our little friends can lend a hand while we make “Beary cool” ornaments and crafts to take home. Should the little guy need a break, bring him over to our tea party table for a “spot of something nice” and everyone will go home happy!

**Feb. 2—Little Builders.** Little hands are always busy and there's no end to what we can build. Our new traveling exhibit “Little Builders” makes building a blast! We can glue and hammer our pieces of wood, make paper bowls out of goeey mash and even use paper towel tubes for some unconventional buildings. Join the fun!

## HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

The Health Adventure's popular Rent-a-Santa program makes holiday gatherings festive while raising



# WHAT TO DO GUIDE™

funds for science and health education. The museum's renowned Clown Troupe runs a Rent-a-Santa program, which provides 30-45-minute visits throughout Dec. with Santa to help hand out gifts and treats family members, provide mirth during holiday parties, or hand out paychecks to employees. Family get-togethers are \$75 and business gatherings run between \$100 and \$150, depending on the event. All proceeds benefit The Health Adventure's exhibits and programs. For more information or to book a Santa, call (828) 254-6373, Ext. 326

The Arts Council of Henderson County is currently distributing entry forms for their annual Gingerbread House Competition & Exhibition. Entry forms and \$5 entry fee must be received by Dec. 1. Gingerbread houses must be delivered Dec. 7. Email request for entry form to [acofhc@bellsouth.net](mailto:acofhc@bellsouth.net) or call (828) 693-8504 for entry form, directions, or more information.

Dec. 2, 10-8:30pm—The merchants of Flat Rock will hold an Open House for their Annual Village Holiday Stroll in the historic village, three miles south of Hendersonville on Highway 225.

Dec. 2, Noon-5pm—Historic Johnson Farm will hold its holiday open house, "Christmas at the Farm". Admission is \$4 for Adults and \$3 for children. Historic Johnson Farm is located at 3346 Haywood Rd., Hendersonville.

Dec. 2, 8:30pm—Annual lighting of the Brevard College Christmas Tree, located in the college's residential quad near Dunham Auditorium. Come join the caroling and comradeship. (828) 884-8211.

Dec. 3, 7-10, 7-9pm—Hitch up that one-horse open sleigh and head over to UNC Asheville's Carol

Belk Theatre for the "Holiday Spectacular! Spectacular!" UNC Asheville's drama students will transform the outside of the theater into a winter wonderland for the entire family with a unique light and sound show. The event is open to the public; concessions will be sold and donations will be accepted. For more information, call UNC Asheville's Drama Department at (828) 251-6610.

Dec. 7-9, 15-16, 6-9pm—Illumination Festival, WNC Nature Center — 75 Gashes Creek Rd. (828) 298-5600. Seasonal celebration with animals, holiday lights and special treats.

Dec. 8-16—Arts Council of Henderson County's annual Gingerbread House Competition, 538 N. Main St, corner of 6th, in downtown Hendersonville. (828) 693-8504 for information.

Dec. 9, 1-9pm—Celebrate the season by giving back! Join the holiday fun on at the West Asheville Community Center on Haywood Rd. Music, face painting, crafts, raffle and international food! All funds support the moving costs of Cooper Blvd. residents when the land where they live is sold. More info at the Emma Family Resource Center: (828) 252-4810.

Dec. 15, 7-1am—"Christmas Community Convergence: A Traveling Bonfires Holiday Chill-Time." Party-Concert-Benefit. Featuring music by Peace Jones and Hank Jones Ghost, with Sage Sansone & the poetry of Pasckie Pascua, Brian Sneed, and Bonfires friends. Center of Unlimited Possibilities, Westgate Mall, West Asheville. Audience brings \$5 gifts and get the same from random friends; benefit

auction, raffle prizes. Free food and non-alcoholic drinks. \$5 donation. Proceeds go to nonprofit side projects, Third World Asheville and Kids 'r Indies. For info (828) 505-0476.

During his visit to Asheville School, Bissinger will hold writing workshops for students on Dec. 8. (828) 254-6345 ext. 4042 or e-mail: [wiliamsb@ashevilleschool.org](mailto:wiliamsb@ashevilleschool.org)

## MUSEUM

### Asheville Art Museum

Every first Wednesday of the month from 3-5pm, Museum is open and free to the public.

Ongoing—Exhibitions—Vantage Points: Perspectives on American Art 1960-1980. Art of the 1960s and 1970s is examined in four different galleries, including Photography, Women Artists, Sculpture and Pop Art and Geometric Imagery. Programs at the Asheville Art Museum:

Every First Wednesday of the Month, from 3-5pm, Museum Open Free to the Public.

Southern Appalachian Radio Museum—The Southern Appalachian Radio Museum is the only radio museum open to the public in North Carolina

where you can see and hear radios of long ago plus an amateur radio station. Donations appreciated. Located at A-B Technical Community College in Asheville, Room 315 of the Elm Building. Hours 1-3pm on Fridays while school is in session, tours (828) 298-1847

## MUSIC

Ongoing—Lucianne Evans—standards solo vocal/piano, Fridays 6:30-9:30pm, Bistro 502, 502 N. Main St. Hendersonville (828) 697-5350.

Dec. 2, 7:30pm—Brevard College's Division of Fine Arts will present its ninth performance of "A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols" at the Porter Center for Performing Arts. The service will include carols, new and traditional, sung by Brevard College's Chamber Chorale and Concert Choir under the direc-

tion of C. Michael Porter, director of choral activities. The reading of the biblical Christmas story will be given by members of the College and community. Admission is free. (828) 884-8211.

Dec. 3, 4pm—UNC Asheville's Music Department to Perform Annual Holiday Concert in UNC Asheville's Lipinsky Auditorium. The concert will feature UNC Asheville student musical groups performing well-known holiday carols. Admission is \$5. The event is open to the public. For more information, call UNC Asheville's Music Department at (828) 251-6432.

Dec. 5, 7:30pm—Anonymous 4, the vocal quartet long acclaimed for its unparalleled performance of medieval repertoire, is branching out with its latest effort *Gloryland*, singing beautiful religious ballads, folk songs, folk hymns, and gospel songs. Brevard College's Porter Center for the Arts. (828) 884-8330 or e-mail [boxoffice@brevard.edu](mailto:boxoffice@brevard.edu).

Dec. 9, 7:30—"Jazz Christmas," a performance featuring Brevard College's Jazz Ensemble. This concert will feature holiday favorites performed with a jazz twist. (828) 884-8330.

Dec. 10, 3:30pm—The Reynolds-Miller Chorale will present their annual Christmas concert at St. Matthias Church facing South Charlotte St. in Asheville. The program will feature Christmas favorites, and the 28-voice chorale will be accompanied by organ and string quartet. Free. The church is located in Asheville just off South Charlotte Street at Max Street on the hill across from the Asheville Public Works Building (1 Dundee St.). Shuttle parking is available from the Public Works parking lot on South Charlotte St.

Dec. 17, 3pm—The Blue Ridge Orchestra will present a concert of traditional Holiday music on at the Folk Art Center on the Blue Ridge Parkway. The orchestra will be joined by Voices in the Laurel children's choir. Free. For more information visit [www.blueridgeorchestra.org](http://www.blueridgeorchestra.org).

Dec. 17, 7pm—"The Many Moods of Christmas," free concert performed by First Baptist Church of Asheville's choir and orchestra. Historic church downtown at intersection of Charlotte St. and I-240. (828) 252-4781 or [www.fbca.net](http://www.fbca.net).

## OPERA

The Asheville Lyric Opera presents its 2006-2007 calendar:

Feb 9-11, 2007—Franz Lehar's



The Health Adventure invites guests to enrich their community during a special Family Day Origami Workshop on December 9: each visitor who brings a can of food for MANNA Food Bank will help minimize hunger in western North Carolina. Canned goods collected throughout the day will be placed under the museum's Holiday Origami Tree in celebration of the museum's current traveling exhibit, *Flip It, Fold It, Figure It Out!* For more information, visit [www.thehealthadventure.org](http://www.thehealthadventure.org). (828) 254-6373

## LECTURES

Dec. 7, 7:30pm—Pulitzer Prize winning author H.G. Bissinger will speak to Asheville School students and faculty in Asheville School's Graham Theater. The event is free and open to the public, but seating is limited. Bissinger is the author of the highly acclaimed *Friday Night Lights*, which is now a major motion picture starring Billy Bob Thornton and a television series appearing on NBC.

CONSULTANT TO VISUAL ARTISTS & ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

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Asheville Arts Council Boardroom Gallery  
Topic: The Art of Conversation: How to Verbally Sell Your Work

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# WHAT TO DO GUIDE™

## Merry Widow

Apr. 13 & 14, 2007—Giuseppe Verdi's *La Traviata*

Brand new subscription prices range from \$90 to \$111. For a season brochure, call Ticket Services at (828) 236-0670. Brand new single tickets prices for *L'Elisir d'Amore* (The Elixir of Love), *Merry Widow*, *La Traviata* go on sale to the public on Sept. 5, 2006 with prices ranging from \$35 to \$45. Single tickets will be sold exclusively through the Diana Wortham Theatre box office at (828) 257-4530, [www.dwtheatre.com](http://www.dwtheatre.com) or in person at The Diana Wortham Theatre, 2 South Pack Square in Asheville.

## QUILTING

Through Dec. 16—"Seven Sisters: New Quilts from an Old Favorite 2005" award winning and finalist's quilts from the Museum of the American Quilter's Society's international competition. Includes quilts from Japan, Germany, and 15 states, including one by NC's own Scott Murkin. Free and open to the public. Arts Council of Henderson County gallery, 538 N. Main St., at the corner of 6th Ave., 2nd floor. Call (828) 693-8504 for more information. This exhibition was organized by the Museum of the American Quilter's Society, Paducah, Kentucky.

## THEATRE

Dec. 10, 2pm—Asheville Playback Theatre joins the World Wide Network of Playback Theatre companies for the 2nd Annual Global Playback Event—sharing stories of human rights: *Listening! Speaking Out! and Taking Action!* at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 1 Edwin Place (corner of Charlotte St.). This is a Fundraiser for the International Center for Playback Theatre. (828) 665-4774.

Dec. 14-16, 8pm—Asheville Community Theatre proudly announces the fifth remount of their sold out smash hit *The Santaland Diaries* by David Sedaris. Performances: Thurs.-Sat. nights with an additional late-night performance Sat. night at 10pm on the Mainstage at Asheville Community Theatre in downtown Asheville. Admission: \$10. 35 East Walnut Street, Downtown Asheville (828) 254-1320.

North Carolina Stage Company Presents 2006-2007 Performance

## Calendar:

Show times: All mainstage shows run Wed.-Sat. at 7:30pm, Sun. at 2pm. Family Passport is every Sat. 11am-12pm.

Ticket prices: Mainstage prices: first Wed. is Pay-What-You-Can Night, other Wed. \$15; Thurs. and Sun. \$20; Fri. and Sat. \$23. Family Passport tickets are \$5 for all ages.

## CORGI TALES



## BY PHIL HAWKINS

Dec. 6-17, 2006—*It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*

Feb. 21-Mar. 11, 2007—*All in the Timing*

Apr. 11-29, 2007—*A Midsummer Night's Dream*

May 9-20, 2007—*Chesapeake*

Jan. 10-21, 2007—Bill and Neela Muñoz—SHOW TO BE ANNOUNCED

Jan. 24-Feb. 4, 2007—The Redundant Theatre Company Theatre—Valentine's show 2007

Mar. 21-Apr. 1, 2007—immediate theatre project—TO BE ANNOUNCED

June 21-June 30, 2007—A Telling Experience—*The Epic of Gilgamesh*

Transylvania Arts Council announces its 2005-2006 Performing Arts Series: Sharing Stories, Near and Far. The series will include five evening performances in the intimate surroundings of the Transylvania Community Arts Center Gallery, eleven school programs, and five community-based workshops presented by the visiting performing artists. Individual performance tickets are \$15 for adults and \$8 for students. Series tickets, including all five performances, are \$50 for adults and \$25 for students. Unless otherwise noted, workshop fees are \$5 per person. To purchase performance tickets or to register for an artist's workshop, call Transylvania Arts Council at (828) 884-2787 or visit the Arts Center at 321 South Caldwell Street, in Brevard, NC. All performances begin at 7pm.

Flat Rock Playhouse. Tickets range

from \$5 to \$32 (with discounts available). For tickets or info call (828) 693-0731 This year's schedule include:

*Sanders Family Christmas*, Nov. 15-Dec. 3

*The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, Dec. 8-17

Walking Tours of Historic Montford—Fri., Sat. and Sun. at 10:30am. Tours vary from historic/architectural to Riverside cemetery. Reservations required. Cost \$20.00/person or two for \$35.00 with \$5.00 in Montford dollars to spend at Viva Europa, Sweet Heaven, The Montford Art Center or Reader's Corner. Call (828) 777-1014 for

[mtnmicro.org](http://mtnmicro.org)

Ongoing—Figure drawing classes at Artemesia Gallery Thursdays from 6:30-9pm. Call (828) 259-3636 to sign up in advance. Limited to 10 students per class. Cost is \$10 per person.

Ongoing—Adult Theatre Workshops offered at Asheville Community Theatre. Beginning Acting, Improvisation and Writing & Performing Sketch Comedy Classes. Please contact Jenny Bunn at (828) 254-1320 x3 or [jenny@ashevilletheatre.org](mailto:jenny@ashevilletheatre.org) for more info [www.ashevilletheatre.org](http://www.ashevilletheatre.org).

Ongoing—Offering study groups, meditation, and workshops on Japanese gardens, Tai Chi, calligraphy, and more. Open to all. Go to [www.greattreeemple.org](http://www.greattreeemple.org) for more information.

Ongoing—Drawing Instruction. Learn to draw from classically trained professional Asheville artist, James Daniel. Inexpensive and open to all. Call the studio at (828) 232-2232.

## TOURS

Historic Johnson Farm—This is an intriguing, personalized viewing of the historic buildings and museum, and a visit with the horses. For costs, tour times and other info call (828) 891-6585 or go online [www.historicjohnsonfarm.org](http://www.historicjohnsonfarm.org).

Trolley Tours—take a trip around Asheville's finest treasures aboard a vintage touring trolley and enjoy the 70-minute tour covering Asheville's major points of interest. For more information on trolley schedules and ticket prices call (888) 667-3600 or go online to [ashevilletrolleytours.com](http://ashevilletrolleytours.com).

Asheville Urban Trail—trace the footsteps of Asheville's historic past. There are six different trails you can take: The Gilded Age (.6 miles), The Frontier Period (.2 miles), Times of Thomas Wolfe (.4 miles), Era of Civic Pride (.3 miles), The Age of Diversity (.2 miles) and if you want to walk the total trail (1.7 miles). For more information call (828) 258-0710.

Asheville Ghost Tour—a leisurely walking tour taking approximately 90 minutes and covering less than a mile. Stroll the shadowy streets of downtown Asheville listening to stories of the unexplained and strange. See pictures, taken by the owner of the tour, of ghost spirits and poltergeist orbs! Be sure to bring your own camera to catch images of energy orbs and possibly a ghost. Tours begin at 9pm nightly and depart from the Haywood Park Hotel. For more information and to make reservations call (828) 337-0645.

more information.

## WNC HAPPENINGS

Through-Dec. 16—Bring your family and Visit TAAS-Gallery in Downtown Old Fort. Make your opinion count with your Vote for your favorite Christmas Tree Ornament. Votes are just a buck benefiting Hospice of McDowell County. Admission is Free Hours Tues.-Fri. 10-5pm, Sat. 10-8pm For more info call (828) 668-1070 or visit [www.taasg.com](http://www.taasg.com)

## WORKSHOPS/CLASSES

Tues. Evenings 5:30-7:30pm—Pinwilz™ Bead & Jewelry Supply owner, Beverly Heldman teaches jewelry making classes: Basic Beading, Hemp knots and weaving and an advanced beading class. Pre-register early for one of the limited seats. Classes start @ \$35.00. For more information call (828) 668-1070 or visit [www.pinwilz.com](http://www.pinwilz.com)

Ongoing--mbody ~ mind-body fitness studio. Step into a free week of classes. 1200 Hendersonville Rd. (828) 277-7500. [www.mbody.net](http://www.mbody.net) for schedule.

Dec. 14, 6-9pm--Performance Workshop with Peggy Baldwin and John Loyd at the Asheville Area Arts Council, 11 Biltmore Ave. Looking for more direction on where your performing career may take you or just need some input on marketing your performance, then come to this seminar. For more info call AAAC (828) 258-0710 or email [sharon@](mailto:sharon@)

## ATTENTION ARTISTS: FULLY EQUIPPED GLASS ART STUDIO AVAILABLE

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# DECEMBER MOVIES

With MIKE STEWART

## STICKS AND STONES

**NEWS RADIO 570 am**  
**WWNC**  
Weekdays 6-9am  
Mike Stewart

- ★★★★-Fantastic
- ★★★★-Pretty darn good
- ★★★-Has some good points
- ★★-The previews lied
- ★-Only if you must
- ☹-Forget entirely

### 'A Good Year'

**Director: Ridley Scott**

**Starring: Russell Crowe, Albert Finney**

**Rated PG-13 for language and some sexual content.**



A son of Zeus, according to Greek mythology, invented wine. There are many important elements that go into the making of wine. First, making a fine wine requires the process of fermentation. Well, continuing in "wine-speak", we have two robust "grapes", Ridley Scott and Russell Crowe and those boys should be ripe enough to know what is expected of them. Second, wine to be great, has to have high sugar content. *A Good Year* does contain two stunning female leads: Marion Cotillard and Abbie Cornish. Third, the winemaker asks himself, is the wine to be dry and light or full bodied and robust? For the answers to these questions affects how the wine progresses in the overall fermentation process. Ah, the choices! The film, *A Good Year*, is neither a full-bodied, robust table wine nor a pleasing dessert wine to savor after an exhilarating event. Therefore, this film falls into the category of Aperitif.... light and pleasing, but bland; on the sweet side, with the promise of more robust and adventure-some tastes to follow. Unfortunately, while everyone was in the parlor somebody walked off with the good cellar stock.

We've been robbed, and the good vintage went to *Under the Tuscan Sun* and *Sideways*! *A Good Year* tries to be somewhere between these two films, but for director Ridley Scott, who makes mostly heavy dramas and action flicks, his palate is not refined enough for this kind of romance-comedy. As for Russell Crowe's

performance, this tough, rough, strong, man's man leading actor doesn't quite make it in the type of film usually reserved for Hugh Grant.

Finally, the absolute magic in making an excellent wine starts with the grape grower. Knowing the exact moment to harvest the grapes is the true secret, too early, and the wine will be thin, too late, and the taste can be overpowering.

Don't take it too much to heart that this "vintage" went bust, it was Scott's first attempt at corking this bottle. The result, too much air got in and the wine over-oxidized. Better luck next season!

— Reviewed by Mike Stewart

### 'Babel'

**Director Alejandro Gonzalez-Inarrito**

**Starring: Brad Pitt, Cate Blanchett**

**Rated R for violence, some graphic nudity, sexual content, language and some drug use**



Ba'bel [bey-buh or bab-uh l] 1. an ancient city in the land of Shinar in which the building of a tower (Tower of Babel) intended to reach heaven was begun and the confusion of the language of the people took place. Gen. 11:4-9.

2. (usually lowercase ) a confused mixture of sounds or voices.

The film title *Babel* is so deceiving... rename it "Blah, Blah, Blah." This film deserves no less than three blah's because *Babel* has three different stories and each will give you the blah's!

When I first saw the preview for the film, I was troubled. I couldn't really connect the plot threads, but with a picture with a title like *Babel*, I honestly thought it was the people who produced these trailers who were blurring the lines a bit, as an artistic exercise of enhancement for the finished product, wrong!

Even seeing *Babel*, does not clear up anything, it is three stories of differing



Movies do not get better then this. *Bond 21* is by far the best Bond since *Licence to Kill*. Craig is the grittiest and most fun Bond yet. If you haven't seen this film, don't wait to see it on DVD. See it now.

range...and as the title would suggest, it might convey an important message or two about middle-east conflicts, culture and alike. Oh no, my friend, we get none of that here!

*Babel* has us traveling to Morocco, Mexico and Japan for these three different stories. If this was a James Bond flick, all the exotic locations would meet the requirements of moving the main storyline. In *Babel* we go to these places to simply witness what the director has decided is on today's menu, and take it from me, the platter is unfulfilling! One storyline is about an American tourist (Blanchett) shot while vacationing in the dessert with her husband (Pitt) as a last ditch effort to save their marriage after the death of one of their children. The second storyline depicts the couple from the first storyline's Mexican immigrant nanny dragging their children off to her son's crazy wedding party when she couldn't reach the children's parents in Morocco to tell them she needed to go to Mexico. The third storyline has us hopscotching over to Japan to watch an oversexed 16-year old girl hustle the streets wanting to pick a partner to do the "wild thing"!

Although the plot is confusing to follow, the film is shot beautifully. I suppose we're to look upon this effort like the Beatles tune, "A Day In The Life" but I prefer the storytelling in their song to this movie!

In a way, through *Babel*, the movie, you do get a true literate interpretation of the term "babel" as it means, "a confused mixture of sounds or voices or a scene of noise and confusion." In that sense, the title gives you your money's worth! They should play this as a double feature with *Lost In Translation*. Both movies should keep you, to quote another title, *Dazed & Confused* for months!

— Reviewed by Mike Stewart

### 'Casino Royale'

**Director: Martin Campbell**

**Starring Daniel Craig, Eva Green, Judi Dench**

**Rated PG-13 for intense sequences of violent action, a scene of torture, sexual content and brief nudity.**



As you read this film review; know that it is a "deconstruct" of its topic *Casino Royale*.

In that same vein, the producers have decided to reinvent, rebirth and reinvigorate the film's main character, James Bond, bringing him back to the basics from which he was born.

After seeing the excellent action/thriller *Mission Impossible III*, I kept asking myself, "How is this next Bond flick going top it?" That's where my bias crept in and I decided, in advance, Mr. Super-Spy should take a few hints from Ethan Hunt! Then, like a lightning bolt, I got it! *Casino Royale* wasn't going to be about CGI effects. Refreshingly, *Casino Royale* successfully builds some honesty back into a unique character originated by Sir Ian Fleming, gives the audience a taste of what the author had in mind when he wrote *Casino Royal*, his first book, and delivers a reality check on the first gritty Bond movies starring Sean Connery, before fantasy totally took over and placed Bond in outer space (*Moonraker*) or the world of invisible cars (*Die Another Day*). Sir Ian Fleming, himself, was a bit of a royal card player, royal ladies man and a Commander in Her Majesty's Royal Navy. Not so surprising then, that his first novel frames these things allowing Commander Bond to step up in rank to the status of new double-0-agent. Audiences will delight in the return of the roughneck rogue who will eventually acquire traits of a better than best dressed man, with lethal skills and style.

The producers of *Casino Royale* have



# FILM REVIEWS

perfectly deconstructed the Bond character in the form of Daniel Craig; the look, the wit and most important, living by his wits! Yes, Craig's Bond came ever so close to Connery's version of Bond, but with today's attitude, not the attitude of the 60's. Think about it, Sean Connery's films were fantastic fantasy, but never so over the top to lack plausibility. In *Dr. No*, Bond was all style and menace and living by his wits. *From Russia With Love* delivered the same pizzazz with the addition of a gadget suitcase. In *Goldfinger*, Bond got the souped up car, the famous Aston Martin, but the rest of the movie was Bond holding his own. Craig, in *Casino Royale*, provides the same kind of grit and this Bond's own "man-man's" action comes into play. Edgy, cocky, vulnerable, and yet the only guy in the room with guts to actually get the job done.

Generations, while enduring, even agonizing for 40-plus years, over varying cinematic Bond portrayals and plot lines, still have a great affection for the essence of the Bond character and have longed for the day the producers would return to the subject's roots.

Craig is deeply rooted and proves himself a classy, unflappable Bond with the right mix of charm and menace whether he's shaken or stirred! A deconstructed Bond is a delight.

— Reviewed by Mike Stewart

## 'Flushed Away'

**Starring voices of: Hugh Jackman, Kate Winslet, Jean Reno, Ian McKellen**  
**Rated PG**

Here's the quick and dirty plot summary: Roddy St. James (Hugh Jackman), a pampered-to-the-max pet mouse, is left home alone when his family goes on holiday. He thinks he's got it made...that is until a street-wise sewer rat named Sid moves into Roddy's swanky digs and makes a nightmare of things. As a last resort, Roddy tries to entreat Sid to take a "Jacuzzi"...in the toilet. Sid, being the ever clever rat that he is, pitches Roddy into the potty and...flushes him away...into the bowels of the sewer. The first creatures Roddy meets in his new environment far below the London streets are the slugs...who really are entertaining (more so than most of the movie and its characters) and adorable to boot. Roddy seeks help from anyone he thinks can help him get back to his beloved home above ground...which is how he meets Rita (Kate Winslet). She's a scrappy gal who is the captain of her own boat and agrees to help Roddy get home after he helps her escape, with pizzazz, from the wart-



Finally a Will Farrell movie for people who don't think X-box and ATVs are the best things in life. This film is definitely a 'coming of age' moment for Farrell and yes, we are impressed.

covered clutches of the film's nemesis, The Toad (Ian McKellen). Adventures abound as Rita and Roddy get closer and closer to getting out of the sewer, but in the process, they discover a devious plot that has been put into motion by The Toad and now they are running from him, his cousin Le Frog (Jean Reno) and Le Frog's hilarious team of henchfrogs (which includes the tickle-your-funny-bone Marcel, who is a Marcel Marceau-type critter). Once Rita gets Roddy safely home, he realizes just how much Rita... and the rest of the sewer gang meant to him. He makes a deal with Sid to take his place as his family's pet and then he re-flushes himself away, back to the sewer and back to his new life...just in time to save the day!

Now, was it worthy to see? Yes and no. CGI has replaced the Aardman crew's unique niche of claymation animation for *Flushed Away*. In case you're wondering, this is the same crew who brought us

the Wallace and Gromit movie, *Curse of the Were-Rabbit*. So, if you're expecting the quality of *Curse of the Were-Rabbit* in this flicker, you won't be getting it. Kids will love it, it's animated and it takes place in a sewer, what's not to like? Adults won't want to run away screaming from boredom, but they will probably be looking at their watches about midway through the movie. There are humorous moments, but, for kids' sake the plot is simple...the importance of family and friends.

— Reviewed by Beth Gossett

## 'Stranger Than Fiction'

**Starring: Will Farrell, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Dustin Hoffman, Emma Thompson, Queen Latifah**  
**Rated PG-13**

This movie was a breath of fresh air. Surprisingly, pleasantly, I might add, Will Farrell does an excellent job shedding his skin as the eternal goofball by playing Harold Crick, the main character in *Stranger Than Fiction*, with earnest humility, emotion and grace.

Crick is a hum-drum IRS agent who spends his days compulsively counting, everything from how many times he brushes his teeth to doing large math sums in his head. He's a seriously boring guy...until he wakes up one day with something new happening in his life... someone, an unknown Englishwoman, is narrating, with pristine accuracy, his every move...as if his life is now some kind of novel. Unsettled by this, he seeks out help from a psychoanalyst, the ever-charming Linda Hunt (who anyone rarely sees these

days on film), who eventually refers Crick to a literature specialist, Jules Hilbert, played eloquently and hilariously by Dustin Hoffman, who has been in need of a really good role lately and finally found it. Meanwhile, Crick audits a hippiesque pastry maker named Anna Pascal (Maggie Gyllenhaal) who he falls in love with and who falls in love with him...much to both of their amazement.

The plot continues to thicken as Hilbert and Crick, in a series of discussions, try to determine if the novel Crick is "in" is a comedy or tragedy. Once the mysterious "voice" mentions Crick's eminent demise, we're definitely on the track of a tragedy. By chance, Crick discovers the owner of the voice narrating his life is, in fact, no other than famed tragedy novel writer Kay Eiffel (Emma Thompson).

Crick makes attempts to find her, and finally does, only to discover through conversations with the writer and her assistant

'Movies' continued next pg.

Catch the "Talk of the Town" film chatting with Mike Stewart and Beth Gossett each Wed. 7:30 am on 570AM WWNC for the latest in film and DVDs. Don't miss a minute.

## NEXT MONTH:

In January we'll be reporting on:

*The Holiday, Unaccompanied Minors, Apocalypse, The Good German, Blood Diamond*

For theaters and showtimes go to [www.rapidrivermagazine.com](http://www.rapidrivermagazine.com)

## TEEN CORNER

### 'Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause'

**Starring: Tim Allen, Martin Short, Elizabeth Mitchell**  
**Rated G for General Audiences**

Ho, ho, hold on... Yet another Santa Clause movie? *Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause* begins where the first two films left off. Scott Calvin (Tim Allen) who resisted turning into Santa in the first film, has now not only accepted his fate, but is actually enjoying his job as Santa and his new marriage to a pregnant Mrs. Clause. Unfortunately, the envious Jack Frost (Martin Short) wants Santa's job and will do anything to get it. Meanwhile, Mrs. Clause (Elizabeth Mitchell) is lonely and wants some taller people (i.e. not elves) to talk to. So Santa



Film fan and movie critic Sierra Bicking lives in Asheville

brings the in-laws, along with his ex-wife's family, to the North Pole. Then the trouble begins. Besides the early release date (it opened in November, for goodness sake!), *Santa Clause 3* suffers from trying to appeal to too wide of an audience. Mixing childish humor, such as reindeer flatulence, with adult themes, like relationship issues between Santa and

Mrs. Clause, the film manages to not entirely satisfy anyone. Even so, it does send a good message to a diverse audience about the importance of family and being honest, and has some great costumes and makeup. If for no other reason, see the movie to



If a movie stars Tim Allen and Martin Short is there any doubt that it will be very bad?

awaken your holiday spirit.

— Reviewed by Sierra Bicking



## MOVIES&amp;MORE

'Movies' continued

(Queen Latifah) that the woman has been hopelessly blocked in her writing attempts for ages and this is the first break she's had in months.

Hilbert tells him, after reading Eiffel's new novel about Crick, Death and Taxes, this novel is her masterpiece and shouldn't be tampered with.

So, what's a guy to do? Does Crick stop Kay from writing him out of his life and killing him off...just when things are getting good...or does he resign himself to his fate and slip off into oblivion as one of the most tragic characters in American Literature? You'll get all the answers and more when you see *Stranger Than Fiction*.

— Reviewed by Beth Gossett

### 'The US vs John Lennon'

Producers/Directors: David Leaf & John Scheinfeld

Documentary

Rated PG-13 for some strong language, violent images and drug references



It's sad today that there are so many 60's wannabes. The 1960's generation had the best of pop culture originals and historic firsts! The first moon landing, the first national anti-war protest, the Peace Corps, the Camelot presidency, the original Bond, James Bond and The Beatles!

All in all, not bad! Every generation



John Lennon film lacks originality and feels like a mix-up of what was left on the cutting room floor. Wait. It is.

since then has tried to recreate some of the magic of that pop art lifestyle as their own and each time it has not only paled in comparison, but has been a pathetic endeavor to embrace what once was. Such an attempt is the film entitled, *The US vs. John Lennon*.

Directors David Leaf and John Scheinfeld strive to pay *homage*, in music and cinematic forms, to John Lennon, but they overlook a major first in the creation of art: To be fresh and to bring something new to the table.

John Lennon was many things: a political activist, an acerbic wit, humorist, musician, and, indeed, an artist. As such, Lennon challenged himself and his other members of the fab four to go the next level, to create something fresh to achieve the next artistic task! For proof of this, look at the series of Beatles albums, each evolved into a new musical style of invention.

Lennon, if he we're still among

us, would have never allowed the band's rehearsals or their intricate ways of shaping a song's style in the studio by trying different arrangements on the way to completion, to be released on album and labeled "rarities" (as has happened). Lennon would say it's crap! He'd say "it's a damn rehearsal" and nothing more!

I'm sad to report to the directors of *The US vs. John Lennon* that the film feels like the rehearsal! The principles to bring something new to the table have obviously been long forgotten by Leaf and Scheinfeld. The first hour of the film simply rehearses the all too familiar film clips of Lennon and other members of youthful dissent of American political policies set to music. This type of montage isn't anything we haven't already seen on MTV newsreels with Kurt Loder or in hour long biographies on the History Channel a thousand times before. Maybe, it's that way because the film was produced by VH-1. We are talking about the most revolutionary band and the founding father of modern pop-culture! Heavens, there are already many worthy documentaries on this subject *Imagine—John Lennon* (1988) being one of the finest. The directors of *The US vs. John Lennon* only succeed with clips show-

ing the "human spark" that was Lennon but weights itself down with too much of the same ol', same ol' Vietnam history lesson. The film lacks soul ("Rubber" or otherwise). I would have liked to like this movie.

Maybe I can say, for the younger generations that don't seem to have a clue, on the plus side, this movie does convey how the government will go out of its way to suppress thought, ideas and opinions to control the masses. Don't think this type of censure happened only "back in the day" when Richard Nixon devised his "enemies list."

The government still supports the repression of the public for its own interests. For instance, country radio stations banned the Dixie Chicks for speaking their minds. That was a blow for free speech, but it didn't bother supporters of the current administration. Further, didn't the US use illegal wiretaps under the guise of "for our own protection" or "going to war on bad information"?

Lennon sang a song, "Strange Days Indeed," maybe the 60's aren't dead after all.

— Reviewed by Mike Stewart

Wondering if you should spend your money on a recent theatrical released movie that's now on DVD? Check out past movie reviews on the *Rapid River Magazine* website: [www.rapidrivermagazine.com](http://www.rapidrivermagazine.com).

## LOCALVOCAL

## Aaron Price follows his own lead with CD 'Bouquet'

BY JAMES CASSARA

*The Local Vocal* by James Cassara  
Editor's note: This semi regular feature furthers *Rapid River's* commitment to exploring and promoting the local scene with a critical and discerning ear. Area bands and performers are encouraged to email me at [JJCassara@aol.com](mailto:JJCassara@aol.com) if you'd like me to consider giving you a mention. It would be my pleasure to do so!

As one of Asheville's most recognized and respected musicians, Aaron Price has long been a fixture in this area's musical community.

Whether energetically accompanying the downtown silent film series or skillfully augmenting any number of locally

recorded projects at his own Collapseable Studios, Price's contributions are as ubiquitous as they are multifaceted. Known as a performer, producer, multi-instrumentalist for hire, and composer of theater scores, few musicians can lay claim to a more diverse resume.



Aaron Price

Price has produced and collaborated on over 30 albums released by local and regional acts; including Scrappy Hamilton, Vendetta Creme, Acoustic Syndicate, Country Blues legend Jessie Mae Hemphill, and Asheville's own Strut, Drug Money and Hollywood Red.

He has composed musical scores for theater productions by two local theater companies and served as musical direc-

tor on numerous projects, including The Who's *Tommy* in 2004. As a performer Price has toured internationally with cabaret singer Vendetta Creme, tap-dancer Ira Bernstein as well as on his own.

Adding to that already impressive body of work Price has recently released *Bouquet* an album of piano instrumentals that demonstrates both his deft playing and exquisite taste. Whether sensitively interpreting such standards as the Gershwin brothers "Love Is Hear To Stay" or The Beatles "Long And Winding Road," Price captures the essence of the song while imprinting upon the melody his own temperament. The album's 14 songs, four of which are Price's own compositions, are as lovely as they are engaging. The intent here is clearly to caress the listener with a cascade of gorgeous playing, putting tone and melody ahead of showmanship.

The album's most intriguing moment

is "Justice In A Cradle," written by local musician Malcolm Holcombe. Price's subtle reworking of a song written for guitar is a thing of quiet beauty; on an album replete with shimmering melodies and tuneful expression it stands out.

It's but one more addition to the Price catalog, but one of which the artist should be exceptionally proud. *Bouquet* is a truly lovely work, the ideal complement to a tranquil afternoon. It is romantic in the truest sense of the word and an effort deserving of both our admiration and support.

Please note: *Bouquet* is available at Karmasonics Music downtown and Harvest Records in West Asheville. It can also be found via his web site at [www.aaronprice.net](http://www.aaronprice.net)



## GALLERYUPDATES

# The Vanishing Landscape show a success

BY BETH GOSSETT

**W**e have all been witness to the tremendous growth of our dear city and surrounding landscape of Asheville.

This has happened over a very short period of time. The mountain sides have seemed to develop a contagious growth of houses. Gated communities have sprung up practically overnight in the most surprising of cliff-side places usually saved for the Peregrine Falcon. Some dwellings are actually built on stilts as the terrain is so steep.

The Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition has heard the protests and seen the strong development of the mountains and forests in our region and have set up offices in Asheville to help our community and the land that surrounds us.

Recently, the Frame Shoppe & Gallery located in the Harris Teeter Shopping Plaza on Hendersonville Rd. decided to pitch in and support the cause. Todd Hilliard, owner of the Frame Shoppe & Gallery, had never before had an art opening, not to mention a full blown benefit and live art auction.

His business has been creating frames



A painting unframed being auctioned at the Frame Shoppe and Gallery in November.

for local art collectors, framing customers and interior designers since 1978. Hilliard felt it was time to put his business on the map as

being more than just a frame shop. He has recently brought in Heidi Foss, art consultant and artist rep, to transform his space into a fine art gallery, complete with local and international artists. These artists want to ensure that our landscapes are preserved and developed responsibly.

Artists are moving to Asheville in surprising numbers. They are drawn here by the beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the diversity of our residents. When word went out that the Frame Shoppe & Gallery was putting together a benefit to support and raise money for the Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition, the amount of support was tremendous.

Kim Porter of SAFC worked closely with Foss and Peggy Taylor (head of the WNC plein-air painters group) to pull the event together. The Western North Carolina Plein-Air Painters Group was asked to be the featured artists during the month of November where sales of their work went to help this organization (SAFC).

Plein-air painting is the tradition of bringing the canvas and paints out of doors and painting the landscape as the artist sees it in natural light. Some of the top landscape painters of NC are members of this group and were thrilled to take part. Powerful paintings by Linda Cheek, Jim Southerland, Richard Oversmith, Colleen Webster, Stuart Roper, Kelly Welch and Peggy Taylor were all juried into the show.

Plein-air painting itself is becoming a lost art as so many public wildlands are being sold off to private owners. No trespassing signs are springing up where once the artist could bring out his canvas and paint to his hearts content surrounded by his inspiration. The beauty for all to behold is slowly becoming a privilege that only some can afford. It is our artists who create and document the history of our land as the Hudson River artists painted years ago a landscape that will never again look the same.

On Nov. 3, the Frame Shoppe &

Gallery opened for an event that brought close to 100 supporters. The refreshments were plentiful with donated food from the Lobster Trap Restaurant, Starbucks Coffee, Harris Teeter and Earth Fare.

Wine from D&H local distributors flowed as acoustic guitar music played by Patton Cardwell wove in and out of the hum of conversation swelling and ebbing as the excitement of the crowd gathered. After the guests had a chance to view the range of landscape paintings the auction began.

Taylor Barnhill, executive director of South Wings, volunteered as the evening's auctioneer. South Wings is an Asheville organization that flies influential people, media personnel, developers and policy makers over our mountains to give them a bird's eye view. This helps educate and increase public awareness on improved land management and watershed issues.

The auction brought in \$4,000 for the Forest Coalition.

*To learn more and or to make a contribution to SAFC visit [www.safc.org](http://www.safc.org) or call (828) 252-9223.*

*For more information about the Vanishing Landscape exhibit contact the Frame Shoppe & Gallery at (828) 274-3635 or visit [www.frameshoppeandgallery.com](http://www.frameshoppeandgallery.com)*

## FEATUREARTICLE

### Diamonds bring cash but sometimes sorrow for developing nations

'Diamonds' continued from pg. 21

some may be ambivalent about DeBeers, she discovered from her travels abroad and from firsthand observation in South Africa the company is nothing short of honest and professional.

It does not exploit the African people, far from it. Instead, in Africa DeBeers is known for the good it does. It trains both black and white; many stay employed a lifetime as miners, diamond sorters, diamond cutters and diamond polishers. DeBeers has also established philanthropic enterprises in Africa to help the less fortunate.

Said Dawkins: "People in South Africa earn professional wages. Botswana has the highest per capita income in Africa. Those who work in the diamond industry have health and education benefits. They have pensions. Their children go to college. They are clearly middle class."

DeBeers was the first in the diamond business, and remains the largest company within the diamond industry with its many mines, sorting houses, sophisticated tracking systems and marketing expertise. Being democracies and free to make their

own choices, South Africa and Botswana decided to partner with DeBeers, a private company. Over the years this partnership has served the countries, its people, and private enterprise well.

#### THE TRUTH ABOUT DEBEERS

"People have heard not such flattering things about DeBeers, but it was just the opposite," said Jewels That Dance store manager Marlene Clevenger. "They are doing so much for the economy of South Africa." She also explained that DeBeers came up with a sophisticated tracking system for diamonds called The Kimberly Process, so that American jewelers and



The Finsch Diamond Mine is safety minded and environmental conscious of the work it does. It removes all the wildlife and vegetation first, and transfers it to a place that has none. Later, the mine will be completely refilled. Furthermore, only water is used to extract diamonds from the host rock, known as kimberlite. Only a small amount of grease is involved in the process to which the diamond itself adheres.

their customers can be assured that every diamond sold comes from a reliable and ethical source.

Having now returned from their diamond trek of discovery, Dawkins and Clevenger's professional curiosity has now been satisfied and, unexpectedly, a new and deep connection to a place half a world away continues to grow within them and their staff.

#### IT GETS EVEN BETTER

"It gets even better," said Dawkins. "A portion of our profits of every South African diamond that we sell goes back to Global Giving, which goes to a foundation that directly helps the people." The foundation was set up by FestDiam Cutting Works, which was founded a hundred years ago and is still operated by

the Dutch family of Meents. Jewels That Dance buys its South African diamonds from FestDiam.

Dawkins and Clevenger are proud of this chain of support and giving, which extends between the United States and South Africa, and more specifically between Jewels That Dance and the Refilwe Community, located outside of Johannesburg, South Africa, that houses and helps orphaned children and HIV/AIDS victims.

There is not a single blood diamond sold at her store. It's just the opposite.

Each diamond that Dawkins and her staff sell might well be "life diamonds," for they profoundly help many working citizens of South Africa achieve and maintain a good life, day after day, year after year.

"We know where our diamonds come from," said Marlene Clevenger.

It's proof positive right here in the heart of downtown Asheville that much good can come in small packages, even if they're from a world away.

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# DECEMBER 2006



## EVENTS & WORKSHOPS

### Dec. 6 & 13

"Sheep to Shawl"  
Woolmaking Program  
WNC Nature Center  
11am-12Noon or 2-3pm  
(828) 298-5600  
www.wildwnc.org

### Dec. 8

LEED Workshop  
8:30am-5:30pm  
US Green Building Council  
Jane S. McKimmon Center  
1101 Gorman St., Raleigh  
Registration: www.usgbc.org  
For details, contact: Laura Walsh  
(202) 742-3755; lwalsh@usgbc.org

### Dec. 12

"Gardening in the Mountains:  
Gifts for the Gardener"  
10am Program at NC Arboretum  
in cooperation with Buncombe  
County Cooperative Extension and  
regional Master Gardeners  
(828) 665-2492  
www.ncarboretum.org

### Dec. 15

"Creative Hands for Public Lands"  
2nd Annual Fundraiser  
5:30 - 7:30pm  
Co-sponsored by BlackBird  
Frame & Art and SABP (Southern  
Appalachian Biodiversity Project)  
Happy Hour Gala includes raffle drawing  
at BlackBird in Biltmore Village  
Call for details: (828) 225-3117  
or 258-2667; www.sabp.net

### Dec. 16

"Forest Trail Walk" Guided Tour  
Explores natural history in  
different types of forests; wear  
comfortable walking shoes and  
layered clothes for outdoor tour  
(828) 665-2492  
www.ncarboretum.org

Sustainable Living Resource for WNC • Vol. 1, No. 7

## What can I do with solar power in my home?

BY JIM BEACON



I've been haunted by the promise of electricity generated from the Sun for over 30 years now, but for most this has resulted in little more than a few solar-powered patio lights scattered around the yard. Anyone who checked has been informed that to power a whole house with solar will cost them \$20,000 -- \$30,000 or more. But recent price drops in solar panels and improvements in battery technology -- along with increasing availability of components at the retail level -- have created an intriguing and affordable revival of the dream.

It is now possible for the average home to produce a practical and useable amount of solar-generated electricity for an investment of \$3,000 - \$4,000. The idea is to install a relatively small array of new, more powerful solar panels, plus a small bank of batteries to store the energy, and bring the solar power to only one or two outlets in the house for specific, targeted uses.

A television, stereo, DVD player or laptop computer does not draw the really large wattage loads that can quickly suck a battery bank dry, but they do tend to be turned on a lot of the time... 5 - 8 hours a day. That cumulative usage adds up on the electric bill. What if we focus on using our small solar system to power ONLY the media room?

For most people this means using about



200 to 300 watts of power an hour. Obviously, individual homes vary on the amount and type of entertainment equipment they use, and naturally a really big screen TV will draw a bit more than a 21-inch TV, but most stereos and DVD players only draw 30 or 40 watts each, so you can devote a lot of that 300 watts to the TV (a newer 21-inch TV burns about 100 watts). Depending on what you have, you may even have enough solar power left over to fire up a 60-watt lamp in the room.

The \$3,000 - \$4,000 system I'm talking about can provide enough power to keep a media room running for 5 to 8 hours in the evening and replenish the power the next day from the Sun. If you run out of stored battery power towards the end of the day, you simply throw a switch and

put the equipment back on the regular house current. And no, you don't necessarily have to mount the solar panels on your roof -- this is often done to get the most sunlight to the panels and keep them out of harm's way. But this smaller panel array is only 5 high by 8 feet wide... a little bigger than one piece of plywood. So you may find there's a spot on the ground in your yard, which will provide them with the 5 to 8 hours a day of direct sunlight they need to do their job. If you've got kids, you would want to put up a light wire fence around a ground array to keep it from being played with or struck by flying objects, which can render it useless. But even if the panels do end up on your roof, the small 5'x8' footprint is much more manageable than the larger arrays we've seen sticking up on houses in the past.

Next issue I'll talk about the specifics for this system, including product numbers, prices and where you can really buy the stuff you need to green up some of your power consumption, pay a little less to the utility company each month, and add a renewable power-pack to your home that will not only ease some of the guilt from watching too much TV, but which can also stand in as an emergency electrical supply during a power outage.

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## THE GREENER HOME

## 'Eloo' preserves the gift of clean water

BY BYRON BELZAK

Newly introduced to the US, the award-winning Enviro Loo ("Eloo") waterless dehydration/evaporation toilet system may be the best solution to treat human waste in mountain retreats, remote cabins and recreation areas, because it is self-contained, relatively affordable and, most importantly, does not pollute drinking water.

Since its introduction in 1993 in Africa, the Enviro Loo, nicknamed "Eloo" – which is manufactured by Enviro Options (Pty) Ltd., a South African company – has revolutionized human waste sanitation systems in some of the driest and most undeveloped countries in the world.

Even industrialized countries are beginning to get their minds around this most unusual solution that is nothing like typical water-based septic systems or chemical portable toilets.

Clean Up America, Inc., based in Tulsa, Okla., is the sole distributor of the Eloo in the United States. Although only a handful of the thousands of Eloo toilets in operation are located in the U.S., Clean Up America (CUA) is looking to change all of that. It intends to attract American consumers, as well as sign up new distributors, installers, representatives and investors throughout the country.

You might say Eloo in America is a ground floor opportunity for anyone looking for a greener way to build and live – or maybe even make a living.

## JUMPING STATE AND LOCAL BUILDING CODE HURDLES

Eloo is like nothing that most people have seen or heard. In fact, building code officials are having difficulty in trying to figure out what to call it or how to fit it into their traditional building codes, explained Clean Up America vice president Ted Knight. He confirmed that the State of Virginia recently issued a green light to Eloo.

The Virginia Division of Onsite Sewage and Water Services has issued a directive to local public officials to allow the Enviro Loo (Eloo) Privy, Model #2040, to be used "in any situation where a vault privy may be permitted."

Obviously, it will take a while for all of the 3,147 counties in the United States to figure out how they, too, will classify and permit a most remarkable toilet

system that does not use water or chemicals; does not require electricity or power of any sort; has no odor and breeds no flies; has zero discharge; typically requires no dumping and no pumping. Even during flooding, the manufacturer claims that no effluent will flow out of the Eloo.

## AN INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY THAT CREATES SOCIAL CHANGE

John Voelcker recently included the Eloo in his noteworthy article, entitled "Innovative Technologies: 10 Innovative Technologies," which was published in the Summer 2006 issue of the Sanford Graduate School of Business publication "Sanford Social Innovation Review."

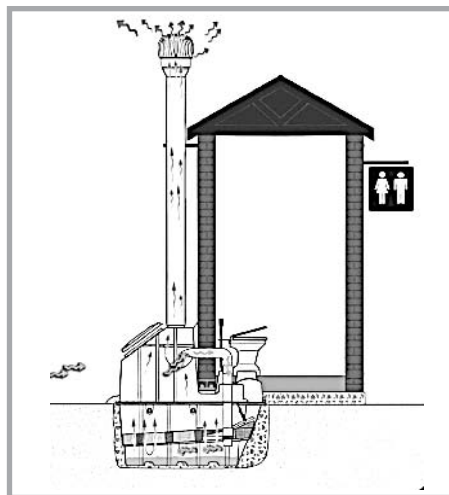
He well explains how the system works: "The sealed dehydration/evaporation system drains liquids into a tap below the solid-waste drying plate. As the liquids evaporate, the solid wastes are subjected to enough radiant heat and ventilation to evaporate their liquid content and dehydrate the rest. Aerobic bacteria then convert the solid waste into a dry, compost-like material that has 10% or less of its original mass."

## WATERLESS, ZERO-DISCHARGE HUMAN SANITATION SYSTEM

Ted Knight of CUA said the Enviro Loo ("Eloo") is a waterless, zero-discharge onsite treatment system for human waste. It is new to the United States but has been in use around the world since 1993 with 25,000 units currently in use in Africa, South America, Australia and Greece. Although it works most efficiently in dry climates, it still can work well with possible modification in more wet environments, including the eastern United States.

It has some features of vault toilets, portable potties and composting toilets and is probably closest to the vault toilet. "But don't call it a compost toilet," said Knight. "It's not."

Knight understands the details bet-



HOW IT WORKS ACCORDING TO CLEAN UP AMERICA V.P. TED KNIGHT: The Eloo functions as a vault toilet with evaporative exhaust. It has a drop toilet. Solids land on a flapper that is manually operated to throw solids onto a drying tray running the length and width of the polyethylene vault. Liquids drop through to bottom of the unit. Heat from the sun creates lift even on cloudy and cold days, which turns the exhaust turbine sitting on top of the exhaust pipe above roofline. Liquids evaporate. Solids dehydrate and, once shrunk, are removed in the holding bag that hangs inside of unit and is filled little by little from brushing dried solids into it once solids have migrated to the bottom of the tray approximately every six months. Tray is slanted towards access hatch at back end of unit. Hatch can be secured by padlock. Once holding bag is filled solids are removed and disposed of according to code.

Added Knight: "The Eloo will work where there is no water, where the ground is rocky, on hills and mountains and with elevated or non-elevated structures and on shorelines. It is ideal for cabins, lodges, recreational and rest areas where there is no water for conventional sanitation. It was designed to mitigate sanitation-borne diseases and due to its aerobic system the pathogen levels are extremely low."

Knight considers the Eloo to be "the next generation in human sanitation." He proudly noted that on Nov. 9, 2005, Dr. Brian La Trobe, the Eloo inventor and CUA Vice President of R&D, was awarded the prestigious Intel Environmental Award by the Tech Museum of Innovation in San Jose, California ([www.techawards.org/laureates](http://www.techawards.org/laureates)).

## MORE POOP ABOUT THE ELOO

US distributors (and that might be you someday!) purchase the Eloos from CUA at wholesale prices and are free to mark them up for resale, said Knight. He said the current suggested retail price is \$3895. Shipping and installation are additional costs. To receive more poop about the Eloo, Ted Knight welcomes questions

(and corny jokes) at (703) 532-2210 or [tnight@erols.com](mailto:tnight@erols.com).

**MORE INFORMATION:** To receive complete operations data, as well as service and maintenance requirements, call toll-free at (866) 437-0672, or visit the CUA website at: [www.eloo.us](http://www.eloo.us)



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## THE GREENER HOME

## Sin and consciousness

BY BILL WALZ

"The greatest sin is to be unconscious"

— Carl Jung



Bill Walz

I have always been drawn to the interlinking of religion and psychology.

It must be remembered that psychology is a modern European concept, while people have wrestled with the issue of mind and behavior, usually under the authority of religion, since time immemorial. Religions of the Orient would largely agree with Jung, believing that the evil that man commits is caused by loss of connection to his own original nature, which is good and in union with God. Buddhism teaches that instead, man has become identified with and attached to a false sense of self, or ego. All Asian religions teach that this is the source of human suffering. This state of, what Buddhism calls, unconsciousness, and the suffering that is resultant, can only be remedied through coming into consciousness, through the realization of one's own deepest nature. Sin is removed by awakening, by becoming enlightened.

I have also long been intrigued by the notion of sin not being an action but an atti-

tude that brings forth actions that would be called sinful. This hearkens back to a watershed moment for me as a freshman in college. I was attending a lecture by the Jewish theologian, Abraham Heschel, when in answer to a question concerning the nature of sin, he answered: "I consider the origin of sin to be in the denial of the sublime wonder of life". This statement was, for me, like the clouds parting, shining light on what had been a confusing and alienating concept from within my Christian upbringing.

Sin is not actions for which we are to be judged. After all, Jesus had said, "Judge not, lest ye be judged." No, sin is an attitude of separation. Adam's original sin was his separation from God and Nature. The original sin that is passed on in Humanity is this separation from Nature, from the sublime wonder of life. Out of this human alienation from Nature and it's contents and creatures, including humanity, acts of dishonesty, manipulation, exploitation and violence become not only possible, but inevitable. Judgment itself then is an act of separateness, which brings with it further separateness. The judger is trapped by their own judgment. The sin of perceived separateness begets the deepened sin of further separateness, for out of this threatening state of separateness acts of harm are easily justified. They even become justified as necessary in the service of

religion.

From within the experience of separateness, life is not experienced as interconnected wonder. Life is experienced as separated objects competing with other separated objects. Life is conflict and competition. Thus flows unending exploitation and harm. Sin, Heschel was right. In this separateness, this illusion of separateness, humans become savage. The irony of human history is that so-called civilization is actually savagery. It is as Gandhi said when asked what were his thoughts on Western civilization, "It would be a good idea".

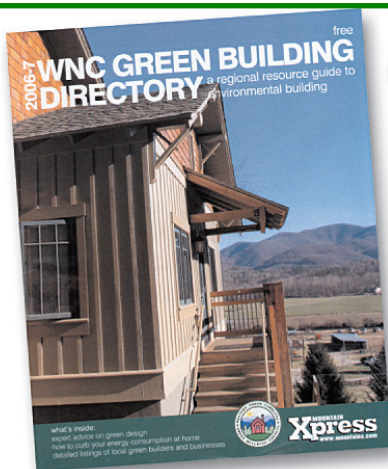
We are trained by our culture to live within the prison of our ego, that psychological correlate to our experience of physical separateness in the world. With this experience comes fear. We find ourselves alone, limited, vulnerable and with the vicissitudes of life largely beyond our control. This is a state very difficult for us to tolerate. It causes us anxiety. We feel our sense of sufficiency, of being good enough, as compromised. We then need to reestablish that we have sufficiency and control. So we get angry. We get violent and vengeful. We get greedy and covetous. We get resentful, critical and judgmental. We get manipulative and exploitive. We can steal and even kill. We get sinful.

But when we become truly conscious, we return to the Garden. When we wake up to being fully present in life, we are then able

to see this life is God. This life is mystery manifesting, and we are all embedded within it, we are it. There is no "I" in "we". And there is. The paradox unfolding. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. One. That's what Jesus was talking about. That's what Buddha was talking about. They taught the way to salvation from suffering, the way back to the Garden, these awakened beings, these two truly conscious beings. Each was saying in the idiom of his own culture, "follow me". "Follow me to awakening, follow me to consciousness". "Follow me back to union with God, to your own God Nature within." "Be as the lilies of the field." They both advised to travel light. Possessions, prideful self-absorption and power do not get you there.

Jung was quite correct. The greatest sin is to be unconscious.

Bill Walz is a UNCA adjunct faculty member and a private-practice teacher of mindfulness, personal growth and consciousness. He holds a weekly meditation class, Mondays, 7pm at the Friends Meeting House, 227 Edgewood. Info on classes and personal Zen training consultations at (828)258-3241 or e-mail at bill.walz@worldnet.att.net

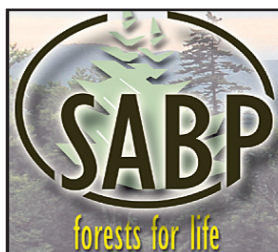


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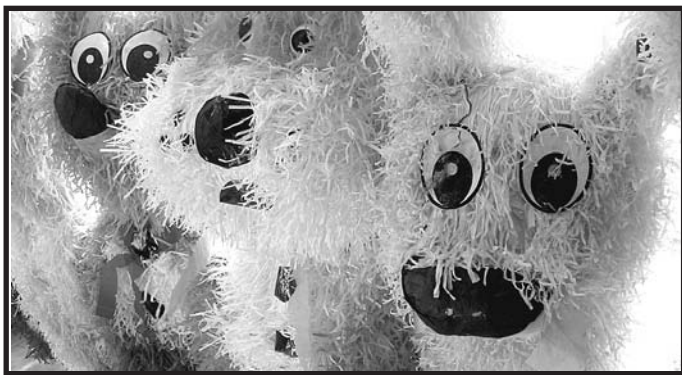
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## FAMILY FUN:



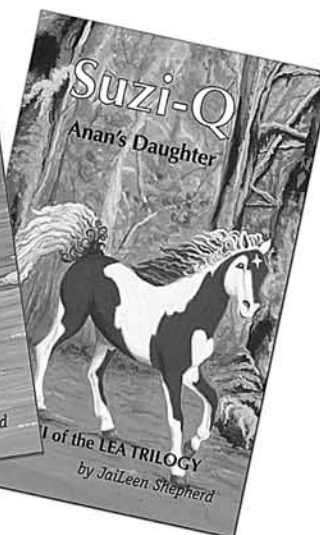
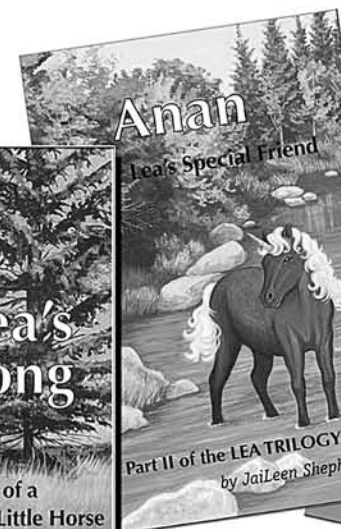
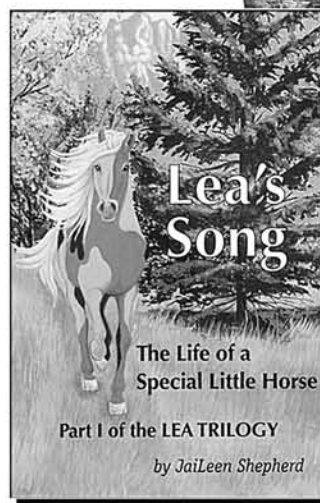
Gallery 86 of the Haywood County Arts Council, 86 North Main Street, Waynesville, (828)452-0593 will hold Feliz Navidad Party for Children Thursday, Dec. 7, 4-6pm.

All children are invited to celebrate in traditional Hispanic style. There will, of course, be piñatas filled with Mexican candies. Students from Tuscola Spanish classes will make the piñatas and be on hand for Spanish singing and games, and children's author, Lynda Fogel, will read her bilingual children's book in Spanish and in English. She will also have books on hand for sale and autographing.

The most exciting moment will be announcing the four winners of the Feliz Navidad Ornament contest. The contest is open to youth in our Hispanic community or current students of Spanish. The four winners will have their ornament photographed to be used for the Arts Council's annual holiday card; winners will also receive gift certificates to the toy store "Fun Things to Do." Sponsors of this event include Fun Things to Do, Osondu Booksellers, Communication Associates, the Haywood County Library, and the Craft Collection. Following the announcement of winners, each participant in the contest will be given an extra surprise and will hang his or her ornament on the Christmas tree in the gallery.

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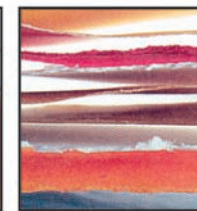


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