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ARTS & CULTURE MAGAZINE



It's a Wonderful Life
at North Carolina Stage Company

December 2007
Vol. 11 No. 4
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IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE: A LIVE RADIO PLAY

ADAPTED BY JOE LANDRY



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PREVIEW

The Blue Ridge Orchestra Christmas Concert

The Blue Ridge Orchestra (BRO) under the direction of Ronald D. Clearfield will present a free Christmas Concert featuring the Voices in the Laurel Children's Choir on Saturday, December 22 at 3:00 PM at the Folk Art Center on the Blue Ridge Parkway. The concert will feature Christmas orchestral and vocal favorites. There is no charge for the concert, but donations will be accepted.

The Blue Ridge Orchestra presents at least five concerts each year in Asheville and the western North Carolina region. The BRO has established itself in the arts and education community by presenting annual Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf in conjunction with the Asheville Ballet to thousands of elementary school children. BRO has also entertained outdoor audiences with patriotic pops concerts for two Fourth of July celebrations in downtown Asheville. Established in 1999, it has performed in Polk, Yancey, Haywood,

Madison, Buncombe and Transylvania counties.

Voices in the Laurel is a nonprofit, independent, community outreach treble choir program based in western North Carolina. Currently in its twelfth season, Voices in the Laurel consists of 75 young people from all over western North Carolina, including members from Haywood, Buncombe, Jackson, and Swain Counties. Musical instruction is provided by a dedicated and talented staff led by Martha Weathers Brown, artistic director. Voices in the Laurel has participated in numerous performance tours that have taken the choir coast to coast in the U.S. and also to England and France. In the summer of 2005, the Youth Choir participated in the Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, and members sang in the World Voices Australia Festival in Sydney, Australia, in the summer of 2007.

For more information, visit our web site at www.blueridgeorchestra.org.

THE ASHEVILLE BALLET presents the 33rd Annual production of

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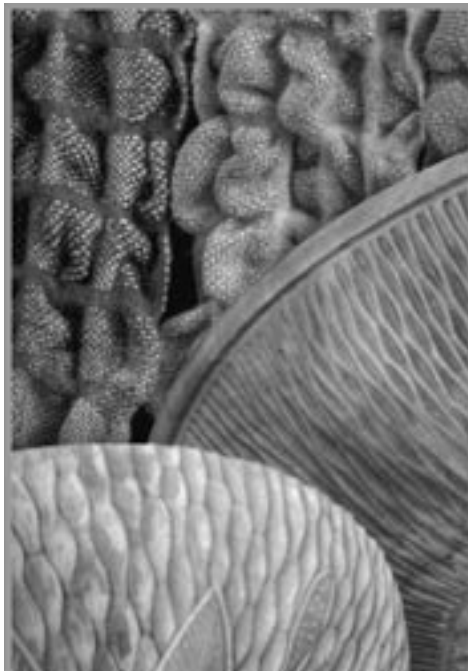
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Distribution: Dennis Ray

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Danielle Baisden, H. Byron Ballard,
Sierra Bicking, Louis Boram,
Jenny Bunn, James Cassara,
Roxane Clement, Amy Downs,
Ann Dunn, John Ellis,
Beth Gossett, Dru Heldman,
Andrea Helm, Chip Kaufmann,
Michelle Keenan, RoseLynn Katz,
Valerie Leeper, Mackensy Lunsford,
John Mappin, Ashley Van Matre,
Zack Maynard, Sarah Mead,
MariJo Moore, Marcianne Miller,
April Nance, Michael F. Parker,
Dennis Ray, John M. Rose,
Bill Walz.

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"Winters Moment" Oil

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COVER STORY

Young Troupers Breathe Fresh Air Into IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

By ROSELYNN KATZ

If you've been near a TV set in the past 30 years, you've no doubt seen the beloved holiday movie, *It's a Wonderful Life*, about an ordinary man, George Bailey, who considers suicide one Christmas Eve, only to be convinced by an angel just how worthwhile his life really is.

Take it from me: the play *It's a Wonderful Life*, at Asheville's own downtown North Carolina Stage Company, is even better. I'm not saying that Jimmy Stewart can be beat, but Willie Repoley, who takes on Stewart's role as George Bailey, is utterly convincing. With his wide-eyed sincerity and slightly turned up nose, to say nothing of his acting finesse, Repoley projects the very image of decency and goodness that the part demands.

"Watching Jimmy Stewart in the movie is expected and iconic by now,"



Actors play their parts — and make all the sound effects — in the charming live radio play, "It's a Wonderful Life" at North Carolina Stage Company.

show, complete with "applause" and "on the air" signs, as well as a full range of objects used for old radio show style sound effects: dice dropped in a glass to simulate clinking ice cubes, and a toolbox that sounds convincingly like the opening and closing of a car door.

I enjoyed the show immensely last year — I expect to enjoy it even more this year with the actors themselves doing the sound effects when they're not saying their lines — a bit of onstage

"... affirmation of how important one average life can be..."

says Amanda Leslie, Managing Director of the theatre. "But when you see the play, the meaning of the whole piece becomes fresher and clearer."

Putting "theatrical" fully into the theatre production, the play is done as a 1940s radio

gymnastics that is sure to enliven the pace of an already lively show. For any theatre lover, it's a delight to experience the troupe's split-second timing as the actors dance from their crisply delivered lines to the sound effect table.

"There is something about getting to see the sound effects happen in front of your eyes," says new director Hans Meyer, who also plays the roles of Clarence the Angel and George's brother. "I'm amazed at the variety of sounds that the right people can get out

'It's a Wonderful Life' cont'd on pg. 30

The Incarnations of It's a Wonderful Life

It was first written in 1939 as a short story, *The Greatest Gift*, by Philip Van Doren Stern, a respected author, who sent it to friends and family in the form of a Christmas card. Infused with the spirit of the times — people frustrated by not being able to realize their dreams because of the Depression, but pulling together to help each other out — the story soon sold to magazines.

When it was sold to the movies in the 1940s, director Frank Capra exclaimed that it was just what he'd been waiting to direct for years. A box office flop in 1946, it was later shown on TV, which catapulted it to the widespread popularity and acclaim it enjoys today.

The stage version, written by playwright Joe Landry, premiered in 1996 in Connecticut. Since then it has been seen many times throughout the country.

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PREVIEW

The Santaland Diaries Returns for Sixth (and Final?) Encore at Asheville Community Theatre

BY JENNY BUNN

Asheville Community Theatre proudly announces the sixth remount of their sold out 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 funniest holiday tradition. *The Santaland Diaries* will again be directed by Josh Batenhorst. The show will be performed Thursday, Friday and Saturday night December 13-15, 2007 at 8:00 p.m. with an additional late-night performance Saturday night at 10:00 p.m. on the Mainstage at Asheville Community Theatre.

Tom Chalmers returns to the Mainstage after his starring role in last year's production of *The Santaland Diaries*. 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. Recently, he has appeared onstage with his original stand-up material as a part of the Laugh Your Asheville Off festival and in 35below's Late Night Comedy Series in *Laugh Free or Die Hard*, a sketch comedy show that he co-wrote. Chalmers and Josh Batenhorst have collaborated on *Harm for the Holidays*, *Hometown Security*, a short film which was awarded Best Film in the 2005 Asheville 48 Hour Film Project, and the stage production of Judy Blume's *Forever: An Unauthorized Parody*.

The Santaland Diaries has sold out nearly every seat for every performance over the past five years. "The first four tickets we sold when we began the online ticketing system in August were for *Santaland*," says Program Director Jenny Bunn. "In each audience, we have people who have seen the show numerous times, and



Tom Chalmers returns as the embittered elf Crumpet in Asheville Community Theatre's production of *The Santaland Diaries*.

people who are seeing for the first time because they weren't able to get tickets before." Currently, plenty of tickets are available for the 2007 performances.

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.

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

Asheville Community Theatre, 35 E. Walnut Street, Asheville, NC

December 13-15, Thursday-Saturday, 8 p.m.; additional late-night performance Saturday night at 10 p.m.

Purchasing tickets in advance is strongly recommended for this production. Tickets are available at the Asheville Community Theatre Box Office located at 35 E. Walnut Street in downtown Asheville.

Tickets can also be purchased online at www.ashevilletheatre.org or over the phone with a credit card by calling (828) 254-1320. Any remaining tickets will be available at the door. All tickets are \$15.

NEW EXHIBITS

Master Woodworker Eddie Hamrick at Grovewood Gallery



Master woodworker, Eddie Hamrick, will be at Grovewood Gallery Saturday, December 15th from 11am – 4pm for a meet and greet and nutcracker woodcarving demonstration.

Eddie, a Newton native, has carved out a reputation as remarkable as his works. He has been named one of the top 100 artists in the nation by the Southern Highland Arts and Crafts Guild and has earned the title of Guild Master Craftsman from The Society of Woodworkers.

Eddie has made musical instruments for over 40 country music stars including Willie Nelson, Charlie Daniels and Bill Monroe. He has also been featured on 36 PBS specials and served as a technical advisor in 2 movies; “Wildflower” directed by Diane Keaton and the Hallmark Hall

of Fame’s “Saint Maybe,” starring Blythe Danner.

A few places Eddie’s work can be found are the Smithsonian, the White House, and in the trophy cases of sports heroes John Elway, Jay Haas and Bob Costas.

Eddie’s nutcrackers are heirloom quality, sure to be passed down to future generations. A limited edition of 6 nutcrackers will be for sale and order. Grovewood welcomes collectors, casual shoppers, and children of all ages to take part in this very special event.

If you go

Grovewood Gallery is located at 111 Grovewood Road in Asheville. Phone (828) 253-7651 for more information.

Leicester Artists Holiday Arts and Crafts Show

The Leicester Artists are holding their second annual Holiday Arts and Crafts Show from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, December 15, at the Eliada Home for Children Recreation Building on Compton Drive in Asheville, NC. The free show features hand-crafted works by potters, painters, jewelers, sculptors, fabric artists, broom makers and more. For additional information, including a map to Eliada, visit www.cometoleicester.com or call (828) 683-2459.

Holidays with the Guild

BY APRIL NANCE

This season the Southern Highland Craft Guild’s Folk Art Center offers the complete package for holiday family fun. On select Sundays in November and December guests to the Folk Art Center can enjoy free live music and handmade ornament workshops for the kids, and a unique Appalachian shopping experience.

All musical performances will be held from 2-4pm in the upstairs main gallery. On November 25, Firefly will perform, specializing in harmony vocals with fiddle and guitar. On December 2, The Magills, a traditional Celtic band will perform. On December 9, the WNC Dulcimer Collective will be at the Folk Art Center. Visitors can bring their own dulcimer and join in the fun or enjoy being a part of the audience. On December 16, the popular duo Brooke and George will perform traditional mountain ballads.

The Children’s Handmade Holiday will be held on December 2 and on December 16 from 1-4 pm in the Folk Art Center auditorium. Craft artists Jan Morris, Nora Mosrie and Sandra Rowland will lead a variety of take-home projects.

Guests are also encouraged to visit Allanstand Craft Shop, the nation’s oldest craft gallery while visiting the Folk Art Center, where they can buy gifts made by members of the Southern Highland Craft Guild. Visitors can have the reward of knowing their purchases are supporting the local economy and Appalachian mountain heritage.

If you go

The Folk Art Center is located at milepost 382 on the Blue Ridge Parkway in east Asheville. Call (828) 298-7928 or visit www.craftguild.org

Visit Downtown Old Fort

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FINE ART

One Thousandth Ornament Graces TAAS-Gallery

BY DRU HELDMAN

As the weather outside cools down, The Appalachian Artisan Society Gallery is heating up with a growing selection of handmade Christmas Ornaments.

TAAS-Gallery member, Kevin Clark of K&D Handcrafted Wood from Marion, NC now has on display his milestone 1,000th ornament. It represents years and years of craftsmanship and attention to detail. The ornament is finely crafted using the finest and rare woods.

Many of the ornaments available in the gallery make for a wonderful family heirloom, a prized possession that can be passed down from generation to generation.

If you ever needed a gift idea and have someone on your list that seemingly has everything, you can't go wrong with a handmade Christmas Ornament. Currently our gallery has about 100 unique handmade ornaments for sale. A large selection from Kevin Clark, felted ornaments by Jennifer East, ceramic and glazed ornaments, wire crosses by Beverly Heldman and many, many more... Someday, we hope to make our small downtown Old Fort handcraft gallery famous for our selection of unique handmade ornaments.

Christmas Ornaments hold a special place in our heart at TAAS-Gallery. Continuing a tradition that we began last year, we're holding our second annual Christmas Ornament competition & Fundraiser for Hospice of McDowell County. The holiday program invites people to compete by entering their ornaments into a competition where the public votes for their favorite ornament. Each vote is one dollar. Every dollar collected goes to Hospice of McDowell County.

We're hoping that our community will support the event again this year by entering into the contest and / or voting for ornaments. The competition is open to anyone from anywhere. The only requirement to compete is that the ornament must be handmade by you (not store bought). In addition to the adult category, this year the competition also has a children's category for the competition.

Entries are accepted now through



"The Bulb" (not for sale) is made from Olive wood from the holy land. The top and icicle are made of African Black Ebony wood. Created by Kevin Clark.

December 15th but the earlier you enter the more public votes you will get. We have invited a very distinguished panel of judges to select the winners. Only the ornaments that are in the top ten make it to the final round for the judging.

The competition has over \$500 in cash and prizes that will be awarded to the winners on December 18th during our awards ceremony.

If you go

If you can create an ornament, please visit TAAS-Gallery at 48 East Main Street, Downtown Old Fort or see the information on their website, www.taasg.com, or phone (828) 668-1070.

and
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to all
this
holiday
season

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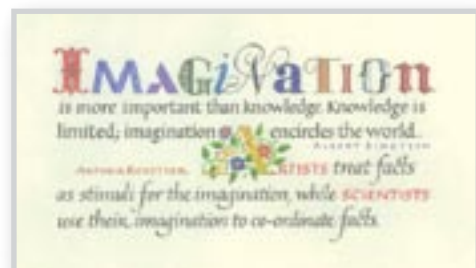
FINE ART

Michael Hughey and Harriet Smith at Focus Gallery

On display now in the Folk Art Center's Focus Gallery is calligraphy by Michael Hughey and the polymer clay boxes and sculpture of Harriet Smith.

Michael Hughey is a Life Member of the Southern Highland Craft Guild. He is also the co-founder of the Society of Calligraphy in Los Angeles and the founder and past president of the Carolina Lettering Arts Society. His masterful lettering transforms quotations and scripture into works of art. His materials include ink, 24k gold and gold leaf, gouache, and watercolor. Hughey's use of color and design is at once visually stimulating and thought-provoking. This Focus Gallery show has given Hughey the opportunity to showcase new work including: *Like Thinking*, *Imagination*, *Circle of Friends*, and *Ancient Mystical Cosmological Elements*.

Harriet Smith has been a Southern



Calligraphy by Michael Hughey

Highland Craft Guild member since 2005. While she formerly worked in the chemical industry, Smith has been working with polymer clay for the past fifteen years. She delights in the challenge of figuring out how to bring to life her whimsical forms while maintaining their structural integrity. Smith is using this show to introduce new, organic sea creatures and imaginative figures. Her stylized boxes make a creative juxtaposition to



Sculpture by Harriet Smith

jellyfish with bright, colorful tentacles and creations that look as if they could be from another planet.

Hughey and Smith's work will be on display through Dec. 31 in the Focus Gallery. Their work can also be found at Allandale Craft Shop, located at the Folk Art Center.

If you go

The Folk Art Center is located at milepost 382 on the Blue Ridge Parkway in east Asheville. Call (828) 298-7928 or visit www.craftguild.org



The Southern Highland Craft Guild is a non-profit, educational organization established in 1930 to bring together the crafts and craftspeople of the Southern Highlands for the benefit of shared resources, education, marketing and conservation.




“Do give books — religious or otherwise — for Christmas. They’re never fattening, seldom sinful, and permanently personal.”

– Lenore Hershey

BOOK GIFT GUIDE ON PAGE 16



NOTEWORTHY



gloria
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Advent Sundays ~ 8:30 and 11:00 a.m.
December 2 ~ Awakening to Hope
December 9 ~ Welcoming Peace
December 16 ~ Experiencing Joy
December 23 ~ Treasuring Love

Advent Evensongs ~ Sundays ~ 7:00 p.m.
December 2 ~ Hanging of the Green
A service of beauty, tradition, and symbolism with music of the season offered by the Jubilee Choir and Adult Handbells.


December 9 ~ Noel
This Advent Evensong concert features the combined Youth and Children's Choirs.

December 16 ~ Gloria by John Rutter
Presented by the Adult Choir and Orchestra, this concert will also include a Christmas carol collage.

Christmas Eve Worship ~ Monday, December 24
Candlelight and Communion Service ~ 6:00 p.m.
The traditions of the season are celebrated through communion, carols, and candlelight.

Contemplative Service ~ 9:00 p.m.
Join us for a service of reflection on the holy scripture, communion and sacred songs of the season.

Preschool childcare activities are planned for all events except the 9:00 p.m. service on December 24.



First Baptist Church of Asheville
5 Oak Street, Asheville, NC • 828.252.4781 • www.fbca.net

Christmas at the Farm

Historic Johnson Farm will hold its holiday open house, "Christmas at the Farm", on Saturday, December 1, 2007 from noon to 5 pm. Admission is \$4 for Adults and \$3 for children. Historic Johnson Farm is located at 3346 Haywood Road, Hendersonville, 28791.

The property is a National Register of Historic Places farm, decorated for the holiday season. The event will include a tour of the oldest brick home in Henderson County. Enjoy seasonal music, refreshments, bake sale and a visit with Santa in the Interpretive Center. Dress warmly for a horse-drawn wagon ride through the farm and nature trails. Stop by the barn to visit Chelsea and Lester the donkeys, and the farm's Jacob sheep. (The property is an alcohol and tobacco free site. No pets please.)

Among the live entertainment acts will be Christmas carols sung by the entire first grade of Hendersonville Elementary School, performances by students in the strings program at West Henderson High School and Rugby Middle School, and more.

Special features of the event are a walk down the Christmas Tree Trail that leads to the 1880s brick farmhouse. Trees on the trail will feature handmade ornaments made by area schoolchildren in the elementary grades. There will also be decorated trees in the house by middle and high school students.

Some of the Christmas tree decorating themes are: Visions of Sugarplums, Wildcats Working to Save the World, Christmas Carol Catastrophe, Snowmen, For the Birds, Razzle Dazzle Christmas, and Book Themes.

Today the farm is operated as a heritage education center. It is owned by the Henderson County Public School System and managed by the non-profit Hender-



son County Education Foundation. The farm and the foundation depend on public support. Donations are tax-deductible. The farm has two nature trails, an 1880's boarding house, a barn-loft museum, 10 historic buildings, and 15 acres of fields, forests and streams.

The property was given to area schoolchildren in 1987 by the late Vernon and Leander Johnson. This is the 20th anniversary year of that gift.

If you go

Historic Johnson Farm is located at 3346 Haywood Road, in Hendersonville, NC.

Contact Farm Coordinator Ingrid McNair at 828-891-6585 for more information.

*jfarm@henderson.k12.nc.us
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When Maggie and Bob decided to get out of the “rat race” computer industry in Silicone Valley, CA they had no plans for future careers. Bob, being an engineer, liked nothing better than to build cabinets and “things” in his workshop, whereas, Maggie was perfectly happy sitting in front of her easel painting.

When they moved to Asheville and the opportunity to buy a framing store arose they thought, “This is a perfect match.” They have had a wonderful year getting to know people in the community.

They really enjoy greeting customers when they walk through the front door, and have met so many wonderful people, many of whom have become good friends.

Maggie and Bob pride themselves on the quality and design of their framing and use only conservation-quality product but, most importantly, they do everything possible to make our customers happy. Everyone is reminded that we guarantee our work. If you don’t like it bring it back.

The shop has grown into a “gallery” as well as a frame shop. They sell original paintings by local and foreign artists. Maggie, an accomplished artist, offers her services for pet portraits in both oil and pastel. The photo’s featured in this article are only a few examples of the art available.

The other product we offer is photo duplication up to 13” wide on high quality photo paper and canvas. Photo duplication is free with framing.

Maggie and Bob hope you will pay them a visit when next you have framing to be done. First time customers get \$40 off the total cost of the project.

FASTFRAME

Bob Brown and Maggie Graham
900 Hendersonville Rd., in Asheville
(below Amici trattoria)
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www.fastframeasheville.com



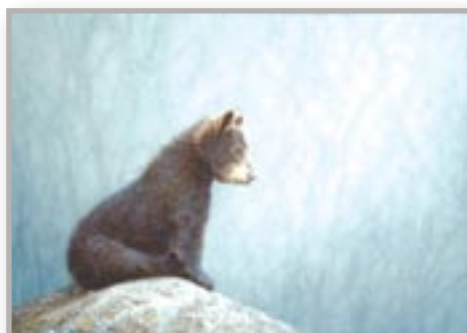
Maggie Graham and Bob Brown,
owners of FASTFRAME.



Maggie Graham doing what she loves
– painting.



Abstract painting
by local artist
Beverly A. Jackson.



This is a wonderful painting titled “Inner
Child” by Michael Bodoian, a local artist.



A pen and ink drawing of “All Souls
Cathedral” by artist Bob Crowe.

December 8th Open House 'til 8pm

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John Mac Kah

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BILTMORE VILLAGE

Dickens Festival in Biltmore Village

The annual Dickens Festival will take place in Historic Biltmore Village. The Festival provides two days of merriment, music and memories in December, plus additional on-stage vocal and instrumental performances by local artists. December dates are Saturday, December 1 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday, December 2 from 1 to 5 p.m.

Saturday night will feature a concert from 5-7 p.m. by Simple Folk, Asheville's well-known musical entertainers, performing traditional folk, holiday seasonal and mountain holiday music.

Throughout the weekend, there'll be more than 30 groups of musicians, singers, storytellers, carolers and other entertainers performing on the stage and the streets of this picturesque village of shops, galleries and restaurants.

Buildings in the Village will be outlined with more than 250,000 tiny white lights. Replicas of the original streetlights have been installed throughout the Village. Shops will be open until 7 p.m., with many of the shopkeepers clothed in Victorian-era garb.

There will be horse-drawn carriage rides on the tree-lined Village streets and a treat for your taste buds when you stop and see Sakshi Gantenbein, the "Chestnut Roaster."

For additional information call (828) 274-8788.

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Modern Raku Ceramics in Biltmore Village

BY SARAH MEAD

Jann Welch and Scott Haines are both North Carolina Raku artists who are pushing the envelope of Raku. The Raku ceramic technique has its roots in the techniques made famous by Chojiro, the son of a Korean ceramic Tile maker during the 1520's in Japan.

Sen-no Rikyu, who was considered Japan's Greatest Tea Master, favored Chojiro's tea bowls and eventually Chojiro's Tea Bowls gave fruit to a whole branch of ceramics called Raku.

Chojiro used techniques, borrowed from Korean tile makers, that used thermal shock and low firing temperatures to keep the clay from hardening and vitrifying. The resultant teabowls had good insulating qualities, so they kept the tea warmer longer, and they were softer and therefore more pleasant to hold.

Those characteristics were important to the Tea Masters who espoused the concept of 'Wabi', which emphasized humility and a focus on simplicity. The ancestral tea bowls of modern Raku ceramics were simple, handmade, darkly colored black and red bowls, suitable for holding in two hands. After Chojiro's death, his son, who carried on the tradition, was honored with the family name of "Raku". Their descendants, the Raku family, have continued producing these traditional ceramics, and the craft is now practiced, in Japan, by the 15th generation of that family.

The traditional Japanese Raku was different in a number of ways from the modern Western version of Raku. Traditional Japanese Raku was always formed by hand; they used specific types of clay, and lead glazes. Modern Raku is no longer restricted to specific clay bodies, nor is it always formed by hand, and lead glazes have been replaced by safer alternatives. In addition modern Raku is not considered functional, but rather for decoration, as a result it has diverged from its roots and become eye-catching and at times almost flamboyant. Modern Western Raku is not used to hold water, and because it is soft, it is susceptible to

breaking easily and not considered suitable for dinnerware.

In 1960 Paul Soldner is attributed with developing 'Post-Firing Reduction' which is one of the major characteristics which distinguishes Traditional from Modern Raku. He took red-hot ware and placed it into a closed container with combustible organic matter, which reduced the air by sucking the Oxygen out of it. The end result was an exciting and un-reproducible array of colors and metallic lusters. Raku ceramics created using these techniques are often vividly

colored and may be sprinkled with cracks from the thermal shock induced in the process. Another side effect of the rough thermal shock involved in the process is that many pieces break or shatter and never make it out of the studio thus significantly raising its cost to the artist.

In 1998, Jann Welch, who is represented by Bella Vista Art Gallery in Biltmore Village, won second place in the Old Santee Canal Juried Show for her innovative hanging Raku Torsos. Jan Rolls the clay into large flat 'canvases' and then hand sculpts then into sensual frontal and back female Torsos.

She has used colored metallic luster glazes as well as white crackle glazes as backgrounds for her pieces. Once they are fired she puts hanging fixtures on the back and they can be hung like two-dimensional paintings on the wall, albeit with a 3 dimensional look.

Like all Raku artists Jann experiences high loss rates from thermal shock, which is all the more unfortunate because each piece is a unique hand-sculptured work of fine art. One of Jann's vertical pieces was fired lying on its side and serendipitously the glaze ran



Vase by Scott Haines

across the mid-riff of the torso leaving a scarlet hued metallic 'belt' draped across the figure that was breathlessly vibrant and unique. Jann's pieces show how far modern Raku has come from the simple, hand-held, lead-glazed austere colored tea bowls of 16th century Japan.

Scott Haines, who is also represented by Bella Vista Art Gallery in Biltmore Village, builds large thin-walled vases and pots with crisp clean designs and employs a wide range of low-fire and metallic glazes. Scott's pieces are wheel turned, meticulously crafted and embellished with a variety of images, including Celtic designs, swirling fields of glazed dots, and simple charcoal colored Zen-like Cranes on white crackle back grounds. One characteristic common to all Scott's pieces is the very fine detail, and careful attention to symmetry and balance. A testament to his control of

the clay is that even his larger pieces are very lightweight due to the thin walls of his pieces. While traditional Raku tea bowls were simple austere, hand-formed heavy and unfinished in appearance, Scott's pieces exude fine stylish workmanship and are light in weight but bold in concept.

From the austere and simple beginnings as hand formed tea bowls in Japan Raku has emerged as a medium of Fine Art, from hand-sculptured torsos by Jann Welch to meticulous finely worked pieces by Scott Haines.



Vase by Scott Haines

Raku Torso by Jann Welch



THE ARTFUL HOME

Add Drama to Your Dining Room: Paint a Floorcloth

BY ROXANE CLEMENT

“Christmas is at our throats again!” is my father’s usual cry this time of year. It all looks like too much work and trouble to him.

It does take an effort to decorate a house and make it welcoming for holiday dinner guests, but it can be fun and entertaining as well. Painting a floorcloth with a holiday theme for your dining room is an easy project and can be used for many years to come.

Floorcloths were once considered the “poor man’s carpet,” but they are now very much back in vogue. The one shown here combines traditional designs in a geometric layout, but floorcloths can be as diverse as any form of art.

1. Start with a piece of medium weight canvas cut neatly to the desired size. I have even used canvas drop cloths from the paint store for my projects.
2. Prime the canvas with acrylic gesso, available at any craft store, with a paint roller. This seals the surface and creates an even surface for painting.



Freehand drawings demonstrate your personal style.

“...floorcloths can be as diverse as any form of art.”

3. Once the gesso has dried, paint the entire surface with a base coat of latex paint.
4. At this point, your creativity and originality take charge. Work out your plan on a sheet of paper, then transfer it to the canvas. The floor cloth shown was painted using a stencil in addition to free-hand painting. If you are insecure about your painting ability, use templates or even decoupage to create the look you want.

5. Apply 3 to 5 coats of an acrylic varnish using a good bristle brush, allowing each coat to dry completely before applying the next. For even more protection and a nice sheen, apply a coat of paste wax with a soft cloth,

“Painting a floorcloth... is an easy project and it can be used for many years...”



Flowers are easily painted using stencils.

then hand buff it when it is dry.

6. Apply a non-skid rubber backing using a paint roller with a foam cover.

It will probably take about 10 days to complete the project, allowing for drying time, but the finished product is durable and easy to wipe clean. Once the holidays are over, it can be rolled up and stored for next year.

If you’re feeling really inspired you can use elements of your pattern to create a dramatic table runner as well.

Happy Holidays!



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Decorative painter Roxane Clement spent ten years in Raleigh, NC as a theatre set painter and lighting designer. She graduated with distinction from the prestigious Decorative Restoration Program of the City and Guilds of London Institute at A-B Tech and taught Decorative Painting there for two years.

She has worked on numerous restoration projects in Asheville including the Smith-McDowell House, the Biltmore Estate, and the A-B Tech library. Her decorative painting business specializes in stone effects and wood grain-ing. Contact her at Rmclement2001@aol.com



This floor cloth combines traditional designs in a geometric layout.

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MUSIC

SPINNING DISKS – DECEMBER CD REVIEWS BY JAMES CASSARA

Be it given one star or five if it's mentioned in this column rest assured it is worth hearing. Be sure to support any of our fine independent record shops and tell them Rapid River sent you!

Various Artists

I'm Not There

Music From The Movie Soundtrack

Making the music of Bob Dylan your own is, for the most part, a foolhardy and neigh impossible task: Stay too closely to the original and you're likely to be doomed in comparison while straying far from the source inevitably brings up cries of heresy. For all the times his material has been performed by others — and few songwriters have been covered more than Dylan — he remains an incredibly singular and unique voice.

This double-disc soundtrack to the Todd Haynes directed film of the same name, features a number of songs not used in the movie. I'm Not There gels as an album, partially because a good portion of the soundtrack is recorded with one of two different house bands: the dusty, cinematic Arizona outfit Calexico and the Million Dollar Bashers, a megagroup assembled specifically for this effort featuring guitarist Lee Ranaldo and drummer Steve Shelley of Sonic Youth, Tom Verlaine, Dylan bassist Tony Garnier, Wilco guitarist Nels Cline, guitarist Smokey Hormel, and organist John Medeski.

Familiar sounds may be here, but not necessarily familiar songs; Haynes and Poster deliberately sidestep standards like "Blowin' in the Wind," "Masters of War," "Subterranean Homesick Blues," and "Like a Rolling Stone," choosing instead to build this soundtrack around songs that weren't widely released during the time of their creation.

Poster has paired performers with the songs almost perfectly, alternating between subtle surprises and sure picks. No other band could duplicate the haunted quality of Dylan's "I'm Not There," but Sonic Youth is the ideal match, as they give the song a hazy beauty and warmth lacking in the original.

Roger McGuinn and Willie Nelson effortlessly blend in with Calexico on "One More Cup of Coffee" and "Señor (Tales of Yankee Power)," respectively, giving these songs arrangements that expand on the originals, just like how Ramblin' Jack Elliott's "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues" takes the Highway 61 Revisited standard and stripes it down to its essence.

John Doe gives "I Dreamed I Saw

St. Augustine" a subdued, soulful passion that contrasts with both Sufjan Stevens' revved up "Ring Them Bells" and Mark Lanegan's gothic "The Man in the Long Black Coat," yet all speak vividly to the spiritual undercurrents in these songs.

Despite their gentle version of "Just Like a Woman" Calexico's cuts come the closest to reinventing the song, particularly on an excellent "Dark Eyes" with Iron & Wine and a fine, weary "Goin' to Acapulco" sung by Jim James of My Morning Jacket. Mason Jennings is responsible for good, straight-ahead versions

of the earliest folk songs, while a joyous "You Ain't Goin' Nowhere" nearly eclipses the Byrds version.

But no band truly gets to speak to the two extremes of Dylan's work as do Yo La Tengo, who contribute a delicate, beautiful take on "Fourth Time Around" and positively nail the wild, careening sound of 1965 on "I Wanna Be Your Lover." They, alone among any of the artists here, get the opportunity to do these two sides of Dylan, but as I'm Not There reminds us there were not just two or even ten sides to Dylan. There are more than we could ever count and fewer than we might know; that much is evident on his recordings, which continue to astound and inspire. Still, it sometimes takes a fresh perspective to hear what's already there, and the soundtrack to I'm Not There provides that perspective. ★★

Levon Helm

Dirt Farmer

Robbie Robertson may have been the face most associated with The Band but for those who truly loved their music Rick Danko was the heart and Levon Helm the heart and soul. His tough, sinewy Arkansas vocals and his indomitable, loosely tight drumming anchored their music in ways that allowed Robertson's soaring guitars and Garth Hudson's ethereal keyboards to push the limits without ever losing the earthy sense so vital to their sound.

Since leaving the group Robertson's solo work has been the product of a man whose lofty ambitions outstrip his ability to make them interesting. But Helm's music has been the greater disappointment; with the exception of 1980's American Son, most of his solo record-

ings have been thoroughly disposable, offering plenty of good-time boogie but none of the gravity one might hope for from the man who made "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down". Which is why Dirt Farmer is such an unexpected surprise; it's easily Helm's best recorded work since American Son, and an absorbing look back at his roots as the son of a farm family in the rural South.

Produced by Larry Campbell, a session guitarist and member of Bob Dylan's road band, in collaboration with Levon's daughter Amy, the sound is clear and clutter free. Having survived a bout with throat cancer Helm's voice is noticeably more weathered than it once was, but in many respects the additional nooks and crannies suit this material beautifully.

His interpretations of traditional rural folk songs like "Poor Old Dirt Farmer," "Little Birds," and "False Hearted Lover Blues" sound thoroughly authentic but with a bracing sense of force and com-

mitment in his vocals. Though Helm adds a touch of boogie to "Got Me a Woman" and a jumped-up interpretation

of the Carter Family's "Single Girl, Married Girl," in this context they add some welcome spice to the stew, and Helm's drumming remains superb.

Dirt Farmer is a hard-edged but compassionate album, offering a full-hearted set of roots music from a master of the form. It's a welcome and inspiring return for Helm after a long stretch of professional and personal setbacks and a glowing reminder of why The Band remain one of this land's most venerable entourages. ★★

Gene Clark and Carla Olson
In Concert

Byrds co-founder Gene Clark was one of the most gifted singers and songwriters of his generation, but bad luck and self-destructive habits followed him like a shadow, and it seemed sadly appropriate that he died in the spring of 1991 as he was working on a follow-up to the biggest

'CD's' continued on next pg.

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Coming Next Month

Joe's Brew Notes ~ Beer fan Joe Zinich is an expert on local beers and the best places in town to enjoy them. After nagging Joe for a year to tell us what he knows, we got him to agree to write a column sharing his secrets. He's no beer geek — in fact, Joe doesn't even know how to make beer. He's just interested in finding the best-tasting beers — and having fun. Breweries, pubs, musicians, private tastings, public events — each month Joe will write up the latest tips on tap for area beer-loving locals and tourists. As he says, "Join me for all things beer — from A (Asheville) to Z (Zinich)!"

WHAT'S HAPPENING

End of Year Reggae Party

The Grey Eagle is widely regarded as the best place to hear reggae music in the western North Carolina region. The shows feature cutting edge artists, are open to persons of all ages, are liquor free and smoke free.

Reggae artists featured at The Grey Eagle have include Midnite, Luciano, Anthony B, Dezarie, Bambu Station, Everton Blender, Dub Is A Weapon, and more. All of the reggae shows put on at The Grey Eagle are booked and produced by One Vibe Reggae.

One Vibe Reggae, ONE WORLD Entertainment, and InnerNational Music will be hosting

"End of Year Reggae Party at The Grey Eagle" on Saturday, December 8, 2007.

Last year's headliner for this event were The Meditations. This year, we are pleased welcome back to Asheville two of St. Croix's most respected — IBA and TUFF LION!

It has been over two years since IBA and TUFF LION last performed in the Asheville area. IBA had previously performed in Asheville while touring with Bambu Station, NiyoRah and the Star Lion Family, Tuff Lion, Ras Bumpa, Ijah Menelik, Lady Passion, among others. While

TUFF LION has been back to Asheville as an instrumentalist, he has not performed as a singer



Tuff Lion

in Asheville since the Talkin' Roots Tour II (of 2005). Both artists have been considered crowd favorites any time they've come through.

Additional DJ's and performers include Shining Rock Reggae Band, Selector Timothy (Deep Roots Sound), and Tablesaw (Cosmic Wind Sound).

IBA has traveled all over the world spreading his message of righteous living, morality, world peace, and unity. IBA's voice and delivery is very distinct and his genuine nature and honesty truly set him far apart many of the more controversial modern reggae stars.

Within the reggae music underground scene, Tuff Lion is a highly respected veteran with a reputation for putting forth a full effort into all that he has been blessed to do. The works of this "passionate" musician are broad and include solid performances on a variety of instruments, as well as songwriting and production.



IBA (pronounced 'Eye-bah')

If you go

Iba, Tuff Lion, with special guest Shining Rock Reggae Band at The Grey Eagle, 185 Clingman Ave., in Asheville.

Saturday, December 8, 2007. Doors open at 9 p.m., showtime 9:30 p.m. sharp.

Advance tickets are available at The Grey Eagle, Harvest Records, Orbit DVD, and online at www.TheGreyEagle.com.

'CD's' continued

success of his solo career, *So Rebellious a Lover*, his 1987 collaboration with Carla Olson of the Textones.

Disc one features seven songs Clark performed on the radio series Mountain Stage; despite having arrived late and being unable to rehearse with the show's house band Clark delivers strong and passionate solo acoustic interpretations of five numbers (including the masterful "Tried So Hard") and later sits in with the band for a pair of songs wherein the musicians lending subtle but effective support.

Disc two is devoted to a concert Clark and Olson played at McCabe's Guitar Shop in Santa Monica, which was previously released in the U.K. as *Silhouetted in Light*. The show is intimate, with Clark and Olson joined only by guitarist Duane Jarvis and bassist David Provost,

whose accompaniment is fine but spare.

In spite of his personal demons Gene Clark

loved the music even when the music didn't love him back. This double CD may be as flawed as was the man but at times it's no less genuine, brilliant, or volatile. ****

John Martyn On the Cobbles

For an artist whose recording career dates back to 1968, British Folk man John Martyn has managed to remain-at least on this side of the pond-in relative obscurity. His first album of new material in four years might, at just under 45 minutes, short on sound but despite one of the tracks ("Baby Come Home") having been previously released it's still eminently satisfying.

Even more so when you consider that most of the vocals and guitar work were laid down before spring 2003 when Martyn, as a result of his long battle with diabetes, lost his right leg.

He revisits his own past with "Go Down Easy," which was originally on *Solid Air*, although in this guise it's



barely recognizable, transformed from an acoustic frippery into a meandering, atmospheric electric piece (this version was originally recorded in 1992 for a ballet). To the joy of longtime fans, there's plenty of Martyn's acoustic fret board work on *On the Cobbles*, although it's not as prominent as it was in the '70s. But the free-and-easy love song "One for the Road" is a joy, as is the wistful "Back to Marseilles."

A couple of guests do show up: Paul Weller on "Under My Wing," (a song that seems made for the former Jam man) and Mavis Staples roars on a cover of Leadbelly's "Goodnight Irene."

"My Creator" is a kind of creed, truly words to live by, and the spiritual heir of "Solid Air." The jazziest cut on the album (former band mate Danny Thompson plays double bass on it); it's dominated by horns to create an atmosphere of midnight blue. While *On the Cobbles* might be a difficult album to track down it's well worth doing so. The whole disc is a testament to a man who will never go gently into the good night, and nor should he. ***1/2

Flying Burrito Brothers

Live at the Avalon Ballroom 1969

"At his peak," Chris Hillman once famously said about Gram Parsons, his country-rock soul mate in the Byrds and then the Burritos, "he was focused, dis-

ciplined, and sober." Sadly, it was a short peak; a scant handful of albums and tours between 1968 and Parsons' death in 1973. This deluxe two-CD set is a vital addition to that precious few, a pair of shows that capture Parsons' dream — a new American union of R&B, psychedelic rebellion and rock's country roots recorded directly



following the band's debut, *The Gilded Palace of Sin*.

These performances also prove that the original Burritos were a great band, with

natural born harmonizers in Parsons and Hillman and a broad, bold covers repertoire that at these shows included Little Richard, Delaney and Bonnie, and early Willie Nelson.

The late sneaky Pete Kleinow's fuzz-rimmed pedal steel guitar skids in "Hot Burrito #2" at slicing pace and Parsons sings throughout with a natural heart-break and drawling resilience that proves something else Hillman said of him: "He knew this music - and he could sing it." Indeed he could. ***1/2





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DECEMBER 2007

Martin Atkins

Sunday, December 9, 2007 3:00 PM

Come meet the author as he signs his latest book, *Tour: Smart and Break the Band*, a comprehensive guide to successful music tours full of inside tips, anecdotes and information.



From packing the right equipment to keeping enough gas in the tank to get home, every aspect of making a successful tour with a band is addressed in this comprehensive guide. More than 100 luminaries and leading organizations from the world of touring — among them Chris Connelly, Henry Rollins, the House of Blues, and the Vans Warped Tour, as well as club owners, tour managers, and even sex advisors — provide handy insider know-how along with insight on mistakes commonly made by novice bands. Chapters address the nitty-gritty of touring, with instructions on how to secure venues and publicity, how to stay healthy on the road, and how to keep the budget in the black. Loaded with hundreds of years' worth of collective hands-on experience from those steeped in the music business, this is a must-have resource for creating an unforgettable tour.

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BOOKS

The Spirit of Giving: Gift Books to Bring You Closer to the Land Around You

REVIEWS BY H. BYRON BALLARD

I love to give books as gifts and have become that dreaded great-aunt who always finds the noisiest board book for the littlest readers on my list. I've been aiming for a slightly older demographic in the last few weeks and am delighted with some of the locally-authored books that hold an authentic flavor of these mountains we call home.

These books are perfect for the person who's just moved to the area or the long-term resident who loves this place or the friend who used to live here but circumstances forced her to move away. I highly recommend each of them.

Cataloochee

by Wayne Caldwell

This tale of a legendary community is vividly brought to life by the author, whose family hails from "Catalooch". Well-written and a dense chewy story make this an ideal gift for the historian or storyteller on your list.

Thirteen Moons

by Charles Frazier

Frazier's first book, *Cold Mountain*, set a standard for historical narrative set in western North Carolina and his second novel will not disappoint. We follow the life of Will Cooper from orphan boy to state senator and the story of the Trail of Tears has rarely been told in such a deliberate and heart-chilling way. Now in paperback, this book is a good stocking stuffer for the fiction reader.

Asheville: Mountain Majesty

(an Illustrated History)
by Lou Harshaw

This is a magnificent book, full of rarely-seen photos of Asheville and boasting a readable text. This is a paperback coffee-table style book that won't bust your budget. A must-have for the history buff or Asheville native.

Thomas Wolfe: When Do The Atrocities Begin?

by Joanne Marshall Mauldin

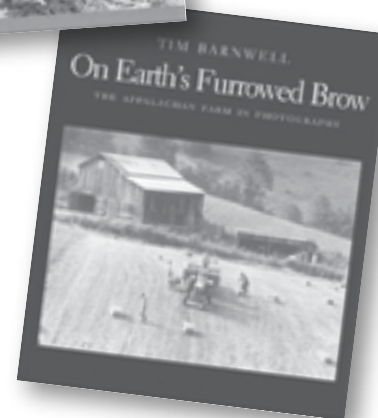
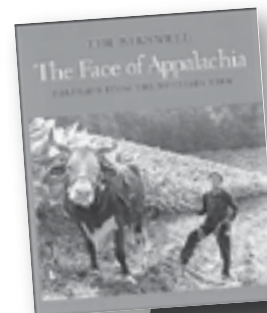
I reviewed this in last month's *Rapid River* and can't say enough about it. Buy

it for the lit major on your list and make sure you get a copy for yourself. This book has a wealth of detailed information about the last months of Wolfe's life.

On Earth's Furrowed Brow

The Appalachian Farm in Photographs by Tim Barnwell

A classic big ol' coffee table book by one of western NC's best known photographers, this is a collection of images of lives well-lived in a place that is all but lost. You can really splurge and give Barnwell's *The Face of Appalachia: Portraits from the Mountain Farm* as a companion volume. Both are breathtaking.



Byron Ballard is a local bookseller, writer, gardener and mom who thinks books make the very best gifts.

HOT BESTSELLERS

Books by these fine local authors are hot bestsellers now:

Sarah Addison Allen's *Garden Spells*, young local author's enchanting debut

Sarah Gruen's phenomenal can't-put-down third novel, *Water for Elephants*.

MULTI-BOOK SERIES

Count on prolific western North Carolina writers to create multi-book series that keep readers coming back:

Sallie Bissell's "Mary Crow" thriller series, four so far: *In the Forest of Harm*, *Darker Justice*, *Call the Devil by His Oldest Name*, *Legacy of Masks*.

Vicki Lane's "Elizabeth Goodweather" WNC mystery series, three so far: *Art's Blood*, *Signs of Blood* and *Old Wounds*

Joan Medlicott's charming *Ladies of Covington* series (seven novels so far) plus her new Christmas novella, *A Covington Christmas*

Charles F. Price's powerful historical *Hiwassee* series of four novels: *Hiwassee: A Novel of the Civil War*, *Freedom's Altar*, *The Cock's Spur*, and *Where the Water-Dogs Laughed*,

You can splurge on your sweetie and get all the books in a series, wrapping them individually to make a tower of reading! And if you're very good, maybe the books you give will be loaned back to you to read yourself. Happy holidays!

BOOKS

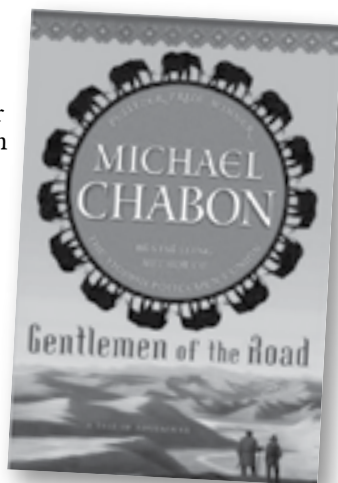
Gentlemen of the Road: A Tale of Adventure

by Michael Chabon, Illustrations by Gary Gianni

This excellent story is set in the mountains of the Caucasus and the delta of the River Volga in areas known today as Azerbaijan, Astrakhan Oblast and Kazakhstan, the era being roughly the middle of the second century, A.D.

The heroes of this tale, a couple of appealing rogues, are Zelikman, a gaunt, Frankish Jew and Amram, a huge, black Abyssinian Jew. These unlikely partners are nomads wandering kingdoms and empires, some fanciful, some legendary and others dimly remembered. These "gentlemen of the road" make their meager living by cunning and wits, trickery and occasional horse thievery. Despite their differences, the men are fast friends and yet, they are as devoted to their horses as they are to each other.

In a colorful and violent time and place, the friends are drawn into a preposterous scheme to restore an overthrown heir to the throne of the fictitious kingdom of Khazaria. Swordplay, horsemanship, guile, heroic elephants, battling armies of Mohammedan and Rus mercenaries all color an extravagant



story. At the heart of the tale is the strange, enduring friendship of the two comrades.

Author Chabon continues to mine genre fiction with great success. He re-imagined Sherlock Holmes as a very old man (*The Final Solution: A Story of Detection*) and was awarded his Pulitzer for commingling stage magic and comic book superheroes (*The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*). He scored a recent bestseller by setting

a noir detective novel in an imaginary Jewish settlement on the coast of Alaska (*The Yiddish Policemen's Union: A Novel*). Chabon's gift is to artfully work the simple writer's question, "What if?" Rather than creating a whole-cloth fantasy, he changes reality just a little bit.

As Chabon explains in a brief Afterword (worth the cover price, alone), his working title was *Jews with Swords*. This sounds preposterous to modern ears but, given a little thought, is reasonable, in light of a long Biblical tradition of Jewish skill at arms. The idea works well, set in the dusty realm of the medieval Middle East. The author's whimsical chapter

REVIEW BY JOHN M. ROSE

titles, such as "On Anxieties Arising from The Impermissibility, However Unreasonable, of an Elephant's Rounding Out a Prayer Quorum" set an ironic tone.

Gentlemen of the Road is graced with fifteen pen-and-ink illustrations by Gary Gianni, the current illustrator of the syndicated comic strip, *Prince Valiant*. The book is especially well-designed in two colors and the choice of the typeface, Requiem, is perfect for the text and overall look. This lively read makes a fine gift choice for an adventurous reader.

John M. Rose is a freelance writer who reviews books and movies for Rapid River.

INTERIM

Come visit me
Spirit of Solitude
for today
there is snow
softly and pleasantly falling
filling the woods with a quality
of freshness and renewal.
No work today
only time
gentle time
spent alone with all of creation
and time

gentle time
always comes with
an essence of healing.
Come visit me
Spirit of Solitude
warm yourself at my fire

for today
there is snow
softly and pleasantly falling
in gentle time
with an essence of healing.
Come...

© MARIJO MOORE

From her book of poetry,
Spirit Voices of Bone

MariJo Moore (Cherokee/Irish/Dutch) is an author/poet/anthologist/editor/publisher and resides in the mountains of western NC. www.marijomore.com

Colophon: Publisher's Note Enhances Readers' Enjoyment

At the end of Michael Chabon's *Gentlemen of the Road: A Tale of Adventure* appears a colophon, which is a publisher's note regarding the production of the book and, usually, the typography employed.

This one reads "This book was set in Requiem, a typeface designed by the Hoefler Type Foundry. It is a typeface inspired by inscriptional capitals in Ludovico Vicentino Arrighi's 1523 writing manual, *Il modo de teperare le penne*. An original lowercase, a set of figures, and an italic in the "chancery" style that Arrighi helped popularize were created to make this adaptation of a classical design into complete font family."

I find colophons a classy touch, in great measure because I was once taught a few things about type. Years ago, I attended Rochester Institute of Technology's (RIT) School of Printing in Rochester, New York. I

especially enjoyed the courses in book layout and the development of type design, which dates all the way back to Johannes Gutenberg and his invention of moveable foundry type in the 1450s. It was as momentous a breakthrough in its time as the Internet is now for what is known today as "information technology".

RIT has the wonderful Cary Library Graphic Arts Collection, which shows the development of typography and history of printing, especially the printing of books. It was there that I had the privilege of handling original Gutenberg pages. The paper, which predates industrial, wood pulp paper-making, was made entirely of cotton rag fiber. Those pages were as soft and supple as the day they were made over 500 years ago. Gutenberg's printing was still wonderfully black and the typesetting was razor sharp. The old boy got it right the first time.

December 2007 Events at Osondu Booksellers

All events at Osondu Booksellers, 184 N. Main, in Waynesville, NC unless otherwise noted.

Saturday, December 1, 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Grandparents' Day at Osondu Booksellers! All visitors to the store over the age of 60, along with all members of our Readers Club, will receive a 20% discount on everything in the store and in Margaret's Café, except wine. Get a head start on your holiday shopping, and stop to sip a cup of tea while you're at it.

Friday, December 7, 7 p.m.

This is the last of Waynesville's "Art After Dark" evenings until May of next year. At Osondu's, we'll celebrate with a wine sampling presented by Wisdom Wines along with mulled cider and sweets for you to enjoy while browsing our wide selection of books and accessories for readers of all ages.

Saturday, December 8, 7 p.m.

Osondu's will be the perfect place to bring the kids along while you're doing your holiday shopping. We'll have a children's storyteller on hand to share tales of the season; carols as a musical backdrop in Margaret's Café; holiday fare for young and not-so-young; and, gift items to please everyone on your list.

Saturday, December 15, 7 p.m.

Come carol with us at Osondu's. Chris Minnick will help us celebrate the season with song in the company of good friends, good fare and good books. What better way to spend a relaxing Saturday evening in the midst of this busy time of the year?!

Friday, December 21, 7 p.m.

We're having a wine tasting, and Golaleh Poorsoltan, local rep for Wisdom Wines, will be our hostess for the evening. Come, sit a bit, sip a bit and enjoy a bit of relaxation amidst the busyness of the season.

Monday, December 24, 4p.m.

Osondu Booksellers will close at 4 p.m. for Christmas. Happy holidays to all!

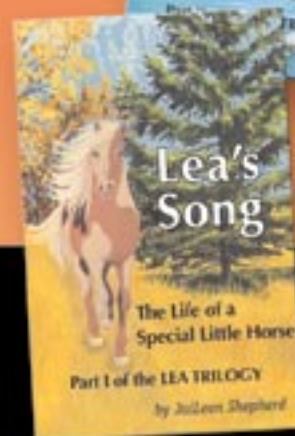
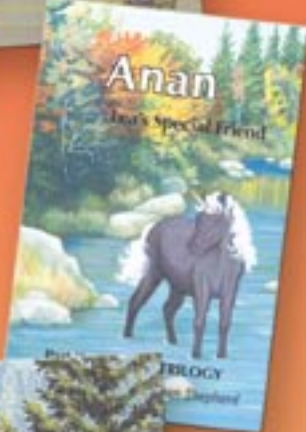
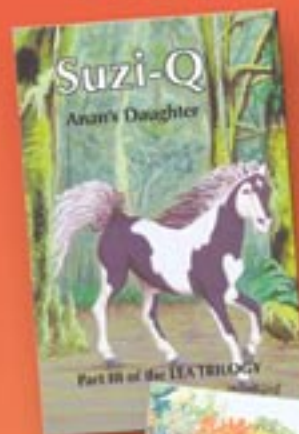
Monday, December 31, 10a.m.

Osondu Booksellers will reopen at 10 a.m. Winter store hours: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturdays. The store will be closed on Sundays.

Osondu Booksellers
(828) 456-8062

www.osondubooksellers.com

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issues children
face today.Readers can relate to these powerful
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and unique life situations reflect our own.They have straight hair, kinky hair,
different color coats, soft toes and hard toes,
— some even have horns!The stories are full of talking animals,
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bumblebees, bullfrogs, saber-tooth tigers
and hungry bears who terrify.Preview the books at
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BOOKS

Book Gifts for the Holidays
and All Year Long

BOOK EDITOR MARCIANNE MILLER

If you've known me for more than a week and I give you a present, no doubt it will be a book. Unless it's homemade soup or a bouquet of flowers, I can't imagine anyone wanting anything else as a gift. On these pages are the books I'd like to give this season.

Gifts for
MenGift Package of Books
by Thomas Rain Crowe

I've met poet/author/translator/gardener/naturalist/musician and now novelist Thomas Rain Crowe only once — on a mutual errand some years ago, we strolled along downtown Asheville streets for about an hour — but I feel I know him like an old friend. He's a man who writes not just with the earthiness of a Nature-awed mountain man, but with the naked, raw power of the poet who lays bare his heart because he knows no other way to write.

Point Crowe toward an experience in life and he gulps it down, mulls it over for a long, long time and hands it back to you transformed into a magic potion. You spiral from one emotion to another with him, you tremble, weep, cry out for help, laugh hilariously, then fly over his landscapes, dipping close for a shadowed look, soaring up to find its boundaries. Then you wake up — hey, you're still here, feet

planted firmly
on the ground.
And so is he.

Women,
of course,
love Crowe's
writing. Men,
do too, but
because he's
a poet ("No
way," I can
hear my
marine master
sergeant hus-
band whine,
"I ain't
reading no

poet!"), they need a little leading. Thus, the Thomas Rain Crowe gift package.

First book in the box would have to be Crowe's fascinating memoir of the four years he spent in a cabin in the woods: *Zoro's Field: My Appalachian Woods* (University of Georgia Press, 2005, 221 pages). After a 20-year absence,



Crowe returned to the mountains of his birth and lived the simple life — no electricity no phone, no car, just himself, his

wits, his
memo-
ries, the
land and

the stories they made together. No real man could resist such a true tale.

Next would be Crowe's latest book, *A House of Girls*, his first novel. Not just any novel, but a book of *autobiographical fiction*. "Fiction is autobiography," the saying goes, so readers can always assume writers' true lives lurk somewhere in their fiction. In *A House of Girls*, Crowe twists the adage and proves that "autobiography is fiction."

The novel is a series of interconnected tales tracing Crowe's amazing love life. For a guy who spent four years in a cabin and emerged with hair so wild and a beard so long he terrified the townfolk, Crowe definitely made up for lost time with the ladies. But don't think he's a braggart who just struts his stuff with poetry groupies. No, Crowe, it seems, takes his affairs of the heart pretty seriously. When he falls in love, he drops like a two-ton boulder, so his romances are exquisite, soulful episodes, full of endless longing and terribly painful separations and enough secret comings and goings to make you wonder if he would have been as good in espionage as he is with creative writing.

One of the legendary "Baby Beat" poets, Crowe traveled widely, so the variety of women in his romantic life would make any normal man envious. There was the sweet young nun in a convent in France when Crowe was a sweet young thing himself. Then the wild dancer from the Yountville Saloon. Followed by the ballerina in the photograph. Along the way there was the undercover agent and the hometown sweetheart. Lastly, the longest and most breathtaking story of all,

is with his childhood playmate and cousin Bennie whom he meets by chance decades after they went their separate ways.

Throughout these relationships Crowe reveals himself as a man that most women would love to have shared time with — sensitive, goofy, passionate, perhaps a bit too eager with long-stemmed roses. How many of his fascinating women were flesh and blood? Was Crowe truly such a determined romantic? How many bizarre situations really happened? I posed such questions to my husband after I had finished *A House of Girls* and was awestruck for days, "What's true?" he said. "And who cares about what's true if it's a good story?"

Whether wrapped in your male gift package or for yourself, you'll also want to include one of Crowe's many volumes of poetry. His latest work, *Radiogenesis* (Main Street Rag, 79 pages, with an introduction by Jack Hirschman) is especially impressive, in light of the themes of his novel.



After a Quarrel

I know good sex will melt
the stars

and good wine
dazzles the sky

But who am I to
cuddle with angels

or drink champagne from
a rich man's ear

Deep in the embrace of reason

sparks flicker to the
touch of candles

Whispers shout
blind as bone

And we cover each other
with bleeding hair.

© THOMAS RAIN CROWE
Radiogenesis

For more information about
Thomas Rain Crowe, go to
www.newnativepress.com

BOOKS

Gifts for Women

Gift Package of Books by Sue Monk Kidd

One of my favorite recent American novels is *The Secret Life of Bees*, Sue Monk Kidd's wondrous first novel published in 2002.

It's the story of a 14-year-old runaway named Lily, who seeks refuge in 1964 South Carolina with three eccentric beekeepers who teach her about life, race relations, and their secret connection to the Divine Feminine.

It sold over 4.5 million copies. I've read *Bees* five times, including three times on audio so I could revel in Kidd's hypnotic language.

After discovering *Bees*, I sought out Kidd's previous work. *Dance of the Dissident Daughter* (1996) is the story of her long, often painful journey from devout traditional Protestantism to feminist theology. It's one of the most moving true stories I've ever read, and particularly meaningful for contemporary spiritual seekers.

While on her dissident path, Kidd

mined another spiritual treasure trove. In her 30s — despite a husband, two children, and a demanding professional life — set off on a contemplative path. Kidd started meditating and made regular monastic retreats. She read volumes of western contemplative literature — St. Teresa, John of the Cross, Julian of Norwich, Meister Eckhart, Hildegard of Bingen, and especially, one of my favorites, Thomas Merton (1915-1968). Merton, was a Cistercian monk, "whose work," Kidd reveals, "became a wise and provocative mentor." Kidd wrote the introduction for the recent reissue of one of Merton's most beloved books, *Seeds of Contemplation*.

Kidd learned, in time, what so many other contemplatives have learned — that the "noise" of life is not dissonance, but rather the sound of divine music.

When I thumbed through Kidd's latest book, *Firstlight: The Early Inspirational Writings of Sue Monk Kidd* (Guideposts Books, 2006), I was apprehensive — it wasn't a look forward as I had hoped — but a look back. For many years, Kidd wrote inspirational essays for magazines such as *Guideposts*, musings created from her expansive, but still traditional Protestant perspective. Not, I thought,

a point of view that would have any relevance to me.

At first Kidd herself was reluctant to revisit her past, but the more she read of her early insights, the more she realized they should be shared. "Firstlight became a bridge," she said, "a way for me to return to my beginnings, to works that had been lost, orphaned, forgotten and dismissed. It was



a gift of reunion."

Kidd is such a good writer, I reasoned, if she was brave enough to have a reunion with herself, then maybe I could try

a first meeting. I'm

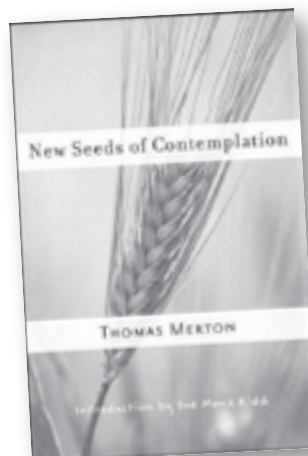
happy to say, *Firstlight* was a lovely, eye-opening experience. Even as a young woman, Kidd wrote with compassionate expansiveness, never confined by dogma.

Her reflections on her life — in the many roles she had, as wife, mother, daughter, nurse and writer, living in the U.S. (mostly in Charleston, SC) and her year in East Africa — speak to all women (and men, too) of any faith. Here are two excerpts from the book:

Severe Grace

Last year I visited a woman in the hospital who is a poet and deeply contemplative. She was in a lot of pain from crippling arthritis, but she said

with confounding vibrancy, "Today I have discovered God as the awful throbbing in my joints. God is the pitiful crying of the woman in the next bed. God is my loneliness. God is the angry nurse who avoids



me. I did not expect God to be these things. But here in the hospital before all these agonies, I keep wanting to drop to my knees. Do you think I'm strange?"

"No," I said. "Not strange. Blessed."

Gracious Space

As my friend Betty and I strolled around some plantation grounds in South Carolina, we found a trail leading off into the woods. It curved beneath moss-draped oaks that formed Gothic arches over our heads. The air floated in bird-song and silence, heavily perfumed with honeysuckle. Now and then we spotted a wild dogwood tree, its white blooms catching the light and shimmering through the dense green thicket.

"I feel like we are walking in a cathedral," I whispered. "Aren't we?" Betty said.

For more information about Sue Monk Kidd, go to www.suemonkkidd.com

The Garden

Could it be so, that Eden's Now,
And we that fill it, are somehow,
In ignorance of that?

I caught a glimpse through
Heaven's veil,
When through your eyes, so clear
and pale, You Reached for me.

A nervous surge, and sudden urge,
to understand.

Curious, playful and unplanned.
What a view! To see all the wonders
of Paradise through You.

Well — Dandelion parachutes lift
on warm air.

JOHN MAPPIN,
WWW.CAMELOTCASTLE.COM

Gift for Gardeners

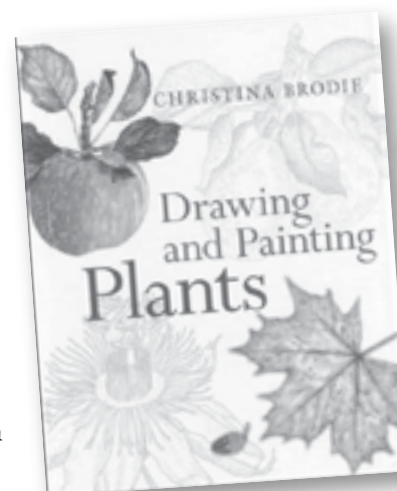
Drawing and Painting Plants

by Christina Brodie

At his time of year, gardeners can get only so much creative satisfaction from sorting through seed catalogs. If you're like me, you've often said, "Oh, if I had some free time I'd love to paint the plants in my garden." Just in time for the holidays, we now have the perfect book to get us off our garden kneepads and up to the easel. *Drawing and Painting Plants*

by Christina Brodie (Timber Press, 2007, 144 pages) is a gorgeous book, beautifully designed to show even the most botany-challenged artist easy ways to capture the awesome wonderfulness of plants. It's full of photos and samples of hand drawings and paintings, and organized in such a way that the reader has encouragement from page one to pick up a pencil or

paintbrush. A lovely, lovely gift for yourself or any avid gardeners on your list.



Even the botanically-challenged will find easy ways to capture the amazing beauty of plants.

BOOKS

Gift for Travelers

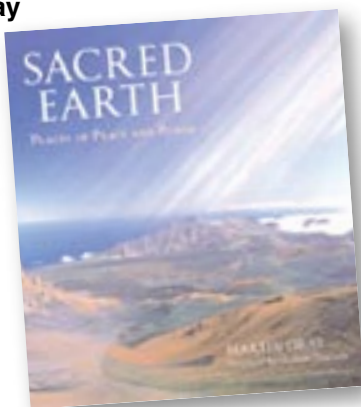
Sacred Earth: Places of Peace and Power

by Martin Gray

I love my menagerie of too many dogs and cats, but every now and then I long for those childless years when I could just pack up and leave on a moment's whim.

I've always dreamed of visiting some of the world's sacred sites — and this wonderful book, *Sacred Earth, Places of Peace and Power* (Sterling, 2007, 288 pages) is the perfect companion for such an armchair traveling.

It's lavishly illustrated with awe-inspiring images from over 1,000 sacred sites in 80 countries gathered over 20 years by acclaimed photographer and anthropologist Martin Gray. A gorgeous, inspiring book that you'll enjoy for years.



Gift for Pop-Up Lovers, Young and Old

600 Spots

by David Carter



If you're an artist, or an adventuresome parent, you already know artist David Carter and his incredible pop-up books, *One Red Dot*, *Blue 2* and others — and you know they've become collectibles and risen to astronomical prices. The

good news is that Carter's new book, *600 Black Spots: A Pop-up Book for Children of All Ages* (Little Simon, 2007, 20 pages) is available and is still affordable at \$19.99.

This latest offering is Carter's most clever scavenger hunt yet, inducing readers to spend hours searching for the black dots throughout the pages. Secrets and surprises galore. If you don't have children, it's worth renting a few, just to enjoy the experience of exploring this book with them.



Gift for Word Lovers

The Dord, the Diglot, and an Avocado or Two: The Hidden Lives and Strange Origins of Common and Not-So-Common Words

by Anu Garg

Every day 6000,000 word lovers in 200 countries get our word-a-day email from wordsmith.org., an internet group founded by India-born Seattle resident Anu Garg. Every day a new English word shows up in our inbox with its pronunciation, a description, and an amazing quote showing it used in a sentence, usually, most surprisingly, from contemporary newspapers or magazines. (Amazing how many words sports writers can come up with!)

Every now and then there's a word I actually know already or hope to add my own vocabulary. I've become particularly fond of nature-related words, such as *crepuscular* (at dawn and twilight) and *dendriform* (in the shape of a tree).

Here's a word a lot of us wish we could

use lately: *petrichor*. Combining *petros* (Greek for stone) and *ichor* (the fluid that flows in the veins of Greek gods), *petrichor* means the pleasant smell that accompanies the first rain after a dry spell.

Anu Garg, the author of several wonderful word-related books, has come out with another one just in time for the holidays. *The Dord, the Diglot, and an Avocado or Two* is a *dilly* for word lovers. Enjoy a holiday *frisson* and get a copy for yourself or a friend. It certainly won't be considered a *bagatelle* and you'll be in full *ataraxia* that you bought the perfect gift.



At Loose Ends Now That Harry Potter Is Over? Gifts for Audio Book Readers

"Dark Materials" Trilogy and the "Artemis Fowl" Series



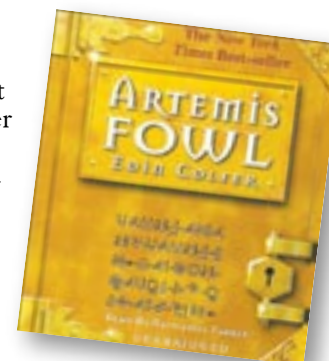
If you're faced with a young reader, (or yourself, confess) who's mourning because the *Harry Potter* books are over, now's a good time to discover other series that are equally, if not even more, captivating. I'm absolutely nuts

about *The Golden Compass* by Philip Pullman and the other two books in his *Dark Materials* trilogy, which features the feistiest young heroine in recent memory. The book on tape, with the voices of a cast full of wonderful actors, carries this story truly into a realm that is both mythical and unforgettable. The series, which has won numerous awards and was made into a movie which opens next month, has become controversial. That's shocking to me and I've read the books several times. In any case, do some internet research before you buy.

Artemis Fowl is genius master criminal who happens to be all of 12 years old, and is

locked in an eternal and ever-more-dangerous struggle with dysfunctional fairies and other wild creatures. The *Artemis Fowl* series by Eoin Colfer is enormously entertaining, especially on tape where the hilarious satire becomes very clear for young readers. There are six books in the series as well as a graphic novel.

Note to parents: Audio books are expensive. You can always get them at the library to listen before you buy. But library books, which get heavy use, are occasionally defective — most frustrating when your child is at the cliff-hanger in the middle of a book. You might want to partner with other parents and share the cost of audio books.



Marcianne Miller is an Asheville-based writer and critic. Contact her at marci@aquamystique.com

Rapid River
ARTS & CULTURE MAGAZINE

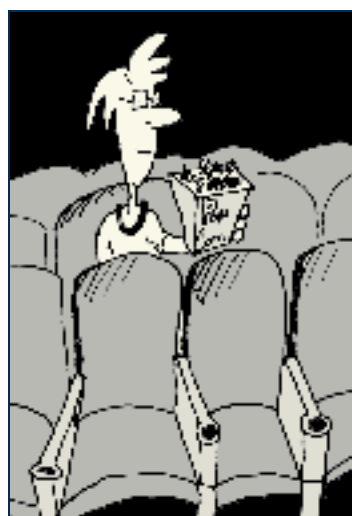
11th Annual Poetry Contest

Winning poems will be printed in the February 2008 issue. Reading fee: \$5 for five poems. For more info call (828) 258-3752.

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

5 Winners! Deadline December 16th. Prizes Include: Bob Travers Signed Print; Books from Malaprop's; CDs from Karmasonics!

Any unpublished poem 35 lines or less is wanted!



Good movies make you care,
make you believe in possibilities again.

— Pauline Kael

December Movies with MARCIANNE MILLER

For the latest reviews, theater info
and movie show times, visit
www.rapidrivermagazine.com

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

This Month's Guest Critics:

Louis Boram, Chip Kaufmann,
Michelle Keenan, John M. Rose,
Zack Maynard, and Teen Reviewer,
Sierra Bicking

the competition's, is twice as good, and makes him attention-grabbing rich. The mafia is consumed with finding him. And so is Det. Roberts (Russell Crowe, *3:10 to Yuma*), a flawed hero-cop who will stop at nothing to bring Lucas down.

American Gangster pays homage to early-1970s anti-hero crime movies — think *The French Connection* (1971), *Superfly* (1972), *Black Caesar* (1973), *Serpico* (1973) — where NYC detectives chased both drug dealers and crooked cops, blurring the lines of morality between all of them. Alas, the two leads deliver incongruous performances that weaken the film's overall impact. Washington is rousing as the high-powered Lucas — but his performance, while captivating, is too refined to convince us he's an illiterate country boy. Surprisingly, Crowe is lackluster, never wrapping his arms around the cop's distressed private life in a way that justifies its screen time. Supporting standouts are Ruby Dee's

deflating intercuts that don't allow the stars to trade fire in the same camera frame.

Rated R for violence, pervasive drug content and language, nudity and sexuality.

Review by Louis Boram

August Rush ★★½

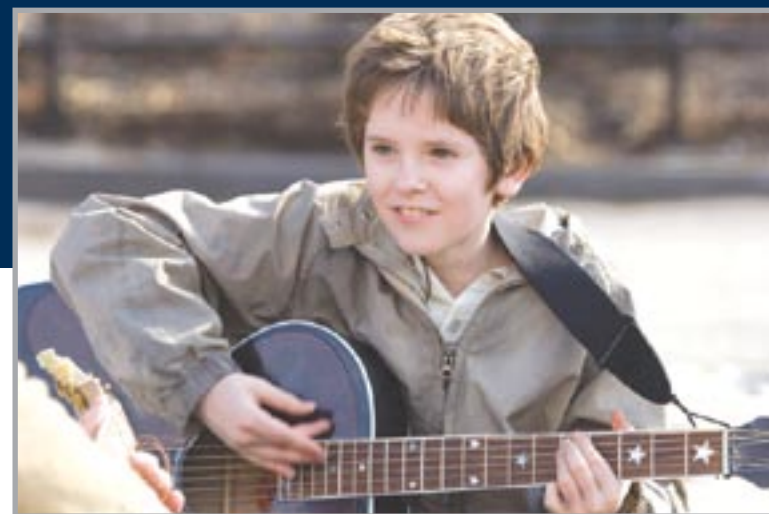
Short Take: Boy wonder opens the way to your heart through music.

"I believe in music the way that some people believe in fairy tales," says August Rush (Freddie Highmore, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*). Thus is announced the grand message in this modern-day fairy tale — that music's mysterious power can be heard if we are willing to listen.

In 1995, accomplished cellist Lyla Novacek (Keri Russell, *The Upside of Anger*) has a passionate one-night-stand with Louis Connelly (Jonathan Rhys Meyers, *Match Point*), a rock n' roll singer-guitarist. She becomes pregnant. Lyla's controlling father doesn't want a baby to ruin her career, so when Lyla is accidentally hit by a car, he tells her the baby didn't survive. Lyla and Louis go separate ways.

Now 11 years old, and with wisdom enough to impress Star Wars' Yoda, orphan Evan Taylor sets out alone into NYC's concrete jungle to find his parents. The boy is a musical genius — for six months, he's been writing symphonic music (eat your heart out, Beethoven). His rhapsodies have a greater purpose — Evan believes he can telekinetically reconnect with his parents through his music.

August perceives orchestral cityscape sounds like you might imagine a genetically engineered super-canine would. The



Orphan Freddie Highmore hopes the power of music will lead him to his parents in *August Rush*.

movie's strength lies in its ability to put us inside August's harmonious head. As his musical productivity turns up, a homeless father-figure named the 'Wizard' (Robin Williams, *Night at the Museum*), dubs him with the colorful moniker — August Rush. Williams 'Wizard' (fashioned like a red-haired version of U2's Bono) is an underwritten transient character—literally and figuratively—coming across as creepy rather than eccentric.

This melodic tale is an imaginative spin on a familiar theme—but it hammers home its message so often that by the time the movie ends, we've wearied of it. More music, less message would be my message to young director Kirsten Sheridan.

Rated PG for some thematic elements, mild violence and language.

Review by Louis Boram

Beowulf ★★★★★

Short Take: Spectacular, humorous, and disturbing.

I must confess that I was totally prepared to dislike *Beowulf*, based upon the trailer that made it look like a cross between *300* and the video game *Halo 3*. If it weren't for it being filmed in the new 3-D process, I wouldn't have seen it at all. I'm happy to report here's a lot more to *Beowulf* than the trailer suggests.

To my great surprise, the film follows the outline of the 11th century epic poem closely and successfully captures its essence. The screenplay by Neil Gaiman

'Movies' continued
on pg 22



Denzel Washington plays a North Carolina native who becomes a Harlem drug king in the high-budget crime drama *American Gangster*.

(*Jungle Fever*) disapproving Mama Lucas and the scene-stealing Josh Brolin's (*No Country for Old Men*) debauched Det. Trupo.

In the film's climax — the long-anticipated face-to-face showdown between criminal and cop — ends up a disappointing fizzle due to hiccups in pacing and

American Gangster

★★★½

Short Take: Action sparks true crime saga but it sags in the end.

Director Ridley Scott's (*A Good Year*) *American Gangster* is a worthy tale that doesn't quite achieve the indelible crime portrait it seeks. Based on a 2000 *New York* magazine article, "The Return of Superfly," *Gangster* follows—from 1968-1975—the Shakespearean-like rise and fall of Frank Lucas, a North Carolina native turned Harlem drug-kingpin.

The intro finds Lucas (Denzel Washington, *Inside Man*) mourning the death of his legendary crime boss mentor Bumpy Johnson. After watching newscasts from Vietnam of American soldiers using inexpensive—and highly potent—Asian heroin, Lucas develops an enterprising strategy to reinvent the drug's supply pipeline. He travels to the poppy-growing fields of Southeast Asia's "Golden Triangle" to broker direct distribution from growers—shrewdly subjugating the mafia's French connection suppliers. His trademark 100% pure "Blue Magic" dope costs half as much as

FILM REVIEWS

'Movies' continued from pg 21

(*Stardust*) and Roger Avey (*The Rules of Attraction*) plays a large part in drawing the audience into the story. For those of you who don't know the saga of Beowulf, it's the heroic story of a warrior who is called upon to rid the countryside (5th



With animation magic and sly wit, the ancient Danish epic *Beowulf* has transformed into spectacular movie.

century Denmark) of a vicious monster named Grendel. After achieving this, he becomes King and has many adventures, including battles with Grendel's mother and later a fearsome dragon, which he kills but at the cost of his own life.

Director Robert Zemeckis is no stranger to special effects films (from *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* through the *Back To The Future* series to 2004's *The Polar Express*). As in *The Polar Express*, Zemeckis uses the new "capture animation" process for *Beowulf* that puts live actors in front of a green screen and then completely animates them. The result is a movie that starts out looking like *Shrek* but finishes up acting like *Excalibur*. Once you get used to the technique, the story carries you along. The film's 3-D effects are truly spectacular and are consistent throughout, giving you the impression of watching a movie through a Viewfinder. I saw the film a second time without the 3-D and it was still impressive, but in a different way. That time it was the acting and the story that held my interest.

There is some debate among critics as to whether the filmmakers intended *Beowulf* to be slyly humorous. Good

question. The performers — Anthony Hopkins (*The World's Fastest Indian*), Angelina Jolie (*A Mighty Heart*), John Malkovich (*Eragon*), and Ray Winstone (*The Departed*) — often reveal a twinkle in their eye and a lot of the dialogue can be interpreted as funny — but most of the film actually is played with a straight face as befits its epic stature.

What is not so humorous is the film's PG-13 rating. There is plenty of nudity, lots of blood and gore, and some truly disturbing imagery. If this had not been an animated film, it would surely be assigned an R rating, which is what I would have given it. It's not a movie for young children.

In the end, for its stunning effects (it really should be seen in 3-D) and its many flavorful performances, *Beowulf* is definitely worth seeing but there's another reason as well. *Beowulf* could be the beginning of an entirely new generation of moviemaking. If the film is a huge success, future movies could all wind up being made this way, with male and female characters made to look like Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie or the star of your choice. I call it *The Stepford Wives* approach to filmmaking. I certainly hope that doesn't come to pass but it's what I left *Beowulf* thinking about.

Rated PG-13 for intense sequences of violence including disturbing images, some sexual material and nudity.

Review by Chip Kaufmann

Dan In Real Life

Short Take: Sprightly romantic comedy where love emerges — despite, Mom, Dad, brother Mitch and the kids.

Dan Burns (Steve Carell, *Evan Almighty*) writes a family-oriented newspaper advice column. He's a 40-something widower and earnest single father of three school age daughters. They all travel to a family gathering at his parent's cushy Rhode Island cabin. At a local bookstore he meets Marie (Juliette Binoche, *Breaking and Entering*). After some flirty sparring, an invigorated Dan rejoins his family, sharing, "I've met someone." Good fortune promptly turns nightmarish when Dan discovers his brother Mitch's (Dane Cook, *Mr. Brooks*) girlfriend is—you guessed it—bookstore Marie. The long weekend suddenly becomes a secret contest for Dan and Marie to fight their mutual attraction and struggle against the sweltering warmth of Dan's omnipresent family.

What's not to love about a lonely widower who cultivates familial bonds through puzzle-solving competitions, touch football, charades, group singing around the piano (admittedly amusing)...and even aerobics? The hyped-up



If Juliette Binoche and Steve Carell can get rid of his family they might grab enough private time to fall in love in *Dan in Real Life*.

"quality" time activities in this lovey-dovey family are so relentless you want to scream for a little peace and quiet. The biggest offender is Mitch, who—to divert himself from one devastating disappointment—immediately proclaims, "Let's do something fun!" It's game time...again. Groan.

In its favor, *Dan* has bubbling chemistry between its co-stars. Thanks to Binoche's penchant for drama—and Carell's for comedy—the amorous pair establishes a teetering balance that makes their verbal foreplay believable and charming.

Rated PG-13 for some innuendo.

Review by Louis Boram

The Darjeeling Limited



Short Take: Three brothers go on a spiritual search and find themselves, sort of.

You don't have to come from a large family to enjoy *The Darjeeling Limited* but you'll get more of the inside jokes if you do. I have three brothers, all Irish maniacs, so I laughed my head off. Of course, I also felt like crying half the



Three brothers with big noses go off to find themselves on *The Darjeeling Limited*.

time, but that's the way it is with siblings — when you're not compelled to strangle them, you want to hug them. And that's one of the many charming paradoxes of life that Wes Anderson (*The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*) portrays in his latest quirky tale about human beings who can't escape who they are — especially when they're on a long-distance quest to find themselves.

Co-writer with director Anderson is Roman Coppola. As the son of legendary director Francis Ford Coppola (*Godfather*), sister of current A-list director Sofia Coppola (*Marie Antoinette*), nephew to actress Talia Shire (*Rocky*), and cousin to Nicolas Cage (*Lord of War*), young scribe Coppola knows first hand the endlessly



In *The Darjeeling Limited*, Mom has found a satisfying new life as a nun on a mountaintop in India.

shifting loyalties of clan dynamics. Much of the lopsided hilarity of the movie is no doubt due to his adherence to the dictum, "Write what you know." The three brothers are control freak Francis (Owen Wilson, *The Life Aquatic...*), commitment-phobe Peter (Adrian Brody, *Hollywoodland*) and libido-driven Jack, played by Jason Schwartzman (*Marie Antoinette*), yet another cousin of co-writer Roman Coppola.

After a life-threatening accident has knocked some sense into him, Francis tries to bring his brothers closer together by forcing them to be cooped up on a train ride across India to seek enlightenment. Resentful and self-absorbed — obvious life metaphor here — the three men are in different compartments on the same train. They wonder the perennial sibling question, "Could the three of us have been friends in real life?"

After a series of poignant experiences that

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point out how similar life is for all people no matter what their latitude, they decide to find Mom (Anjelica Huston, *The Life Aquatic...*), who abandoned them long ago to become a nun on a mountain top. At long last, they find her and she still won't apologize for leaving behind the past they continue to cling to. In the end — metaphors still clanging as loud as whacks on the head — to get on with their lives, the men must run after a speeding train — and leave all their baggage behind.

It's sweet, it's lovely, it's sad, it's funny — it's real. Do see it.

Rated R for language.

Review by Marcianne Miller

Fred Claus: 1/2

Short Take: This holiday comedy will have you wishing you were a kid again.

Santa Claus (Paul Giamatti, *The Illusionist*) has a big brother named Fred (Vince Vaughn, *The Break-Up*). In this holiday flick you'll see the comedy and tangled webs that lurk in the Claus family. Fred is a bitter sort of Scrooge, who only looks out for himself and no one else. He's always been able to avoid his family.



In the comedy *Fred Claus*, jolly old St. Nick is a lot jollier without his goofy older brother messing up Santa's workshop.

But when he gets stuck between a rock and a hard place, Fred calls up his little brother to get some money. Santa, being the jolly old Saint Nick we love, gives it to him under one condition — Fred must pay back the money by coming up to the North Pole and helping out in Santa's workshop. Fred quickly learns that he isn't exactly elf material. Worse, he's clueless how his behavior is affecting one very significant unexpected visitor — the performance inspector sent by the company that makes all the holidays possible. If Santa's operation gets three strikes against it, then Christmas will be gone forever. Uh oh! Can Fred learn to be a better brother in

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Two Reviewers Enchanted by "Enchanted"

Our baby-boomer film historian, Chip Kaufmann, and our teen reviewer, Sierra Bicking, both loved Enchanted — proving that age is no barrier to the magic of a good movie. Enjoy this doubly good perspective.

Enchanted 1/2

Short Take: Snow White for the 21st Century

Just before Thanksgiving I took my 13-year-old daughter and her friends to see Disney's latest cinematic offering. When I left the multiplex I was totally *Enchanted*.

It has been 70 years since Walt Disney unveiled the first full-length animated cartoon with *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*. A recent decision at Disney to move away from traditional hand-drawn animation and go with Pixar's computer-generated images (such as *Toy Story* and *Finding Nemo*) was met with dismay from animation fans worldwide — Disney was the studio that had created such beloved animated delights as *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *The Little Mermaid*. But all is not lost, as *Enchanted* clearly shows.

The idea of taking cartoon characters and putting them in the real world has been done before. Walt Disney first did it back in 1923 with his *Alice* series of comedies. In recent times *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* and *The Adventures of Rocky & Bullwinkle* did it on a



Amy Adams is the *Enchanted* princess who is turning Disney's latest movie into the biggest family hit of the year.

large scale. But only Disney has such a rich animation heritage or so many films to use as material for comic possibilities.

Anyone familiar with the Disney fairy tales will recognize the similarities to several of their classic movies that *Enchanted* parodies but never ridicules. There are also references to other classic films scattered throughout — and a knockout ending borrowed from one of the most famous films of all time (which I won't divulge here).

While all the performers do a great job, Amy Adams as the princess must be singled out for doing an outstanding turn with a difficult role. She projects an

innocence that is believable, an intelligence that is admirable, and she's cute without being cloying. Susan Sarandon as the Wicked Queen/Stepmother also deserves special mention. It's a pleasure to see one of the great actresses of our time having so much fun.

Much of the credit for the success of *Enchanted* should go to screenwriter Bill Kelly, who came up with a clever script that satirizes Disney-style fairy tales while embracing them, and to director Kevin Lima (*Tarzan*, *102 Dalmatians*), who seamlessly blended the animated fairy tale world with the real world and kept the film moving along briskly.

The true beauty of *Enchanted* is that it's ageless in its appeal. Children should love it for the modern day fairy tale that it is, while adults will fondly remember all the classic Disney films it evokes. Do see it.

Rated PG for some scary images and mild innuendo.

Review by Chip Kaufmann



Chip Kaufmann is President of the Hendersonville Film Society, an historian of silent films, and hosts a program of classical music Thursday evenings on WCQS-FM.

TEEN REVIEWER:

Enchanted 1/2

Short Take: A princess takes a big bite of the Big Apple, but instead of falling asleep, she wakes up to a life full of possibilities.

Snow White, *Sleeping Beauty*, move your fairy tails over — *Enchanted* has come to town, and it's more magical than you may think.

Enchanted is a wonderful story about a fairytale princess (Amy Adams, *Junebug*) who falls down a wishing well and ends up in the mysterious and dangerous land of New York City. Facing reality, she must now



Film critic Sierra Bicking lives in Asheville.

Marsden, *Hairspray*) to rescue her. When he comes for her, he is not alone, and the adventure begins!

This movie is amazing. Not only

"Enchanted" reviewed by Sierra Bicking

navigate a perplexing world of automobiles, billboards, and people who don't live happily ever after. She is befriended by a New Yorker named Robert (Patrick Dempsey, *Freedom Writers*) with whom she develops a close relationship while she waits for her Prince Edward (James

does it have a fresh plot, well-drawn characters, and great animation, it is absolutely hilarious! It had me rolling in the aisles. It's a real twist on classic Disney that cleverly parodies its own beloved fairy tale movies. The clash of happy-go-lucky characters (ready to burst into song) with jaded New Yorkers makes for a great story, not to mention a fabulous movie. It has everything—magic, romance, adventure and especially an exuberant little chipmunk named Pip. So if you want to escape it all, find your local well and fall into *Enchanted*. You'll be happy forever after.

Rated PG for some scary images and mild innuendo.

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time to save Christmas for everyone?

The message of this movie is as shiny as wrapping paper: the importance of staying together as a family, forgiving your loved ones for their mistakes, and the acceptance of who they are and who you are.

Rated PG for mild language and some rude humor.

Review by Zachary Maynard, age 15.



Lars takes good care of his girlfriend, the love doll Bianca, in the wonderfully charming comedy *Lars and the Real Girl*.

Lars and the Real Girl

1/2

Short Take: A delusional young man finds real love with an un-real girl.

Lars and the Real Girl—the first time I heard the title I was intrigued. Then, while watching a trailer for the movie, I saw the love doll and, like a needle scratching across a vinyl record, it made me cringe. However, when a movie with a love doll as one of its main characters is being promoted regularly on National Public Radio — and winning raves from some of the snarkiest critics in the industry — there must be something to it.

Lars (Ryan Gosling, *Half Nelson*) is a painfully shy young man in small-town northern Wisconsin. He lives in a sparsely furnished garage apartment behind the house he grew up in, where his older brother Gus (Asheville's own Paul Schneider, *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford*) and pregnant sister-in-law Karin, (Emily Mortimer, *Dear Frankie*), now live.

Karin is worried about Lars. She goes to great lengths to draw him out, even drop kicking him, to get him to simply come to dinner. Gus assures Karin that his little brother is weird but fine, that is, until one night Lars brings 'Bianca' to dinner. To Lars, Bianca is a beautiful,

wonderful, handicapped woman from Brazil whom he met online. To Gus and Karin's dismay, she's a life-like love doll that he ordered from the internet. Yep — Lars is nuts. Enter Dr. Dagmar (Patricia Clarkson, *Pieces of April*), the town doctor/shrink.

Dr. Dagmar explains that Lars is delusional and that Bianca is very real to him. "When will the delusion end?" Gus asks. "When he doesn't need it any more," responds Dagmar. She tells them to go along with the delusion. She also tells Lars that Bianca is sick and will need to come in for weekly treatments, which, of course, is a ruse to get Lars to participate in incognito therapy.

The ensuing story is delightful. The town welcomes Bianca into their community; she gets a job, goes to parties, and even gets a haircut. Lars meanwhile works through his issues and, thanks to this un-real girl, becomes a man — no, not in that way — a *real* man, who takes responsibility for his own life, with all its real emotions and risks.

What ultimately makes *Lars and the Real Girl* so utterly disarming and quite wonderful is the raw honesty and vulnerability of the story and its characters. This awkwardly shy, reclusive young man is *truly* sweet. Love dolls and the men who 'love' them, conjure an unseemly and pathetic image — Lars is the antithesis of this image. He's the epitome of a gentleman suitor, something that is also rare in life and films today.

The sub-plots are equally important and lovely. The far-fetched but touching



Asheville's own Paul Schneider co-stars in one of the year's best small movies, *Lars and the Real Girl*.

notion of the townspeople embracing Bianca because they care so much for this young man is genuinely heart-warming, and somehow even plausible. Executed with an eloquent balance of humor,

emotional nakedness and humanity, first-time feature director Craig Gillespie delivers one of the best little films I've seen in a long time.

Rated PG-13 for some sex-related content.
Review by Michelle Keenan.

Lions for Lambs

Short Take: Robert Redford wags his fingers at our sins of omission.

There are several things to consider about this film. If you want to deliver a message, it's better to send a telegram than make a movie. Great actors can always shine in their scenes no matter how bad the rest of the movie is. And ain't it a wonderful country when you can make a movie openly condemning the government and you don't get beheaded for it?

Lions for Lambs is three intertwined stories, two of which are interesting, and even only one of those actually works. The one that is both interesting and works is a long play-like scene in which Presidential wannabe and military theory wonk Senator Jasper Irving (Tom Cruise, *Mission Impossible III*) gives an exclu-



The scenes with Meryl Streep and Tom Cruise are the only worthwhile moments in the otherwise preachy and plodding *Lions for Lambs*.

sive interview to influential TV journalist Janine Roth (Meryl Streep, *Rendition*). Irving wants to sell Roth — and thus her television audience — on the new counter-insurgency strategy he's convinced the President to start in Afghanistan. Cruise is downright reptilian in his Machiavelli imitation, a finely-tuned caricature if not a full-blooded character. Streep, who seems to get better with every wrinkle, is mesmerizing in the way her lovely face indicates the attentiveness of an "active listener," as well as the silent horror of her growing realization of how the senator is manipulating her. For this scene's on-the-nose articulation of the strained relationship between government and media, the film should be required viewing in journalism classes.

The storyline that's interesting but

doesn't work takes place in Afghanistan when bad weather and the mountainous terrain ruin the mission that is supposed to save the U.S. military strategy there. Noble but doomed are the two Army Rangers played by Michael Pena (*World Trade Center*) and Derek Luke (*Catch a Fire*). Alas, despite the bravery of the characters, the scene rings hollow when played, as it is, against the third story — which takes place a world away — on an American college campus. Boring old political science professor (Robert Redford, *The Clearing*) is trying to shame his promising but lazy student (Andrew Garfield, *A Boy*) into doing something to change the world instead of just hanging out with his frat brothers. Ho-hum and painfully sanctimonious. The professor's sermon falls on ears about as deaf as the preaching in the rest of the movie has made the audience become.

Do we need movies that speak to the war, the mistakes we've made as a nation and the effort we still have to make in the future? Yes. Do we need to be reminded that as citizens we each bear responsibility for the decisions our government takes? Yes. Blaming others for the road taken doesn't mitigate our own inaction. Alas, Robert Redford as the film's director forgot that a movie influences by the portrayal of believable emotions, not by wielding a bludgeon. His earnest heavy hand fails to deliver his message in a way that audiences want to receive it, even if we would be willing to hear it.

Rated R for some war violence and language.

Review by Marcianne Miller

Love in the Time of Cholera

1/2

Short Take: Much anticipated adaptation of beloved novel can't stand on its own as a movie.

Young Florentino (as a teen, Unax Ugalde) is smitten with Fermina (Italian actress Giovanna Mezzogiorno). She spurns him and he sinks into lovesick obsession. Fermina marries promising Dr. Urbino, (Benjamin Bratt, *Catwoman*), raises a family and enjoys comfort and prosperity. Meanwhile, Florentino (as an adult, Javier Bardem, *The Dancer Upstairs*) beds over 600 women, for which he keeps a life-time log, deluding himself that he is soothing his broken heart and, absurdly, maintaining his virgin purity. Through 51 years of Florentino's vigil, for which he readily quotes how many hours have passed, the creepy fellow stalks his heart's desire. She ignores him.

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When all are in their 70s, Dr. Urbino dies and Florentino, dismissing Fermina's mourning, imposes himself on her. She relents, takes up with him and they reflect philosophically on the nature of love. The end.

Many fans of author Gabriel García Márquez recall his acclaimed 1986 book when viewing this film. Taken on its own very limited merits, the movie is annoying. Florentino believes love is true only when it endures all hardships and Fermina thinks all love is an illusion. In the novel, these two characterize the question of the nature of love, but in the film Florentino is not heroic but pitifully obsessive and Fermina is not alluring but shallow and superficial.

The longer this excessive film ran, the less I cared about these silly people. Director Newell (*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*) gets in trouble with laugh-out-loud bits intended to be serious moments of insight and revelation. Why all those women throw themselves at old, droopy-mustached Florentino is never clear. Character aging is so clumsy that I focused on the makeup instead of the scene. The setting is turn-of-the-last-century Cartagena, Colombia, but they speak English with various Spanish accents. Minor characters say something simple in Spanish and immediately repeat themselves in English. The director, trusting neither his movie nor his



Starring Javier Bardem as a guy with a life-long crush, *Love in the Time of Cholera* turns out to be a nice-looking but anemic romance.

audience, assumes we cannot comprehend rudimentary, phrase book Spanish in the obvious context of the scene.

It's not a total disaster. Bardem and Bratt do the best they can with the script and veteran Brazilian actress Fernanda Montenegro is wonderful as Florentino's aging mother. TV star Hector Elizondo (*Cane*) charms as Florentino's uncle and patron. The cinematography (by Brazilian-born Affonso Beato, *The*

Queen) captures the lush beauty of Colombia. The paddle wheel and riverboat were pretty good, too. Skip the movie and read the book.

Rated R for sexual content/nudity and brief language.

Review by John M. Rose

Martian Child

Short Take: With patience and grace, two misfits make a match.

I loved this movie and am heart-sick I'm in the minority. Sure, it's a tale that's been told before — lonely adult revives his life by loving an equally lonely child. But rarely has it been told with such cleverness, subtlety, economy



Bobby Coleman and John Cusack are two earthly misfits with galactic dreams in the delightful *Martian Child*.

and yes, believability — for it was based on the novel that the movie's executive producer wrote of his true experiences as a single father adopting a child no one else wanted.

Eccentric sci-fi writer and recent widower Jack (played with exquisite nuance by John Cusack, *Ice Harvest*) is inexplicably drawn to an orphan who is so weird he seems like an extraterrestrial. In fact, Dennis (10-year old Bobby Coleman, TV's *Surface*) insists he is from Mars — and does everything he can to prove it. Like many abandoned children he evidences hypersensitivity to the point of extrasensory perception, amazing everyone, but scaring a lot of people, too. Directed by *The Color Purple*'s Dutch-born screenwriter, Menno Meyjes, and shot by the same cinematographer (Robert D Yeoman) who gave *The Darjeeling Limited* its colorful charm, *Martian Child* is graced with a subtle palette of other-worldliness that makes the lovely story all the more magical — and real. Ignore the cynical reviewers and see it.

Rated PG for thematic elements and mild language.

Review by Marcianne Miller



Dustin Hoffman and Natalie Portman inhabit a wildly magical store in the season's most surprising charmer, *Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium*.

Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium

Short Take: Sparkling. Delightful. Magical in marvelous ways.

As a friend and I humbugged our way through the consumeristic Black Friday, we were a little trepidacious about seeing a G-rated holiday movie. Lo and behold, we emerged an hour and a half later from *Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium* pleasantly surprised and in much lighter spirits.

Mr. Magorium (Dustin Hoffman, *Stranger Than Fiction*) is a 243-year-old toy impresario, wonder aficionado, and avid wearer of shoes, who is getting ready to go — er, die. Molly Mahoney (Natalie Portman, *Star Wars, Episodes I-III*), works for Mr. Magorium. She's a former child prodigy pianist who's failed to reach her genius potential and is facing a critical creative block (a key word to a not-so-subtle metaphor in the movie). Eric (played oh-so-likeably by Zach Mills, *Hollywoodland*) is our narrative voice, a 9-year-old social misfit with a penchant for hats. The Emporium is his refuge in a friendless world. Henry (Jason Bateman, *Arrested Development*) is the quintessential accountant in the grey flannel suit, hired by Magorium to determine the Emporium's worth.

Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium is a magical toy store — an actual living, breathing store. For the viewer it's a mesmerizing feast for the eyes and an elixir for the child-like soul. Magorium's plans to "leave" are complicated when the store, imbued with the sensibilities of a child, begins to pitch a fit — and its colorful walls begin to fade. In a scene of manic mayhem, the magic dies and the store closes. Mahoney is the intended new owner and although she believes in Magorium and the magical store, she's lost her inner sparkle — she can't save the store (or break that creative block) until she feels the magic of believing in herself.

Despite missing the mark on a few

things, including a sudden and hurried resolution, this fanciful film is a delight. The script, by writer/director Zach Helm, is delicious and Hoffman revels in every syllable. The true magic of *Mr. Magorium* is delivered in some terrific moments, including one when Eric and Henry have their first conversation via notes, and Cat Stevens' "Don't be Shy" plays in the background. Ultimately the words of Mr. Magorium say it best, "Your life is an occasion, rise to it."

Rated G

Review by Michelle Keenan

No Country for Old Men

Short Take: Brilliant. Mesmerizing. Disquieting. See it if you dare.

There's something about the desert that calls people to go there to come closer to God. Perhaps it's the endless vistas, the blurred demarcation between earth and sky. Perhaps it's the stark beauty, the reminder that life is tenuous and death can come without warning, a rattler under a rock, a bandit out of the shadows. Jesus spent his time in the desert, so did Mohammed and Abraham and countless seekers since them. Whether in the Mideast or the Mojave or, in the case of *No Country for Old Men*, in west Texas, the desert is both the reality and the metaphor for the convergence of our inner and outer lives.

In the desert, then, novelist Cormac McCarthy set his dark and epic story of men whose mistakes have made them fragile and hubris has made them think they can elude the consequences. In translating the novel to the screen, the Coen Brothers, Joel and Ethan (*Fargo, O Brother, Where Art Thou?*), have proved themselves worthy partners for the Pulitzer-winning novelist, subjugating their own dark humor and idiosyncratic dialogue to stay faithful to McCarthy's vision, transcending it even, so that both novel and movie exist as two sides of the same masterwork. Part of the credit must go to long-time Coen Brothers cinematographer, Roger Deakins, who was also responsible for the equally gorgeous though dissimilar contemporary western, *The Assassination of Jess James by the Coward Robert Ford*.

To say *No Country* is brilliant, however, it not to say it's easy to take. It's complex, exhilarating, and poetic. It's also disturbing, depressing, and repulsive. Because it's unforgettable, you have to live with it a lot longer than its official 122 minutes running time. It will definitely haunt you, and you'll likely debate it for

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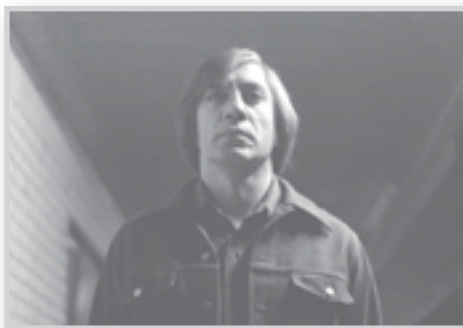
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years. Like me, you might want to take a shower the minute you get home from seeing it.

It's 1980, though the time doesn't really matter. Smalltown sheriff, Ed Tom Bell (Tommy Lee Jones, *In the Valley of Elah*), has a happy marriage with Loretta (Tess Harper, *Loggerheads*), but he's disillusioned by the changes in society he's seen in his long life. Kids run around with "green hair" and "bones in their noses." He feels "overmatched" by the "dismal tide" of evil he fears is coming. As Yeats said, the nation now is "no country for old men..."

Vietnam vet Llewellyn Moss (Josh Brolin, *American Gangster*) lives with his sweet wife Carla Jean (Kelly Macdonald, *Nanny McPhee*) in a cramped house trailer. While antelope hunting one day, he finds abandoned vehicles and lots of bloody bodies — a drug deal gone terribly bad. One man clings to life, begging for water. But seeing packs of heroin in the truck, Llewellyn figures money is close at hand — and sure enough, he finds it — \$2 million dollars



Javier Bardem plays one of the screen's most haunting villains in the Coen Brothers controversial thriller, *No Country for Old Men*.

in a satchel. That night, he takes a jug of water (long after the injured man would have died) and heads back to the desert. It's as if he knows the Furies are waiting, and he can't resist their call. "I'm fixin' to do something dumber than hell, but I'm going anyways," he tells his wife, sealing both their fates — and setting in motion a chase thriller that is so exquisitely paced, so relentless, so hypnotic, you'll have trouble remembering to breathe until it's over.

The misguided Good Samaritan, Llewellyn steps into disaster. His truck is seen by bad guys coming for their money. He must flee for his life by hurling himself into the Rio Grande as a vicious dog swims after him. But he receives no redemption in those waters. Greed keeps him going, and cleverness keeps him going longer than the average person, but not even a veteran of killing jungles can match Death when it's on the march. Enter Anton Chigurh (Javier Bardem, *The Dancer Upstairs*), a loping, primal bear in dusty cowboy boots and a doofus hair cut. He's the grim reaper with the loopy smile of a psychotic, the hooded eyes of a serpent, killing people as if they were steers waiting for slaughter. He stalks Llewellyn like a bad memory, eliminating legions of innocent bystanders or tossing a coin occasionally to allow them to think they've got some say in what he's going to do to them.

The sheriff tries to save Llewellyn, while a bounty hunter (Woody Harrelson, *A Prairie Home Companion*) joins the chase. One bad decision after another, more cleverness outwitted, more bullet holes, more innocents sucked into the

web, and in the end, finally, what does it all mean? Will the land remain no country for old men? Or will the old men dust off their dreams of justice and righteousness and revive the world for the young ones who follow them?

Rated R for strong graphic violence and some language.

Review by Marcianne Miller

Rapid River Movie Editor and critic Marcianne Miller is a member of the Southeast Film Critics Assn. Contact her at marci@aquamystique.com

Coming Next Month:

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Javier Bardem on DVD: "The Dancer Upstairs"

Spanish actor Javier Bardem is making a big splash lately with two highvisibility roles. In the movie version of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's heart-breaking bestseller, *Love in the Time of Cholera*, Bardem plays Florentine, a love-sotten long-suffering suitor in Cartagena, Colombia.

His other role is 180-degrees out — Anton Chigurh, the psychotic, serpent-eyed killer who lopes through the west Texas landscape like the shadow of Death. Bardem's performance — terrifying, mesmerizing, repulsive — is the most talked about aspect of the controversial Coen Brothers movie adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's noir novel.

If you want to see more of Mr. Bardem's work, see what I think is one of the best films of all time, 2002's *The Dancer Upstairs*. It's a fascinating and complex thriller that is both romantic and political, based on a novel and screenplay by Nicholas Shakespeare. It was also the feature film directorial debut of actor John Malkovich, who did a masterful job. The movie was so good, why Malkovich has not directed a movie since, is a huge mystery. *Dancer* is well-known among die-hard dance nuts — and Bardem fans, who has starred until recently most in foreign

films — but it made little impact in the marketplace. For many of us it was our introduction to Bardem — an experience we never forgot. I found the movie on DVD and was so blown away, I watched it six times in a week.

The Dancer Upstairs takes place in an unnamed Latin American country — think Peru — where the government holds tight reign and terrorists resist with frequent assassinations. Bardem plays Detective Augustin Rejas, a rare figure in such a country — a policeman who is actually honest and principled. He sets out to investigate the shadowy terrorist organization, following one hidden thread after another in an ever-growing web. Meanwhile, he becomes fascinated with Yolanda (Laura Morante), a beautiful dancer who lives above her dance studio. In the life-and-death struggle enveloping the police and the terror-



Javier Bardem and Laura Morante star in actor John Malkovich's superb directorial debut, the Latin American thriller, *The Dancer Upstairs*.

ists, Rejas finds himself both the hunter and the hunted, and facing the loss of everything he holds dear. Bardem's performance is truly wondrous — finely nuanced, powerful, vulnerable, unbelievably sexy. He's liked a caged leopard who can't figure out whether he wants to lick you or kill you.

In some ways, many of these same conflicting emotions run through the killer he plays in *No Country*. But in *Dancer*, you're able to determine that these are the qualities of a good man in conflict, whereas in *No Country*, it's madman with a warped sense of humor.

Do see *The Dancer Upstairs* and if you enjoy it as much as I did, share it with your friends. All of us, I'm sure, will end up being fans of the remarkable Mr. Bardem.

By Marcianne Miller

ARTFUL LIVING

Ensnared In The Net

BY BILL WALZ

Existence is. Then, there are human concepts about existence. The dilemma of being human is that we cannot live in existence without conceptualizing existence.

The great evolutionary uniqueness of humans is our ability to abstract our experience out of its undifferentiated totality. This is our special talent. It makes us human. It is also our curse, and the curse upon all of Nature.

Nature is. It is a harmony and a perfection of balance and unity. Nature, undisturbed by human imposition, is the Biblical "Eden". To be quiet and present in Nature, relatively undisturbed by humans, is to experience something powerful resonating within us that touches the ground of our fundamental Being, our own deepest nature, even the foundation of our spirituality.

But, our humanness, our compulsively abstracting, conceptualizing, dividing, talking mind, compels us to separate our experience into thoughts about who we are, what life is about and how we can better manipulate Nature for our own benefit, and Eden is lost. We cannot seem to coexist with Nature. This is the human dilemma. Our ability to abstract existence allows us to emerge from Nature, to create human society, culture, invention and technology, to escape being subject to the amoral laws of Nature where survival is tenuous. This certainly seems good, but we then have cut ourselves off from Nature, and, in the process, from our own deepest nature. Humanity has practiced indifferent exploitation of Nature for thousands of years, and has largely lost any primal connection to it. This is not good.

Nature is a unity and harmony. To the human mind, however, it is all these squiggly, wiggly, hard-to-control lines of form, and the human mind rebels at this. It wants to control, safeguard and develop existence for its own benefit. Since humans have the capacity for abstraction, they can identify the separate entities about them and categorize them by their value or threat to human existence. Since they have the capacity for abstraction, they can take the separate entities about them, use or dispose of them, and create new combinations that increase their value to human existence. This sounds like it is good, but as abstracting consciousnesses, we have lost the realization that humans have abstracted the foundation of their own existence right out of connection to the basis of that existence.

To create an example of this, let us



Bill Walz

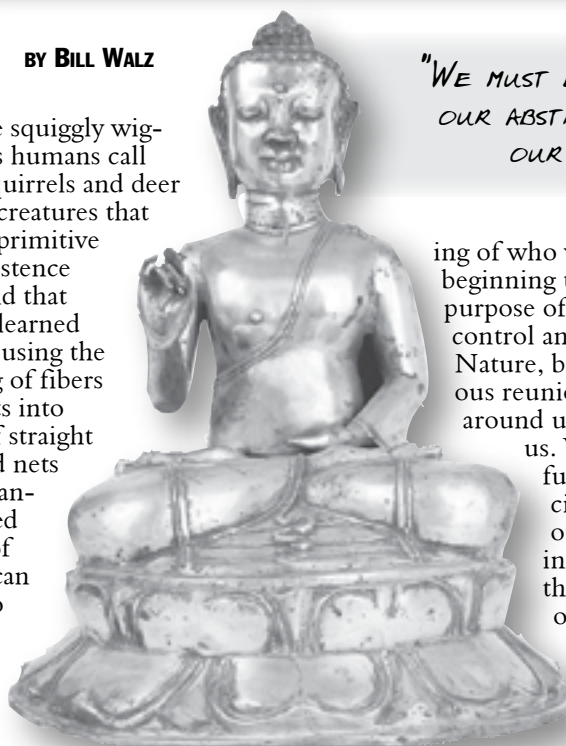
look to the squiggly wiggly entities humans call fish and squirrels and deer and other creatures that enhanced primitive human existence as food, and that humanity learned to capture using the abstracting of fibers from plants into patterns of straight lines called nets

and snares. Humanity has also learned that the entities of earth and plants can be combined into another kind of net called fields for farming after all the entities in the net that are not the earth and the desired plants are taken away. It has also learned that nets called shelters and villages and cities can be made to live in once all the entities that are not conducive to the shelters, villages and cities are taken away. It has also learned to take the materials of the Earth and abstract them into nets called technology. All this to enhance human existence. Good. Right?

What gets lost in the making and casting of nets onto existence so as to enhance humans is the realization of the consequence of all that is getting lost. What gets lost is Nature in all its squiggly wiggly lines, and all its connectedness. What gets lost is our own fundamental Beingness that emerges from and is of Nature. We forget the Nature that is who we are, and that Nature is where we came from. We have snared ourselves.

We have made and cast so many nets, that we have entangled all of Nature, our home and source, in separating nets, and tragically, are strangling the life out of Nature. So very sadly, we, likewise, have become entangled in the nets ourselves, so that we cannot even realize existence as harmony and balance and oneness at all, and are strangling the Life out of our own existence, our own Being, our spirit. Eden has been lost, and so are we. The truth is that we cannot exist separated indefinitely from our source without becoming hopelessly lost, and thus, doomed. It is time to remember what the old prophets used to intone: "Repent, before doom is upon us."

There is, of course, no going back to Nature before the technology/nets. There is however the remember-



"WE MUST EVOLVE FURTHER AS A SPECIES TO REINTEGRATE OUR ABSTRACTING INTELLIGENCE WITH THE GROUND OF OUR OWN BEING, OUR OWN DEEPEST NATURE."

ing of who we truly are, and beginning to weave nets the purpose of which is not the control and domination of Nature, but the harmonious reunion with Nature around us and within

us. We must evolve further as a species to reintegrate our abstracting intelligence with the ground of our own Being, our own deepest nature, to find a new balance of humans in Nature. We

must remember that we emerge from Nature and are Nature

as surely as the fish and the squirrel and the deer. Repenting means coming home. It means to think (abstract) less and meditate (connect) more, so as to rediscover Nature within us, and our connectedness to Nature around us, with the squiggly wiggly lines of Creation, of Eden, "before doom is upon us."

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 growth and healing instruction or phone consultations at (828) 258-3241, or e-mail at healing@billwalz.com. Visit www.billwalz.com

Eternity is Now

Indian Dance Performance by Ganga Grace

Saturday, December 8, 8pm

Theater Auditorium
Asheville High School
419 McDowell Street, Asheville

**Tickets: \$12 (\$8 for students)
\$15 at the door (\$10 for students)
Tickets sold at Malaprops.**

Ganga Grace, a native of Croatia, is an internationally renowned dancer and will be performing the Bharatnatyam, one of six styles of Indian classical dance. This dance has its origin in the Indian temples and is closely related to the art of temple sculpture.



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RESTAURANTS & WINE

Beer. Wine. Happiness. - *Didn't Franklin say something about all that?*

BY MICHAEL PARKER

It was a perfect day for locally brewed beer. The annual Asheville Christmas Parade marched through downtown on Saturday, November 17. The bench at Jack of the Wood defied, again, the laws of physics as its users took on more and more liquid weight.

As the Snow Queens' float rode slowly by, I couldn't help but think there were a few better candidates beside and behind me. (*An old employer came to mind, too.*) Drinking with the same old crowd has that magical way of bringing things to the surface, doesn't it?

The local parade experience is a specific formula of Jack's bench, the Drum and Drill team from Hillcrest, and Green Man Ale. Fortunately, there will be another Hillcrest show when we have the 2nd annual Asheville Mardi Gras, which will begin at Asheville Brewery on Coxe Avenue downtown and after some fun they will march in the streets. (*Stay tuned for the February wine column for the when-and-where and what beer to drink.*)

The Christmas parade happened, gracefully, two days after Nouveau Night. This year they made a good effort to expand the wine selection so the \$40 dollar ticket holders would not feel they were stuck with Nouveau as their only wine. There was, as always, good French Fizz, plus a good supply of North Carolina cabernet sauvignon by Yadkin Valley's Shelton Winery.

Lots of other choices filled the tasting tables, too. I think it was definitely worth trying an expanded selection, but I prefer that a Beaujolais event remain a little more focused on the wines of the region, which can be done since there is more from the Beaujolais region than just Nouveau. The Beaujolais wines from Morgon and Brouilly, for example,

are always a nice surprise to reluctant Beaujolais tasters.

One table, however, had a single bottle of Barbera from Italy and a cool bartender who, in awe of my fashionable jacket (or baffled by my wine-writing BS), held the bottle aside just for me. Tasting Nouveau after that Barbera led to my decision to put down the glass and focus instead on the food. Asheville's restaurants served delicious foods, especially the coq au vin from Lexington Avenue's charming hole-in-the-wall French bistro, Bouchon. Super-chef Vijay from the Flying Frog brought his own bottle of Vosne Romanée, and I found a new glass in a big damn hurry.

Around that same time, there began an alarmed local buzz about a local neo-Prohibitionist movement, a rumor that an effort was underway to make Buncombe County dry. It seems that a letter to the editor of the Asheville Citizen-Times got this talk going, and it was a lot of talk about nothing. The letter was a tongue-in-cheek smack at two local politicians for their opinions about the homeless.

Online, 44 comments were posted on the subject, not-a-one recognizing the obvious sarcasm in the letter. However, a widespread case of poor reading comprehension can still spawn a good exchange of ideas, perhaps someday even in the online forum of the local newspaper.

Surprisingly, no one posted a quote credited to Benjamin Franklin, "Beer is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy." Did you ever consider that perhaps he really didn't write that? He may very well have toyed with it in conversation, but there exists no hard copy of the quote.

It was not based on nothing, however. In a 1779 letter to a French friend named André Morellet, Franklin did write, "Behold the rain which descends

from heaven upon our vineyards; there it enters the roots of the vines, to be changed into wine; a constant proof that God loves us, and loves to see us happy."

Somewhere in this exchange of letters, Morellet quilled a drinking song that suggested the American Revolution was really about Franklin's preference for French wine over English ale.

Here is an equally irreverent drinking song by Franklin:

*T'was honest old Noah
first planted the Vine,
And mended his Morals
by drinking its Wine;*

*And justly the drinking
of water decry'd*

*For he knew that all Mankind,
by drinking it dy'd.*

*From this Piece of history
plainly we find*

*That Water's good
neither for Body nor Mind;*

*That Virtue and Safety
in Wine-bibbing's found*

*While all that drink
Water deserve to be drown'd.*

Yeah... throw that one at your Baptist-preaching grandpa. They may have been heathen and the target of God's destructive justice, but I am a little surprised at Franklin's comfort at playing Bacchus. At the same time, though, it would be another misinterpretation to think Franklin approved of excess.

I wonder, too, what would he think of the modern world's obsession with and the global trade in bottled water? Perhaps he would agree that evolution is quite behind in providing us with a third hand: one for water, one with a coffee, and the third with wine. It is my personal formula

for mens sana in corpore sano — a sound mind in a sound body. I think the scientist in him would consider it, too.

On that little bit of Latin, a later American journalist had his own opinion. A. J. Liebling, keeping extensive notes in the 1920's of his indulgences in Paris, believed the concept of a sound mind in a sound body was a contradiction in terms. "No sane man can afford to dispense with debilitating pleasures." Anyone who practices extreme self-denial should have his sanity questioned, he insisted, and promptly sited Hitler's choice of water in the Brauhaus.

As you put on your different faces for your different crowds this party season, remember that somewhere you have allies in all your opinions. Be well, drink to enjoy, just use your brain and be true.

December Events at the Weinhaus

Tuesday, December 4th

A special wine dinner will be held at La Caterina Restaurant featuring five courses of Italian inspired cuisine paired with wines designed to enhance the food. Join us for this holiday event! Price is \$55 all inclusive. Time is 7:00 p.m. For reservations call the Weinhaus at (828) 254-6453.

Saturday, December 15th

The Weinhaus will host a free wine tasting of Holiday Charmers to suit all palates, come and enjoy wines of the season from 2 to 4 p.m. and pick your favorites for your holiday meals! The Weinhaus is located at 86 Patton Ave., Asheville. Phone is (828) 254-6453.

TASTING EVENTS!

Our semi-blind seated tastings at the Merrimon Ave. shop include a sampling of wines from some great producers including the Pacific Northwest. The highly anticipated and touted 2005 vintage Burgundies are in and delicious. We will be scheduling a tasting of these "can't miss" classics. Call today for more information.

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LOCAL FLAVOR

Christmas on the (Relatively) Cheap BY MACKENSY LUNSFORD

Whoever first said “it’s the thought that counts” was a saint. That conventional nugget of wisdom has gotten me through many a near-penniless Christmas looking like a champ. I have never been known around my family as a fount of expensive presents; rather, I’m partial to presenting hand-made gifts.

Making my own Christmas presents may take a bit more planning than anything I might be able to purchase ready-made, but that’s never stopped me from waiting until the very last minute all the same. I’ve been known to bestow still-tacky — as in wet, thank you — oil paintings upon more than one family member. I’ve finally learned that oil paintings just need too much time to cure and are still costly in the long run. And by now I’m past the hippie phase where I was putting hemp necklaces and macramé belts under the tree.

These days I’m more partial to the edible gift — everyone eats, right? Homemade flavored cooking oils or bottles of hot sauce take just a little bit of time and money, but still add plenty of flavor to the recipient’s household. The act of filling up cute little bottles with homemade habenero sauce — the likes of which will make certain members of

my family sweat and cry later — fills me with oodles of holiday spirit. The quaffing of holiday punch helps, too, and the last time I checked, staggering around Macy’s with a mug of spiced rum was socially frowned upon. At home in my kitchen, I can eat, drink and be merry to my heart’s content; damn the occasional slice and burn.

The most valuable tip for making edible Christmas presents is planning ahead during and near the end of the growing season. I even plant some things with Christmas in mind way back in May! Preserving herbs from the garden for

seasoned oils (or better yet, planting cold-hardy herbs for a fresh pre-Christmas harvest), and freezing the last of the season’s hot peppers for sauces or summer berries for homemade vinaigrettes can make for gifts that are truly handmade from start to finish. But if you’re tardy with your gif plans this year don’t give up — you can usually find fresh herbs and peppers in the produce section of your local market, especially in Asheville’s



**Asheville Chef
Mackensy Lunsford**

Roasted Garlic and Rosemary Olive Oil is a perfect dipping oil. Hand-printed labels add a charming touch.



Your hot-natured friends will love your homemade Roasted Habenero Sauce.

specialty markets.

Whether your gift recipients were naughty or nice this year, they’re sure to appreciate the effort put into anything homemade like the recipes below. Most craft stores carry great little corked bottles that hover around a dollar a piece for perfect packaging. Extra touches like raffia twine and personalized labels give these ideas a homey touch.

Merry Christmas!

Have an idea for future articles for Local Flavor? Local foodies we must know about? Workshops or community food events? Contact Mackensy Lunsford at catalyst@charter.net.

Mackensy Lunsford is an award-winning food writer. With her husband Judd Lohof, she owns Café Azalea in East Asheville.

This oil is perfect for dipping crusty Italian bread or in salads, but it is not designed for high temperature sautéing.

bottle that you plan to use for the finished product.

3) Add to each bottle a sprig of fresh rosemary and a small pinch of red pepper flakes.

4) To a sauce pan, add olive oil, rosemary and garlic. Simmer on medium low heat for about 20 minutes. Let sit until fully cooled.

5) Strain into sterilized bottles and cork. Label with date. The oil should be refrigerated and will keep in this manner for 2 months.

A Present for the Naughty: Roasted Habenero Sauce

Hot sauce makes a great gift for the little devils on your list. A nice roast brings out the sweeter flavors of peppers nicely. Be careful with hot habeneros — the steam really irritates the lungs! Washing anything that had hot peppers in it with hot water is also bound to bother sensitive lung tissue — rinse with cool water first. It’s always a good idea to use kitchen gloves when handling hot peppers. At least make sure to wash your hands frequently and never touch any sensitive body parts while working with peppers!

Ingredients (makes about 2 quarts):

- 1 large onion, peeled, large chop
- 1 small carrot, peeled, chopped
- 10 habenero peppers
- 6 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 stalk celery, large chop
- 3 whole large tomatoes, large chop
- 1 TBS whole coriander seed
- 1 tsp whole cumin
- ¼ tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp whole black pepper
- 2 TBS fresh oregano (or cilantro)
- 1 ½ TBS vegetable oil
- salt to taste
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
- juice of 1 lime
- 2 cups water
- ½ cup ketchup (yes, ketchup!)

1) Preheat oven to 400°.

2) Place peppers, garlic, tomatoes, carrots, onions and celery in oven-safe dish, liberally sprinkle with vegetable oil, season with salt. Roast until browned, not burned, stirring occasionally. I use frozen tomatoes from my garden which release a lot of water, keeping the veggies from burning and creating a longer roasting time (1 hour). Feel free to add a little water of your own in the process to help soften the veggies — be careful of steam burns. Remember: don’t breathe the steam!

3) Meanwhile, toast cumin, black pepper and coriander seed in a dry pan over medium heat, being careful not to burn. Crush with a mortar and pestle or coffee grinder and set aside.

4) After roasting, let veggies cool.

5) De-seed peppers if less heat is desired. I de-seed mine to get more of that floral habenero flavor and less of the fire.

6) Place cooled roasted vegetables, peppers, and herbs in food processor and puree. Add vinegar, lime juice, ketchup, water and paprika and blend until smooth. Add more water if a thinner consistency is desired. Taste if you dare, and add salt as needed.

7) Let cool, then place in sterilized (dunking in hot water will do) bottles, cork and label with date. I like to seal my cork with a spot of wax. Keeps about 3 months in the fridge.

A Present for the Nice: Roasted Garlic and Rosemary Olive Oil

Ingredients (makes about a quart and a half):

1 head garlic, about 10 - 15 cloves

1 quart olive oil

Red pepper flakes, enough to put a pinch in each decorative bottle you plan to use to present the finished oil

About 4 oz fresh rosemary sprigs

1) Rinse rosemary and dry well.

2) Smash each clove of garlic a bit before peeling to make peeling easier and to help release aromatic oils. Reserve a small, unblemished clove to place in each

Details matter.



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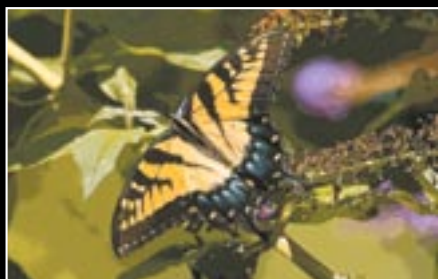
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COVER STORY

'It's a Wonderful Life' cont'd from pg. 5

of everyday objects. It's its own kind of theatrical magic."

Also new to the production is Joe Sturgeon, playing the dual roles of George's father and the evil banker, Mr. Potter.

Although she played Mary Bailey last year, Lauren Fortuna is approaching the part from a new perspective. "This year I realized just how feisty, sassy and incredibly strong my character is," she explains. "I've had a lot more fun with her. For those of us who are repeating our roles — Willie Repoley as George and Kathryn Temple as bad girl Violet, among other roles — we come to them with a deepening and a wonderful sense of discovery."

All players are associated with *the immediate theatre project*, a group of thespians who originally met in college. After graduation they put their youthful enthusiasm to work by founding their own theatre company. "There's much more room to play and experiment in small towns instead of places like New York, where costs are prohibitive and investors are unwilling to take risks," Fortuna points out. "Good theatre is happening all over the country."

Costumed in authentic period garb for the show, the actors look as though they've just stepped off running boards from vintage automobiles, complete with parted, slicked-back hair styles for the men and pompadours for the ladies.

A period aficionado, Willie Repoley is in charge of hair do's, while Fortuna multitasks as producer and tailor of suits. Troupers that they are, everyone in the company does a little bit of everything.

The *immediate theatre project* also takes its shows on the road. *It's a Wonderful Life* will play in South Carolina, Charlotte, North Carolina, and Virginia before its seven performances at North Carolina Stage.

As for the play's relevance to the holidays, suffice it to say that it's an affirmation of how important one average life can be. Although set on Christmas Eve, it has absolutely nothing to do with the consumer mania or enforced jollity that plagues so many of us during the holiday scene. For my money, that's an excellent reason to see *It's a Wonderful Life* for the first and—yes — the second time.

If you go

It's a Wonderful Life, at North Carolina Stage Company, 15 Stage Lane, next to the Rankin Street parking lot.

December 18-23, Tuesday-Saturday at 7:30 p.m. Matinees Saturday & Sunday at 2:00 p.m.

Info & tickets: Call (828) 350-9090 or visit www.ncstage.org.

RoseLynn Katz is an Asheville actress, storyteller and playwright.

Brevard College Theater Students Host an Evening of One Acts

BY VALERIE LEEPER

The Evening of One Acts consists of three plays, the first written and directed by Evelyn Pearson titled "Lies, Psychiatrists, and Made-for-TV Movies." The play, Pearson's Senior Project at BC, is about a girl in an accident who goes into a coma, but in the end realizes she was part of a horrible study.

BC student Kelly Bone will then direct Thornton Wilder's "Infancy," a comedy about what babies really think and say when we do not understand their "nonsense".

The final play of the evening is titled "The Not So Grimm Fairy Tales," and is a collaboration between Bone and Pearson. It muses on and attempts to explain what fairy tales and nursery rhymes are, and why some of them are

altered to sound happy and playful.

Actors in this Evening of One Acts are students Kelly Bone, Courtney Brandon, Christine Caldemeyer, Jessie Combest, Kara Ontiveros, Katherine Parnell, Evelyn Pearson and Erin O'Rourke. The stage manager and Scene Designer are Ryan Riordan and Erin O'Rourke respectively.

The community is cordially invited to attend.

If you go

Performances will be at 7:30 PM in the Morrison Playhouse in Brevard College's Porter Center for the Performing Arts. Tickets are \$5 and free to BC students with a college ID.

NOTEWORTHY



Asheville Ballet's 45th Anniversary Year Continues with *The Nutcracker*

BY ANN DUNN

Magic is the word for the evening: from "real" snow on stage to a tea pot that produces dancing Chinese dolls. What's new this year? A heart-stopping, Ninja doll that will inspire young athletes, and a sparkling Marzipan dance that will become every budding ballerina's dream.

The beloved, traditional holiday ballet tells the timeless tale of a young girl's magical visit to a dreamy Land of Sweets, where she encounters fabulous characters from all over the world, rescues The Nutcracker Prince from the evil Rat Queen, and is blessed by the beautiful Sugar Plum Fairy.

Asheville Ballet will offer special group rates on Thursday night for retirement community residents, educational communities, Social Service agencies, and Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts. In addition, there will be TWO school shows on Wednesday, so that young people from all over our region can encounter the magical wonder of art, and its transformative power.

The Nutcracker, composed by Tchaikovsky and choreographed by Marius Petipa, contains some of the most elegant classical music and ballet ever created, from the sensuous Arabian dance to the familiar favorite, Waltz of the Flowers. This year, as always, little Bon Bons will roll out from under Mother Ginger's skirts and tapping sol-

diers will triumph over jazzy rats. This ballet is the perfect gift for boys and girls of any age, with its spell-casting loveliness, its humor, and its athletic wonderment.

Male and female professionals from The Asheville Ballet dance principal parts in the production, while advanced students from studios all over Western North Carolina participate in the corps de ballet. A cast of over 50 dancers performs almost 200 roles in this extravaganza. Elaborate costumes, hand-made

Elaborate costumes, hand-made in The Ukraine especially for Asheville Ballet, add a special touch to an already lavish production.

in The Ukraine especially for Asheville Ballet, add a special touch to an already lavish production.

The Asheville Ballet's Nutcracker is truly a community-wide production. For more information on Asheville Ballet's programs please visit www.ashevilleballet.com. At Asheville Ballet Guild, our motto is, "No dance task in our community is too small or too big for us."

If you go

The Asheville Ballet presents The Nutcracker December 5-9 at Diana Wortham Theatre. Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. Thursday - Saturday, and 2:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Regular tickets are \$25-40, students \$20-35, and all children \$15. For tickets call the box office at (828) 257-4530. For special school show tickets (Wednesday December 5, 8:45 and 11:45 a.m.) please call Ann Dunn, Director at (828) 258-1028.

Pyramid Brass Christmas Concert on December 7

BY JAMES CASSARA

The Blue Ridge Performing Arts Center in Hendersonville has long been a quiet mainstay in the entertainment scene for Western North Carolina. Renowned for its excellent acoustics and inviting atmosphere BRPAC is certainly one of this area's best kept secrets.

Still, if newly appointed spokesperson Tom Fisch has his way the secret will be out. An established singer and songwriter, Fisch approaches his latest venture as both an artist and advocate, eager to spread the good word. Fisch has been actively involved with the center since its beginning and has been a great influence on the type of music and live theatre programming presented at the Arts Center.

Originally from Upstate New York, Fisch spent 13 years in Nashville, as a songwriter before relocating to Flat Rock in 2004. Since then he has quickly become a part of the local and regional acoustic music scene.

Located in the historic Skyland Hotel building on the corner of 6th and Main in Hendersonville, The Blue Ridge Performing Arts Center features a grand marble lobby, a cozy 100 seat theatre/listening room and a 20 seat digital screening room. The smoke free center is a venue for all types of musical entertainment, comedy, live theatre, and host to various writers, speakers, community events, parties and children's events. It is a NC non-profit corporation founded

by Howard and Barb Molton.

With the holiday season approaching BRPAC is gearing up to full swing. As such, Pyramid Brass will hold a special Christmas concert on Friday, December 7 at 7:30 p.m. The repertoire of the quintet-consisting of trumpeters Herb Wolff and Emerson Head, Carol Weinhofer on French horn, Dick Seiber on tuba, and trombonist Tommy Brendel, has grown to include many arrangements from all musical styles and periods including The Renaissance, The Romantic Era, Sacred Music, Broadway Musicals, Big Band, Dixieland, Ragtime, Jazz, Marches, Polkas, and Patriotic Music.

Each member is an experienced musician, having performed as a soloist as well as with numerous orchestras, bands, and ensembles; individually they each bring something unique to the collective entity.

If you go

Tickets are \$20 and available at Flat Rock Cinema, across from the Flat Rock post office, Lazy Moon Music on Main Street directly in front of the performing arts center, or by calling (828) 693-0087.

For more information on this and many other BRPAC shows, visit their website at www.BRPAC.org

Speedsquare + Heypenny = Fire at the New French Bar on Saturday, December 8th

Asheville-based band Speedsquare, an experimental drum and piano duo, are hosting Heypenny, a Nashville-based indie pop band playing Asheville for the first time at the New French Bar Courtyard & Café. Heypenny opens at 10 p.m. with Speedsquare taking the stage at 11 p.m.

"We invited Heypenny to Asheville to have an opportunity to collaborate prior to the festival and have an opportunity to play with them in Nashville, a new city for us that we didn't hit on our tour," said CScott, drum and piano for Speedsquare.

Last summer Speedsquare toured the country playing on streets and in venues in more than 20 cities. Speedsquare met enough promising folks on their trip that they are touring again, this time up the East coast on "The Big East Coast Busk" in late Spring 2008. You may have heard them in late October on WNCW's Local Color. With the release of two new albums, "Be Cool" and a self-titled live album, Speedsquare is rocking the region, playing gigs from Nashville to Charlotte, Johnson City to Charleston.

Speedsquare: www.sonicbids.com/speedsquare

Heypenny: www.myspace.com/heyppenny

New French Bar: www.myspace.com/newfrenchbar

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November 16th - December 31st

Join Grovewood Gallery in their 10th Annual Ornament for the Season exhibition. Featuring tree ornaments, menorahs, dreidels, nativity scenes, wreaths and much more. Hot cider and ginger cookies from the Grovewood Cafe will also be on hand to provide holiday cheer.

www.grovewood.com

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GROVEWOOD
GALLERY

ON STAGE

Lees-McRae College Performing Arts Department to Host the Candlelight Christmas Concert

BY DANIELLE BAISDEN

Lees-McRae College's Division of Performing Arts will be ending their Fall 2007 Season with the annual Candlelight Christmas Concert at Hayes Auditorium on Lees-McRae College's campus.

large, it was move to Hayes Auditorium and the college promised that we would always use live greenery since we come from an area that depends on Christmas trees and greenery for its livelihood. Each year's concert has seen some changes. But



This year's concert will host students and faculty presentations as Solos, Duets, Piano Solos, Dance Pieces, Reader's Theatre, Talking Heads, and a special appearance by the big man himself – Santa! This annual tradition is appropriate for all ages and is a great way to get into the Christmas spirit! As usual Hayes stage will be decked to the nines with several Christmas trees, wreaths, garland, presents, poinsettias, and thousands of Christmas lights. Just walk into Hayes and the smell will entice you to sit down and have an enjoyable evening watching great performances.

The tradition of The Candlelight Christmas Concert began thirty years ago this Christmas, and has continued due to its success and community support. Begun in The Pinnacle Room, the Christmas concert caused greenery to be hung from the rafters with tiny lights strewn throughout. The Performing Arts Faculty (which was much smaller than its current size) served gingerbread and spiced tea, just like they would in Renaissance England and a fire was always in the fireplace. When the crowds became too

mostly, it's become a staple for the community and campus as a sign that, yes, Christmas is finally coming.

If you go

The Performing Arts Department on the campus of Lees-McRae College will be entertaining audiences in Hayes Auditorium December 1 at 7:30pm and December 2 at 2pm. Tickets are \$12 for Adults and \$5 for Children and Students; any student ID is accepted. Tickets are only sold at the door, the Box Office will open 1 hour prior to show time – plenty of seating is available. For additional show information please visit: www.performingarts.lmc.edu or call (828) 898-8721.

Lees-McRae College is a private, four-year, liberal arts college affiliated with the Presbyterian Church U. S. A., located in the mountains of western North Carolina in the town of Banner Elk. The college is dedicated to service learning and offers majors in twenty-three academic disciplines.

NOTEWORTHY

NewSong and Todd Agnew Present 'The Christmas Promise Tour'

Grammy Award-nominated Integrity Music recording artist NewSong, along with critically-acclaimed Ardent/INO singer/songwriter Todd Agnew, will herald the holiday season with "The Christmas Promise Tour." Including performances by special guest Matthew West, as well as newcomer Britt Nicole, the tour will also feature Agnew's acclaimed Christmas musical, "Do You See What I See?"

NewSong will present selections from their best-selling recordings The Christmas Shoes and The Christmas Blessing, highlighted by a performance of the group's #1 mainstream radio hit, "The Christmas Shoes," which spawned a best-selling novel by Donna VanLiere and a CBS Movie of the Week. In addition to sets from each artist, NewSong, Matthew West, and Britt Nicole will perform several songs together.

Agnew's musical, "Do You See What I See?" will be featured in the second half of the concert. A retelling of the Christmas story with the singer/songwriter's original compositions and dialogue, the

musical offers personal perspectives from eyewitnesses to Christ's birth. In addition to Agnew, the cast of "Do You See What I See?" will include NewSong's Nate Sallie and Billy Goodwin; Matthew West; and Britt Nicole.

Since its inception more than 25 years ago by original members Eddie Carswell and Billy Goodwin, Dove Award-winning and Grammy Award-nominated NewSong has recorded 17 albums and is a member of the Georgia Music Hall of Fame. The group has twenty #1 singles, including such signature songs as "Arise My Love," "Can't Keep A Good Man Down," "Red Letter Day," "Psalm 40" and "Rescue." In addition, The Christmas Shoes was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Pop/Contemporary Gospel Album in 2003. NewSong's multi-artist Winter Jam Tour Spectaculars, which the group began hosting in 1995, have grown to be-



come the largest attended annual Christian music tours in the industry.

Singer/songwriter Todd Agnew's fourth studio recording, Better Questions, released in July from Ardent Records, in coordination with INO Records. Hailed by ChristianMusicToday.com as "some of the bravest Christian songwriting you'll find all year," the album features the hit single, "Our Great God," a duet with Rebecca St. James. Recently, Agnew's "Do You See What I See?" Performance Resource Disc was released. The double CD includes a variety of resource tools for churches presenting the Christmas musical.

Sparrow recording artist Matthew West catapulted onto the Christian music scene in 2003 with his debut single, "More," which became the most played Christian AC song of 2004, according to R&R. Since that time, West's two criti-

cally-acclaimed studio recordings, Happy (2003) and History (2005), have yielded such hits as "Only Grace," "History" and "Next Thing You Know." A sought-after songwriter, West's cuts have been recorded by Rascal Flatts, Billy Ray Cyrus, Natalie Grant, and Mandisa, among many others. His latest album, "Something To Say", is slated to release January 8.

Britt Nicole's Sparrow Records debut, "Say It", released in May, and she was also a featured artist on this year's Winter Jam Spectacular Tour.

If you go

'Vision Productions & North Buncombe/Madison County Churches present The Christmas Promise Tour' with Special Guests Matthew West, Nate Sallie and Britt Nicole. December 15 at 7:00 p.m.

Moore Auditorium, Mars Hill College

*At the door: \$17 adult/\$9 child
Online tickets: www.itickets.com*

For more information visit www.newsongonline.com, www.toddagnew.com, www.hisvisionconcerts.com

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NOTEWORTHY

Groewood Gallery Receives Sculpture Featured at US Botanic Garden



Groewood Gallery was honored to receive an outdoor sculpture featured at The U.S. Botanic Garden in Washington, D.C., one of the oldest botanic gardens in North America.

The 15 ft steel sculpture, entitled *Dahlia*, was on display in the National Garden from May 26 to October 9, 2007 in an exhibit celebrating the importance of public gardens across America. *Dahlia* was created by local Waynesville artist Grace Cathey, who is represented by Groewood Gallery and has several sculptures included in the North Carolina Arboretum's permanent art collection. *Dahlia* is currently on display in the Groewood Gardens.

Groewood is a destination gallery that radiates old world charm! Located in a 1917 English-style cottage, the gallery is the centerpiece of eleven acres of beauti-

BY ASHLEY VAN MATRE

fully maintained grounds. Groewood exhibits 9,000 square-feet of handmade American crafts by more than 500 artisans. The gallery features ceramics, glass, jewelry, garden sculpture, and an impressive second floor studio furniture collection.

Groewood Gallery is located next to the Grove Park Inn. Also located on the grounds are the Estes-Winn Automobile Museum, The North Carolina Homespun Museum, working artists' studios and the Groewood Café.

If you go

Groewood Gallery is located at 111 Groewood Road in Asheville, NC. Hours: Mon-Sat 10-6, Sun 11-5. (828) 253-7651 or visit www.groewood.com

Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Junior Ranger Program:

November marks the first year anniversary of the park's Junior Ranger program with over 100 young people having earned Junior Ranger badges.

Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site announces this program now is available to Spanish speaking young people who are learning English as a second language. Some activities for Spanish speakers relating to the Sandburg site include creating a five line poem about something in nature they love, discovering why Mr. Sandburg called television a "thief of time," and finding out what Mr. Sandburg called "Goober Peas."

These activities will challenge young Spanish speaking visitors as they participate in the park's new Spanish language edition of the Junior Ranger program.

This program is available in the park bookstore at no charge. Participants who complete all of the activities within their abilities and who take the Junior Ranger pledge will be given a Junior Ranger badge and a certificate of completion. Participants who complete every activity in the program and who take the Junior Ranger pledge will be given a special Junior Ranger patch in addition to the badge and certificate.

Junior Ranger programs at national parks across the country are sought after by many families as a worthy educational experience while visiting parks. Through self-discovery and guided learning the program creates opportunities to interact with the natural and cultural resources within parks. It teaches America's youth about the concepts of stewardship and

Connecting Our Children to America

citizenship on a local and national level. Junior Ranger programs are generally very interactive and may include guidance from family members, peers, teachers, or park rangers to complete. Nearly 500,000 children engage in Junior Ranger programs at national parks each year.

"Carl Sandburg Home's Junior Ranger program actively engages young people and their families in the significant cultural resources uniquely found at the park," said Carl Sandburg Home Superintendent, Connie Hudson Backlund, "Now this opportunity is available to a larger segment of our growing population to help bridge the communication gap when learning a new language."

The Junior Ranger program at Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site will provide an enhanced and more meaningful park visit for these youth. It will actively engage children and their parents in an opportunity to learn together.

The grant program that enables the Junior Ranger Program at Carl Sandburg Home to become a reality is called the *Junior Ranger Challenge Grant*. It was awarded in August 2005 by the National Park Foundation and Unilever, the Proud Partner of America's National Parks, to Carl Sandburg Home NHS and The Friends of Carl Sandburg at Connemara. The Friends were challenged by the National Park Foundation to gain local support for the program. The Community Foundation of Henderson County gave that support through a \$5,000 award. The National Park Foundation and Unilever

then matched that \$5000 for a total of \$10,000.

"This generous support from The Community Foundation of Henderson County will enable young people to learn about American history in a hands-on way at a place significant to the community and the nation through a nationally recognized program," Backlund stated.

The National Park Foundation awarded 28 Junior Ranger Challenge Grants to National Parks across the country with the generous support of Unilever, the longest-standing corporate partner of the Foundation.

"As the national charitable partner of America's National Parks, the National Park Foundation is proud to lead fundraising efforts for innovative educational programs," said Vin Cipolla, President and CEO of the National Park Foundation. "We are committed to engaging America's youth more than ever before and instilling in them a life long commitment to America's National Parks."

If you go

Families with children ages 7 to 12 are invited to participate in this program when they visit Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site. Simply ask a ranger for a Junior Ranger Program and begin! Becoming a Junior Ranger is becoming a friend of national parks and promising to help protect these places for the enjoyment of future generations.

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STAGE PREVIEW

Wolcom, Yole!

The Asheville Choral Society Ushers in the Holiday Season with a Joyful Sound

BY ROXANE CLEMENT

The Asheville Choral Society, accompanied by a 35-piece chamber orchestra, presents its holiday concert, *Wolcom, Yole!*, December 8 and 9, at Central United Methodist Church. I had the pleasure of sitting in on a recent rehearsal, and I strongly suggest you attend this event if you wish to fully celebrate the season of Yule.

The Asheville Choral Society, 150 voices strong, is in its thirtieth year, and the quality of this diverse, energetic, volunteer group is impressive. Their music director is Lenora Thom, who brings passion and meticulous attention to her work, and the results are easily heard. Under the leadership of Ms. Thom, who took charge in 2000, the group has almost tripled in size. She gives all credit to Robert Keener, the founding artistic director, but she came with a new vision, and having a larger group gives much more scope to the variety of pieces it can tackle.

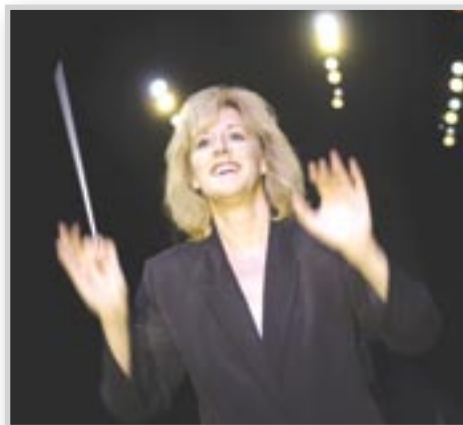
Chorus member Stacey Lewis has been with the group since 1984 and has witnessed the growth, but says: "It feels like a family." For a concert such as this, the group generally rehearses at the Old Haywood Methodist Church for 13 weeks, accompanied by the orchestra for the last two.

"Lenora instills in us the meaning of the words, and this often brings tears to my eyes."

- JAN BODENHORST, MEMBER, ASHEVILLE CHORAL SOCIETY

Many of the singers are professionally trained, and obviously come with a love for music, but they leave rehearsals with an additional love for words. As Jan Bodenhurst, a member of the group since 2000, said, "Lenora instills in us the meaning of the words, and this often brings tears to my eyes."

As Ms. Thom rehearses the group, she stresses precise enunciation, and reminds them of the beauty of the poetry they are singing. "It's not every day of the week you get to sing these kinds of words," she pointed out. The pieces she has chosen for the *Wolcom, Yole!* program give a good indication of her feel for poetry: it includes compositions set to the words of Sara Teasdale, Robert Frost and Kahlil Gibran. She particularly loves



Lenora Thom, Asheville Choral Society music director.

the Kahlil Gibran piece and its evocation of the season:

*Come close to me,
oh companion of my full life;
Come close to me and let not winter's
touch enter between us.
Sit by me before the hearth,
for fire is the only fruit of winter.*

Ms. Thom stresses that the program isn't a religious one; rather it contains works that are fresh, innovative and not done all the time. As she put it, "This is a very mixed program expressing beautiful sentiments."

The title of the program is taken from British composer Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, the first three movements of which will be sung. Other composers represented in this program include well-known contemporary American composers, Morten Lauridsen and Randol Alan Bass. The group spent much of the rehearsal working on the Lauridsen "Mid-Winter Songs," and the Kahlil Gibran piece, composed by another American, Z. Randall Stroope.

It was fascinating to hear the pieces being meticulously honed. The enthusiasm and intensity of the group is contagious; every time Ms. Thom commanded "Heads up!" I felt I had better look up as well! The rehearsal conjured up my childhood memories of Christmas Eve services at the National Cathedral, and inspired me to consider singing again.

Maestra Thom comes with impressive credentials. She studied at Juilliard, Trinity College and the Monteux School for Conductors, and for over 20 years had a busy career as a music director and conductor in the New York City area. She visited Asheville in 1997 and immediately fell in love with it, then moved here the

following summer. She is assisted in her rehearsals by accompanist Vance Reese, who holds a PhD in music from Indiana University. He frequently performs with the group, either as a singer, bass player or organist. Executive Director John Clark runs the show from behind the scenes, but his enthusiasm is equally contagious.

When Ms. Thom speaks about her vision of the future, she insists she wants to create a world-class group as good as those heard on any recording. People are already leaving her programs with the reaction, "Oh, my God, I had no idea..." She is on a mission to debunk the myth that choral singing is an amateur venture and reminds us that the world's greatest composers have written works in this genre. As she puts it: "It's such a privilege to bring these great pieces to life..., this genius, this miracle..., it's my duty to honor it. It can really change lives." The piece by Sara Teasdale sums it up well:

*I will make this world of my devising,
Out of a dream in my lonely mind,
I shall find the crystal of peace,
— above me Stars I shall find.*

The Asheville Choral Society perhaps began as a dream in the minds of all who sing in it, but the reality is stellar.

If you go

Wolcom, Yole! Asheville Choral Society Holiday Concert to be held at Central United Methodist Church, 27 Church Street, downtown Asheville.

Saturday, December 8 at 8:00 p.m., Sunday, December 9 at 4:00 p.m. Tickets: \$20 Adults; \$15 Students. For more information call (828) 299-9063, or visit www.ashevillechoralsociety.org

Roxane Clement is an Asheville artist and writer who has worked many years in theatres in North Carolina, Maryland and Europe.

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WHAT TO DO GUIDE™

How to place an event/classified listing 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.

Sponsored listings (shown in boxes) can be purchased for \$12 per column inch.

Deadline is the 19th of each month. Payment must be made prior to printing.

Email Beth Gossett at: 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.

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One-Day Audition and Voice-Over Workshops

Saturday, December 1

Asheville Community Theatre will hold two One-Day Intensives, an Audition Workshop and an advanced Voice-Over Workshop. These classes, geared for adults, will meet from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Asheville Community Theatre, located in downtown Asheville. The cost for either workshop is \$40 and registration is currently open.

The Audition Workshop will be taught by professional actor and director Michael MacCauley. Participants are encouraged to bring a prepared monologue, but will also work with cold reading materials.

The Voice-Over Workshop will be taught by veteran actress and voice-over talent Ida Ginn. This class promises lots of copy, lots of voicing, and lots of fun! Participants should bring a blank cassette, a CD-R and a bag lunch.

For more information, visit the Asheville Community Theatre web site at www.ashevilletheatre.org or contact Jenny Bunn by phone at (828) 254-2939 x21 or email jenny@ashevilletheatre.org.

Call For Artists

The Public Art Commission of Waynesville, NC, is issuing a call for artists for its inaugural public art project. The theme is Old Time Music and its cultural impact in the region.

Open to all artists residing in: Cherokee, Graham, Clay, Swain, Macon, Jackson, Haywood, Transylvania, Madison, Buncombe, Henderson, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Surry, Watauga, Wilkes, Yadkin, and Yancey counties.

The project: a unique and durable work of art, designed to stand up to environmental factors, to be installed at the juncture of Main Street and Miller Street in downtown Waynesville and inte-

Colburn Earth Science Museum Hosting Holiday Fest December 1

Support local artists and Earth science education in Western North Carolina at the second annual Colburn Earth Science Museum Holiday Fest arts and crafts sale 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. December 1. During Holiday Fest, area artists and crafters will take over the lower lobby of Pack Place and sell handmade items ranging from jewelry to ceramics to fiber arts.

And at Holiday Fest, shoppers can feel good about making purchases because a percentage of all of sales at the festival will benefit the Colburn's educational programs.

In addition to the work of local artists and crafters, the Colburn's Crystal Pocket Gift Shop will offer bargains on minerals, gems, books, jewelry, posters and cool children's science toys and kits. Coal for holiday stockings will be featured, too.

The Colburn also will be open free of charge during Holiday Fest, and seasonal refreshments will served. The Colburn Earth Science Museum has been an Asheville institution since 1960. Each year, Colburn educators reach more than 10,000 children with Earth Science programs.

Colburn Earth Science Museum, 2 S. Pack Square at Pack Place, Asheville, NC 28801. Phone (828) 254-7162, fax (828) 257-4505, www.colburnmuseum.org

grated into the existing landscaping at that location.

Selected artist will receive \$20,000. Applications will be reviewed by the Waynesville Public Arts Commission which will choose three finalists, each to be paid \$500 to present sketches and/or models to a committee of citizens and town officials.

Deadline: January 15, 2008. Application instructions are available by calling (828) 456-3517 or visit www.townofwaynesville.org.

Early Music Concert

Sunday, December 2

At St. Matthias Church beginning at 3 p.m., there will be a concert of early music for violas da gamba and harpsichord. Gail Ann Schroeder and Holly Maurer will play viola da gamba and Barbara Weiss will play the harpsichord. The program will include music of the Italian, French and English Baroque period. The performance is to benefit the Echo Early Music Festival.

There is no charge for the concert, but a free will offering will be taken for the ensemble and the restoration of the beautiful

and historic church. St. Matthias' Church is over 100 years old and is on the national historic register.

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.).

The Sacred Art of Mudras Sunday, December 9

A workshop with Ganga Grace, 1 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. Cost: \$20

You will learn: Hand gestures (mudras), Basic steps (adavus), short choreography, a story.

Tom Turner Porcelain Studio Show & Sale

December 1st and 2nd

There will be lots of pots with lots of variety of form, glazes, and price range. I will have just "fired" some Turner Super Cookies for you to graze on while looking at pots. Sugar is always a plus. Christmas is just around the corner, so be sure to remember those special gifts you are searching for, especially one for you. Bring a carload of friends and enjoy a trip to the country.

381 Turner Lane, Mars Hill, NC. Directions and a map are on www.tomturnerporcelain.com, or call (828) 689-9430.

Osondu Booksellers December Events

Sunday, Dec. 2, 1 p.m.

A couple of curmudgeons are coming to Osondu Booksellers. James Cox, author of *The Christmas Curmudgeon* and Al Manning, author of *Curmudgeon's Book of Nursery Rhymes*, will read from and sign copies of their books, and in the process may be heard to mutter an occasional "Baa Humbug!" or two.

ery Rhymes, will read from and sign copies of their books, and in the process may be heard to mutter an occasional "Baa Humbug!" or two.

Saturday, Dec. 22, 7 p.m.

A Shoppers' Respite! Stop in at Margaret's Café for an evening of blues with Bobby G. There'll be festive teas and wines, sweets galore and fine folks with whom to mingle and make music.

Osondu Booksellers
184 North Main Street
Waynesville, NC

(828) 456-8062

www.osondubooksellers.com

Prama Institute, 310 Panhandle Rd., in Marshall, NC. (828) 649-9408, www.pramainstitute.org
Tickets sold at Malaprops.



AUGUST EVENTS ~ ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ CLASSIFIEDS

WHAT TO DO GUIDE™

Together We Read Finale on December 2

Author Lee Smith comes to Pack Memorial Library in Asheville to celebrate *Together We Read 2007* for which thousands of people throughout Western North Carolina have read Smith's post-Civil War novel, "On Agate Hill."

The program begins at 2:30 p.m. with musician Jeff Sebens' and actress Barbara Bates Smith's performances and concludes with period spirituals sung by the Bethel 7th Day Adventist Choir.



Lee Smith

Dr. Carol Boggess of Mars Hill College introduces Smith — then Smith talks about reading, writing, and her career.

After the program, there's a reception, a presentation of *Together We Read* materials, and the conclusion of the vote for the

2008 *Together We Read* book.

For more information, visit www.togetherweread.org; or call the library at (828) 250-4700 or *Together We Read* at (828) 505-1973.

Choral Christmas Music Concert

Sunday, December 9

The Reynolds-Miller Chorale will present a concert of Christmas music at 3:30 p.m. at St. Matthias Church. The program will include Christmas favorites, and the 25-voice historic Chorale will be accompanied by organ and the St. Matthias String Quartet.

There is no charge for the concert. The church is located at 1 Dundee St. in Asheville. Shuttle parking will be available from the Public Works parking lot on South Charlotte St.

Asheville Musicians Coalition presents: Home-town Holiday Jam VII

Thursday, December 13

Featuring: A Social Function, Sons of Ralph, Nikki Talley, & Peggy Ratusz. Plus Special Guests: Mike Barnes, Marc Keller, Bobby Sullivan, Johnny Blackwell, Dave Fowler & surprise special guests.

Tickets: \$10, plus donation of one canned food or one NEW toy. Concert starts at 8:00 p.m., doors open at 7pm. Ages 16+.

To Benefit: The Breast Cancer Research Foundation, Manna Food Bank, Eliada Home for Children

The Orange Peel, 101 Biltmore Ave., in Asheville. (828) 255-

Corgi Tales by Phil Hawkins



5851, or visit www.hometownholidayjam.org

Blue Ridge Ringers

Sunday, December 16, and Monday, December 17

Blue Ridge Ringers presents two benefit handbell concerts, for the Blue Ridge Educational Foundation Sunday, December 16, 4 pm at Bo Thomas Auditorium at Blue Ridge Community College (donation requested), and for the Flat Rock Playhouse YouTheater on Monday, December 17, 7 pm at the Flat Rock Playhouse, \$10 adults, \$5 children.

A Special Weekend With

Playback Theatre

Friday, January 4th, and Saturday, January 5th, 2008

Playback is stories told by audience members and re-enacted on the spot! Join this fun & exciting Improv Theatre ensemble for three different performances the first weekend of the New Year!

Friday, January 4th at 8 p.m., come and get involved with *Broken Resolutions*, A Community Playback Jam where audience members will be coached & invited to act, play music etc with the Company.

Then on Saturday, January 5th at 2 p.m., a special kids performance, *What Do Grownups Know Anyway?* And on Saturday nite at 9 p.m., an adults only!

performance called *Secrets*.

Tickets at the door - \$10 adults/ \$5 students & seniors, 1/2 hour prior to show. For more info call (828) 670-5881.

Recreation Resolution

January 2 - 31, 2008

January is a great time to get back into shape and what better place to go than the Waynesville Recreation Center! Come join in on the greatest promotion of the year featuring an outgoing staff and a crystal clean facility!

Visit the Center between January 2 - 31, 2008, and receive a 2 week FREE membership! It's that simple! For more information or directions phone (828) 456-2030.

First Baptist Church of Asheville Services

Monday, December 24

Christmas Eve Candlelight and Communion Service

6:00 p.m. The traditions of the season are celebrated through communion, carols, and candlelight. (Childcare is available.)

Christmas Eve Contemplative Worship

9:00 p.m. This service combines reflection on the holy spirit, communion, and sacred songs of the season.

First Baptist Church of Asheville, 5 Oak St., Asheville, NC.

(828) 252-4781
www.fbca.net

Start Your New Year's Eve at The Health Adventure

The Health Adventure will kick off a yearlong celebration of its 40th birthday with a family-friendly afternoon on December 31 from 3:00 until 5:00 p.m.

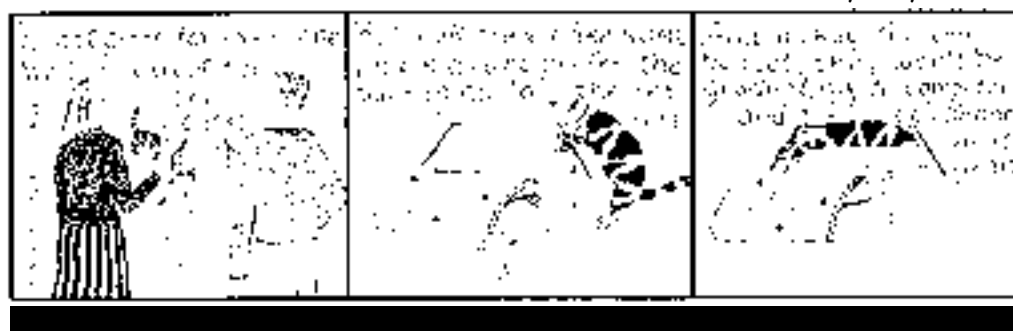
Taking a cue from the decade The Health Adventure was born, the party will include retro inspired activities from the Sixties. Guests are encouraged to come dressed as their favorite rock star or band from the Age of Aquarius, and prizes will be awarded for the best costumes.

At "The Grateful Dead Zone," children will learn about bones and their importance in the human body. The science of flight will be explored in "Jefferson Airplane."

Guests will also enjoy nutritious snacks and have the opportunity to set healthy living resolutions for the New Year.

Admission is free for members and \$10 per family for non-members. For more information, visit www.thehealthadventure.org

Callie & Cats



By Amy Downs

Montford Park Players Seeks Director

The Montford Park Players, North Carolina's Longest Running Shakespeare Festival, seeks candidates to direct its 2008 summer season. The season will include *Antony & Cleopatra* (June 6-29), *As You Like It* (Aug 1-24), both by William Shakespeare, and Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (September 5-28). A fourth production will be named later.

Interviews will be held Saturday, January 5, 2008 at 3:00 p.m. at the Montford Community Center. To schedule an interview please email John Russell, Managing Director at info@montfordparkplayers.org for more information.

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PERFORMANCE

A Swannanoa Solstice

By JOHN ELLIS

**"...sprightly, sensuous,
sunny, entrancing and
wonderfully evocative."**

- *THE WASHINGTON POST*

Grammy award-winning musicians Al Petteway and Amy White and multi-instrumentalist Robin Bullock headline the fifth anniversary edition of A Swannanoa Solstice, this year expanded to two performance

times: 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Sunday, December 16 at Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place in downtown Asheville.

In this annual winter holiday celebration, world-renowned musicians Petteway and White along with Bullock and a host of special guests share holiday songs old and new, religious and secular, joyful and poignant, in a warm and intimate winter concert. Presented in association with The Swannanoa Gathering at Warren Wilson College, A Swannanoa Solstice has expanded to two performances in order to meet the audience demand for this popular winter gathering and concert.

This year's special guests include:

- Sheila Kay Adams, world-renowned Appalachian storyteller and traditional Appalachian ballad singer;
- The Warren Wilson Collage Chorale and the Warren Wilson Brass Ensemble, directed by Milt Crotts;
- Steve Agan, award-winning highland bagpiper;

- The Twisty Cuffs, local Cape Breton-style stepdancers led by Stephanie Johnston and joined by young up-and-coming fiddler Alex Reidinger; and
- Doug Orr, invaluable supporter of and participant in the musical heritage of western North Carolina.

A Swannanoa Solstice showcases all manner of seasonal sounds, images and festivities, with 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,

Gathering at Warren Wilson College, and is made possible by Mainstage Special Attraction Series Sponsors Arby's The Winning Team Inc. and Michael and Cathy



**Alex Reidinger, founder
of Twisty Cuffs.**



The Twisty Cuffs, local Cape Breton-style stepdancers.

Andry, and by Performance Sponsors Bill & Marilyn Hubbard with additional support from Media Sponsor WNCW 88.7 FM.

The Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place is located in the center of downtown Asheville on historic Pack Square within walking distance of many shops and restaurants. The intimate theatre seats just over 500 and boasts exceptional acoustics and sightlines, making it the premier performance space in all of Western North Carolina. The Mainstage Series is supported by a grant from the North Carolina Arts Council, a state agency. The Mainstage Series 2007/2008 season

sponsors are Asheville Citizen-Times, Creative Energy, Laurey's Catering and Gourmet-to-go, and Renaissance Asheville Hotel.

If you go

**Mainstage Special Attraction Series
John Ellis, Managing Director**

**2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Sunday, December 16
Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place**

Tickets: Regular \$28; Senior \$26; Student \$23; Children \$10. Student Rush tickets (\$10 for students with valid I.D.) are sold the day of the show, based on availability.

To obtain more information about A Swannanoa Solstice at Diana Wortham Theatre or to purchase tickets call the theatre's box office at (828) 257-4530 or visit www.dwtheatre.com.

Artists' Websites:
www.alandamy.com
www.robinbullock.com



Multi-instrumentalists Amy White and Al Petteway.

Bullock, Petteway and White explore shared winter traditions from the area, the country, and from around the world. Petteway, a virtuosic acoustic finger-style guitarist, draws on a broad variety of cultural influences from American Blues to Scottish jigs while White, on piano, mandolin, guitar, Celtic harp and percussion, draws on her classical and jazz background. Bullock, a multi-instrumentalist who plays the guitar, fiddle and bouzouki skillfully embraces Celtic and Appalachian music in his gorgeous arrangements for solo finger-style guitar.

Atmospheric photos showing the beauty of Asheville's mountains in winter (taken by Petteway and White, who are photographers for National Geographic in their spare time) provide a scenic backdrop for the performance.

A Swannanoa Solstice is presented annually in partnership with The Swannanoa

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Best Bet for Holiday Shopping

By APRIL NANCE

On December 1 the Folk Art Center will host the Southern Highland Craft Guild's annual Seconds Sale from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Artists will be on hand in the center's auditorium to sell select work 10-50% off retail.

This is an excellent opportunity for the artist to liquidate overstocks and 2007 items, try out new techniques, and sell studio seconds. For the customer the sale means great deals for holiday shopping and a chance to connect with the craftsperson. It also provides an exciting, festive alternative to mall and big box import shopping.

Buying from Guild artists supports the local economy and promotes the mission of the Guild which is bringing

together the crafts and craftspeople of the Southern Highlands for the benefit of shared resources, education, marketing and conservation.

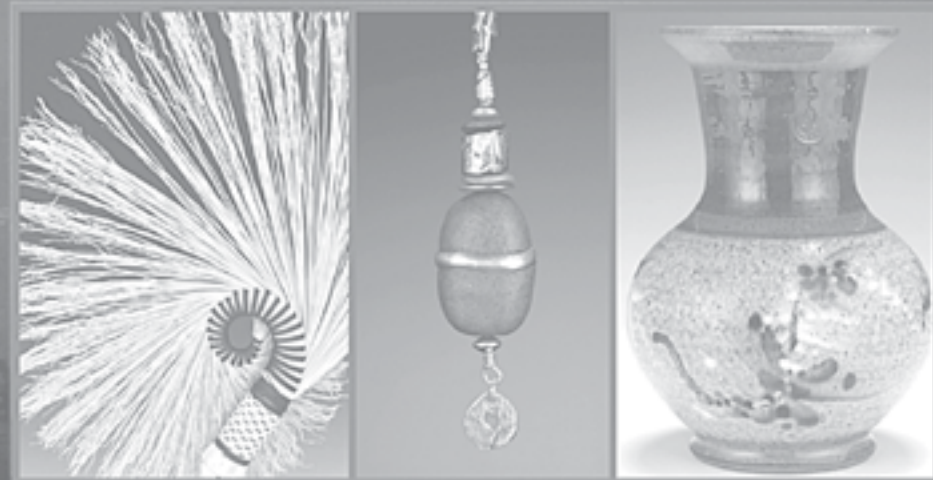
While at the Folk Art Center visitors can be inspired by three galleries showcasing the work of current Guild members and collections from the Guild's history. They can also shop at Allanstand Craft Shop, the nation's oldest craft gallery, where they will find gifts for everyone on their list.

If you go

The Folk Art Center is located at milepost 382 on the Blue Ridge Parkway in east Asheville. For more information call (828) 298-7928 or visit craftguild.org.

Folk Art Center & Allanstand Craft Shop

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www.craftguild.org

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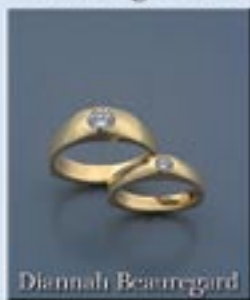
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