

RAPID RIVER

Arts & Culture Magazine

December 2009 • Vol. 13 No. 4



"Live From WVL Radio Theatre: It's a Wonderful Life." Seasonal radio-play adaptation presented by the NC Stage Company. **PAGE 13**



Comedians appearing this month at the Asheville Comedy Club include Collin Moulton, who will perform

December 18-19. **PAGE 12**



The calming and tranquil photography of Kathy Avery is on display at Affordable Treasures. **PAGE 8**

POETRY CONTEST

There's still time! Enter Rapid River's 13th Annual Poetry Contest. **PAGE 4**



Bill and Sue Foley of the Chocolate Fetish offer some holiday ideas, while Elizabeth Foley focuses on creating unique chocolate masterpieces. **PAGE 18**

Meet the *Snow Queen*

The Asheville Ballet presents
the Nutcracker

PAGE 5

Identity Theft Hits 5-Year High

Leader in I.D. Theft Protection Strikes Back with Free Protection Offer for All

TEMPE, ARIZONA – Identity theft has topped the Federal Trade Commission's list of consumer complaints for the past eight years.

Now, a stunning new survey shows a record 9.9 million Americans were victims of identity theft last year – a shocking 22% increase over the prior year – according to Javelin Strategy & Research. This news mirrors a just-released report from the Federal Trade Commission that cites a 21% increase in identity theft complaints during the same period.

Apparently, individual consumers are not the only ones at risk: a recent review cited by the Wall Street Journal reports that the cost of information breaches to U.S. companies was also on the rise, with the average total per-incident cost in 2008 rising to \$6.65 million*.

These studies send a clear message: in the wake of the global economic crisis, identity theft is a big business. It's up to consumers to take proactive steps to protect themselves.

That's why for a limited time, LifeLock, the industry leader in identity theft protection, is offering 30 days of guaranteed identity theft protection service at no cost.

"All you have to do is call 1-888-252-5862 for an individual membership, or 1-888-261-1335 if you

are enrolling more than one member," said Todd Davis, the CEO of LifeLock known for giving out his real Social Security number in advertising to show his confidence in the service. "It's that simple."

Immediately upon enrollment, all LifeLock members are protected by LifeLock's \$1 Million Total Service Guarantee.

Why should you protect your identity? Consider some of the Javelin survey's specific findings:

According to the survey, more than one in every ten victims knew the person who stole their identity.

The Javelin survey also revealed women are 26% more likely to be victims than men. The survey also named higher income consumers (households with combined incomes of \$75,000 or more) to be at higher risk. Latinos are 47% more likely to become victims of new account theft, versus 32% of all victims. It's important to point out that no one can stop all identity theft, but what LifeLock doesn't stop, they fix at their expense, up to \$1 million.

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"When I first learned about a company called LifeLock that protects families from identity theft, my husband was skeptical. I signed us up anyway, and forgot about it. A couple of months later, on a family vacation, my husband received a phone

call asking if he was applying for a new credit card. Someone was trying to steal his identity. LifeLock had stopped the thief cold." **Kim Barnes**



"I'm a former chief of police of a major city. I knew identity theft was a \$50 billion a year business, and a prime focus of organized crime. But they got me anyway. Even though I was a senior law enforcement official, it took weeks to clear my name. I decided:

never again. A reporter recommended LifeLock to me and I tried them out. I've never had a problem since. I highly recommend them to you." **Bobby Jo Harris**

Never give your Social Security number out unnecessarily. Source: Javelin 2009 Identity Fraud Survey Report.

*Source: M.P. McQueen, "Data Breaches Cost Businesses More", Wall Street Journal, February 2, 2009

noteworthy

A Closer Look at Baskets and Their Makers

Anna Fariello believes that artifacts – somewhat like windows – can act as passageways to a culture's soul.

"Material culture can be a window onto the changes that occur in social and cultural history," said Fariello, an associate professor and chief architect of the Craft Revival Project at Western Carolina University's Hunter Library.

An author, editor and former research fellow at the Smithsonian Museum of

American Art, Fariello most recently turned her attention to Cherokee basketry, a thousands-year-old tradition, passed from mother to daughter, that she believes is integral to Cherokee culture. Fariello's new book, titled "Cherokee Basketry: From the Hands of our Elders," studies Cherokee baskets and basket-makers who lived during the first half of the 20th century.

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians played a significant role in the craft revival, a regional movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that produced a wealth of objects, identified traditional skills, and revitalized handwork production in Western North Carolina.

"Cherokee Basketry" examines specifics about basket-makers themselves, how baskets were made, and what they were used for. Archival photographs illustrate

"Cherokee Basketry," published by The History Press of Charleston, S.C.

"I hope that this book has a broad audience," Fariello said. "I think it can serve as a classroom text for Cherokee studies or the visual arts, and I also think it will have a broad public appeal for anyone interested in

regional culture, especially the influence of the Cherokees on Western North Carolina."

The project was a great service to the Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, whose permanent collection has more than 100 baskets and continues to grow. "Before the archive organization, the only recorded information in our permanent collection was a handwritten line about each item," said Vicki Cruz, manager of the Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual.

The basketry book is the first in the "From the Hands of our Elders" series, a three-year project to document Cherokee arts. The next book will focus on Cherokee potters and pottery during the first part of the 20th century. A book on Cherokee woodcarving and mask making is scheduled to follow.



Etheyn Conseen holds a rivercane basket. Photograph by Clemens Kalischer, courtesy of Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual.

Travelogue: Stories of our Migration

Travelogue: Stories of our Migration" will feature some of the most exciting modern dance artists in the Southeast performing intriguing stories of immigration. It will entertain as well as inspire the audience to ask 'Where are we from?', 'Where did my family come from?', 'How did they get here?'. Inspired by the recent 'hot' debates about immigration, the performance will explore with sadness, humor, love, drama and passion the never-ending migration of humans.

"Travelogue" will feature live music by Laurie Fisher, Duke Ramuten and Marcus Chatfield, and choreography by ACDT director Susan Collard, dancer Jenni Cockrell, French/Vietnamese dance artist Thierry Ramond, Cuban dance artists Nelson Reyes and Diana Cabrera Stepanova, and tap dancer Joe Mohar.



The Saturday night performance will feature an international food and drink sampling at the theater before the show. A combined ticket for this event and for the performance costs \$50. These special tickets can only be purchased through ACDT by calling (828) 254-2621.

IF YOU GO

Asheville Contemporary Dance Theatre and White Dog ProjectX International present *Travelogue*, at Diana Wortham Theater, December 4 and 5 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$25 general admission/\$20 students and seniors. They can be purchased at the

Diana Wortham Theater Box Office at Pack Place in downtown Asheville, (828) 257-4530.

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Ann Dunn, director

Diana Wortham Theatre

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December 12 & 13 at 2:30 p.m.

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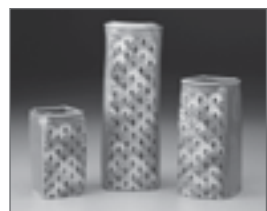
Toe River Studio Tour

More than 100 studios and galleries in Burnsville, Spruce Pine, Bakersville, and Little Switzerland, NC are open noon to 4 on **Friday, December 4**, and then 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on **Saturday** and **Sunday, December 5 and 6** as part of a FREE self-guided tour sponsored by the Toe River Arts Council (TRAC). A meet-the-artists' reception takes place on Friday, December 4 from 5-8 p.m. at the TRAC Center Gallery, 269 Oak Avenue, in Spruce Pine where an exhibit of participants' work is on display. Maps can be picked up at any participant's studios or at the TRAC galleries. For more information visit www.toeriverarts.org or phone (828) 682-7215.



2009 Flat Rock Holiday Stroll

Flat Rock's Annual Holiday Stroll will take place this year on **Saturday, December 5** from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. sponsored by the colorful shops of Little Rainbow Row. Each store will offer refreshments, some will feature seasonal specials. A special Holiday Tailgate Market, featuring local farmers with seasonal items and handmade crafts will take place in the lower parking lot from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Holiday music will be performed during the market. For further information, contact Virginia Teel at The Wrinkled Egg at (828) 696-3998 or David Voorhees at Hand in Hand Gallery at (828) 697-7719.



Pottery by Maria Andrade

Holiday Market to Benefit Western Carolinians for Criminal Justice

Western Carolinians for Criminal Justice (WCCJ), a nonprofit that provides alternative sentencing programs and rehabilitative services, will hold a Holiday Market at the Grove Arcade. Local businesses and artists will be selling everything from furniture to jewelry, with 15% of all proceeds benefiting WCCJ.

Participants include: Village Antiques; Constance Boutique; Quality Forward; Jewelry designers Kathleen Cooke and Nathalie Mornu; Fair Trade Peruvian imports and furniture; Cambodian Living Arts, and many others. **Friday, December 4** from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. **Saturday, December 5** from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. For more information visit www.wccj.org, or call (828) 252-2485.

Rapid River
ARTS & CULTURE MAGAZINE

13th Annual Poetry Contest

5 Winners

Prizes Include: Tickets to local concerts (TBA); Tickets to the Opera; Mellow Mushroom Gift Certificates; and books from Malaprops.

Any unpublished poem 35 lines or less is wanted!

Deadline December 19, 2009. Winning poems will be printed in the February 2010 issue. Reading fee: \$5 for three poems. For more information please call (828) 646-0071. Send poems to: Rapid River Poetry Contest, 85 N. Main St., Canton, NC 28716

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RAPID RIVER

ARTS & CULTURE MAGAZINE

Established in 1997 • Volume Thirteen, Number Four

DECEMBER 2009

www.rapidrivermagazine.com

Publisher/Editor: Dennis Ray

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INFO

Rapid River Art Magazine is a free monthly publication. Address correspondence to: info@rapidrivermagazine.com or write to:

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85 N. Main St.
Canton, NC 28716

Phone: (828) 646-0071
www.rapidrivermagazine.com

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December 2009 Vol. 13 No. 4

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holiday traditions

Asheville Ballet presents *The Nutcracker*

Besides vodka, Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Mikhail Nikolaevich Baryshnikov and living proof that Communism just doesn't work, those in search of counterexamples to disprove their loudmouthed relatives' holiday dinner claims that "nothing good ever came out of Russia" can now add the inspiration for one of the Asheville arts scene's longest-running yuletide traditions.

This year's installment of the Asheville Ballet's annual performance of *The Nutcracker* will feature choreography based on the original 19th Century Imperial Russian version of the beloved Christmas classic.

That's only fitting, since Asheville Ballet director Ann Dunn trained with the great Russian ballet master George Balanchine, who co-founded the New York City Ballet and is often credited as the father of modern ballet. In 1954, Balanchine adapted Marius Petipas' choreography from the original *Nutcracker* to stage the first of what quickly became an annual Christmas tradition of performances of Tchaikovsky's masterpiece in New York and across the entire country. As his student, Dunn feels a deep personal connection to *The Nutcracker* and its Russian roots, which she says has inspired her choreography for this year's staging.

"There's a direct link [to the ballet's Imperial origins]," explains Dunn. "But in our version, it's also evolved to incorporate the history of American dance and the interests of the audience." While Dunn's choreography retains important classical features from the original, she's also added flourishes to incorporate elements of American jazz, modern, and tap styles. Russian tsars might be confused by the sight of tap-dancing soldiers and evil rats doing jazz steps, but Dunn says WNC audiences are sure to be delighted.

Also certain to please are the production's ornate cos-



This year's performance will feature choreography based on the original 19th Century Imperial Russian version of the Christmas classic.



The 35th annual performance of *The Nutcracker* by the Asheville Ballet will be held at the Diana Wortham Theatre from Friday, December 11 through Sunday, December 13. Shows are scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, with matinees at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Tickets are available through the Diana Wortham box office, call (828) 257-4530. Seats range from \$28 to \$49 for adults and \$18 for children and students. For special group discount rates (of twenty or more), please contact the Asheville Ballet (828) 258-1028.

tumes, elaborate sets, and enchanting special effects. "Those are always big 'wow!'-factors," says Dunn. This year, several scenes will include (simulated) snowfalls to accompany the dancers, and there is also a new set of costumes (handmade by the Ukrainian National Ballet's costume shop) for the dancing gum drops and gummy bears that make up the Sugar Plum Fairy's court.

The cast for *The Nutcracker* includes more than 80 dancers, many of whom have extensive histories performing with the Asheville Ballet's professional corps or training as students at the Asheville Academy of Ballet, and other regional dance schools. Homegrown talents include Megan Jones as the Sugar Plum Fairy and Sarah McGinnis as the Dew Drop Fairy, alongside longtime AB contributor Lyle Laney in the role of the Cavalier.

Dickens Christmas Festival Transforms Biltmore Village

One of Western Carolina's "must see" holiday events will be held from December 4-6. It's the Biltmore Village Dickens Festival, three fun-filled days of musicians, singers, dancers and actors performing on stage, street corners and in the shops and restaurants of this charming English village conceived and built by George Vanderbilt in the early 1900s.

The Festival celebrates with three days of merriment, music and memories as the unique Village shops and restaurants deck out for the holidays and take shoppers and visitors back to a Dickens-era England.

The Festival features more than 300 singers, dancers, mimes, musicians and actors performing throughout the Village — on the streets and in the shops.

When dusk turns into evening, 250,000 tiny white lights outlining each building will combine with the streetlights to enhance the Village ambiance. Shops will stay open both evenings until 7 p.m. with many of the shopkeepers dressed in Victorian-era garb.

There'll be horse-drawn carriage rides through the tree-lined Village streets Friday afternoon, and all day Saturday and Sunday. Chestnuts roasted on an open fire by chestnut roaster Sakshi Gantenbein will be available next to the main stage.

The Village will be decked out with fresh Fraser fir holiday wreaths on each streetlight, on the entrance doors to the shops, and at other special locations throughout the Village.



Festival Hours: Friday, 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Friday and Saturday evenings include main stage concerts from 5 to 7 p.m., featuring vintage folk and seasonal favorites performed by "Simple Folk" on Friday and a variety of Celtic and olde-English classics by "Gypsy Bandwagon" on Saturday.

"Ring in the Holidays" with the Asheville Choral Society

BY ANDREA ROSAL

Music Director Lenora Thom and the Asheville Choral Society will offer a spirited blend of voices, bells, brass, percussion, and organ in the upcoming holiday concert, "Ring in the Holidays," on Saturday, December 12 at 8:00 p.m. and Sunday, December 13 at 4:00 p.m. in Central United Methodist Church, downtown Asheville.

Known for her creative programming, Ms. Thom has chosen a fun and festive variety of Christmas pieces this year from both familiar and perhaps less commonly-known traditions. "We have 'Wassail Song' and other beloved types of holiday pieces from both American and British tradition, but you'll also hear a Nigerian Christmas carol



Lenora Thom, Asheville Choral Society Music Director.

and an 'African Noel' complete with drums and great rhythms and harmonies; a beautiful Gaelic piece for chorus and marimba; a piece for bells and chorus from celebrated contemporary American composer Libby Larsen; a suite called 'Swingle Bells' from the Swingle Singers, featuring jazz trio and vibraphone; just a wonderful mix of sounds and sensations that bring excitement to this holiday music offering."

The December holiday concert kicks off the 33rd season of the Asheville Choral Society, which continues with Carl Orff's mysterious and popular "Carmina Burana" on March 20-21 in Central United Methodist Church, and concludes with "Unforgettable," the ACS pops concert, on

May 22-23, 2010 in the Diana Wortham Theatre.

The "Ring in the Holidays" program includes a capella and accompanied pieces from John Rutter, Ralph Vaughn Williams, Libby Larsen, Z. Randall Stroope, John Ness Beck, Wendell Whalum and Via Olatunji, Kirby Shaw, André J. Thomas, Alf Houkom, Ward Swingle, and G.F. Handel.



Tickets to "Ring in the Holidays," as well as for the 2009-2010 ACS Season, can be purchased from the Asheville Choral Society via its website at www.ashevillechoralsociety.org or by calling (828) 232-2060. Special discounts are available for groups of 10 or more.

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What is Art?

A VOYAGE INTO THE MIRACLE OF PROCESS

BY JONAS GERARD



Jonas Gerard is known as an abstract expressionist.

Art is an essential tool that allows people to process life, reconnect with one's soul and help to discover who we really are as we move on.

Throughout my life painting has been most intriguing and fascinating on so many many different levels, as if nothing else mattered. In every color, every brush stroke, my life is on the line...

My art always engulfed my whole being. I really had no choice. It all began very early in life.

When I was eight years old, I received two set of paints as gifts: watercolor in tubes and oil paint in tubes. So I mixed them to make shades. It was totally disastrous. I quickly learned the difference and loved to make pictures. I was mostly self-taught. I usually copied images from calendars, post cards, picture books and magazines. I was good at details and accuracy. Copying the Impressionists was my favorite.

I grew up in a restrictive household, and was held back from experiencing many "typical" childhood things. For that and other reasons, I turned to painting as an activity that gave me pleasure and satisfaction. The difficulties of family life in some ways encouraged the thing that later became the center of my life.

I began exhibiting my paintings at the age of 16 at the Washington Square Arts Festival in Greenwich Village, NY back in 1957. I continued to participate in outdoor art festivals and made a major career doing this, learning early on that it was easy for me to connect with people about my work and sell my paintings. I did art festivals for a total of 52 years, perhaps among the longest for anyone in the U.S.

What is art? Well, for me it is many things. Art is an opportunity to reconnect to our own soul. It can be therapeutic and a healing endeavor. Art can make us aware of ourselves and can connect us to that oneness within us. Art to me has the power to transform. Art is about the freedom to experience the joy and the excitement of applying paint to canvas in a fearless way. Whether the artist is a dancer, a sculptor, a painter, a ceramicist, or a musician, an open heart becomes a channel for creative expression.

But, how does this happen? There is something magical whenever I take a risk and allow the process to guide me, rather than hope for a "goal" or "product." I personally find it easier to accomplish that when I paint fast, getting out of the way. I like to let accidents happen, allowing mistakes to be opportunities to explore. That's why I paint to music which makes me feel brave enough to take risks. I get happy, I giggle, I dance.

All my deep-seated feelings, longing,

love, excitement, enthusiasm goes right into the canvas. When people come across a painting that catches their eye, a wordless connection is made. A silent emotional conversation begins. People smile, eyes sparkle, and sometimes tears develop.

It's my experience as an artist to be open and receptive to what I call the sacred. Taking that risk means letting go of preconceptions, fears and desires, which is a lot easier said than done. It's with this kind of urgency and excitement (my daughter Mira calls it "childlike abandon") that I make paintings.

Often, artists have indeed a need to convey some point of view, maybe a social, political, or mythological concept. I prefer to work within the sweet unpredictability of the process so that paintings become like living breathing entities. Taking risk, in contradiction to what that my mind wants to do, is a way to break the pattern of doubts. In this act of courage all kinds of support comes along: new forms, color, movement and "feel" come forth effortlessly. To witness this is nothing short of the miraculous in art, because the universe rewards courage.

In my view, to "get it", to really get what this art is about, one has to let go of judgment or the need to classify, interpret or even understand. If the mind does not interfere with this process one becomes involved in a sort of love affair.



Jonas Gerard moved his studio to the River Arts District of Asheville three years ago. His work can be seen at Jonas Gerard Fine Art, open 6 days a week,

10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sundays 1 to 6 p.m. 240 Clingman Ave. next to Clingman Café.

To see Jonas' creative process in action visit his studio any Saturday at 2 p.m. www.jonasgerard.com

fine art

Karen Newgard's Festive Sgraffito Pottery

BY BILL SCHLOSSER

Sgraffito (from the Italian verb meaning “to scratch”) is an artistic technique involving the cutting away of an outer layer of ceramic of one color to reveal an underlying layer of a different color. The result is a cameo effect where contrasts in shade or color are enhanced by the difference in relief between figures and background.

Karen Newgard masterfully utilizes this ancient eastern Mediterranean technique to bring life and energy to functional sculptured vessels of porcelain clay. “Growing up in spirited Louisiana gave me a sense of celebration,” relates Karen. “I strive to make a pot that honors our daily routines with a degree of festivity.” On some of her pieces she accomplishes this by depicting whimsical interior scenes drawn from memories of family gatherings and of visits to her grandparents’ Minnesota farmhouse. “Over the years these scenes have evolved into an iconographic encyclopedia that I draw from to create more stories and scenes,” she reveals.

On other pots, crisply delineated images of familiar birds and other small creatures appear within their native settings, the boughs, leaves, reeds and other botanical elements creating joyful natural rhythms. “The landscape and the architectural elements found in south Louisiana have also been a strong influence in the development of my imagery along with the works of John Audubon,” states Karen. “The natural world has always been a great source for pattern.”

Her vessels, numerous in form and function — bowls, vases, teapots, pitchers, platters, trays, cups, mugs, plates, jars and ewers — also reflect styling aspects of other cultures. “I find that my pots are influenced by many sources,” she says. “Japanese pots for the simplicity in utility, French pots for their ornate qualities and elaborate scenes



and handles, English pots for their sense of humor balanced with formality.”

Karen makes her pots on an English style treadle wheel. When fully formed and dried, each pot is brushed with a stained slip of the finest clay, known as a terra sigillata. She then carves through the resulting

dark layer with a loop tool, revealing the lighter clay beneath. “The reductive carving method allows me to add movement to the images on the surface of my pots,” she explains. The pots then undergo two separate firings. Glazes are applied to interiors, imparting wonderful pools of color. Karen finally introduces table salt to the kiln during the second firing, which reacts with the silica to glaze and seal the surfaces of each one-of-a-kind piece.

Karen began making pots as a student



at Louisiana State University, graduating in 1992 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts. She next entered Penland School of Crafts on a work-study scholarship, and became a professional potter in Asheville upon completing her studies in 1995. Karen is a member of the Southern Highland Craft Guild, the Piedmont Craftsman Guild, and the Carolina Designer Craftsman Guild, and has received numerous awards and professional honors for her work.

Karen Newgard's work may be seen at Susan Marie Designs Gallery, located at 4 Biltmore Avenue, downtown Asheville.

Hours: Monday - Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Sundays 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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fine art

The Photographic Style of Kathy Avery

There are as many styles of photography as there are photographers. A photographic image holds the imprint of the photographer as easily as a painting or drawing holds the style and characteristics of the painter.

Kathy Avery who grew up south of Asheville in rural North Carolina never thought the images from her childhood would guide her future as a successful artist.

A winding dirt road cuts through a dense forest or an old fence falling to foliage and time, or a field of red poppies blooming in a spring valley — these images, these moments of time, stay with the viewer. Her photographs offer the viewer something different with each look.



"Magnolia" Fairview, NC

These images, these
moments of time, stay
with the viewer.

BY DENNIS RAY



Kathy Avery,
photographer.

"I see something that interests me," she says, "an odd angle, soft

morning light flooding a dirt path, depths of the shadows, and it's something I know others would want to see."

Avery also works part time at Mission hospital as a registered Oncology nurse providing care and support for patients diagnosed with cancer, where she is responsible

for administering chemotherapy and managing symptoms related to cancer illnesses.

"Photography for me is a release, a way to calm myself. It's therapy. My work as a nurse can be very stressful."

Her photos are calming. They are tranquil. They offer hope. They say "There's a whole world out here, don't forget to come explore it." We the viewer must not disobey.

Kathy Avery's photography can be viewed at Affordable Treasures inside the Haywood Park Hotel.



"Roadside Poppies" Asheville, NC

"Photography when it's done well tells a story," Avery says. "The stories come not from the photographer but from the viewer. I have people tell me such and such photo brought back a flood of good memories. I like hearing that."

Avery who now sometimes "plays around" with computer digital enhancements on some photos says she still prefers using 35mm film and plans no time in the immediate future to take her art into the digital age. "I'm not big with technology. I have trouble sending an email," she says, then laughs. "I like things simple."

Many of her photographs are minimal, the image stripped down to its most fundamental feature, focusing the eye on a single object like a magnolia bloom. Some of her photographs display incredible images of life and beauty here in Western North Carolina.



"Mystical Morning" Spruce Pine, NC

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Thoughts on Studio Safety

**IF I HAD KNOWN I WAS GOING TO CATCH ON FIRE,
I WOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT...**

BY GREG VINEYARD

I caught on fire a few years ago. In winter, happiness is a W.K.R. ("warm kiln room"). I inadvertently stood too close to the 1800-degree peephole and suddenly a towel tucked in my pocket was burning! After yelping like a startled puppy, I threw it to the ground and stomped the flames out. But I wasn't quick enough to prevent the holes that had burned through my apron and over shirt. This was all a little too close to my second chakra for comfort. And my ego was singed, too.

When I was in design, back before computers were invented and we used slow-moving dinosaurs as furniture, production involved deft handling of No. 11 X-Acto blades. I used to wield one in each hand, picking and placing type on waxed boards. One day I accidentally stabbed one hand, and instinctively reached out with the other — which was holding the other blade — and promptly stabbed myself again. I stopped holding double blades after that. It was clearly not safe handling of my tools.

Many other tools also require serious respect. Blow torches, for example. And any type of saw. In addition to X-Acto's, many artists have sharp, pointy items like scissors, wire cutters, screwdrivers, nails and screws lying around rather than in labeled drawers. And for some reason we accumulate items that we just know we will have a use for someday. Like garden stakes. And rebar. And has anyone ever accidentally grazed their hand with an electric sander? (I'm not necessarily saying I HAVE done that... but... it hurt!) Studios also tend to have their fair share of H.T.'s ("heavy things"), many of which don't feel so good when they land on your foot. Like bricks. And hammers. Or so I've read.

Artists need to be vigilant about long hair, necklaces, jewelry, loose clothing and headphone cords. And where we set our fingers (two words: "Slab Roller"). Particle masks help prevent lung disease. Regular cleaning keeps dust from accumulating. Ventilation systems suck up toxins. Eye

and ear protection are a must. In ceramics, turning a potter's wheel off and tucking the pedal under the unit helps avoid A.V.I.'s ("accidental velocity incidents").

Wood shelving, walls, work boards, panels for painting, frame parts and pieces waiting to become fine furniture all have one thing in common: they provide us with Splinter Stories. Those under-the-fingernail tomes that can make anyone cringe. They're like Fish Stories. Only real.

Which leads me to: First Aid Kits. Artists need a little extra in theirs. Tweezers. A wide variety of bandages. Eyewash solution. Cold packs.

A reminder note that reads: "Did you get a tetanus shot this year?" I carry a couple extra bandages in my wallet. Geeky, I know. But broken ceramics are essentially glass. People have teased me over the years about this, but guess who they remember has one when they've just had a C.F.I.

("ceramic-finger intersection")? Happy to help.

A rewarding art life is in part possible by being studio-safe. As artists, we are responsible for creating that environment.

Being mindful of our hot, sharp, heavy and dangerous items — and being prepared in case something does happen — can enhance our experiences and careers in the studio. We can keep the creative fires burning — rather than our pants.

To be continued...



**Artists need to be vigilant
about long hair, necklaces,
jewelry, loose clothing and
headphone cords.**



Greg Vineyard is a visual artist and creative consultant in Asheville's River Arts District.

His Ceramics for Contemplation and Connectivity

can be found at Constance Williams Studio & Gallery, 12 Riverside Drive. Open daily from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. www.riverdistrictartists.com

asheville shops

Susan Marie Phipps Designs

Nature Inspired Complexity/Simplicity

Each day, when designer and goldsmith Susan Marie Phipps goes to work at Susan Marie Designs, her gallery and studio in downtown Asheville, she is inspired to create elegant, contemporary one-of-a-kind jewelry of gold and the finest gemstones from around the world. "My primary inspiration is in the beauty inherent in the precious natural materials with which I work," reveals Susan. "Whenever I find a stone I like I design for it. The stone drives the design, leading me to do something that will complement it."

Her love of stones dates to her childhood, when she would comb the ground for pretty or unusual rocks while hiking on family outings. "I was always fascinated by the great variety of mineral shapes and colors," Susan explains. She was fortunate to begin making jewelry while in high school, where a course was offered in metalsmithing. There she was honored with two Gold Key Scholarship Awards for her designs, encouraging her to pursue a career as a goldsmith.



14 kt. yellow gold Diamond and Tourmaline Pendant.

Susan furthered her studies of art and metalsmithing at Penland School in North Carolina and at the University of South Carolina, becoming a professional goldsmith in 1980. Several years into her career she earned her Graduate Gemologist degree from the Gemological Institute of America, and began her own business in 1993.

"Though I love to work with all varieties of colored gemstones, my favorites include diamonds, all colors of sapphires, tourmalines and garnets, and Tahitian black pearls, which come in many natural hues," states Susan. "My training as a gemologist has proved invaluable in helping me to understand the fundamental properties of gemstones and the importance of such factors as cut and clarity in bringing out the most beauty they have to offer."



18 kt. yellow gold Tourmaline Ring.



14 kt. yellow gold multicolor Sapphire Pendant.

BY TIM HENDERSON



14 kt. yellow gold Cultured Pearl and Diamond Earrings.

"By examining many thousands of gemstones over the course of my career, I've also come to know which cutters do the best job of maximizing the brilliance of the stones they cut. So I buy from only a few stone-cutters whom I've gotten to know very well and who have even won industry awards for their innovative styles of cut."

Susan's designs are also deeply influenced by the harmonious balance between complexity and simplicity found throughout nature. "I love gardening, and am always amazed at the way all the varied colors and textures of flowers and foliage work together aesthetically. Their differences don't conflict, but rather play on their common patterns and shapes. I try to capture this essence of natural form, which I regard as elegant simplicity, in my work," she relates.

When not creating items for her store, Susan works with clients to custom design the jewelry of their dreams. "I enjoy listening to customers express their tastes and discussing their particular budgets and needs. Once I get a feel for their personal style I am inspired to create something truly unique," says Susan. "My fulfillment as an artist is not only in the process of creating, but also in the enjoyment people get from wearing something which is created especially for them."

Susan Phipps' work may be seen at Susan Marie Designs Gallery, 4 Biltmore Avenue, downtown Asheville.

Hours: Monday through Saturday, 10 to 5:30 p.m. and Sundays 11 to 4 p.m. Phone: (828) 277-1272.

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stage preview

The Santaland Diaries Asheville's Hippest Holiday Tradition

Asheville Community Theatre proudly announces the eighth remount of its 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. 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.

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, Chalmers 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.

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 productions of Heathers and Judy Blume's *Forever: An Unauthorized Parody*.

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 "When You Are Engulfed in Flames." When Sedaris read the essay version of *The Santaland Diaries* during an installment of "Morning Edition," it generated one of the largest and most enthusiastic responses from the listening audience that NPR had ever experienced.



Tom Chalmers returns as the embittered elf Crumpet.

BY WILLIAM TIERNAN

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

Recently voted "Best Locally Produced Play" and "Best Live Show: Theatre" by readers of the *Mountain Xpress*, *The Santaland Diaries* is directed by Josh Batenhorst.

IF YOU GO:

The Santaland Diaries starring Tom Chalmers. December 10-19, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.

Asheville Community Theatre, 35 E. Walnut Street, in Asheville. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased at the box office, by calling (828) 254-1320, or online at www.ashevilletheatre.org.

DECEMBER HEADLINERS at the Comedy Club

Jason Russell

December 4-5

Jason's style of comedy is silly, hard hitting, and real. His strong personality, high energy, and quick sense of humor, enable him to handle any situation. In 1991, he won "The Funniest Person in Wisconsin" contest by dazzling the audience with his unique and crazy impressions.

Jason promises to be one of the country's hottest young comedians, a must see performance... GUARANTEED laughter!

Pat Godwin

December 10-12

Pat Godwin has been writing songs, performing in clubs and releasing CDs since he was 20 years old. It was only when Pat's style took a turn, and he began adding more humor to his live act that people started taking notice. Before long, his banter with the audience was funny and his

songs were even funnier. Pat plunged headfirst into comedy and discovered his true calling.

Pat's comedy has an edge to it. With a mix of quirky, personal musings and off the cuff remarks, Godwin can segue into any one of his songs, performed in an endless array of musical styles.

Collin Moulton

December 18-19

Less than two years after getting started, Collin won his first comedy competition (the 2001 Rocky Mountain Laff-Off), and later that year found himself featured on Comedy Central's "Best of the Improv." In 2003 he was a "Best in Fest" feature at the Montreal Comedy Festival.

On June 24, 2007 Collin opened for the infamous Lewis Black after



Collin Moulton



Jason Russell



Pat Godwin

winning the 4th Annual Northwest Comedy Competition.

IF YOU GO:

Shows are 21+. Funny Business Comedy Club is located in the S&W restaurant in downtown Asheville at 56 Patton Ave.

Showtimes: Friday & Saturday 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Cover charge: Fridays and Saturdays \$14. Special shows are more \$. For more information phone (828) 318-8909 or visit www.ashevillecomedy.com

Tickets are available online at www.ashevillecomedy.com, by phone at (828) 318-8909, or at the box office located in the lobby of the S&W building the night of the show.

stage preview

Rediscover the Moving Story of *It's a Wonderful Life*

If you're like most people, you already know the plot of *It's a Wonderful Life*. At the lowest point of his life, George Bailey has a miraculous chance to see what life would be like if he'd never been born. It's a heartwarming movie, and after six decades, annual holiday airings on television, and innumerable parodies in sitcoms and movies, it's one of those stories that has permeated our popular culture.

But with a fresh new stage adaptation from NC Stage and Immediate Theatre Project, you might be surprised



George Bailey
rediscovered the value
of community and
personal connection
— something that we
can all appreciate.

characters in the same scene!

Despite the period costumes and old-fashioned radio style dialogue, the story of *It's a Wonderful Life* seems startlingly contemporary. George struggles to keep the Bailey Building and Loan afloat in a time of widespread bankruptcy and home foreclosures, sacrificing his own dreams to prevent Mr. Potter from getting a stranglehold on the economy of Bedford Falls. In a famous quote, George makes his case to a crowd of anxious depositors:

"If Potter gets hold of this Building and Loan there'll never be another decent house built in this town. He's already got charge of the bank. He's got the bus line. He's got the department stores. And now he's after us. Why? Well, it's very simple. Because we're cutting in on his business, that's why. And because he wants to keep you living in his slums and paying the kind of rent he decides."

At the lowest point in his life, George Bailey rediscovered the value

of community and personal connection — something that we can all appreciate.

The play stars Tiffany Cade, Michael MacCauley, Willie Repoley, and Kathryn Temple as the beleaguered radio actors and their alter-egos from Bedford Falls. *It's a Wonderful Life* is brought to you by BMW of Asheville.

at how relevant the story still is. *Live From WVL Radio Theatre: It's a Wonderful Life* is a radio-play adaptation by the Asheville actor and writer Willie Repoley.

You become the live studio audience for the fictional WVL Radio Theatre, as a small band of hard-working radio actors performs the classic story, using just their voices and live sound effects. Part of the fun is watching the actors create sound effects using the simplest objects, like an eggplant, a bucket and mop, or a coffee cup full of pennies.

This clever script also offers a window into the behind-the-scenes business of a classic radio drama. With the stars of the broadcast stuck in a blizzard, a small group of radio station employees must step in at the last minute to play the dozens of roles from the movie, often playing multiple

characters in the same scene!

Despite the period costumes and old-fashioned radio style dialogue, the story of *It's a Wonderful Life* seems startlingly contemporary. George struggles to keep the Bailey Building and Loan afloat in a time of widespread bankruptcy and home foreclosures, sacrificing his own dreams to prevent Mr. Potter from getting a stranglehold on the economy of Bedford Falls. In a famous quote, George makes his case to a crowd of anxious depositors:

IF
YOU
GO:

"Live from WVL Radio Theatre: *It's a Wonderful Life*" runs through December 20 at North Carolina Stage Company in downtown Asheville, with performances Thursdays

— Saturdays at 7:30, and Sundays at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$8 for kids 8 to 18. For more information visit www.ncstage.org, or call (828) 239-0263.

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DECEMBER CD Reviews

by James Cassara



Manassas Pieces Rhino Records

Following the dissolution of CSNY Stephen Stills could seemingly do no wrong. His first two solo albums remain among the finest recorded by any of the four while Manassas, although never fully living up to either the hype or potential, clearly demonstrated that Stills was the one most likely to experiment with diverse sounds and explore the roots of his musical consciousness. Of the myriad abandoned projects connected in some ways to the CSNY myth Manassas remains among the most intriguing.

Forming the group with founding Byrd Chris Hillman, pedal steel guitarist Al Perkins, percussionist Joe Lala (ex-Blues Image) and the rhythm section of Dallas Taylor and Calvin "Fuzzy" Samuels (who'd done time with CSNY) was a bold and inspired move. Stills would no longer be seen as the focal point, while the musicians' divergent styles and experiences forced him to open wide his own horizons. The unit released two albums on Atlantic: its self-titled debut in 1971 (perhaps the finest record he ever made) and 1972's *Down the Road*.

Now, nearly three decades later, Stills' has collected a set of outtakes and unreleased numbers from this period. It's the first in a series of retrospective recordings that promises to restore his musical reputation (which has suffered somewhat over the years) while giving us the opportunity to at long last hear sessions that were previously only hinted at. Among the upcoming releases is a comprehensive box set detailing all phases of his career and (at long last) an album of studio session demos he recorded with Jimi Hendrix.

As for the collection at hand it's a true and pleasant surprise. Meticulously reconstructed the sound is great, with the mastering and remixing results darn near perfect.

Musically it may be a mixed bag but that's much the charm. It's not intended for the casual listener, but rather the obsessive among us who find it perfectly normal to own a dozen slightly different takes of the same song.

"Word Game" and "Sugar Babe" far surpass the eventual released versions (and the timing suggests Stills was forming Manassas even as he was finishing up his second solo album). While the previously unheard "Like a Fox" is propelled by a sultry vocal performance from Bonnie Raitt. A pair of songs from *Down the Road*,

spinning discs

Given two stars or five, be assured anything reviewed in these pages is worth your time and dollars. Just be certain to spend that dough at any of Asheville's fine independent record stores. They're the ones who really know and support the music. Downloading may be fine, but for my money there's nothing like holding the real McCoy in my music loving hands!

"Lies" (with a blistering guitar solo from Joe Walsh) and a straight bluegrass version of "Do You Remember the Americans" are both equally intriguing.

The remaining tracks may be less vital but joyous romps through such gems as Leon McAuliffe's "Panhandle Rag" and "Dim Lights, Thick Smoke (And Loud, Loud Music)" demonstrate the diversity and sheer musicality of the band.

Further delights include the opening "Witching Hour," Chris Hillman's "Love and Satisfy," and a live version of "High and Dry" that simply soars. And while it is tempting to rewrite history and imagine this as the band's swan song it is equally enticing to wonder if the time isn't ripe for a Manassas reunion. Stephen and Chris, are you listening? ★★★1/2



Kentucky Headhunters Live at the Agora Ballroom Mercury Records

The Kentucky Headhunters were never an easy band to classify, and one listen to this gloriously feverish outing demonstrates why. They may have aspired to some degree of Nashville cool but in many ways they were the antithesis of Music City slick.

Sure they could play well — in fact light years better than many of their contemporaries — but not unlike Johnny Cash they reveled in giving Nashville a strong dose of what for.

In celebration of the 20th anniversary of their aptly named debut, *Pickin' On Nashville*, the band has begun releasing a series of authorized bootlegs from the early years. First up is their legendary gig at the Agora Ballroom, a performance which culls heavily from that initial album and tosses in some surprising and inspired cover tunes, selections that give evidence to where the band was coming from and would eventually go.

Hank Williams' "Honky Tonk Blues" may be a familiar tune but as a show opener, there could scarcely be more suitable choice. Another well worn number, Doug Sahm's "She's About a Mover" is equally welcome; like Sir Douglas the Headhunters always followed their unbeaten and roughly hewn path. Don Gibson's "Oh, Lonesome Me", which did appear on the original album, sounds as fresh and vital now as it did then. The band's version of Robert Johnson's "Crossroads" may lack the sheer dynamics of others (most notable

Cream's) but the essence more accurately captures the original.

Closing the set is another (perhaps) overly recognizable song; Norman Greenbaum's "Spirit in the Sky" seems a pretty ideal way to end the set. This is not to diminish the original material — although the Headhunters always seemed better suited to interpret the songs of others — but for the most part those numbers replicate the studio versions note for note. What really justifies the presence of this disc, elevating it from mere nostalgia to worthy entry, are the cover tunes.

Whether or not you were a fan of the group, *Live at the Agora Ballroom* serves up some pretty fine music, the perfect antidote to the pre-packaged pabulum that dominates country radio. And isn't that what the Headhunters were always about? ★★★



Caroline Herring Golden Apples of the Sun Signature Sounds Records

Blessed with one of the purest voices in folk music Caroline Herring continues to mature not just as a singer but as an artist with much to say and the talent to say it.

That's not as simple as it seems. With arrangements as sparse as these — putting her voice up front and central — Herring straddles a fine line between precocious and precious, pithy and puerile.

Judging from the dozen tracks found herein she's more than confident to the task; after all it does take a certain smidge of chutzpah to name an album after a beloved Ray Bradbury tome. The honey glazed warmth of her voice, tempered with the cautious fashion in which she dispenses each carefully measured syllable, sets a perfect emotional tone for the material, be it her own or others.

Herring's insouciant interpretation of "True Colors" is a fine example; she so completely makes it her own you might scarcely recognize it as a hit for Cyndi Lauper. It's much the same with her subtle reworking of such time worn chestnuts as "Long Black Veil" and "See See Rider."

As gifted she is at interpreting songs not her own Herring's own compositions are no less successful. She certainly has her own poetic bent — one cannot help but notice the dedications to Yeats, Walter Anderson, and Wendell Berry — yet her own lyrics deftly avoid the pratfalls such grand

'CD's' continued on next page

what's happening

'CD's' continued from page 14

allusions might suggest.

"The Great Unknown" manages to be both episodic and understated (no mean feat) while "A Turn On The Hill" gives us a glimpse of Herring singing a song for no reason other than its inherent charm. All of this adds up to an album of quiet and reflective beauty that might not initially grab your attention but, once it penetrates the psyche, is nearly impossible to let go of. ★★★★★

Rickie Lee Jones

Balm in Gilead Fantasy Records



Few artists have so consistently and uniquely charted their own creative course, following whatever path their muse leads them down, than has Rickie Lee Jones.

She's done so with the supreme coolness that her fans will follow along and, over a career that now touches four decades, they've willingly done so. It's a rare and unique relationship in which both the artist and the audience share a commitment to one another: She refuses to stay anchored to one style and her followers wouldn't want it any other way.

Rather than repeat the sound of her first two albums — which largely on the basis of her hit single "Chuck E's In Love" catapulted her to stardom — Jones certainly has steadfastly indulged her obsessions with blues and jazz while pushing the edges of both.

Balm in Gilead, a title drawn from a traditional hymn and reflective of the somber tone of the album, carries with it considerably less surface and far more substance than her last few releases.

The themes central to the songs, love of family and the importance of lasting friendships, are hardly revelatory but Jones is able to gently coax every nuance out of them.

Her low key delivery is ideally suited to the material — particularly on a pair of lovely duets with Vic Chesnutt — while her coupling with Ben Harper on the blues fueled "Old Enough" works largely because the two are so ideally matched and because no one writes a broken heart ballad any better than she does.

"Wild Girl" was written for her daughter and is one of the most genuine songs Jones has ever written, demonstrating affection in her lyrics that can only come with parenthood. Similarly "The Moon Is Made of Gold" continues the trend of family first. When she was a small child it was written for and sung to Jones by her father.

While the rest of the album doesn't quite climb such lofty heights, there is certainly no shame in such hushed jewels as "Bonfires," "Eucalyptus Trail" and "Bayless St." In truth she has never put together such a strong and seamless collection of songs.

While Slaid Cleaves has yet to attain the prominence of many of his Austin, Texas contemporaries he is held in highest regard among their ranks.

His music is deeply rooted in country and traditional folk songs, but Cleaves style is unique enough to set him slightly apart from the multitude of artists who have emerged from that fertile environ.

Often working with guitarist Gurf Morlix, best known as a member of Lucinda Williams touring band, Cleaves combines his passion for folk songs, blues, and traditional country music into an amalgamation of styles known that may best be described as "Americana". His 1997 album *No Angel Knows* rode high into the charts at Americana-formatted radio stations around the U.S. and Canada and quickly began catching the attention of what would become his core audience.

Cleaves majored in English and philosophy at Tufts University in his native New England, and while still in high school began playing music in garage rock bands. At Tufts he learned guitar, and later spent a summer in Ireland. There he began playing on the streets in Cork, and that was the turning point when he decided to become a folksinger. He developed his guitar skills and studied the music of Woody Guthrie and Bruce Springsteen.

Recalling that he had listened to the music of Guthrie, Carl Perkins, and Hank Williams as a child, he went back into his parents' attic to rediscover what he calls "a treasure trove of albums. From that point

on I knew my path." Intrigued by its burgeoning music scene Cleaves moved to Austin, TX, in 1992. Despite the surfeit of great singer/songwriters like Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Lucinda Williams, Robert Earl Keen, Guy Clark, and Joe Ely found there Cleaves was able to break into the fold. In 1995, he recorded an independent album for Rock Bottom Records entitled *Life's Other Side*.

In 1996, stirred by a chance meeting and a shared love for much the same music, Cleaves and Morlix began their long collaboration. With Morlix serving as producer the two recorded *No Angel Knows* and the acclaimed follow up *Broke Down*. Since then Cleaves' output has been consistently strong but somewhat infrequent.

2004's *Wishbones* and 2006's *Unsung* were released on Rounder Records, but both failed to attract the attention of his earlier efforts. Cleaves has recently recorded a new collection of songs in hopes of finding a label supportive of his talents.

Opening for Cleaves is Charles Arthur, a versatile multi-instrumentalist who has occasionally been seen playing shows around the country with Caroline



Slaid Cleaves

BY JAMES CASSARA

Herring, and Wayne Hancock. Centered in Richmond, Virginia, where he is a member of numerous local bands, Arthur is at home in virtually every style of American music.

While his primary instruments are guitar, lap steel, and dobro, he is equally comfortable playing fiddle, banjo, piano, autoharp, upright bass, and drums. His hallmark is a deep knowledge of various styles, and his ability to blend

with different musicians and musical situations. As such he has been in steady demand as a session musician.

In addition to his steady band gigs Arthur occasionally steps out on his own, opening for Bill Kirchen, Cephas and Wiggins, "Steady Rolling" Bob Margolin, Roy Bookbinder, and others. He is also on the faculty of the University of Richmond as a guitar, banjo, and mandolin instructor.



Slaid Cleaves and Charles Arthur at the Grey Eagle on Wednesday, December 2. The show starts at 8:30 p.m. with tickets priced at \$12 in advance and \$14 the day of the fully seated show.

Rickie Lee Jones may no longer be the brash new kid on the block but she's settled nicely into the joys of middle age, a time in her life when the fierce determination of youth has become the learned sagacity of experience: One out trumps the other every time. ★★★★★

Nitty Gritty Dirt Band

Speed of Life Sugar Hill Records



It has been five years since their last studio album, but the venerable Nitty Gritty Dirt Band shows little signs of slowing down. They've now been together for an astounding 43 years, with three of the original members still in tow.

The departure of Jimmy Ibbotson has again reduced them to a quartet but while some may miss the range his multi-instrumental skills bought to the table in many ways the NGDB have always operated best

as a lean foursome.

Speed of Life finds the band in fine spirits, re-energized and ready to roll. Produced by George Massenburg and Jon Randall Stewart the groove is one of old timey charm set to new found determination. In fact, more so than any other NGDB studio album, it effectively captures the essence of their live shows.

The core of Jeff Hanna, Jimmie Fadden, Bob Carpenter, and John McEuen are abetted by bassist Glenn Worf, guitarist Richard Bennett, and drummer Vince Santoro. Backing vocalists Matraca Berg, Jessi Alexander, and Jaime Hanna are an essential part of the equation, so much so that Berg also wrote a pair of the songs.

"Tulsa Sounds Like Trouble to Me" with its snappy electric dobro beat sets a solid opening tenor. It's a straightforward rendering that quickly introduces layered acoustic guitars, banjo, and mandolin, long-time trademarks for the band.

"The Resurrection" — and if ever there was an suitable anthem for a band this may be it — is propelled by one of the finest vocal performances Jeff Hanna has ever put to tape. His 'this world has worn me down' voice has rarely been so effectively used, with Hanna wringing every last drop of emotion out of the lyrics.

Among the cover songs, something the band has always reveled in, an unlikely bluegrass cover of the Canned Heat warhorse "Goin' Up the Country" is as good a retake as they've ever done, and that is saying something, while the title track and "Good to be Alive" sound like a band looking firmly at their future while preserving a most glorious past:

This is a band that has survived by constantly reinventing themselves while never losing sight of what made them special to begin with, a lesson more than a few newer bands would do well to learn. Look out world, a new (old) band has come to town! ★★★★★

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R A P I D R I V E R A R T S

music

Stacey Earle and Mark Stuart

at the Mountain Spirit Coffeehouse

BY JAMES CASSARA



Mark Stuart and Stacey Earle

While (perhaps unfairly) best know as “Steve Earle’s kid sister” Stacey Earle is herself a gifted singer and songwriter, once whose music is to this reviewer’s ears even more evocative and personal than that of her more famous sibling. Born and raised in San Antonio, Texas she began playing music at 15, picking up a guitar Steve left behind at the family’s home.

But after an early marriage and motherhood the not yet twenty year old seemed fated to a domestic life far removed from show business. In 1990 Earle divorced her husband and moved with her kids to Nashville, where they took up residence in Steve’s home. After he heard her singing in the kitchen, he recruited her to lend backing vocals to his 1991 breakthrough album *The Hard Way*. A world tour followed, and Earle soon began writing her own songs, becoming a fixture at writers’ showcases across Nashville.

Those events lead to her hosting a weekly showcase of her own at Jack’s Guitar Bar. It was there she met another aspiring singer/songwriter, Mark Stuart, whom she married in 1994. Stuart later joined Steve’s band the Dukes, while simultaneously appearing in Stacey’s group the Jewels. After signing with a Nashville publishing company, Earle garnered attention when her song “For Years” was recorded by country star Sammy Kershaw.

However when no record deals were forthcoming she instead released her superb 1998 debut *Simple Gearle* on her own label. *Dancing With Them That Brung Me fol-*

lowed two years later and her new found career was now set. Since then she has released a steady course of solid records, each one further establishing her credentials as a distinct voice among the Nashville set.

A regular visitor to our area, Earle continues to refine and expand her music. Coupled with the virtuosity of her husband she has long since moved beyond the shadow of her brother Steve.



Stacey Earle and Mark Stuart at the Mountain Spirit Coffeehouse (located at the Unitarian Universalist Church on Edwin Place)

Sunday, December 13 at 7 p.m. Tickets range from \$12-\$15 for adults, and \$8-10 for students. For more information go to www.uuasheville.org/coffeehouse.php

Blue Ridge Ringers Holiday Concerts

The Blue Ridge Ringers are an auditioned community handbell group based in Hendersonville. There are 15 ringers who ring difficult music, both sacred and secular.



Photo: Douglas Engle

The Blue Ridge Ringers play on five octaves of Malmark handbells and five octaves of Malmark hand chimes. Please join us to enjoy this unique and unusual musical medium, well suited to put you in the spirit of the Christmas season.

• **Sunday, December 6,** Biltmore United Methodist Church, 4 p.m.

• **Tuesday, December 8,** Transylvania County Public Library, 12-1 p.m.

• **Monday, December 14,** Henderson County Public Library, 2 p.m.

• **Sunday, December 20,** Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Brevard, 4 p.m.

The public is welcome – admission is free. For more information call (828) 692-4910.

thoreau's garden

The Gifts of the Magi

BY PETER LOEWER

2009 years ago The Three Wise Men came to the streets of Bethlehem bearing gold, frankincense, and myrrh. They were gifts for the newborn Christ and worth a great deal of money.

Today, gold is still lining everybody up, only now it's an investor's solution to the collapse of the American dollar or primary in the filling of teeth or banded on fingers to salute various unions. As I write this on November 21, the price of gold is \$1151.20 an ounce.

But what of frankincense and myrrh? While still available in commerce — especially on the web — their mission has changed and today both are featured in the international trade of healing herbs or found as ingredients in various incense and perfumes.



Myrrh is on top with small male and female flowers. Frankincense is on bottom. Illustration by Peter Loewer

Frankincense comes from a tree belonging to the genus *Boswellia* with the species name of *sacra*. Even with our knowledge of genes and DNA, these trees are very unusual because they can survive and grow in such brutal environments they often appear to be rising directly out of solid rock. Their traditional homes are in North Africa and parts of the Middle East.

Frankincense trees are small — usually growing under twenty feet tall — and have more than one trunk. Their bark resembles paper and is

easily torn from its base. Leaves are large and compound with tiny flowers of off-white hue eventually producing a capsule-sized fruit. These trees start producing resin when they're about 8 to 10 years old. The

resin is extracted by making a shallow incision on the trunk or a branch whereupon it drips as a milky substance that coagulates when exposed to air. On the web you can buy such incense for your holidays for under \$5 a box.

Myrrh first came to my mind last week when watching a re-mastered copy of *The Mummy's Tomb*, a famous Universal horror film inspired by Boris Karloff's great 1932 triumph, *The Mummy*.

Midway through the film, after some of the still-living members of the original exhibition to discover the tomb of the Egyptian Princess Ananka, are strangled by the moldy hand of Karas, the living mummy, suspicions arise that the murderer might not be human.

A conference is called and Professor Norman (his degree is in the study of Egyptology), the County Sheriff (who doesn't believe in living mummies), and the local coroner (who is suspicious of the gray mold found on the throats of the victims) meet at Norman's office at the State University in Mapleton, Massachusetts.

There the professor examines some mummy wrappings under a microscope and turning to the others says: "This powder is mold with a distinct scent. Smell it. It's un-



Peter examines the blossoms of early-blooming Lenten roses.

doubtedly the odor of myrrh. It comes from a tree known as *Commiphora myrrha* and grows only in parts of Africa. This reddish-brown resin is myrrh; the other test tubes contain cedar oil and sodium carbonate. Now all of these substances came from this strip of linen, the linen came from the body of a mummy, and the chemicals were used in embalming."

So the truth be known about the uses of myrrh, in addition to its being burned as incense for funerals and cremations. In the Eastern Orthodox Church many of the sacraments were performed using myrrh and worshippers receiving such sacraments were commonly referred to as "receiving the Myrrh." It's also found in toothpaste or a mouthwash and has many uses as an herbal remedy. A small bottle of pure oil of myrrh is available on the web for under \$15.

The name myrrh is also applied to the common garden herb, sweet cicely or *Myrrhis odorata*.

Peter Loewer is a well-known writer and botanical artist who has written and illustrated over twenty-five books on natural history over the past thirty years.

Give the Gift of Nature

Sometimes it is hard to find just the right gift and not purchase a gift that goes unused and unappreciated. Give the gift of nature instead. Through the Western North Carolina Nature Center, you can:

Give a Gift Membership

Not only does this membership admit a family to our facility, but also to over 200 zoos, aquariums and science centers nationwide. Membership costs just \$55 for a family of six.

Adopt an Animal Friend

For many of us, animals hold special meaning. What better gift than adopting an animal friend from the WNC Nature Center. With more than 25 animals to choose from, this gift is sure to please anyone who is passionate about animals and their care. Gift packages range from \$25, \$50 to \$100.

Buy a Permanent Brick

Honor family, friends and even corporate partners. Buying a brick at the WNC Nature Center leaves a permanent mark at our facility in honor of those you appreciate the most. Nature



Center Bricks are now prominently displayed in our Donor Garden near our facility entrance and graced with benches that provide a comfortable rest stop for many visitors. Brick are \$100, \$135 and \$150.

Join Our Food Chain

When you join our Food Chain, you make a donation to the Center in honor of or in memory of someone you love. Donations may be any level and will be publicly recognized in a variety of ways depending upon their level.

For more information or questions about year end giving please call Sarah Oram, Director, Friends of the WNC Nature Center, at (828) 298-5600 ext. 308, e-mail friends@wildwnc.org, or visit www.wildwnc.org.

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asheville shops

Giving the Gift of Fine Chocolate



"Chemically speaking, chocolate really is the world's perfect food."

~ Michael Levine, nutrition researcher, from *The Emperors of Chocolate: Inside the Secret World of Hershey and Mars*

BY DENNIS RAY

The panic sets in right after Thanksgiving when you realize there are only weeks left until Christmas.

This means shopping, wrapping and sometimes shipping out gifts for immediate family, in-laws, friends, co-workers, employees, neighbors and those who have helped out all year long like the mail carrier and paper delivery person; And what about the mechanics, the teachers, your spa therapist, your...? Yes, that list goes on and on. Experts say gift-buying leads to the highest amount of stress during the holidays than any other factor. So what can you do?

customer in the snow belt complaining his order never arrived. Worried that the order probably got lost in the mail he promptly sent out another order. Two weeks later he received a call from that same client saying that they found the original order. It had been placed at the base of their mailbox and subsequently covered with snow from the snowplow. "I am a customer for life," the man said. "You really do care about your customers."

They use only the highest quality chocolate and the final product is kept in refrigerated cases at 58 to 62 degrees with low humidity. If you happen to come in person please take a moment and step around back of the store (inside the upscale Haywood Park Hotel) and watch the chocolates being made through glass windows. The experience holds a charming old-fashioned feel like visiting Santa's workshop.

Their daughter, Elizabeth Foley, and the trained chocolatiers create beautiful chocolate sculptures, hand-painted chocolate shoes and boots, trees with cocoa butter snow, Santas and smaller stocking stuffers and the popular smash cakes.

The smash cakes are hand-made especially for you, they consist of a solid chocolate shell and can be filled with your choice of chocolates. With a small hammer you break the cake into bite size pieces and serve your guests. For the holidays the Chocolate Fetish will again offer chocolate Champagne bottles filled with 100% Belgian chocolate morsels. These make incredible host/hostess gifts everyone from all ages will enjoy.

"We use the same chocolate in our molded chocolates as we do in our award winning truffles," Elizabeth says. A chocolate truffle is a type of chocolate confectionery; traditionally made with a chocolate ganache center coated in chocolate or cocoa powder, usually in a spherical, conical, or curved shape.

Travelers may wonder if high-end chocolate will suffer on a long journey



Elizabeth Foley creates a delicate chocolate smash cake.

Bill and Sue Foley of the Chocolate Fetish in downtown Asheville offer some holiday help.

"We focus on the details," Bill says, "so you do not have to. Stop by, email, phone in your order for one box or hundreds of gift packs and we'll take care of the packaging, the shipping and we'll even hand print your holiday wishes on each of your gift packages for no extra charge."

They deliver anywhere in the country.

"Our goal," Bill adds, "is to give the best possible chocolate you can find anywhere in the world with the best possible service. We will go the extra mile for each and everyone who calls, visits, or shops from our website."

Last year Bill received a call from a

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Happy Holidays

'Chocolate Fetish' continued on page 39

restaurants & wine

For the Merlove of God!

– PLUS, A NEW WINE SCHOOL, AND SOME SURPRISING WINE NOTES

As I write, as usual facing the deadline, my inbox is receiving emails from wine retailers boasting their new supplies of Beaujolais Nouveau. (That is not a redundant phrase, by the way, there is such a thing as old Nouveau. Someone you know has a bottle dated 2008 or even much earlier.)

Many people who buy the stuff consider it the only red they can drink. Many of those people heard someone say that wine needs to age, so on the top-o-the-fridge rack it goes, to get old and die.

The wine shops have for years been setting prices way above \$10, such as \$14 for the Joseph Drouhin label. Drouhin usually is the best all-around of the easier-to-find labels, but, good grief, there are so many easy-to-drink red wines that are priced less, especially wine from Beaujolais that is not Nouveau.

A Wine Studio – what's that?

The above remarks are mine, but a local woman who has launched a wine studio on Charlotte Street would say some very similar things in one of her classes. Jessica Gualano runs The Wine Studio of Asheville. She is on a mission to get the pretense out of wine, she wants you to understand that wine is an experience, not an act or a show, and that the more facets you can discover, the more plain enjoyment you get out of it all.

It is more of an events and learning space than an actual wine shop, although, yes, of course, there is wine for sale — a real convenience to the Charlotte/Arlington neighborhood and guests of the nearby B&B's, Princess Anne Hotel, and Grove Park Inn.



The Wine Studio hosted a most-cool event on November 19, by organizing a screening of the documentary “Merlove” at the Fine Arts Theater with special guests: Director/Producer Rudy McClain and Producer Marisol Ramirez. This film is in response to the most memorable quote (not fit for print) from the Movie “Sideways,” a quote that directly led to a 14% drop in Merlot sales, but led to an increase in sales of Pinot Noir.

McClain explains, “The message of Merlove is that no single grape varietal should be singled out as superior or inferior to others. Enjoy as we interweave documentary style filmmaking with the animation of a bottle of Merlot wine named ‘Merlove’ who must find a way to fill itself with love when aimlessly tossed into the ocean of mediocre Merlot wine.”

**“Merlove” is available on DVD.
Check it out at www.merlove.com**

A premium Merlot tasting preceded the screening:

Hyatt Vineyards, Merlot, Rattlesnake Hills, Washington 2005 (\$19) American oak, plum and prune. Four years old and going strong.

Novelty Hill, Merlot, Columbia Valley, Washington 2006 (\$25) This is the taste that reeled me in to Columbia Valley reds when I first experienced them in 1994. A touch of raspberry, which I dearly love, plus currants. Concentrated.

Tamarack Cellars, Merlot, Columbia Valley, Washington 2006 (\$30) This is a big damn Merlot, in a dark cherry style with a masculine tannic structure. Awesome!

J. Bookwalter, Foreshadow Merlot, 2006 (\$40) WOW! If I listed every nuance and taste in this massively complex wine, it would read like I had tasted six wines. What stood out to me was a subtle smell, like a struck match, or the special flavor you get from black salt – very appetizing, and the reason I went back for thirds.

Other wines that highlighted my November:

Casal Garcia, Vinho Verde, Portugal NV (\$9) Fresh, zippy, always reliable. It has a delicate and slightly fruity aroma. Fresh, smooth and well-balanced. This wine is never meant to be aged.

Zull, Grüner Veltliner, Austria 2008 (\$15) Another great alternative to the usual white wine, and the label design is cool! Fresh, dry, lower in alcohol.

Bosio, Moscato D’Asti 2008 (\$13) Delicate and sweet on the palate, with tastes of white peaches and jasmine flowers. This is better for dessert, served cold. Low in alcohol.

Wrongo Dongo, Monastrell, Jumilla, Spain 2007 (\$10) Rich, purple, dark berry fruits. This is a great red for the money. Monastrell is the grape the French call Mourvèdre. California’s Cline makes an old vines version that costs twice as much but is unforgettable.

Shannon Ridge, Wrangler Red, Lake County, California 2007 (\$15) Any red wine that has the sent of raspberries makes my list – it is one of my favorite



BY MICHAEL PARKER

nuances in a wine. This red is smooth, a very appetizing blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Petite Sirah, Zinfandel, and Syrah.

Castillo de Monseran, *Garnacha, Cariñena, Spain 2008 (\$)* The characteristic *Garnacha* cherry pie flavor was in this wine. Good for the money, if this is your style. Definitely a food wine.

Avignonesi, Rosso Di Montepulciano, Italy (of course) 2006 (\$15) A blend of Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Merlot. A touch of spice, cherries, very appetizing.

December at the Weinhaus

Tuesday, December 8

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Details – The restaurant fills up fast so call for reservations. The Bistro is California casual in style and offers live music seven nights a week. The upstairs restaurant is smoke free. You can smoke in the Bistro after 9 p.m.

Hours: Monday - Thursday 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 5:30 p.m. to 11 p.m.; Sunday 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

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The word about town is that chef and owner Hugo Ramirez, a native of Mexico, graces his ever-evolving menu with local, organic vegetables, hormone-free meats and wild seafood. Ask about the Tres Leches cake for a special dessert treat.

Details – Dress: nice casual. Serving brunch (\$10-15), and dinner (\$15-20). Wine, beer, and cocktails. Reservations accepted.

Hours: Monday - Sunday 5-10 p.m., Sunday brunch 10:30-2:30 p.m.

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Cake & Pie at Short Street Cakes

Short Street Cakes, Asheville's source for all-natural, southern-style cakes, cupcakes, and wedding cakes, introduces pies from new local company Pies in Disguise! Located at 225 Haywood Road in East-West Asheville, the Cake Shop will now be serving pies, whole and by the slice, in addition to its Cake Menu.

Pies in Disguise, owned by baker Eliza Sydney and "hype-man" Ben Herring will be retailing their wares at the Cake Shop counter. Short Street

Cakes owner Jodi Rhoden has expanded her retail offerings to include pie to support bakers and entrepreneurs.

Short Street Cakes believes that everyone should be able to live their dream, and everyone should be able to eat delicious cake and pie.

Pies are available by special order by calling the Cake Shop at (828) 505-4822. Thirteen flavors are available with two days' notice, whole pies are \$22, slices are \$3.95. Visit www.shortstreetcakes.blogspot.com.

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Restaurant Guide



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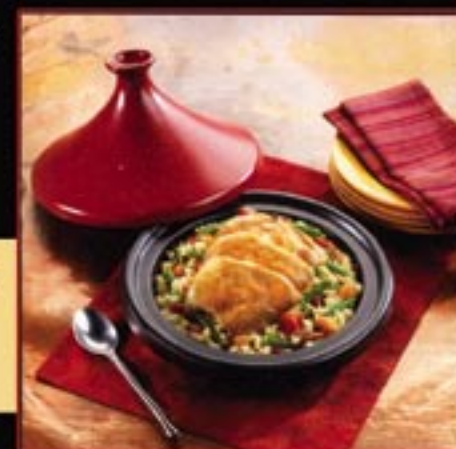
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joe's brew notes

Hops and Yeast: The Salt and Pepper of Beer

The four main ingredients of beer are water, malt, yeast and hops. If beer were a stew, then water is the stock, barley malt is the meat and potatoes, and hops and yeast are the spices.

Soft, pure water neither adds nor detracts from the flavors and aromas of the malt which is unleashed, balanced, and enhanced by the hops and yeast addition. As with food, a good beer recipe must have the right combination of ingredients and brewing conditions.

To develop a beer recipe, the Brewmaster decides on a style, the malt bill, a hop variety and schedule, and a yeast strain that achieves the desired flavor and aroma profile. Last month we covered the malt selection process; this month we'll review hops and yeast.

Hops are the pinecone-like flowers of a female climbing plant in the cannabis family (has a weak sedative, not narcotic, effect). Its oils and acids add bitterness, aroma, and flavor to beer while its anti-bacterial properties help to preserve it. Hop flavors and aromas are usually described as grassy, citrusy, spicy, piney, lemony, or floral.

There are more than 75 varieties of hops which are sorted into three types – bittering (high alpha acid), aroma or finishing (high beta acids), and noble (low alpha and beta acid, high in aromatic oils). Noble hops consist of four varieties – Hallertau, Tettnanger, Spalt, and Saaz. The names are derived from the (European) region or city where they are grown; no other hops are considered noble. Noble hops are used primarily to make pilsner style beer.

There are three different forms of hops – whole (the dried hop flower), pelleted (made from milled hop flowers), and extract

(a liquid that contains hop acids and oils) – each have pluses and minuses. Whole hops are more natural and may provide rounder flavors but present variability and storage issues. Pelleted hops are easier to store, less variable but may produce sharper flavors. Their use is based on the brewer's preference. Hop extract is a highly processed form used almost exclusively by large commercial, not craft brewers.

Hops can be added at any time or step in the brewing process. Normally they are added early (bittering hops) or late (aroma hops) in the boil (brewing process, step two) on a timed basis. When the brewer wants to enhance hop aroma and flavor (not bitterness), hops are added prior to fermentation (hop back) or after fermentation (dry hopping).

With the selection of hop type and schedule added to the malt bill, the brewer selects a yeast strain. Although almost any

yeast (including bread yeast) will cause fermentation, yeast must be chosen with care. If a brewer takes five gallons of wort (liquid from the boil that contains malt sugars and hops), divides it into five equal portions, adds five different yeast strains, the result is five (sometimes dramatically) different beers.

Yeast is a single cell organism in the fungus family (like mushrooms) with a ravenous appetite for sweet

liquids. In the brewing process, it digests barley sugars and releases carbon dioxide, alcohol and flavor/aroma compounds. The flavors/aromas yeast generate are described as fruity (apples, bananas, strawberries, etc.), buttery or butterscotch, sweet corn



Whole hops

BY JOE ZINICH

or cooked vegetables, spicy (clove like), medicinal, solvent (lacquer thinner), or sulfur (rotten eggs).

With the exception of Belgian lambics (wild yeast), there are two types of yeast

use in all beer styles; ale (top fermenting) and lager (bottom fermenting). However, there are hundreds of strains of each type. The brewer selects the yeast to maximize the desired flavors in the recipe. Many brewers consider yeast a secret ingredient and closely guard its identity.

During the fermentation process, yeast is pitched (added) after the wort is chilled to the proper temperature (60° to 75°F for ales, 45° to 55°F for lagers) and aerated (oxygen enrichment). The yeast population grows and converts sugars into carbon dioxide, alcohol, and flavors; a process that generates a large amount of heat. Temperature control is critical otherwise off flavors are produced. When all nutrients have been digested, the yeast begins to clump (flocculation) and settle to the bottom of the fermenter. The beer then goes through the finishing process and is soon ready to be enjoyed.

To produce a beer of exceptional flavor and aroma requires the ability to create a recipe that contains the right combination of malts, hops and yeast and the ability to optimize the brewing conditions. They're called Brewmasters for good reason.

The Brewing Process: Short version

The major steps in brewing a beer are mash (barley is soaked in water to release sugars), boil (the malt sugar is boiled with hops for seasoning, called wort), ferment (yeast is added to the wort to create alcohol, carbon dioxide, and desirable flavors), and finish (yeast is removed, flavors blend, and carbon dioxide is added).

Hop History and Facts

The first reported use of hops in beer was in the early 700's AD. Cultivation of what once was considered a weed began in Germany around 750. But it took almost 300 years before Hops began to replace Gruit (a combination of herbs – mugwort, sweetgale, etc. – and spices – juniper berry, ginger caraway and anise seeds, etc.) as the preferred bittering/flavoring/aroma agent in beer. Cultivation of Hops in England began in the early 1500's and in the United States in the early 1600's. By the 16th century hops had become the most widely accepted spice for beer.

Germany is the world's largest producer of hops (Hellertau Valley, 34.5 thousand tons), followed by the US (Yakima, WA, and Willamette, OR, 23.5 thousand tons) with

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Lose the winter blues with a trip to the Haywood Park Hotel ballroom for the Winter Warmer. The \$37 ticket price includes a souvenir tasting glass, food (provided by the Lobster Trap restaurant, served at multiple stations), music, beers from 20 breweries (9 local), a world record attempt, and more.



Friends having fun at the 2008 Winter Warmer Festival.

Try the beers, discover new taste sensations, then discuss them with the brewers, your friends (old and new), and special guests that include "Sam Adams", "St. Pauli Girl" and others. Enjoy the music of local favorites Woody Wood and Brushfire. Cheer Tres Hundertmark's (Lobster Trap's executive chef) attempt to break the Guinness world record for most oysters opened in a minute.

Ticket supply has been increased this year since the event has sold out the past two years. Avoid disappointment and buy tickets early. They make a great holiday gift for the discerning beer lover and anyone else who enjoys good food and a fun time.

For more event and ticket information, go to www.brewscruise.com/beerfest or phone (828) 545-5181.

China a distant 3rd (10.6 thousand tons). Hops is an agricultural product, so the same variety grown under different growing conditions and/or in different parts of the world will impart different flavors to the beer.

Hops is almost a perfect match for barley in beer making. It is no surprise that its primary commercial use is in beer. However, hops is used in soft drinks (Scandinavia and South America), deodorant (Tom's of Maine), and herbal medicine (much like valerian root anxiety, restlessness and insomnia).

Yeast History and Facts

When beer was first produced, fermentation was caused by wild airborne yeast strains. Until Louis Pasteur, about 1883, proved that fermentation was connected to

'Brew Notes' continued on page 39



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Reel Take Reviewers:

CHIP KAUFMANN is a film historian who also shares his love of classical music as a program host on WCQS-FM radio.

MICHELLE KEENAN is a long time student of film, a believer in the magic of movies and a fundraiser for public radio.

Questions/Comments?

You can email Chip or Michelle at reeltakes@hotmail.com

REEL TAKES

with **MICHELLE KEENAN**
and **CHIP KAUFMANN**

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

2012 ★★ 1/2

Short Take: Roland Emmerich's latest disaster effort is a surprising epic of romance and heroism that transcends the disaster film genre.

REEL TAKE: I have a bone to pick with *2012*. I was all set to write a wonderfully negative review about it being a B-movie that cost \$260 million dollars when the original 1951 film that it takes its story from (*When Worlds Collide*) cost 1/100th of that total and that even adjusting for



John Cusack contemplates the end of the world in *2012*.

inflation that figure seemed a ridiculous amount of money. Then I saw it and everything changed. My snarky review was not to be.

2012 is one of those movies that makes sure you can see where every

penny was spent but just like *Titanic*, the effects are subservient to the story not the other way around which is how it usually works with disaster flicks. In fact, also like *Titanic*, the movie is a true epic in every sense of the word. If David Lean (*Lawrence of Arabia*, *Doctor Zhivago*) had made a science fiction film, this is what it would have been. And like the films of David Lean, *2012* is a little too long at 158 minutes but I never once looked at my watch.

In addition to having a better than average script, *2012* contains several fine performances which is necessary in order to carry a multi-character film that runs well over 2 hours. John Cusack as the Everyman character who holds the film together is remarkably engaging.

Unlike Tom Cruise in *War of the Worlds*, you are never aware that Cusack is acting. Oliver Platt as the consummate politician, Danny Glover as the noble last President of the United States, Thandie Newton as his art curator daughter, and especially Woody Harrelson as a crazed radio personality add depth and credibility to what is happening. In fact there are so many fine performances, even in the smaller parts, that I can't begin to mention them all.

Most critics have been very unkind to *2012*. A lot more so than to Roland Emmerich's other disaster epics (*Independence Day* and *Day After Tomorrow*) as if to say "how dare a disaster film have any depth" but for me it's that depth that raises *2012* way above others of its ilk.

Yes, the basic story has been done many times before and I've seen most of those movies, but never have I come away from them feeling the way I did at the end of *2012*. In this day and age and with most movies being what they are today, that feeling is worth its weight in gold to me.

Rated PG-13 for intense disaster sequences and for language.

REVIEW BY CHIP KAUFMANN

A Christmas Carol ★★

Short Take: Even the unholy trinity of Disney, Jim Carrey, and Robert Zemeckis can't completely undermine this classic story.

REEL TAKE: When I said I was going to review *A Christmas Carol*, family members, colleague Michelle Keenan, and a friends asked "Why?" My answer was that I love the story and I'll see almost anything in 3-D (except James Cameron's upcoming *Avatar*). "But Jim Carrey's in it" they countered. True but he's actually one of the better things about *Carol* and that should tell you something right there.



An animated Jim Carrey as Scrooge deals with Marley's ghost in *A Christmas Carol*.

First the good news... Much to my surprise, Carrey was very good overall. His vocal characterizations for Scrooge and the two ghosts (The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come has no dialogue) was varied and interesting. His scenes with the Ghost of Christmas Present were the best part of the movie although the end of that scene was very disturbing and too intense

for young children.

The 3-D effects were among the best I've ever seen although there was a little too much of them especially when combined with the rather dizzying camerawork. A couple of sequences actually resemble a roller coaster ride which I don't recall being in the Dickens original. The music by Alan Silvestri is an amalgam of Christmas tunes and *Lord of the Rings* style otherworldly importance but it is effective most notably in the scarier sequences.

The bad news, the downside, or the humbug factor can be summed up in two words...Robert Zemeckis. As the adaptor and director of *A Christmas Carol*, he must be held accountable for the final film which after a promising start, quickly and unapologetically degenerates into a theme park ride of over-the top visuals, second-rate or non-existent characterizations, and a schizophrenic tone that can't decide if it wants to be scary or funny. It's *Beowulf* meets *The Polar Express*.

A number of big names (Gary Oldman, Bob Hoskins, Colin Firth, Robin Penn Wright) were recruited to voice the other characters but it sounds like little more than a script reading and why not since they don't appear but are "motion captured" in front of a green screen. The whole thing must have been rather boring for that's how it came across to me.

Another problem I had was the overall look of some of the characters especially the minor ones who look as if they were carried over from the *Shrek* franchise. Whoever was responsible for the look of Bob Cratchit deserves extra switches and coal in their stockings for he looks like a cross between a hobbit and a gnome.

In the end though the power and redemptive quality of the original story was too much for even Disney and Zemeckis to overcome and I left the theater uplifted as Charles Dickens would have wanted. I wonder how many others felt the same way on their way home.

Rated PG for scary sequences and images.

REVIEW BY CHIP KAUFMANN

'Movies' continued on next page

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movie reviews

'Movies' continued from page 24

A Serious Man

Short Take: An average Jewish man in 1960's Minnesota meets an above average string of bad luck setting him on a quest for the meaning of life, or maybe just life.

REEL TAKE: Joel and Ethan Coen have returned to the darker side of their creative brilliance in their latest effort, *A Serious Man*. While it is being hailed as perhaps the best Coen brothers movie yet, I think not. Yes – it is an exceedingly well done movie, but a movie for very few.



Larry Gopnik (Michael Stuhlbarg) finds "F-Troop" and a moment above it all the Coen brothers' *A Serious Man*.

In a nutshell, it's an excellent piece and I am a huge Coen brothers fan but even so, at the end of two hours, I wanted my two hours back. I fear many will go to see it, based on the popularity of recent Coen brothers movies, and come out scratching their heads. If this makes me, and I dare say the lions share of movie-goers, something less, so be it.

The story is familiar enough – a middle aged man who suddenly realizes he's in a loveless marriage, his kids couldn't care less about him and his world is great big poop parade. Stage actor Michael Stuhlbarg plays our hapless hero, Larry Gopnik. Gopnik is a physics professor who's up for tenure and is erstwhile being bribed for a passing grade. His son is an adolescent stoner who's studying for his bar mitzvah. His daughter is always trying to get into the bathroom, which is the usual residence of Uncle Arthur (Richard Kind). Last but not least, Larry's wife Judith (Sari Lennick) is about to leave him for Sy Ableman (Fred Melamed).

The Coen brothers were smart to deviate from many of their stock players for this particular vehicle and to cast a relative unknown in the lead. Stuhlbarg turns in a fine performance. The layers of the likable and unlikable elements of his character intertwine and play out beautifully. Likewise the alternating and sometimes simultaneously mingling tones of sadness, ugliness and comedy in conjunction with Judaism and philosophical questions throughout the film are impressive. There were even a couple of

As 2009 draws to a close, it has been a good year in the world of film for a remembrance of things past and people no longer with us.

The 40th anniversary of Boris Karloff's death, the 100th anniversary of Errol Flynn's birth AND 50th anniversary of his death, the 50th anniversary of the birth of the modern horror film are all things that I have written about in earlier issues of Rapid River.

To close out the year, I have chosen to remember actor Oliver Reed who died in 1999. My sincere apologies to Douglas Fairbanks Jr, Lou Costello, James Mason, and to others I was not able to get around to.

I chose Reed for a number of reasons. He was a performer who began and ended his career during my lifetime, hitting his stride just as I was coming to grips with the adult world.

From the first time I saw him (in *Curse of the Werewolf* when I was 12), he grabbed my attention. His combination of "Black Irish" good looks (dark hair and pale blue eyes) and the sound of his velvet voice, an eloquent whisper ready to increase to a roar at a moment's notice, kept me riveted to the screen.

During the 1960s and 70s his name was usually a guarantee of quality movies while in the 1980s and 1990s as the British movie industry declined, it became harder and harder to see the European films he wound up in.

Oliver Reed appeared in more than 100 movies during a career that spanned 40 years. He began as extra in 1958 and was soon playing important parts in early Hammer Films (*Paranoic*) before hitting the big time as Bill Sykes in *Oliver!* (1968). Films for Michael Winner (*The Jokers*, *I'll Never Forget What's 'is*

Name) and Ken Russell (*Women in Love*, *The Devils*, *Tommy*) turned him into an International star with several quality films (*Z.P.G.*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Royal Flash*,

The Brood) for major directors (Richard Lester, Richard Fleischer, David Cronenberg) to follow.

But along with his stardom came his reputation as one of England's great drinkers and hellraisers. Cliff Goodwin's book on Reed's life, *Evil Spirits*, chronicles many of his escapades while pointing out that two of his most notorious episodes (drunken appearances on David Letterman and a BBC talk show which can be viewed on YouTube) were actually put-ons which the hosts did not realize.

When asked why, Oliver simply replied "because that's what people expect of me". He was always good for a quote as a visit to the Internet Movie Database (imdb.com) will bear out and he had the knack for making whatever he did seem not so bad and the public was always on his side.

The end of his life came in spectacular fashion. Reed was in Malta filming *Gladiator* with Russell Crowe and director Ridley Scott. The self proclaimed 'Mr England' was now 61 years old and had slowed down his extracurricular activities considerably. With 10 days shooting left, Ollie as he was affectionately known, went to a local bar, drank an unbelievable amount of alcohol (check it out on imdb), defeated 5 younger sailors at arm



Actor Oliver Reed

BY CHIP KAUFMANN



wrestling, bought drinks for everyone, signed autographs, and then succumbed to a heart attack.

He was buried in Ireland across the street from his all time favorite pub leaving behind some remarkable performances and even more remarkable stories.

In preparation for this article, I watched a number of his films and was enthralled all over again. A special treat was watching him play Vulcan (at 50) opposite an 18 year old Uma Thurman as Venus in Terry Gilliam's *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* (1988). His performance demonstrated that he had a flair for comedy which he rarely got to show.

Watching these films today show not only what a dynamic screen presence he was, but reminded me of just how much I miss seeing him. He would have been 71 this year and should have given us more performances but it wasn't meant to be and as Glenda Jackson said "he went out the way he would have wanted".

For those of you unfamiliar with his work or those who want to revisit his career, check out any of the films that I have mentioned over the course of this article and then read Cliff Goodwin's book *Evil Spirits* (wonderful title!). Like all the great performers, he was truly one of a kind.

scenes that I thought were truly remarkable. However, if the ending was supposed to be the 'strong' ending, it was completely and utterly wasted on me and [in my humble opinion] negated the whole journey of the story.

I realize that was the point, but it was maddening and only served to enhance the disconnect I felt with the film. Regardless of its ending and lack of mass appeal, *A Serious Man* has the potential to become the critical equivalent of last year's *Revolutionary Road* (a film which I truly loathed). I think this may be personally significant movie for the Coen brothers, but it is not a significant Coen brothers movie for me.

Rated R for language, some sexuality/nudity and brief violence.

REVIEW BY MICHELLE KEENAN

Pirate Radio (Known to the rest of the world as "The Boat That Rocked")

1/2

Short Take: The boat that truly rocked the world.

REEL TAKE: In spite of a recall and rename and heavy editing before getting a release in the U.S., chalk another one up for writer/director Richard Curtis (*Love Actually*, *Bridget Jones Diary*, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*). He has succeeded yet again



Tom Sturridge, Rhys Darby, Will Adamsdale and Bill Nighy rock the boat in Richard Curtis' latest ensemble comedy *Pirate Radio*.

'Movies' continued on page 26

movie reviews

'Movies' continued from page 25

in producing another refreshing, high-spirited ensemble comedy with *Pirate Radio*, and it's a sheer delight. The story is loosely inspired by the off-shore stations in the mid-late 1960's that broadcast Rock n Roll in the UK when the genre was still banned by the government-run radio.

It's the heyday of Brit-Rock. Carl (Tom Sturridge) has just been kicked out of school and is being sent to live with his godfather, Quentin (Bill Nighy), to keep him on the straight and narrow. In theory it sounds good, but when your godfather runs 'Radio Rock' an off-shore radio station in the 1960's, rest assured there isn't going to be anything straight or narrow about it. Quentin, his 8 DJ's and other assorted characters are a colorful lot and Carl jumps right in.

There are really two stories at work in *Pirate Radio*. The first is her majesty's government vs pirate radio; Curtis pits a stodgy, uptight and downright strange government official (Kenneth Brannagh) single-handedly hell-bent on bringing down the corruptive travesty that is pirate radio. The second is life on the boat and sub-stories therein.

Here we have everything from deflowering our young hero, to a war between American rock jock The Count (Philip Seymour Hoffman) and Radio Rock legend Gavin (Rhys Ifans). In between all the going on, Curtis inserts brief cutaways depicting the legions of faithful fans to Radio Rock. The result is a fantastic time capsule and celebration of an era.

The soundtrack is a must-have for fans of 1960's Rock & Roll. If you're not, I can't even imagine that you'd enjoy the film. The cast is top drawer. Young Tom Sturridge

is completely lovable as Carl. Bill Nighy looks like he's having almost as much fun with this movie as he had playing the aging rocker in *Love Actually*. Emma Thompson's cameo is over-the-top fun. Philip Seymour Hoffman gives one of his most likable performances to date and Rhys Ifans is spot on as the sexy radio God, Gavin.

I don't remember the last time I left a theatre so truly happy. Last year's *Mama Mia* was a fun, feel good flick, but it didn't have the depth of spirit and quality that *Pirate Radio* has in spades, a quality that Richard Curtis excels in illustrating in his films. It makes you want to clap and cheer, not just for a character but for mankind and Rock n Roll.

Rated R for language, and some sexual content including brief nudity.

REVIEW BY MICHELLE KEENAN



Frank Langella and Cameron Diaz discuss the possibilities of *The Box*.

The Box

Short Take: Richard Kelly's expansion of a *Twilight Zone* story is well acted and effectively creepy.

REEL TAKE: When I saw the previews for *The Box*, I immediately recognized it as an old *Twilight Zone* episode. What a curious thing to a movie of I thought at the time. Remakes of TV shows are nothing new but a single episode expanded to feature length could result in an awful lot of padding. Fortunately that did not happen thanks to writer-director Richard Kelly.

I had heard of him because of his earlier cult film *Donnie Darko* but I hadn't seen it or its follow-up *Southland Tales*. I promptly rented both and now have seen Kelly's entire feature output. Without a doubt, in my opinion, *The Box* is the best of the lot but as is often the case, I find myself in the minority.

What I discovered by watching Kelly's other movies is that he is remarkably adept at taking ordinary situations and settings and making them incredibly menacing. It's an updated version of 1940s producer Val Lewton's theory that what you don't see or know is far worse than what you do. That scores major points with me and on that score, *The Box* delivers.

Conveying that kind of unease is a

collaborative effort and in addition to his fine script, Kelly has great camerawork, an ominous soundtrack and a trio of fine performances from Frank Langella, James Marsden, and especially from Cameron Diaz. That came as a pleasant surprise as I didn't think she had it in her.

The original story concerned itself with the morality of killing a complete stranger that you will never meet by pushing a button in exchange for money. Kelly uses that premise as his starting point and then expands it. Not only is the button pushed but it initiates a series of actions that will ultimately have global ramifications.

There are strong mystical overtones to *The Box* and that along with the ending have put many people off. Critics don't seem to like the mystical angle and preview audiences didn't like the finale. I give credit to Warner Brothers for distributing the film in the first place and then not allowing the preview audience to change the ending which is what happened to *The Golden Compass*, *Inkheart*, and to countless others. The triumph of integrity over commercial interests is always something worth celebrating.

Rated PG-13 for thematic elements, violence and disturbing elements.

REVIEW BY CHIP KAUPMANN

The Men Who Stare at Goats

1/2

Short Take: The partially true story of a special covert, woo-woo, Jedi-like branch of the Army.

REEL TAKE: *The Men Who Stare at Goats* seemed to be one of the most promising releases of the year. Unfortunately it didn't live up to the anticipation, but it is worth a view, if you are so inclined. The premise and cast are great, but the film is inconsistent and the ending is weak. That said, you can't go too wrong with a cast that includes George Clooney, Ewan McGregor, Jeff Bridges, and Kevin Spacey.



George Clooney stars in the 'we're not what sure what parts of it are true' story of a special branch of the U.S. Army in *The Men Who Stare at Goats*.

Bob Wilton (Ewan McGregor) is young reporter who, facing divorce, decides to go to Iraq to prove himself a significant journalist. While there he meets a man who

he had heard of back home by way of a man he had written off as a nut job. Said man had Wilton about a special, secret branch of the Army dedicated to training men as psychic super heroes. The greatest of these Jedi-like progeny was Lyn Cassady (George Clooney). Thinking he might have the scoop on a story greater than the war, Wilton decides to stick with Cassady and see what's really going on with this 'special forces' unit designed to actually end war.

Along their journey Cassady regales Wilton with the origin of the unit, the training process and their exploits. As the story shifts from back and forth from present day to Cassady's tales, we realize that he's searching for the founder and commanding officer of their unit, Bill Django (Jeff Bridges). This is all very interesting and quite comical (and yes, there are goats) until the point when past and present meet. This would normally be the climax of the movie, but here I'm not quite sure what happened. After this whole adventure it just meanders into nothingness.

The story is based on the book by Jon Ronson and half the fun is deciphering truth from fiction. There is even a disclaimer at the beginning that speculates that the weirdest parts could be the truest parts. The other half of the fun is watching Clooney and Bridges work their magic. Oddly, I found Spacey's performance, as the jealous and corrupt colleague, two dimensional at best. It was probably just as it was called for, but I found it flat given his talent. Even so the entire ensemble looks like they had a good time making this film and staring at goats.

In subsequent conversations with my viewing partner about what worked and what didn't, we finally left it at this – what if the ending wasn't just a weak Hollywood ending (due to schedule, funding or producers), but was actually the truest part of all. Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction.

Rated R for language, some drug content and brief nudity.

REVIEW BY MICHELLE KEENAN

The Twilight Saga: New Moon

1/2

Short Take: The second installment of the popular series appears to deliver what the people want, at least it did for me.

REEL TAKE: I am one of the very few people to see this movie having had no previous exposure to either the Stephenie Meyer books or the first *Twilight* movie. This puts me in the somewhat unique position of being able to assess *New Moon* without any previous baggage. Think of seeing the second *Harry Potter* film without having read the books or seen the first installment of that series. It was just a movie plain and simple.

'Movies' continued on page 27

Coming Next Month



Robert Downey, Jr. and Jude Law star as Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson in one of the season's most anticipated films, *Holmes*.

Reel Take reviews of:

- Precious
- Holmes
- The Road
- The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnasus
- Invictus

... and much more

movie reviews

'Movies' continued from page 26

I found the film to be entertaining on a number of levels from a purely cinematic point of view. It is technically well made with some gorgeous photography of the Pacific Northwest enhanced by occasional 360 degree Brian De Palma style camera pans and clever transitional editing allowed one scene to suddenly transform into another. The soundtrack of current teen tunes and romantic movie music punctuated by sound effects worked well for me.

Of course *New Moon* assumes that you are already familiar with the characters and the storyline so it just picks up where the other left off. This was not a problem for me as they allow this story to develop on its own terms although as an outsider I found Meyer's changes to traditional vampire and werewolf mythology (daylight hours, no full moon to name two of them) fascinating.

Regarding the performances, Kristen Stewart is an engaging protagonist as Bella. A young woman dealing with teenage



Kristen Stewart as Bella and Robert Pattinson as Edward enjoy an intimate moment in *New Moon*.

moods and feelings while emotionally divided over her two boyfriends, a vampire and a werewolf. Robert Pattinson as vampire Edward Cullen is the ultimate sensitive male. Kind and considerate, he would sacrifice himself for the woman he loves. Werewolf Taylor Lautner provides the beefcake. He's a manly man who also loves Bella and is overprotective of her. Dakota Fanning makes the most of her brief appearance as uber-Vampire Jane.

After seeing *New Moon*, it's easy to see why so many women are drawn to the *Twilight* series. It's ultra-romantic with the guys more interested in Bella as a person than with killing or sleeping with her. The supernatural elements are really just icing on the cake. Director Chris Weitz (*The Golden Compass*) has done a good job balancing the different script requirements. Although his pacing lags every now and then, *New Moon*'s fans will hardly notice.

For the record and for a different perspective, I saw *New Moon* with my teenage daughter who has read all the books and seen the first installment. Her verdict: It was technically better than the first film but they added scenes not in the book which annoyed her (she's still recovering from the burning of the Weasley home in the last *Harry Potter* film) and she didn't care for the music at all. As we left the theater it was apparent that I liked it better than she did.

Rated PG-13 for some violence and action sequences.

REVIEW BY CHIP KAUFMANN

Help Keep Asheville Weird!

The Fringe Arts Festival

January 21-24, 2010

The annual multi-day and multiple venue performing extravaganza that invites artists of all types to push their boundaries and present original and innovative performance art to a culturally adventurous audience.



"The Vehicle" performed by Stina Andersen. Photo: Jenny "Doc" Bowen

Now in our eighth year, join us and explore the Fringe. Let's help keep Asheville weird! Plans are underway for a fabulous, fringe, opening night gala event on Thursday, January 21 to showcase Asheville's unique performing art talent – theatre, movement, music, spoken word, puppetry, spectacle, whatever!

The 2010 Fringe venues include the purple LaZoom Bus, which will host a mobile show that will tour around town stopping at unique Fringe spaces for performances as well as performances on the bus itself.

Also featured is the Black Mountain College Museum and Arts Center on Broadway Street, which will host audio arts and experimental music on January 22 and 23, 2010. Musicians, performers and composers will premiere and showcase new music and avant garde ambient sounds.

The Asheville FringeArts Festival is an annual presentation of the Asheville Contemporary Dance Theatre and is recommended for mature audiences only.



Tickets and Fringe Freak All Access Passes will be available in January 2010 at the BeBe Theatre, 20

Commerce St., Asheville, NC. Call the Box Office (828) 254-2621. Find out more at www.asheville-fringe.org

Chip Kaufmann's Pick: "A Christmas Story"

A Christmas Story (1983)

Like its more famous predecessor *It's A Wonderful Life*, *A Christmas Story* was completely ignored on its release back in 1983 only to develop a strong cult following so that today over 25 years later, it has become a bona fide Christmas classic. This comes as no surprise once you have seen the film but if by some chance you haven't seen it then this holiday season would be the ideal time to start.

One of the reasons the film works so well is that it has the value of nostalgia in its storyline. The adult narrator transports us back to the 1940s when as young Ralphie, all he wanted for Christmas was a Red Ryder BB gun. Everyone he turns to (even a department store Santa) tells him "You'll put your eye out, kid". Of course that doesn't stop him from hoping.

In addition to Ralphie (wonderfully played by Peter Billingsley), we get to meet his family and it is the family that gives this movie its depth and charm. Gruff father (Darren MacGavin), perfect mother (Melinda Dillon-whatever happened to her?), and younger brother Randy (Ian Petrella) are so universal that we all feel that we have known someone like them at some time in our lives.

The movie is full of memorable sequences including the flagpole incident, the pink bunny costume, and the bad word and its consequences. For those

December's DVD Picks



unfortunate few of you who haven't seen *A Christmas Story*, I won't go into further details as I don't want to spoil it for you. This is a movie which needs to be experienced by the entire family if possible. You'll be talking about it for a long time afterwards and any movie that can do that is very special indeed.

The Bishop's Wife (1947)

It's a Wonderful Life, *A Christmas Carol* and *A Christmas Story* are annual traditions for me and I'm sure I'll delight in all three in the coming weeks. There is however another holiday offering that I enjoy ever so much, albeit not as regularly. *The Bishop's Wife* starring Cary Grant, Loretta Young and David Niven takes me to the grace of a bygone era.

David Niven is Bishop Henry Brougham, a good man who lets his plans for a grand cathedral usurp the im-



portant things in life and moreover the reasons he became a minister in the first place. Stalled by the stubbornness of a particular patron and frustrated in his efforts, Henry asks for help. Enter Dudley (Cary Grant) – an angel sent in answer to Henry's prayers.

When Henry doesn't know what to make of his new assistant, Dudley quickly befriends everyone else in the household, especially Henry's daughter Debby (Carolyn Grimes) and wife Julia (Loretta Young). By arousing the green-eyed monster in the good bishop, Dudley may actually answer Henry's prayers.

Cary Grant and Loretta Young have a wonderful chemistry that is palpable. That chemistry lends itself to other supporting actors as well, including two of my favorite character actors of the time, Monty Woolley and James Gleason. This is in large part due to Dudley's character and Grant's infectious, certain je ne sais quoi. Part of Dudley's magic is that he brings out the child-like spirit in people, the truer part of the soul.

The Bishop's Wife is about keeping site of what's most important in life. It is an utterly charming film, which some critics may find a little too vanilla, but which I find as elegant and lovely as its stars.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

music

Asheville Community Band 30th Annual Christmas Program



The Asheville Community Band is in its 30th year of bringing stirring band music to the people of Asheville and surrounding areas.

The band was formed in 1979 when Patricia Garren and Joyce Dorr announced the formation of a new band open to all. The first rehearsal was attended by 95 musicians from all walks of life. Current membership is approximately one hundred (100).

The band has performed in Europe and Hawaii, twice at the NC Bandmasters Association Convention in Winston-Salem, and in Charlotte, NC, dressed in the uniform of the John Phillip Sousa Band for an all Sousa Concert.

Selections on the program include A

Chanukah Celebration, Christmas Recollections, Cowboy Christmas, Variations on "Deck The Halls", German Carol Festival, the Glory of Christmas, Joyful All Ye Nations, Fanfare Prelude on "Joy To The World", and Up on the Housetop. In addition, the audience will be invited to join in a sing-along with a well known vocal group.



The Asheville Community Band Holiday Concert, December 13 at 3 p.m. in the Auditorium of Asheville High School on

McDowell Street. Admission is \$8 for adults. Students admitted free. Call (828) 254-2234 for more information.

New Year's Eve Blow Out With Larry Keel and Natural Bridge

BY ERIN SCHOLZE

Larry Keel and Natural Bridge is undeniably the most powerful, innovative and all-out exhilarating Acoustic Americana ensemble performing today. Period.

Lead by award-winning Flatpicking Guitar genius Larry Keel, this group takes Bluegrass instrumentation into totally surprising places, from the purest traditional forms to the most astonishing experimental sonic journeys a listener can undertake. The mission is always clear: to let technical skill, honest emotion and fearlessness connect their playing and singing to their audience – to entertain and to thoroughly enjoy the experience.

"We hope," says Keel, "to achieve a commonness between everyone that listens to our music, and let the magic of the music take over the moment and bring everyone together. We want them to be pulled into the music."

Keel himself absorbed the best lessons of his Bluegrass family upbringing, both sides deeply steeped in the rich mountain music culture and heritage of Southwest Virginia. From there, he has always integrated that solid musical grounding and natural-born talent with his own incomparable approach to flatpicking the guitar and to his original music.

The combination is pretty irresistible, and has earned Keel the highest respect and billing among the top acoustic musicians alive, and some now gone: Tony Rice, Vassar Clements, Sam Bush, Del McCoury,



John Hartford, Bill Monroe, Mike Marshall, Darol Anger, to name a few.

And his fierce, high-spirited energy also appeals to young rockers, jammers and alt country pickers and fans who are equally drawn to Keel's deep rumbling voice, his earthy and imaginative song-writing, and his down-home-gritty-good-time charm. Keel regularly collaborates with JamBand and Rock giants Yonder Mountain String

Band, Keller Williams, Jorma Kaukonen, David Nelson, Jim Lauderdale, members of String Cheese Incident, and Leftover Salmon, amongst others.

Joining the award-winning flatpickin' legend are his mighty band Natural Bridge: Mark Schimick on mandolin and vocals, Jason Flournoy on banjo and vocals, and wife Jenny Keel holding strong on upright bass and vocals. You won't believe what these musicians achieve with just these simple, acoustic instruments, with nothing but volume enhancement to deliver the musical message.



Larry Keel and Natural Bridge, New Year's Eve, Thursday, December 31 at 9 p.m. \$25 advance / \$30 day of show. The Grey Eagle, 185

Clingman Ave. in Asheville. Call (828) 232-5800 or visit www.thegreyeagle.com.

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Big Brown Bag

SONGWRITING COMPETITION FINALS

Asheville's own cosmic multi media wonder, Jenny "Juice" Greer has brewed up The Big Brown Bag songwriters competition at MoDaddy's on Biltmore Avenue in Asheville. The last weekly round is Monday, December 7 with finals on Friday, December 11.

The rules: Each act is limited to three people on stage, no amplifiers, and two songs per act. Judges consist of local seasoned musicians and music industry professionals. Acts are judged on lyrics vocal performance, musical composition/ instrument playing, and stage presence, which

includes crowd response. Brown Bag cash prize for winner!

For the Big Brown Bag Series Finals on Friday, December 11, each weeks winners will be showcased. Three finalists will be chosen to perform a second round that evening from which the Big Brown Bag winner will be selected by the celebrity judges. The audience will also be voting on the winner of the Audience Choice Award.

IF YOU GO: Friday, December 11 at MoDaddy's, 77-B Biltmore Avenue in Asheville. Tickets: \$5-10. Details call (828) 258-1550.

poetry

Poet Robert Morgan

Capturing Appalachia in Words

Robert Morgan grew up on a small farm in the North Carolina Blue Ridge, and the place he explored in his earliest years remains the place he explores in his writing today.

He left home to attend college, and he found work away from home (he has taught at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, since 1971), but he returns to southern Appalachia frequently to visit kinfolk and friends and to share, through readings and lectures, his appreciation for and his understanding of the region. Morgan's prolific and varied literary works (poetry, fiction, and nonfiction) remember — and in the process of remembering, honor — the place and the people that have long nurtured him.

Into the 1990s, Morgan was primarily known as a poet, having produced nine collections of poems before he garnered, virtually overnight, a national reputation as a fiction writer upon the selection of his 1999 novel *Gap Creek* as an Oprah Book Club Selection. He had in fact been writing fictional works since the mid-1980s, expanding the range of his storytelling from the more imagistic, allusive approach associated with poetry to the more concrete, direct representation of situations rendered possible within the realm of fiction.

Since the early 1990s, the majority of his books have been novels, collections of short stories, or, in the case of his acclaimed 2007 book *Boone: A Biography*, nonfiction. Nevertheless, because Morgan is without a doubt one of the most accomplished poets ever to explore Appalachia, it is cause for celebration that he continues to compose poetry and to publish poems in periodicals and in the occasional book.

Morgan's most recent books of poetry are *The Strange Attractor: New and Selected Poems* (Louisiana State University Press, 2004) and a collection of recent poems, *October Crossing* (BroadStone Books, 2009). The former book features 81 highlights from his first nine poetry collections alongside 14 previously uncollected poems.

Any book that purports to chronicle such a long and sustained career in poetry might easily have lacked focus, yet *The Strange Attractor* makes for remarkably unified reading, suggesting that Morgan maintained an unwavering interest in his chosen subject throughout the 35-year span covered in the book.

The new, previously uncollected poems are printed at the front of the book, immediately before the oldest ones (from his 1969 book *Zirconia Poems*), and yet the juxtapositioning of newer and older work is not awkward or abrupt. While the earliest poems in *The Strange Attractor* are character-

BY TED OLSON

ized by a hermetic understatedness and the later ones are richly textured and effusive, all of Morgan's poems flow from the same undiminished source — a deep respect for and curiosity about life in Appalachia. The poet's love for this region is so strong that he frequently depicts Appalachia's natural and cultural landscapes as being infused with sacred meaning.

For instance, "Rhymer Spring," one of the new poems in *The Strange Attractor*, offers metaphorical insight into the life-giving force of a mountain spring:

This fountain is so deep and bold
it seems to be an oracle
from underneath the rock and moss
and ferns, reciting poetry
or maybe quoting Scripture to
its hidden mountain pasture.

One of the signature characteristics of Morgan's poetry is the poet's keen eye for the quotidian — he sees and appreciates the things that most people overlook. Several of the 34 poems in *October Crossing* perfectly interpret the profundity of small subjects, such as in the book's title poem:

The woolly bears go cross the road,
their backs of orange and black a sign
of winter's length and strength to come.
They inch across the lanes in fur
fit for a monarch, fox, or star,
as crows descend and yellow leaves
fly out against the twilight breeze.
However accurate the widths
of colors on their prophet backs,
or knowledge of their fate as moths,
they seem intent on crossing this
hard Styx or Jordan to the ditch,
oblivious to the tires' high pitch.

Virtually all of the poems in *The Strange Attractor* and *October Crossing* emanate from Morgan's sustained fascination with Appalachia, a fascination he explains in an essay posted on a website dedicated to his work (www.robert-morgan.com):

"This is the moment when we want to



Robert Morgan Photo: Randi Anglin

catch in words an Appalachian world all but gone. We tend to write best about cultures that have almost melted into the past. The blue valleys, the fog-haunted coves, the tireless milky waterfalls, are still there, but the people, the people with wisdom in their hands and humility in their hearts, have slipped away forever, unless we find them in our own words, and in our own hands and hearts."

Both *The Strange Attractor* and *October Crossing* feature many well-crafted, luminous poems. Upon first reading these or other collections of Robert Morgan's poems, poetry fans everywhere — whether or not they have a personal connection to Appalachia — will be deeply moved by Morgan's lifelong commitment "to catch in words an Appalachian world all but gone."



Ted Olson is the author of "Breathing in Darkness: Poems" (Wind Publications, 2006) and "Blue Ridge Folklife" (University Press of Mississippi, 1998) and the editor of "CrossRoads: A Southern Culture Annual" (Mercer University Press, 2009).

His experiences as a poet and musician are discussed on www.windpub.com/books/breathingindarkness.htm and www.SonicBids.com/TedOlson.

Poets who would like for their poetry to be considered for a future column may send their books and manuscripts to Ted Olson, ETSU, Box 70400, Johnson City, TN 37614. Please include contact information and a SASE with submissions.



George Ivey Releases First Novel

George Ivey's novel, *Up River: A Novel of Attempted Restoration*, tells the tale of Peter Bailey, a young man trying to beat the odds to restore a dying river in the southern Appalachian mountains. Sometimes amused, often frustrated, and always challenged, Peter must learn the needs of the river and the ways of the locals and try to bring them into harmony before it's too late. Visit www.georgeivey.com/upriver for more information.



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DECEMBER 2009

• **Saturday, December 5 at 3:00 p.m.**
Jeff VanderMeer KaffeeKlatsch & Booksigning – *Booklife: Strategies and Survival Tips for the 21st Century Writer*. Offering timely advice in an era when the burden of production and publicity frequently falls on authors, this essential reference reflects on methods for being focused, productive, and savvy in the craft of writing.

• **Saturday, December 12 at 4:00 p.m.**
Author Robert Roskind will sign copies of his book, *Memoirs of an Ex-Hippie*. He will also sign copies of his books *Rasta Heart: A Journey into One Love* and *2012: The Transformation from the Love of Power to the Power of Love*. Roskind and his wife will be hosting a "Conscious New Year's Eve Party" just outside of Asheville at Camp Rockmont.

• **Saturday, December 12 at 7:00 p.m.**
Drawing Down the Moon: The Art of Charles Vess. Verdant fairy forests. Whispering mountains. The fallen towers of ancient kings. Spirit-filled lakes. The fantasy art of Charles Vess has been acclaimed worldwide; his rich palette, striking compositions, and lavish detail are second to none in the field.

• **Sunday, December 13 at 1:30 p.m.**
Coach Roy Williams Booksigning & Fundraiser. UNC Tar Heels Men's Basketball Coach Roy Williams will sign copies of *Hard Work: My Life on and Off the Court* with proof of purchase from Malaprop's. At UNCA's Justice Gym.

• **Wednesday, December 23 at 2:00 p.m.**
Meet Katherine Russell Rich, author of *Dreaming in Hindi: Coming Awake in Another Language*. Having survived a serious illness and now at an impasse in her career, Rich spontaneously accepted an assignment to go to India, where she found herself thunderstruck by the place and the language. Before she knew it she was on her way to Udaipur, a city in the northwestern state of Rajasthan, in order to learn Hindi.

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2009 holiday season

Best Bet for Holiday Shopping

The Southern Highland Craft Guild's annual Holiday Sale has become such a popular event that an extra day has been added this year.

On December 5 and 12 the Folk Art Center will host the Guild Artists' Holiday Seconds Sale from 10-4. Craft-speople 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 2009 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. Choose from a variety of gift items including ceramics,

BY APRIL NANCE

jewelry, fiber, paper, glass and wood.

Buying from 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 Allstand Craft Shop, the nation's oldest craft gallery, where they will find gifts for everyone on their list.



Magruder Glass



Walt Cottingham

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 www.craftguild.org.

Holiday New Works Art Sale Fundraising Party

Local Celebrity Artist teams up with Local Eatery (Brixx) and Local Frameshop (Fast Frame) for evening benefiting Asheville Greenworks – just in time for holidays!

Local celebrity artist, Shelley Schenker, most recently known for her unique design of the 2009 Bele Chere Festival art, will be adding several new pieces to the large selection of her works that are regularly on display at Brixx.

Shelley's work creates quite a stir for patrons of the restaurant. From afar they are interesting compositions of animals – everything from frogs and fish to owls and pelicans – come in for a closer look and you will see that these pieces are actually made of pieces – yes, pieces of torn magazine pages – thousands of them in some cases! For this one evening event there will be signed art



"Ablaze" by Shelley Schenker

prints, note cards and holiday cards for sale at the restaurant.

Appetizers will be provided in the cocktail area. The first 100 event attendees will receive a FREE gift from the artist and anyone who purchases a 14x18 print will receive a \$30 coupon good at Fast Frames (1829 Hendersonville Rd). 10% of all art

sales from this event will be donated to Asheville Greenworks.

Asheville GreenWorks, an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, is a volunteer-based organization working to achieve a clean and green Asheville and Buncombe County through community organizing, educating and environmental stewardship since 1974. Asheville GreenWorks was formerly known as Quality Forward.

IF
YOU
GO

Artist's Holiday Cocktail Party and Sales Event, December 3, from 5 to 8 p.m. at Brixx Wood-fired Pizza, Biltmore Park, 30 Town Square Blvd., in South Asheville, (828) 654-0046.

Historic Kenilworth Inn Hosts Holiday Art Market

Saturday, December 5

The Kenilworth Artists Association Holiday Art Market will take place at the Kenilworth Inn Apartments from noon to 5 p.m. The Inn is located at 60 Caledonia Road.



Painting by MJ Koza,
Pack Place

Twelve neighborhood artists will showcase their work in a variety of media including paintings, jewelry, pottery, tiles, hand bound books, clothing, painted furniture, cloth dolls, glass ornaments, and turned wooden bowls.

Participating Artists: Valerie Hoh, art tiles and wearable art; Anna Jensen, hand painted boxes and ornaments; Kathie Jones, beaded jewelry; Teddy Jordan, painted furniture; Kathie Kline, porcelain pottery; Robert Kline, turned wooden bowls; Michael Koza, portraiture, still life and landscapes; Angela Maddix - glass jewelry and ornaments; Olivia Maddix, odd dolls; Gwen Ottinger, printmaking and pottery; Stephanie Robinson, hand bound books; and Salley Williamson, handcrafted jewelry.

Historical and Hysterical LaZoom Holiday Tours

LaZoom is Asheville's only rolling comedy tour bus and one of the most unique things to do with family and friends in town.

LaZoom's side-splitting odyssey to Asheville's favorite neighborhoods and landmarks spells quirky fun for both first-time visitors and long-time residents. Each tour is fully Historical and Hysterical, so, prepare to laugh your socks off – get your tickets and Get on the Bus!

You never know what you might see on LaZoom's 90 minute Hoopin' Hollarin' Good-Time Holiday Ride!

Bring your friends and family on board the LaZoom Bus and allow us to do the rest. Your costumed tour operator will lead you on a ride through Asheville like you've NEVER been on before. Besides, we'd love to meet your family.

All tours leave from the French Broad Food Co-op at 90 Biltmore



Ave. There will be a 15 minute break in the middle of each tour. Each tour includes live comedy and live music! Beer and wine are allowed on board to guests 21 years of age or older. Our bus has awnings that close. We'll be warm and cozy even in cold weather. Get to the bus 10 minutes prior to departure to allow time to board.

IF
YOU
GO

Pricing: Adult Tickets: \$22. Children ages 5 - 12 years: \$12. Children 4 and under ride free but must share a bus seat with two others in their party. To purchase tickets visit our website at: www.lazoomtours.com, or call (828) 225-6932.

kid culture

JOSEPH RATHBONE RECOMMENDS

This month I'm reviewing *2012*, a movie I am sure most kids will like, and also some of my holiday recommendations for kids.

2012 is a four-star action adventure movie with superb state-of-the-art graphics giving us a lot of cool destruction scenes. The film also has a pretty good story line; although clocking in at over two and a half-hours long it sort of feels like it just will not end (but the world *does*!). I don't want to give away the ending but it takes a surprising turn. The action is great and it's a film you just have to see on the big screen. This is a fun film and worth the full ticket price just to see LA fall into the ocean.

I'm making a prediction that *Alvin and the Chipmunks the Squeakquel* is going to be an awesome movie to take the whole family to see. The first film was very funny and had some good songs in it. The trail-

"Alvin and the Chipmunks the Squeakquel" will be released on Christmas day.



Anakin's Jedi Starfighter™ from LEGO's Star Wars™ collection.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS
AND SEE YOU
NEXT YEAR!

Ira B. Jones Elementary School presents

Willy Wonka Jr.

With a cast of more than 100 children and under the direction of Chris Martin, the play Willy Wonka Jr. is underway at Ira B. Jones Elementary.

Show times are December 3 and 4 at 7 p.m. in the Ira B. Jones Auditorium. Tickets are \$5 for adults, \$3 for children five and up. Admission is free for children 4 and under. Tickets can only be purchased at the door on the day of the show.

Cast:

Willy Wonka played by Olivia Weidie; Charlie Bucket played by Cade Wooten; Granpa Jo played by Sam Bible-Sullivan; Candy Man played by Davis Turner; Augustus Gloop played by Max Ungert; Violet Beauregarde played by Sarah Plaut; Veruca Salt played by Emma Grace Hutchins; Mr. Bucket played by Harrison Ungert; Mrs. Bucket played by Allison Hinshaw; Grandma Georgina played by Paige Kemper; Grandpa George played by Askar McMahon; Grandma Josephina played by Darcey Lynn; Matilda played by Jessica Lynn; James

played by Santez Booze; Phineous Trout played by Logan Wilson.

Lead Ompa Loompas: Zya Brown, Freya Falls, Matthew Mazzarese, Donna Rizzo-Banks. Lead Ensemble: Katlyn Ball, Sam Bruder, Morgan Dotson, Davon Dunbar, Isabelle Erne, Claire Grady, Elizabeth Greer, Shameika Heard, Sophia Lewis, Eliza Long, Emily Mathews, Mercedes Morgan, Eleni Nakos, Shaelyn Newcomb, Justin Parsels, Makaela Rush, Helen Ye.



School Location: 544 Kimberly Ave. – Jones Auditorium. Enter through last building on the right. Park in first parking lot in front of auditorium or along the street.

For more information, contact Chris Martin at (828) 216-4768 or chris.martin@asheville.k12.nc.us, or Kerri Saum at babysaum@yahoo.com.

BY JOSEPH RATHBONE



ers make this movie look cute and fun. It will be released on Christmas day.

Finally, here are some of the things I recommend as gifts for kids this holiday season. Some of the things might not be new but are still available. Here we go: LEGO™ *Star Wars the Clone Wars* products and all of the other LEGO products (can't you just tell that I LOVE LEGOs!). *Harry Potter 6* and *the Half-Blood Prince*, available on DVD and Blue-Ray. And now for the video-game category. For kids 10 and up although it is

rated T (teen), I recommend *Mercenaries I & 2*, and for the younger kids *Mario Kart*.

PROTECT YOUR FAMILY

Violent Crime Shows Steeper Rise

The Washington Post - September 25, 2007
The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program found robberies surged by 7.2% and homicides rose 1.8 percent from 2005 to 2006. Violent crime overall rose 1.9%, homicides increased more than 10% and robbery was up 12.2%.

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2009 holiday season

A Swannanoa Solstice

Annual Holiday Concert

BY JOHN ELLIS

Grammy award-winning musicians Al Petteway and Amy White and multi-instrumentalist Robin Bullock lead the seventh anniversary edition of A Swannanoa Solstice on Sunday, December 20 at Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place in downtown Asheville.

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

About the artists:

Al Petteway and Amy White perform an exciting blend of original, traditional, contemporary Celtic and Appalachian-influenced music. Their repertoire offers extensive instrumental



Photo: Peter Smith

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. Petteway and White have received much recent attention for their key musical contributions to Ken Burns' PBS miniseries, "The National Parks: America's Best Idea."

Presented in association with The Swannanoa Gathering at Warren Wilson College, A Swannanoa Solstice offers two performances 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;
- Steve Agan and E.J. Jones, award-winning highland bagpipers;
- The Twisty Cuffs, local Cape Breton-style stepdancers;
- Young virtuosic fiddler and harpist, Alex Reidinger; and
- Host Doug Orr, president emeritus of Warren Wilson College, and founder of The Swannanoa Gathering.

A Swannanoa Solstice showcases all manner of seasonal sounds 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, Bullock, Petteway and White explore shared winter traditions from the area, the country, and from around the world.

The melodies played by Petteway, a virtuosic acoustic guitarist who favors an altered tuning, draw from a broad variety of cultural influences from Middle East tonalities to Scottish jigs. White, on piano, mandolin, guitar, Celtic harp and percus-

work featuring acoustic guitars, mandolins, Celtic harp, piano and world percussion as well as a fine touch of vocals.

They have been Artists in Residence at Warren Wilson College and The Kennedy Center Millennium Stage. While living in the Washington, D.C. area, Al & Amy won a grand total of 50 Wammies from the Washington Area Music Association in the Folk, Celtic and New Age categories. They received a coveted Indie Award for their CD "Gratitude" and Al won a Grammy for his solo fingerstyle guitar contribution to the pop instrumental compilation, "Pink Guitar."

Al is the coordinator of Guitar Week for the world famous Swannanoa Gathering at Warren Wilson College. He and Amy make their home on top of the Swannanoa Mountain range in nearby Fairview, NC.

Celtic/American string wizard Robin Bullock journeys to the heart and soul of Celtic and American traditions. He is a prolific composer and multi-instrumentalist, whose virtuosity on guitar, cittern and mandolin blends the ancient melodies of the Celtic lands and their vigorous Appalachian descendants into one powerful musical vision.

The 17th-century harp tunes of legendary Irish bard Turlough O'Carolan, the spirited jigs and reels of rural Ireland, the haunting ballads of the southern Appalachians and evocative original compositions all find a musical common ground in his music, where lightening-fast fingerwork one moment is perfectly balanced with tender, quiet intimacy the next.



A Swannanoa Solstice on
December 20 at Diana
Wortham Theatre. Two
shows: 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Tickets: Regular \$35; Senior
\$33; Student \$30; Children

(\$12), call the theatre's box office at (828)
257-4530 or visit www.dwththeatre.com.

2009 holiday season

North Carolina Symphony's Holiday Concerts

Holiday tunes will float through the air like midwinter snowflakes as the North Carolina Symphony gets the season started with two area performances.

On Thursday, December 10 the symphony takes the stage at UNC Asheville for its popular Holiday Pops concert. The performance will be held at 8 p.m. at UNC Asheville's Lipinsky Auditorium.

Guest soprano Rozlyn Sorrell and guest conductor Jeffrey Pollock will join with world-class musicians for a performance of classical and traditional holiday music. The show will feature pieces to celebrate Hanukkah and Kwanzaa as well as Christmas carols. A highlight of the performance will be an audience sing-along of three popular Yuletide songs.

Sorrell's six-octave range will be featured in several arrangements during



the performance, including "The Christmas Song." She has performed and recorded with such noted artists as Barbara Streisand, Whitney Houston and Al Jarreau. Prior to moving to North Carolina, Sorrell was a principle cast member in the "Glory of Christmas" and "Glory of Easter" at the famed Crystal Cathedral in California.

Pollock has served as associate conductor with the Fort Wayne Symphony Orchestra, assistant conductor with the North Carolina Symphony and featured conductor with the American Symphony Orchestra League. He has appeared as a guest conductor across the U.S. and in the Ukraine, in addition to working with operas in Maryland, Delaware and North Carolina.

At the December 10 performance of Holiday Pops, Progress Energy, a statewide

supporter of the North Carolina Symphony, will promote their Energy Neighbor Fund. For 26 years, this fund has assisted needy individuals and families with paying their home energy bills. One dollar from every ticket sold will go toward helping local families stay warm this winter.

On Friday, December 11, the symphony performs at the Fine and Performing Arts Center on the campus of Western Carolina University. The holiday-themed program will include classical and pop selections such as "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," "Joy to the World," "White Christmas" as well as a Christmas favorites sing-along. Jeffrey Pollock will conduct, and soprano Rozlyn Sorrell will perform.

Prior to the show, symphony members will host an "instrument zoo" in the FAPAC lobby, where children ages 5 and older can learn about a mix of instruments including the clarinet, flute, trumpet, trombone, French horn, violin and viola. The zoo also will feature Cherokee instruments.

IF YOU GO

The North Carolina Symphony at UNC Asheville's Lipinsky Auditorium. Thursday, December 10 at 8 p.m.

Tickets: General public \$25, \$10 for children ages 12 and younger. To reserve tickets by phone, call UNC Asheville's Highsmith University Union Box Office at (828) 232-5000. Purchase tickets online at www.uncatickets.com.

The North Carolina Symphony on Friday, December 11, at Western Carolina University. Tickets: \$25 for the general public; \$20 for WCU faculty and staff and people 60 years and older; and \$5 for students ages 5 and older.

To purchase tickets, visit the FAPAC box office or call the box office at (828) 227-2479 for Visa and MasterCard orders. To order online, go to www.ticketreturn.com.



Rozlyn Sorrell



Jeffrey Pollock

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IF YOU GO: Frame it to a T is located at 1103 Brevard Road. Contact them at (828) 665-7730 or check out www.frameittoat.com.



MOUNTAIN BIZWORKS' HOLIDAY PARTY AND HOLIDAY ART SALE!

Thursday, December 17

Buy local and support WNC artists by doing some holiday shopping and getting that unique arts gift for your loved one! Finger food, light refreshments, cash bar, music, awards, and more will happen during the Holiday Party portion of the day.

Holiday Art Sale: 2-7 p.m.

Holiday Party: 5-7 p.m.

At Jubilee!, 46 Wall Street, in Asheville.

To attend the Holiday Party portion of the day, RSVP to naomi@mountainbizworks.org or phone (828) 253-2834 x27.

Visit www.ashevilleartistalliance.com

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Buddhist Libertarian Socialism

"I vow to help all Beings overcome their suffering. I vow to understand and overcome delusion and egoic confusion."

~ from *The Bodhisattva Vow*

In this current era of intensified political debate, something said from my idiosyncratic Buddhist-influenced perspective may be of interest.

I teach meditation and consciousness, and in my classes, somewhere along the way, usually I will say, "I try to stay away from politics, but this is a class in consciousness, and politics is about consciousness." I then talk about the environment or health care or education policy or poverty or war or capitalism vs. socialism, because all of these issues are about consciousness, but are commonly understood to be solely political. This is a shame.

Positions based in bias, prejudice, self-interest and opinion are often backed by little more, than, well, opinion.

Our politics might be much more productive if these issues were understood to be fundamentally about consciousness. The way politics is typically practiced and argued, it is more an exercise in unconsciousness. Positions based in bias, prejudice, self-interest and opinion are often backed by little more, than, well, opinion. And that's where Buddhism has something valuable to say. Much opinion could accurately be defined — borrowing from a phrase in the Bodhisattva Vow — as "delusion and egoic confusion." And it is the vow of the Bodhisattva to awaken out of and confront delusion and egoic confusion wherever it occurs.

Buddhism, at its most basic level, can be understood as the study and practice of awakening out of delusion and egoic confusion, which Buddhists see as the source of human suffering. It is a very pragmatic and even scientific approach to life. It stipulates the problem — human suffering — and then sets out to achieve understanding and action. It seeks the cause and solution. The Western scientific method, including psychology and sociology, does this as well, but Western science typically brings only observation and the intellectual mind to bear.

Buddhism, on the other hand, believes that it is only by bringing ALL the faculties of mind to bear, including emotion and intuition, that the problems of the human condition can be resolved. It is only when there is a harmonious blending of all the mental faculties into full awareness that we

BY BILL WALZ

awaken into the essence or truth of anything. Great Western scientists also understand this. Albert Einstein is an example. His insights into quantum physics and relativity are excellent examples of wholistic science, where he felt, as well as thought, his way to revolutionary breakthroughs.

Human psychology and society are principle concerns for Buddhism precisely because of its central focus on the cause and resolution of human suffering. Humans create a great deal of unnecessary suffering for themselves and others, and they do it believing a lot of ideas they have learned that are the equivalent to "delusion and egoic confusion," in other words — nonsense.

We believe what we believe about human nature and society for little more reason than it is what we believe. It is what we learned from the social, cultural, educational and personal egoic influences that created our opinions.

In the political sphere, these opinions tend toward one of two polar positions — either preserving the individual's advantage, perspective, possessions and power, which then leads to fundamentally egocentric, conservative, libertarian, capitalistic political/economic views, or egalitarianism, which tends to lead toward fundamentally liberal, collectivistic, socialistic views.

Either one, seems to contain certain truths while, when taken to extreme, lead to their own unique forms of human delusion and suffering. We wrangle back and forth, arguing and fighting, right vs. left, libertarian conservatism vs. socialistic liberalism.

Now for most people, these psychological/political positions are irreconcilable. We see them as contradictions that have little to no common ground. Our political process seeks for one position to prevail. If the conflicting forces cancel each other out, our political process seeks some compromise that tends to eviscerate the essential truths of either position.

This leaves a confused mash that has little to no hope of really understanding or resolving the particular issue of human suffering that is under consideration. As a result, our society and our politics are a mess.

I believe Buddhism has a lot to say about this problem, as Buddhism is sometimes referred to as "the middle way," and the middle way is about seeing plainly the truths and delusions contained in any position. It believes that only in realizing a

synthesis of the essential truths of all possibilities can tranquility, both personally and socially, be found. Buddhism is very much about taking what seems to be contradiction and seeing into its underlying unity as a paradox.

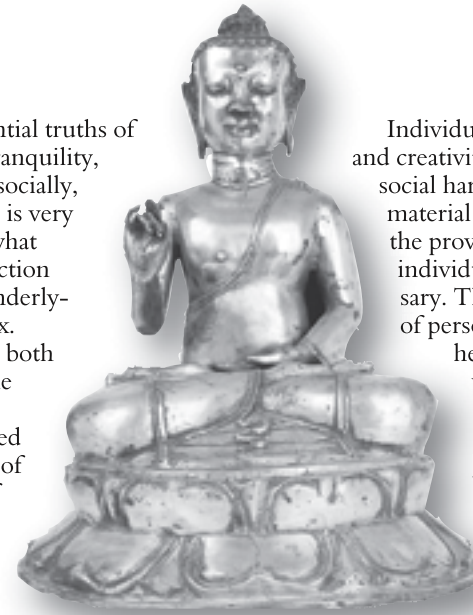
This means that both the individual and the whole can only be honored and protected through recognition of the opposite poles of any position along with the center that connects them. An important Buddhist teaching is that there is no circumference without a center and there is no center without a circumference comprised of all the points on the circumference. On any particular issue, we are simultaneously at the center (egocentric to the issue) and on the circumference (a position amongst many, dependent on the positioning of others.)

The truth is that human beings are both individuals and a collective. There are truths about what individuals need in order not to create or be in suffering and there are truths about what a society needs not to create or be in suffering.

Both elements need to be honored if we are to arrive at personal and social enlightenment, which means — happiness — the pursuit of which is enshrined in the American Declaration of Independence, along with life and liberty. An individual must have the right of their individuality. This is a truth. And a society must be built fundamentally as a harmonious collective in which all the individuals comprising it are safe, secure and happy to experience both their individual and social well being. This also is true.

Is such a political philosophy possible? I believe, yes. And it might be called Libertarian Socialism, turning a seeming contradiction into a unifying paradox. Individual human beings have the inalienable right to their own individuality and no society ought to impinge upon that individuality *unless* it is impinging on the individual "life liberty and pursuit of happiness" of others.

Equally true, society has a right and need to be, in a sense, a collective Bodhisattva, existing to facilitate life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for the collective of individuals, vowing to relieve suffering caused by egoic, that is self-interested-only, individuals and groups.



Individual identity, liberty, energy and creativity need fostering. So too, social harmony found in universal material security, health, safety and the provision of the resources for individual fulfillment are necessary. This requires the guarantee of personal safety, education, health care, aesthetics, vocational opportunity, community support, freedom from want, personal growth and wealth, and manifest respect for every individual provided within a relative egalitarianism. All these are necessary to eliminate suffering caused by the

egoic confusion that tries to make me and mine superior to you and yours.

Buddhism teaches that all sentient beings deserve and need respect to be their own unique manifestation as well as to have their place secure within a compassionate community, a harmonious whole. This is not only true for humans, but for all life forms, as well as the planet, and indeed, the universe.

Individuality and interdependent unity are the simultaneous truths of all levels of existence, from the microscopic to the macroscopic.

Only in realizing a synthesis of the essential truths of all possibilities can tranquility, both personally and socially, be found.

This is the Buddhist principle of Interbeing. For humanity to survive and prosper, it is of the utmost importance that our politics be based in a vow to help all Beings overcome their suffering.

Is such a philosophy that can be described as both libertarian and socialist, the full honoring of the individual and the collective, possible? I believe absolutely yes. But you have to meditate on it to really see it.



Bill Walz is a UNCA adjunct faculty member and a private-practice teacher of individual mindfulness, personal growth and consciousness. He holds a weekly meditation class, Mondays, 7 p.m., at the Friends Meeting House, 227 Edgewood.

He will hold an "Early Winter Satsang" to explore deep consciousness in life and politics on Saturday, December 12, 2:30 to 5 p.m. at the Friends Meeting House.

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

asheville shops

The Golden Rules of Colored Gold

When most people hear the word “gold”, they think of a metal that is yellow in color. Little do they know that yellow is just one color of gold. Pure gold is 24 karat which is a deep golden color that has been used for jewelry historically but is too soft for general purpose jewelry.

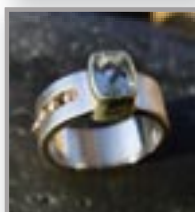
Most jewelry is 18 karat (k), 14k or even 10k having added alloys to increase the strength and durability of the metal. 18 karat gold means that the metal is 18 parts out of 24 pure gold and is the standard for European jewelry. 14 karat gold is 14 parts gold and is the standard for American jewelry. While 10 kt is only 41.7% gold.

Interestingly enough, each country has a minimum karat for gold alloys that may be legally sold as “gold”. In the United States, the minimum is 10 karat gold. In France and Italy, for example, the minimum is 18 karat gold while in England the minimum is 7kt. In addition to the proportion of pure gold, the term “karat” is used to signify solid gold alloyed pieces versus gold platings or gold-filled pieces of jewelry. Each piece of jewelry made in the United States is by law required to mark somewhere on the piece, the karat gold used.

There are four commonly used colors used in jewelry and they are: yellow, white, rose (pink) and green. The alloys used to make these colors serve a dual purpose not only to color the gold but also increase the durability of the metal. The most common alloys used to make yellow gold a prettier brighter yellow color while increasing the strength are silver and copper.

Commercial white gold jewelry is commonly nickel based and rhodium plated to achieve a white look. Nickel has been used for decades in white gold but has many drawbacks. One person in eight has an allergic reaction to the nickel and the typical reaction is an unpleasant skin rash. Another problem with using nickel as an alloy is that nickel tarnishes and yellows with age. Most people purchase gold items assuming they will not tarnish like sterling silver does so it is very disappointing to purchase a gold item and have it tarnish or turn yellow with wear.

Of course plating the metal solves some of these problems but over the years some jewelers have found palladium to be a much superior alloy to use in making white gold white. . Not only does palladium make a brighter, more grey toned white gold but since palladium is the alloy used for generations to make platinum hard, it also works to increase the hardness in white gold. No one is allergic to palladium



so it is a great solution to the white gold alloy problems.

Rose gold is used for specialized jewelry due to its reddish color and was extremely popular in Russia at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is also known as pink gold and red gold and although the names are often used interchangeably, the difference between red, rose, and pink gold is the copper content. The highest carat version of rose gold is also known as crown gold, which is 22 carat. The 14 carat rose gold found in the Middle East contains 41.67% copper. Rose gold became very popular in America during the 1920's and is finally regaining popularity today among those who collect and enjoy unusual jewelry.

The last of the most commonly used colored golds is green gold. It actually appears

as a greenish yellow, rather than as a true green. The alloys used to produce the beautiful rich green gold tones are silver and palladium, and occasionally zinc. Most popular in the late 1700's and early 1800's in England, it became more widely known in the United States about 1985. It is a wonderful contrast to rose gold in intricate jewelry designs. Green gold is also beautiful against darker skin tones and is used to enhance green gemstones.

Black gold has become widely known among jewelry enthusiasts although it is not truly a color of gold. It is usually achieved through electroplating, using black rhodium or ruthenium. Solutions that contain ruthenium give a slightly harder black coating than rhodium. Recently a laser technique has been developed that renders the surface of metals deep black. All of these techniques are on the surface only and if one were to cut through the metal, yellow gold or white gold would appear in the center.

Other gold colors have been tried such as blue, purple and grey but all are brittle and shatter easily, which makes them unsuitable to be used in jewelry.

Not all jewelers work in the four major colors of gold but two designers down in Biltmore Village have made them popular again. Lynn Daniel and Susan West, who own blue, design and create their one-of-a-kind pieces of jewelry have used all colors of gold to enhance stones or create a contrast in the piece. In Lynn's vine pieces, it isn't uncommon to find the vines in green gold with the leaves in rose.

You can see all four of these colors of gold used in jewelry at blue located at 1 Swan Street in Historic Biltmore Village. Or go to their website at bluegoldsmiths.com.



2009-2010
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Daniel Meyer,
Music Director



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what to do guide™

Friday, December 4 Byzantine Icons

New work by Gloria Gaffney will be on exhibit at the Asheville Area Arts Council gallery with an opening reception from 5 to 7 p.m. 11 Biltmore Avenue. Visit Gaffney's downtown studio by appointment by phoning (828) 253-4443, or email streetartist@netzero.net.

December 4 & 5 A Winter's Tale

Bring your flashlights and woolen mittens for our festival of animal Holiday lights, music, culturally diverse arts and crafts, candle making, animal enrichment, food, hot chocolate and cider, family games, and of course, Santa will be here with some elves! Possibly even, a camel!

Animal enrichment, games and entertainment will highlight these two days of Christmas cheer! \$6 per person admission to the event.

From 6 to 9 p.m. at the WNC Nature Center, 75 Gashes Creek Road in East Asheville. Members receive \$1 off with proof of current membership. Call for details (828) 298-5600.

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. 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.

7-Day Zen Retreat

December 1-8 at Great Tree

A seven-day silent Zen retreat will be held at Great Tree Zen Temple, led by the temple's abess, Rev. Teijo Munnich. Called Rohatsu sesshin, it commemorates Buddha's enlightenment.

The sesshin begins at 7 p.m. December 1 with a light supper and ends at noon December 8. A weekend option is available, running from 7 p.m. December 4 to noon December 6.

Accommodations are dormitory-style. Participants are asked to bring their own sheets, blankets, pillows, towels and other necessities.

Cost is \$300, or \$260 for members, plus a voluntary donation to the teacher. For questions or registration information call (828) 645-2085 or email info@greatreetemple.org.

Great Tree Temple is about 15 minutes from downtown Asheville, near Weaverville.



Flat Rock Tailgate Special Holiday Market

Saturday, December 5

From 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

The Market is held in conjunction with the shops of Little Rainbow Row's Holiday Stroll and is located in the courtyard behind Hand in Hand Gallery on the Greenville Hwy./225S. just south of the Flat Rock Playhouse.

The Market will offer a wide variety of baked goods, jams, jellies, herbal vinegars, pickles, herb teas, fresh or dried mushrooms, goat cheeses, chicken, eggs, lamb & beef. In addition, many vendors will have specialty items like festive holiday cheese items, confectionaries, lettuce and herb baskets, bath salts and handmade crafts. Pick up a fresh wreath or seasonal greenery for decorating your home.

Seating is very limited so do not wait to save your space, call or email today! RSVP by December 4, naomi@mountainbizworks.org, or phone (828) 253-2834 x27. Soup and bread provided. \$10 per person, 6-9 p.m. 84 N. Lexington Avenue.

Sunday, December 13 Great Tree Art and Craft Sale

Short Meditation and Ceremony from 3:30 to 4 p.m. Refreshments and Craft Sale from 4 to 6 p.m. WriteMind Institute, 84 N. Lexington Ave. in Asheville. Sales to support Soto Zen Practice, residencies and scholarships. For more information about Great Tree please visit www.greatreetemple.org.

Wednesday, December 16

Guitarist Clay Ross Releases "Matuto"

Imagine the sound of a Brazilian Carnival in the Appalachian Mountains. Clay Ross, guitar and vocals, Brian Mulholland, bass, and Adam Snow on drums. At the Emerald Lounge, 112 N. Lexington Ave. in Asheville. 10 p.m. show. Phone (828) 232-4372 for more details.

Friday, December 18 The Nutcracker

Performed by the new Ballet Conservatory of Asheville at the Diana Wortham Theatre, 7 p.m.

Tickets only \$10. For more information contact Angie Lynn, Ballet Conservatory of Asheville, (828) 255-5777 or visit www.BalletConservatoryofAsheville.com

Friday, December 18 Stop Human Trafficking

Benefit concert at The Orange Peel, downtown Asheville. Featuring: Addison Road (Christian Rock); Ryan Larkins (3rd Runner Up, from this season's CMT show Can You Duet); Rebekkah Joy (Hip Hop from Orlando).

Admission \$15. Doors open 6:30 p.m. There will also be representatives from two local organizations working to prevent Human Trafficking.

Sunday, December 20 In Terra Pax

Christmas music by Finzi, Leavitt, Paulus, and Corelli presented by the First Baptist Church Adult Choir and Orchestra, featuring harpist Lelia Lattimore. Concert begins at 7 p.m. at the First Baptist Church of Asheville, 5 Oak Street, Asheville. For more information contact Tracey Jenkins, Music Ministry Assistant, (828) 252-4781 x315 or email tjenkins@fbca.net.

Advent Prayer Labyrinth

Monday, December 14 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Tuesday, December 15 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Wednesday, December 16 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Treat yourself to an hour (more or less) of Peace and Prayer. The Advent Prayer Labyrinth Journey is a gift to our congregation, the community, and visitors.

This is a unique way to spend some quiet personal time with God during the busy holiday season. It will be held in the Barber Christian Life Center at First United Methodist Church of Hendersonville, NC. We are located on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Church Street in downtown Hendersonville.

For details contact Sandy Rumsey, Director of Communications, First United Methodist Church of Hendersonville, sandy@hvlfmc.org.

Chris Austin Songwriting Contest

Deadline: February 18, 2010

An extraordinary opportunity for aspiring writers to have their original songs heard and judged by a panel of Nashville music industry professionals, under the direction of this year's volunteer contest chairperson, Grammy-winning singer/songwriter Jim Lauderdale.

Contest entries are now being accepted via the following methods:

1. U.S. Mail – Send to PO Box 121855, Nashville, TN 37212
2. American Songspace – www.americansongspace.com/chrisaustinsongwritingcontest
3. www.sonicbids.com/chrisaustinsongwritingcontest

Details about entry fees, eligibility and other requirements are available at www.chrisaustinsongwritingcontest.org. The deadline for submissions is February 18, 2010. To be eligible to enter, a songwriter must not derive more than 50% of his or her total income from songwriting or music publishing.

Songs are judged by a volunteer panel of Nashville songwriters, publishers and other music industry professionals. Judging is based on a song's originality, lyrics, melody and overall commercial potential. Twelve finalists, three from each category, will be announced during the first week of April 2010. Each of the twelve finalists will compete on the Austin Stage at MerleFest 2010.

The contest recognizes winners in four categories – country, bluegrass, gospel and general. First place winners in each category receive: a performance on the Cabin Stage at MerleFest 2010 (April 29-May 2); an acoustic guitar; a check for \$300; two boxes of D'Addario strings; and one-year subscriptions to both *Acoustic Guitar* and *American Songwriter* magazines.

For additional information call the contest hotline at 1-800-799-3838 or Laurie Hayes, CASC Coordinator: 336-838-6158, laurie.hayes@wilkescc.edu.

DECEMBER EVENTS ~ ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ CLASSIFIEDS

what to do guide™

Peaceful Season Concert

Thursday, December 10



Flautist Marina Raye and percussionist River Guerguerian perform music from their new CD Blue Moon Dancing. This is going to be a great peaceful evening, right in the middle of the holiday rush! Show begins at 8 p.m. at the White Horse Black Mountain, \$6.



WhiteHorseBlackMountain.com

Celebrating the Arts in Saluda - Call for Entries

Deadline: February 15, 2010

Celebrating its heritage and arts culture, the Saluda Business Association is pleased to announce its seventh annual Saluda Arts Festival scheduled for May 15, 2010 in historic downtown Main Street in Saluda.

This will be a juried art event offering cash awards to a diverse range of 2D and 3D artwork. Cash awards will be given for; \$500 Best Overall, \$300 for 2nd Place 2D and 3D, \$150 for 3rd Place 2D and 3D, \$50 for each Honorable Mention. Applications for participation can be downloaded from the www.saluda.com web site or by contacting Susie Welsh at (828) 749-3900 or Catherine Ross at (828) 243-8696 or email at sswelsh@tds.net for more information.

Applications are due by February 15, 2010. "This year's event will have an all new format and juried by distinguished and internationally acclaimed artists who reside in Saluda.

Saluda abounds with natural assets. It's our duty to the heritage of Saluda to celebrate and promote its artistic culture, historic buildings, and the natural beauty of our mountains and waterfalls," said spokesperson for the SBA, Cathy Jackson.

Bob Moog: A Photo Retrospective Calendar



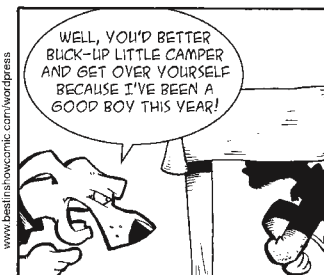
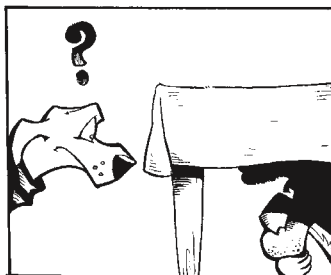
The Bob Moog Foundation has created a calendar celebrating the rich history of the Moog Legacy through vintage photos, memorabilia, quotes and information taken directly from the synthesizer pioneer's archive.

The photos trace pivotal moments in Moog's early career and highlight many musicians and

pioneers who inspired his work. The calendar is laden with images of early Moog instruments, along with Bob's thoughts and philosophies about his work.

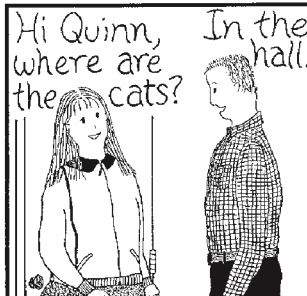
The calendar may be purchased at these Asheville area stores: Accent on Books, Downtown Books and News, Earth Guild, Loft, Malaprops, Smashing Guitars, and online at www.moogfoundation.org. The website also features T-shirts, limited edition CDs and DVDs, and other foundation related merchandise.

Best in Show



by Phil Juliano

Callie & Cats



by Amy Downs

Corgi Tales



by Phil Hawkins

Dragin



by Michael Cole

Odyssey Center for Ceramic Arts Winter Classes 2010

Adult Winter Classes run from January 11 – March 12 and Children's Winter Classes run from January 18 – February 27. Enrollment is limited. Visit our website at www.highwaterclays.com or contact Cara Gilpin at (828) 285-0210 for more information.

New offerings for winter include:

Clay Date Nights: You are sure to have a great night learning some slippery moves at this monthly event. Bring a date, come with friends, or meet someone new on a Friday night!

Teen Clay Class: Learn basic techniques or build upon their knowledge of wheel throwing and handbuilding (Ages 13-17).

Adult Classes (9 weeks):

Making Faces with Alex Irvine, Mondays 10am-12:30pm

Lips, Bellies, and Feet with Patty Bilbro, Mondays 3-5:30pm

Dynamic Dinnerware with Gabe Kline, Mondays 6:30-9:00 PM

Tile Designs with Cynthia Lee, Tuesdays 10am-12:30pm

Beginning Wheel Throwing with Lindsay Rogers, Tuesdays 6:30-9pm

More Handbuilding with Barbara Perez, Wednesdays 10am-12:30pm

Interpreting the Lidded Bowl with Becca Floyd, Wednesdays 3-5:30pm

Cone 6 Cosmetics with Jennifer Hoolihan, Wednesday 6:30-9pm

Salt, Soda and Sass with Linda McFarling, Thursdays 3-5:30pm

Masters of the Mountain with regional master potters, Thursdays 6:30-9pm

Clay Date Nights: Friday, January 29, 6:30-9 and Friday, February 19, 6:30-9pm

K-12 Educators' Workshop on February 26 from 6-9pm and February 27 from 9am-4pm

Odyssey Center for Ceramic Arts
236 Clingman Ave., Asheville, NC

White Horse Black Mountain

Every Tuesday – Free Irish Sessions at 6:30 p.m., then Open Mic Night with Parker Brooks. Sign up by 8 p.m.

White Horse Black Mountain
105C Montreat Rd. (828) 669-0816
www.whitehorseblackmountain.com

CLASSES ~ LECTURES ~ ARTS & CRAFTS ~ READINGS

fine art

Painter Jessica Stoddart Opens Grovewood Studio to the Public

BY ASHLEY VAN MATRE

Jessica Stoddart in her studio.

school, she attended Austin Peay University where she graduated with honors, receiving a B.F.A. degree.

In 2002, she relocated to North Carolina where she completed a concentrated study in furniture making

and design at Penland School. She currently resides in Asheville where she is a studio artist at Grovewood Gallery.



December 19 from 11 a.m. to – 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. at 111 Grovewood Rd. Asheville, NC. For details please call (828) 253-7651.



Award-winning painter Jessica Stoddart will open up her Grovewood studio to the public on Saturday, December 19. Have the opportunity to speak with Stoddart about her creative process and view works from her current collection.

Jessica Stoddart spent her formative years traveling to art exhibits with her parents. Upon graduating high



"Eight Dress Forms" Mixed Media

Works by Angela Alexander

F.W. Front Gallery at Woolworth Walk

BY MEGAN STONE

"Boston Tee Party" painting by Angela C. Alexander

rescue groups such as the Asheville Humane Society. She is

currently selling holiday cards that feature, among other animals, Maggie the wonder dog. Maggie is a famous local Jack Russell that knows how to count and loves to show off her talent! All proceeds from the card sales go to the Asheville Humane Society.

Come meet warm hearted and talented Angela Alexander at her opening reception Friday, December 4 from 5 to 7 p.m.



Paintings by Angela Alexander on display December 1-30, 2009.

Woolworth Walk, 25 Haywood Street, Asheville, NC. (828) 254-9234. Hours: Mon-

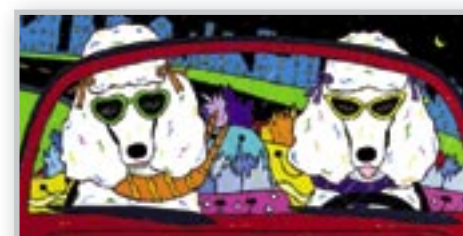
Thurs. 11-6, Fri. and Sat. 11-7, Sun. 11-5



For the month of December the F.W. Gallery at Woolworth Walk will feature the artwork of local painter Angela Alexander.

Angela specializes in painting vibrant cartoon-like images of animals with a clever and fitting title given to each piece. She has said the reason she feels a strong pull towards painting pets is "because they represent the purest forms of unconditional love."

Angela is a big supporter of animal



"Hurry Sale Ends at Midnight" painting by Angela C. Alexander

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Flu and Vitamin D and "The Rest of the Story"

This year there has been increased concern about getting influenza, especially with the more virulent form, H1N1, on the rise. People are rushing to get their flu shots, including the newer shot for those at high risk. Is there anything more we can do to protect ourselves other than good dietary and general health habits?

Would you believe that vitamin D can play a very important role in preventing the flu? Recent very reliable scientific studies have demonstrated not only the occurrence of influenza in connection with inadequate Vitamin D levels, but the protective effect of adequate vitamin D levels in preventing the flu, even the newer H1N1 influenza, swine flu.

For example, consider the experience of a long-term-facility in Wisconsin for people with developmental disabilities having 275 residents and 800 staff. The residents are regularly monitored for vitamin D levels and supplemented with Vitamin D, but the staff are not. In June 2009 only two residents developed an influenza-like illness and both tested positive for H1N1 influenza, whereas 103 of the 800 staff developed influenza-like

disease, and of those tested half were H1N1 positive.

The "rest of the story" is that vitamin D is not really a vitamin, but a type of hormone, which is involved in repair and maintenance of a multitude of body functions. Besides its role in preventing influenza, it has also been shown to have a role in preventing cancer, autism, asthma, multiple sclerosis, and cardiovascular disease.

For example, a study of 512 breast cancer patients followed for 10 years was reported in 2008. More than three-quarters of the women had vitamin D deficiency when diagnosed. The study demonstrated that, in the women with vitamin D deficiency, 94% were more likely to have their cancer spread, and 73% were more likely to die, in comparison with the women with normal levels.

The great majority of Americans today have inadequate levels of vitamin D. Why are we well-fed Americans so deficient in vitamin D? Our life-style today involves a lot more indoors activities, and when we do go outside, we are warned about sun exposure so we use sunscreens.

There are three options for treating vitamin D deficiency: sunlight,

BY RONALD KRUM, MD, MPH

artificial UVB light, and vitamin D supplements. Vitamin D is produced by a short exposure to sunlight, but there is very little benefit from winter sunlight for those in the northern hemisphere, which is why vitamin D supplements are needed, especially in the winter.

To be sure you have a safe level, ask your doctor to do a serum 25(OH)D level. For adequate protection, it should be between 40 and 70 ng/mL. Seniors and those with chronic illness such as cancer especially need the higher level of 70 ng/mL.

There are two types of vitamin D supplements: cholecalciferol (vitamin D 3) and ergocalciferol (vitamin D 2). Presently vitamin D 3 is the most effective form. Vitamin D 2, a vegan source, is less effective, but attempts are underway to produce a more reliable D 2.

If your doctor is not very familiar with this current information, share this article with him and refer him to the following scientifically reliable internet site: www.vitaminDcouncil.org.

'Chocolate Fetish' continued from pg. 18

home. While experts agree chocolate truffles are best eaten soon after they are made, they can travel if you take precautions to keep them at a cool, stable temperature. You'll know you've failed if your chocolate starts to turn white, which indicates that the cocoa butter has separated out of the blend.

This doesn't affect the taste but it does change the eye appeal. Ask your chocolatier to pack it for travel and try not to put it in your checked luggage, they should know what to do. If you plan to be traveling for a while it may be best to have them ship your order to coincide with your arrival home.

"Fine chocolates are like diamonds," Bill says. "Take care of them."

You can place your holiday orders now for delivery or for in store pick-up before Christmas. Bill encourages everyone to order early so they are sure to get what they want, sometimes they have difficulty keeping up with demand. Order online at www.chocolate-fetish.com or phone (828) 258-2353.

NOTE: Next month we'll be featuring Elizabeth Foley's secrets as she makes some of her artistic items.



Elizabeth adds the finishing touch to her chocolate heels.

Plus a preview of what she will be demonstrating at the Philadelphia Chocolate and Candy show in January 2010.

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'Brew Notes' continued from pg. 22

the yeast cell, yeast wasn't even considered and ingredient in beer.

Around 1888, Emile Hansen developed the process to isolate individual cells and grow pure yeast cultures. He created the first pure lager yeast which allowed brewers to make lagers on a planned basis. Prior to this, brewers stored ale under cold conditions and hoped for the best.

Ale yeast work at higher temperature, form colonies that float on water, ferment beer very quickly, and create a thick layer of foam; these are called top fermenting yeasts. The fermentation lasts from 4 - 10 days

Lager yeast work at lower temperatures, form colonies that sink, ferment beer very slowly; these are known as bottom fermenting yeasts. The fermentation lasts from 2 - 3 weeks



For five years, Joe Zinich has been taking a self-guided, high-intensity tour of Asheville's beer world. Contact him at: jjzinich@bellsouth.net

FLEET PHOSPHO-SODA ALERT

Oral Sodium Phosphate Laxatives can lead to dehydration and increase levels of phosphate in the kidneys which causes an overproduction of crystals that can damage the organs.



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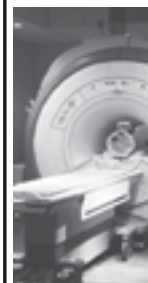
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MRI/MRA SCAN WARNING



A dye used with some MRI and MRA scans is linked to a serious disorder called Nephrogenic Systemic Fibrosis or NSF, also known as NFD. Symptoms of NSF include:

- **Swelling And Thickening Of The Skin** (Especially On The Arms Or Legs)
- **Joints Contract And Become Inflexible** (Especially The Hands, Wrists, And Elbows Or The Feet, Legs, And Knees)

Symptoms usually begin within a few days to several months after being injected with contrast dye. In some cases, NSF can be fatal. If you or a loved one suffered symptoms of NSF following a MRI or MRA scan, call James Rolhouse & Associates at 1-877-636-0495.

Lawyers at James Rolhouse & Associates are licensed in MN with principal offices in Burnsville MN and associate with experienced lawyers throughout the U.S.

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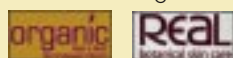
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"Culinary Showcase"
Award for
"Best Entree"
Four Times!

10 N. Market St.
254-4698

www.Vincenzos.com

Dinner • Mon. - Thurs. 5:30 - 10:00

Fri. & Sat. 5:30 - 11:00

Sunday 5:30 - 9:00

Reservations suggested.

