

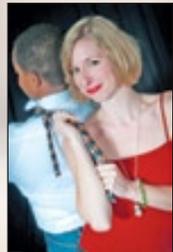
RAPID RIVER MAGAZINE

December 2011 • Vol. 15 No. 4

Arts & Culture

GREAT FINDS IN HISTORIC BILTMORE VILLAGE

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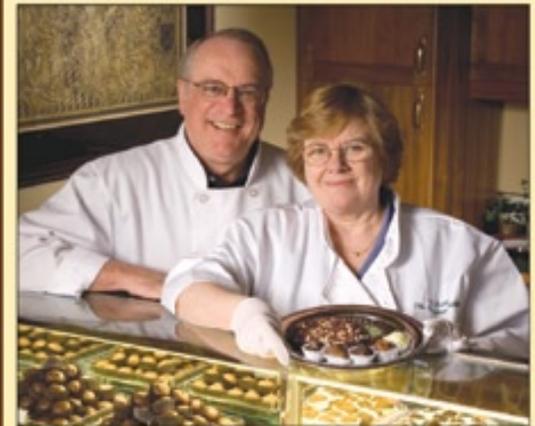
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The Asheville Ballet presents

the Nutcracker

Ann Dunn, Artistic Director



Diana Wortham Theatre ~ December 9 & 10 at 7:30 p.m. ~ December 10 & 11 at 2:30 p.m.



www.ashevilleballet.com

Tickets range from \$15 to \$50. *Group Rates Available.*
For reservations call the box office at (828) 257-4530

Give the perfect gift of dance lessons this holiday season. Call (828) 258-1028 for schedule and prices.

performance

The Asheville Ballet's

Nutcracker

A spectacular professional production of the full original ballet from Empirical Russia interpreted and performed by Asheville's own, and only, Professional Resident Ballet Company, directed by Ann Dunn.

The Asheville Ballet's Nutcracker has been a holiday tradition in Asheville for decades. Children and adults will be charmed yet again by ballet's greatest classic. This all-time favorite story of Clara's magical midnight trip to the Land of Sweets is classical ballet at its best. Snow will fall in the Snow Queen's kingdom, scary rats will frighten — then good soldiers will rescue — Clara, the exquisite Sugar Plum Fairy and her handsome Cavalier will dance their eternally lovely pas de deux, and beautiful flowers will waltz, and waltz, and waltz.

There is a direct historical line behind our production, from the original choreographer and teacher, Petipa and Vaganova, with the 19th century Russian Kirov Ballet; to their pupil, dancer/choreographer George Balanchine, with his 20th century New York City Ballet; to his pupil, dancer/choreographer Ann Dunn, with our very own 21st century The Asheville Ballet.

Asheville is fortunate to have a ballet company of this caliber. The community has, essentially, a year-long resident repertoire company of professional adult dancers. Seasoned ballet fans and novices alike have the opportunity to watch consummate artists perform a wide variety of roles, from classical to contemporary. Allison Hertzberg, Lyle Laney, Fleming Lomax, Amy Strickland, Jaimon Howell, Alan Malpass — these are names that stand for powerful, meaningful, memorable performances.

This year we are pleased to welcome back Allyssa Belcher, last year's popular Sugar Plum Fairy. Alyssa hails from Texas Ballet Theatre, Ben Stevenson Artistic Director, where she danced a variety of roles in *The Nutcracker*. Asheville will be privileged to enjoy her again as the delicate, breathtaking Sugar Plum Fairy, partnered by her Cavalier, Lyle Laney.

The Sugar Plum Fairy Pas de Deux is the final triumph in a ballet full of triumphant moments: Waltz of the Flowers, Chinese, Russian, Arabian, Spanish, Marzipan, and of course the ever popular Mother Ginger, whose gigantic skirt opens to allow eight little bonbons to pop out and dance.

Students from studios all over Western North Carolina perform every year in The Asheville Ballet's *Nutcracker*. This year we are especially pleased to announce a formal collaboration with the studio, Dance Revolution, Jodi Taylor Director. Not only will Jodi's advanced tap dancers be featured



as Toy Soldiers, fighting off the scary rats under the Christmas tree, Jodi herself will perform a non-stop, fast-footwork tap duet as the Lead Soldier. No wonder they defeat the evil Rat Queen. This sort of collaboration is just the beginning of a community-wide effort to unite local dancers.

The Asheville Ballet has built a reputation on the belief that dance plays a vital role in the education and culture of the community. As a key component of its Educational Outreach Program, The Asheville Ballet will perform its entire production of the holiday classic *The Nutcracker* for school children on Thursday December 9 at 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Seating is limited and is confirmed on a first come first served basis.

Thanks to generous patronage, we are able to offer children's tickets at \$5 again this year. This popular opportunity fills up

quickly. For reservations call or write Ann Dunn, Director at (828) 258-1028 or ann.dunn@mindspring.com.

The Asheville Ballet's *Nutcracker* is a perfect opportunity for young people to encounter professional classical dance and a wonderful, traditional story, in a real theatrical experience.



The Asheville Ballet performs The Nutcracker at Diana Wortham Theatre, December 9 and 10 at 7:30 and December 10 and 11 at 2:30, with two daytime school shows on December 8.

Tickets range from \$15 to \$50, with group rates available in all sections. For reservations call the box office at (828) 257-4530. For group rates and school shows call Ann Dunn, Director, at (828) 258-1028.

SHAKESPEARE GETS A FRESH, NEW MUSICAL TWIST

The Altamont Theatre takes something old and gives Asheville something new with "*Shakespeare Sings!*" — an original theatrical event conceived by acclaimed director, Francis Cullinan, highlighting Shakespeare's words alongside famous operatic settings of Shakespeare by great composers.

A co-production with AmiciMusic, the show brings the Bard's verse to life in an innovative and theatrical way, with musical interpretations of such works as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *Much Ado About Nothing* by composers such as Verdi, Tchaikovsky, Schubert, and Leonard Bernstein.

The show is a collaboration by operatic singer and actor Scott Joiner, pianist Daniel Weiser, with Cullinan as host. This unique trio will take the audience

on a cross-cultural odyssey through the expressive power of words and music.

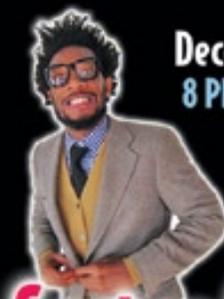
These forces will come together at the Altamont Theatre, Asheville's new professional black-box theatre. Says Cullinan, "The Altamont's intimate space truly lends itself to a closer relationship between audience and performer." This 120-seat space run by husband-and-wife team Brian Lee and Tiffany Hampton opened earlier this year. Wine and beer are available during the show.



IF YOU GO: Performances take place Thursday, December 1 at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, December 4 at 4 p.m.; Tuesday, December 6 at 7:30 p.m. For more information go to www.myaltamont.com or call (828) 348-5327.

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Stand-up
comedian
and internet
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Seaton Smith

Sunday, December 18
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RAPID RIVER MAGAZINE Arts & Culture

RAPID RIVER ARTS & CULTURE MAGAZINE

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Managing Editor: Beth Gossett
Marketing: Dennis Ray, Rick Hills
Staff Photographer: Liza Becker
Layout & Design: Simone Bouyer
Poetry Editor: Ted Olson
Proofreader: Mary Wilson
Accounting: Sharon Cole
Distribution: Dennis Ray

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:

James Cassara, Michael Cole,
Amy Downs, Beth Gossett,
Chall Gray, Max Hammonds, MD,
Phil Hawkins, Phil Juliano,
Chip Kaufmann, Michelle Keenan,
Eddie LeShure, Amanda Leslie,
Peter Loewer, Marcianne Miller,
April Nance, Ted Olson,
Michael Parker, Dennis Ray,
John Russell, Clara Sofia,
Rita Vermillion, Greg Vineyard,
Bill Walz, Joe Zinich.

INFO

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Paula Dawkins,
owner of Jewels
that Dance. See
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we love this place

The Black Mountain Center for the Arts presents the annual **Holly Jolly Clay Studio Annual Show and Sale** on **Friday, December 2** from 6-8 p.m. in the Upper Gallery at the Center for the Arts, 225 W. State Street. The Pottery Sale will be open until the Center closes for the holidays on December 23. The Gallery Pottery Show will continue through January 2012.



Pottery by
Charles Freeland



25th Annual Appalachian Potters Market takes place **Saturday, December 3**. The Appalachian Potters Market begins its twenty-fifth year with 66 potters under one roof. Each year, on the first Saturday in December, potters return to McDowell High School's commons area and gym transforming them into display and shopping spaces for potters and buyers. Market hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Collectors and holiday shoppers will find a wide array of wares suitable to expand private collections as well as for holiday gift giving.

Marion is located ten minutes north of I-40, one hour west of Hickory, 35 minutes east of Asheville, and 20 minutes south of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The main entrance to McDowell High School is located on Business Routes US 221 and NC 226 North of Marion, and US 70 West of Marion. Ample parking and handicapped accessible. \$4 admission. For more details call the McDowell Arts Council Association at (828) 652-8610.

Annual Holiday Ceramics and Art Sale from 4-7 p.m. **Friday, December 2** and 10 a.m.-2 p.m. **Saturday, December 3** in the S. Tucker Cooke Gallery in Owen Hall. A wide variety of functional and decorative items crafted by UNC Asheville students will be on sale with prices beginning at \$5. The sale is open to the public. For more information call (828) 251-6559.

Local Food and Gift Market at the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, 36 Montford Avenue. **Saturday, December 3, 10, and 17** from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Yes, you can still make your special holiday meals and party foods from the best, local ingredients!

Weaverville Business Association presents the **8th Annual Candlelight Stroll**, on **Friday, December 9**. Enjoy the warmth and spirit of the holiday season from 6 until 9 p.m. in downtown Weaverville. A charming small-town Christmas atmosphere.

Flat Rock's Tailgate Market is offering a very special **Annual Christmas Market, Saturday, December 10** from 2 to 5 p.m. in the area in front of Hubba Hubba Smokehouse and behind Hand in Hand Gallery along Little Rainbow Row in downtown Flat Rock (Highway 225, Greenville Highway). For more information please call (828) 697-7719.



The Handcrafted Holiday Market takes place at 91 Biltmore Ave., next to the Orange Peel in downtown Asheville. Open **through December 24**, gift wrapping available. Hours: Sun-Thurs 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Fri-Sat 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Extended hours to coincide with some Orange Peel performances.



Rapid River Magazine

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stage preview

The Magnetic Theatre's Holiday Hit Returns

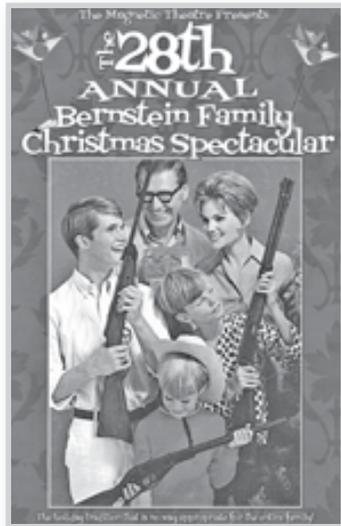
The 28th Annual Bernstein Family Christmas Spectacular!

The 28th Annual Bernstein Family Christmas Spectacular brings new material, long-lost family members, and the answer to the burning question: is Santa actually a communist?

The first production held at the Magnetic Field upon its opening last year was *The 27th Annual Bernstein Family Christmas Spectacular*. Returning now, the ever-lovable, drunken and entertaining Bernstein family will present some audience favorites from last year (including the much loved "Magic Corn," about the time Rudolph, despite warnings from other reindeer, dips his nose into the wrong type of feedbag, with disastrous consequences), and a host of new skits, songs and humorous commercials.

In one hilarious new skit we learn about the Occupy the North Pole movement that the elves have formed of late, and the question of whether Santa Claus is a communist is answered once and for all!

"We're thrilled that the family has been able to come together again, despite their many differences, to present their annual Spectacular at the Magnetic Field," said Steven Samuels, Artistic Director of the Magnetic Theatre. "It's exciting that this show is becoming a raunchy, fun, holi-



BY CHALL GRAY

day tradition for WNC." Featuring some of the area's most well-known actors, including Tracey Johnston-Crum, Mondy Carter, Trinity Smith and several others, this year's Spectacular is sure to be a fun holiday experience that is in no way appropriate for the entire family.

If last year's series of sellouts was any indication, getting tickets ahead of time would probably be a good idea.

The 28th Annual Bernstein Family Christmas Spectacular, written and directed by Mondy Carter & Karen Stobbe. Starring: Mondy Carter, Tracey Johnston-Crum, Mike Coghlan, Tabitha Hall, Glenn Reed, Trinity Smith, & Darren Marshall. Lighting design by Ryan Madden. Set design by Kevin Smith. Stage management by Katie Anne Towner. Produced by Chall Gray.

IF YOU GO *The 28th Annual Bernstein Family Christmas Spectacular. Tickets \$12/14. For tickets or reservations, visit www.themagneticfield.com, call (828) 668-2154, or stop by The Magnetic Field at 372 Depot Street in Asheville's River Arts District.*

'Seaton Smith' continued from page 6

SS: That's 'cause you are me.

Me: No reason to be a jerk about it! So why are you coming to Asheville.

SS: 'Cause I love Asheville! I've done the Laugh Your Asheville Comedy Festival here the last two years, and I've always loved the people! They get me. And then there's 12 Bones and the micro-brew beer.

Me: BBQ! Hecks yea.

SS: The people here are great! I did a small comedy show on the Lazoom bus last time I was here. And everyone was so drunk and fun. That's another thing I will do here.

Me: So your itinerary is as follows: 12 Bones; drinking beer at every bar possible.

SS: And two amazing comedy shows at The Altamont Theatre.

Seaton Smith applies a smooth charisma to a layer of explosive energy, topped off with unforgettable characters sure to permanently reside in your brain. Smith leaves his audience in a state of comedic euphoria. He has performed in the Opie and Anthony Virus tour, the New Faces show at the Just For Laughs Comedy Festival in Montreal, and he was a crowd favorite at the Laugh Your Asheville Off Comedy Festival. He is an internet phenom — signing a deal with Sierra Mist, he was able to showcase his chops at producing with the skit Pimpin' Referee. And he's a Youtube favorite with his popular webseries, *Annoy Charlie Smith Inc.*

IF YOU GO *Seaton Smith performs at The Altamont Theatre, December 16 and 17, hosted by Greg Brown. Tickets are \$12, www.myaltamont.com. Box office (828) 348-5327.*

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spinning discs

CD Reviews

by James Cassara

Wrapping up what has been a stellar year in music with a twist and a turn. Last month I focused on the pure pleasures of power pop. This go around, let's take a look and listen at the singer/songwriters who prefer to chart their own musical course. As always you are strongly encouraged to support one of the excellent independent record stores our area is so fortunate to have.



Shelby Lynne Revelation Road Everso Records

Since branching off with her own Everso imprint Shelby Lynne has been on a bit of a

tear. Within ten months she's released a pair of albums, embarked on a lengthy tour, participated on a few tribute albums, and worked with a wide range of other artists. So while it's clear she enjoys playing with others, Lynne throws us a curve ball by veering in an unexpected direction. Revelation Road is as solo as it gets, with the artist writing, producing, and performing virtually every note found within its grooves.

While her best songs have always tilted towards admissions of guilt and lust – with perhaps a bit of contrition mixed in – the eleven tracks that make up her latest are among the most personal and introspective of her long career. And while they might ostensibly fall under the all too easy category of Americana, there is far more here than meets the ear.

Since the runaway success of her 2000 masterwork I Am Shelby Lynne (which, although it was her sixth album, inexplicably garnered her a Grammy Award for best new artist) Lynne has earned a reputation as a no nonsense performer who plays the game her way, keeping her own story largely separate from the music. In that regards Revelation Road is a catharsis of sorts, an opportunity for her to confront the demons she's long kept hidden.

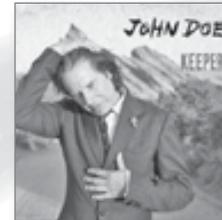
Foremost among those is the tragic murder of her mother, as Lynne and her sister watched, by their father, who subsequently took his own life. Few artists could find the courage to even write about such horror, let alone tastefully wrestle with the aftermath. But Lynne can. In "Heaven's Only Days Down the Road" she does so with a matter of fact clarity that is both startling and mournful. It's not an easy listen but it certainly is riveting.

The title track is a sound collage of mannered drum loops punctuated by twin mandolins, beautifully orchestrated gospel vocals (after all Lynne did grow up singing in the church choir) and a serpentine bass beat that threatens to blow the ceiling off the house. But at the core of its brilliance are Lynne's effortlessly expressive lyrics.

The rocking ballad "Woebegone" revives her gospel roots while "Lead Me Love" is the sort of off handed yet gorgeous romantic tune that reminds us again how

much Lynne's style is influenced by her love for the music of Dusty Springfield. By design Revelation Road has the cohesive feel of a meticulously assembled whole, but it never sounds the least bit forced or sterile. It moves seamlessly from one song to another, perfectly paced, and while the absence of a band makes it the quietest record of her sterling career it is by nature the most potent.

Even those who have disparaged Lynne – and there are certainly critics who too readily label her "yet another product of Nashville" – had better sit up and take notice. This is a fully assured album by an artist who knows precisely what she wants and has talent aplenty to achieve it. ****1/2



John Doe Keeper Yep Roc Records

Coming off his partnership with the Sadies, a merger that seemed to reignite

both him and the band he took under his wing, Keeper reintroduces us to John Doe, the punk informed roots rocker who, while continually tinkering with new sounds, always returns from whence he came.

From his earliest days as co-founder of X – one of the most influential groups this country has yet produced – through his numerous musical permutations, Doe has always been a team player. But it's his solo work that best reflects who he really is, and in that regards Keeper really shines.

Opening with the left/right punch of the country flared "Don't Forget How Much I Love You" and the punk rock ethos of "Never Enough," Doe lays the framework for what's to come: a combination of rustic ballads slid neatly between punkish tears of rage and desolation.

Even such low key numbers as "Little Tiger" and "Moonbeam" succeed, largely due to the strength of material and Doe's own subtle knack for song sequencing. Supported by a bevy of familiar studio aces, all of whom have long been associated with Doe, the performances are fresh and vigorous, with just the right balance of unity and impending disaster.

Producer Don Was coaxes the best out of all involved, and no doubt convinced Doe to leave off the filler material that sometimes plagues his albums. But this is John Doe's baby, and while in the liner notes he modestly credits "the singers and players who make this happen," he's still the go to guy. Along with 2009's Country Club John Doe has now

released two albums in a row that prove how even those approaching 60 can still maintain their punk rock integrity. Keeper most assuredly lives up to its name. ****



Chris Isaak Beyond the Sun Vanguard Records

Some albums are so obvious it's a wonder they didn't

exist before, and so it is with Beyond the Sun, a double-disc salute to the nascent rock & roll label Sun Records. Since his first album Isaak has never shied away from his love of Roy Orbison and Elvis Presley. It has in fact nuanced every aspect of his career. But this is the first time he's embraced their music in such a celebratory fashion.

While this is technically not a tribute to the Sun label itself (music aficionados have correctly pointed out that "Can't Help Falling in Love" was a post-Sun hit for Elvis) that really is beside the point. Likewise the songs don't all trace directly back to either Presley or Orbison; the welcome inclusion of numbers by Sun Records alumnus Warren Smith shows that Isaak is as much historian as fan, one whose appreciation of the past informs rather than dictates his present. Still, Sun Records was the house that Elvis built, and it is only fitting that the bulk of material here, both in numbers and approach, tilts in his direction.

Isaak is primarily a crooner and while his smoothing out of such torrid rockers as Carl Perkins' "Dixie Fried" and Jerry Lee's "Great Balls of Fire" might be off putting to some, he's smart enough to know his strengths and play to them. It's all about the groove, and what Beyond the Sun lacks in grit it more than compensates for in style and soul. ****1/2

John Wesley Harding The Sound of His Own Voice Yep Roc Records



In many ways starting his career with a pair of stunning releases (1988's It Happened One Night and the following year's Here Comes the Groom) has worked against John Wesley Harding. His subsequent efforts, while consistently solid and at times brilliant, have never quite

'CD's' continued on next page

what's happening

The Legendary John McCutcheon

BY JAMES CASSARA

Thanks to the tireless efforts of Don and Louise Baker, the Mountain Spirit Coffeehouse series has become one of the premiere listening experiences in our area.

Audiences are treated to first rate talent in a fine setting. Many could likely fill larger venues, but there is something special about playing in front of such appreciative audiences in a friendly surrounding.

During the time that the Bakers have promoted the non-profit shows (every penny of the ticket sales goes directly to the artists) they've managed to bring in some impressive names. None any more so than the great John McCutcheon; his forty year tenure as both a folk historian and children's performer has won him international acclaim.

He is one of the most prolific and respected artists of our time, a multi-instrumentalist whose career has been a lesson in self sufficiency. "We are honored to host the legendary John McCutcheon," says Louise. "After an absence of quite a few years John has chosen our venue to hold a concert and we couldn't be more excited!"

A native of Wisconsin, McCutcheon bought a mail order guitar before his tenth birthday and taught himself a few

simple chords. Enamored by the local folk scene, his interest quickly became more serious. Still in his later teens McCutcheon headed for Appalachia and learned from some of the legendary greats of traditional folk music.

Along the way, he became adept at a multitude of instruments, including fiddle, banjo, guitar, autoharp, jaw harp, and especially the hammered dulcimer. He is widely considered one of the undisputed masters on the hammered dulcimer and adapts much of his music around the instrument.

As a parent, McCutcheon wanted to share his passion with his offspring. However, he found most children's music "unmusical and condescending." In 1983, he sought to remedy that situation with his first release for Rounder, *Howjadoo*. Intending it to be the only children's record he'd make, he was genuinely surprised by its success and other children's albums followed.

His 1988 release, *Mail Myself to You*, featured several reinterpretations of classic



John McCutcheon Photo: Irene Young

folk songs. In McCutcheon's hands they seemed to find new life. *Family Garden* followed in 1993, with several original tunes including the evocative "Baseball on the Block."

McCutcheon also turned to producing and encouraging other folk and world musicians to address children as an audience. In 1995 he started a new series of children's albums with the release of *Summer Songs*, an album devoted to such seemingly mundane activities as yard work and haircuts. But in his capable hands the songs were anything but ordinary.

The following year saw the release of its companion *Winter Songs*, which earned McCutcheon his first Grammy nomination. Over the next decade McCutcheon moved ably from children's albums to adult oriented folk music. 2006's *Mightier than the Sword* was a literary effort, featuring collaborations with contemporary poets and fiction writers such as Wendell Berry, Rita Dove, and Barbara Kingsolver.

McCutcheon also came out with a children's audio book that year called *Christmas in the Trenches*, which won him his first Grammy in the children's spoken word category. *Hail to the Chief!* and *Stand Up!: Broadides for Our Times* came out the following year.

Clearly he shows no signs of slowing down, and if his own children are now into adulthood his early efforts have withstood the test of time. The great Johnny Cash once called McCutcheon "the most impressive instrumentalist I've ever heard."

"His show will be a treat for all ages," adds Louise. "He will be playing multiple instruments and inspiring us with his wide range of poignant, humorous and inspiring songs."



John McCutcheon plays the Mountain Spirit Coffeehouse on Sunday, December 4. Location:

UU Church of Asheville, 1 Edwin Place in Asheville. The doors open at 6:15 p.m., show from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Check for ticket availability by calling (828) 299-4171. Tickets available on line in advance at: www.uuasheville.org. Click on Coffee House. Tickets: \$22 adults, \$11 students.

'CD's' continued from page 8

lived up to such lofty standards.

Naming yourself for a Bob Dylan song might add to the allure but, coupled with being Britain's most prominent folk singer not named Billy Bragg, it has also kept Harding from achieving success equal to his talents. He's also lived a bit of a double life, publishing a trio of highly praised novels under his given name of Wesley Stace, as well as written numerous short stories and theatrical plays. This literate slant is a dual-edged sword, as one criticism of his songs is that they sound too damn erudite, heavy on the intellect but often short on soul. His tenth solo record should quiet such criticisms.

Co-produced by Scott McCaughey, whose work with R.E.M. and Robyn Hitchcock makes him a logical choice for Harding, *The Sound of My Own Voice* shows the more comfortable side of the artist, one whose instincts for pop songwriting, catchy lyrics, and irresistible hooks are as boundless as they are beautifully crafted. McCaughey brings in an impressive list of guests, including Peter Buck,

Rosanne Cash, Chris Funk, Jenny Conlee, and members of the Decemberists, and Harding responds with the strongest collection of songs he's delivered in years.

Between the glimmering "Uncle Dad," the ballsy rock of "Calling Off the Experiment," or the R&B drenched "I Should Have Stopped," there's hardly time to catch one's breath. Just as soon as you think Harding has outdone himself he ups the ante, not satisfied until he's blown the roof off the house with the grand finale of "The World in Song."

Harding's literary efforts have obviously helped hone his already impressive lyrical gifts but while his word play is as ingenious as ever he's learned when to scale back and let the song carry itself. There's not a forced or awkward moment to be heard, and the warmth of his voice plays beautifully against the vulnerability of his characters. Even more smartly is how the guests are utilized: They're not here as mere window dressing, but rather perfectly matched to the songs on which they play.

The result is an album that not only justifies the promise of his first two, but actually surpasses it. It seems that by regulating his

musical career to part time status John Wesley Harding is better able to step back and self edit his work. It might mean fewer albums but if they're half as good as this one it's an exchange I am willing to take. ★★★★★



Tyler Ramsey The Valley Wind Fat Possum Records

Asheville native Tyler Ramsey joined Band of Horses

at just the right time, shortly before they began an extensive tour in support of *Cease to Begin* and just at a time that founding member Ben Bridwell seemed ready to take on a full fledged musical partner. Replacing Mat Brooke was no easy task but Ramsey proved more than equal to the challenge. He quickly took on a much larger role with the band – his sonic touch can be heard throughout the majestic *Infinite Arms* – but he's always insisted that his solo releases were no less important to him.

With *The Valley Wind* he backs that assertion up, giving full evidence that his

success with *Horses* was far more than being in the right place at the right time. Tyler has never shied away from his love of acoustic finger picking and rustic temperament. Listening to *The Valley Wind* its hard not to envision early 70's Neil Young or Emmett Rhodes. But at the same time it reinforces his own influence over the band that adopted him.

At times the eleven songs that comprise this brisk (barely 30 minutes) album sound like demos for the next *Band of Horses* release; they comfortably inhabit a space between Americana and country-rock while producer Bill Reynolds helps Ramsey flesh out what are often not much more than ideas into full fledged songs.

Such gentle persuasions as "1000 Black Birds" and "Angel Band" are nicely amped up with a bit of heavy reverb, but be forewarned: If you're craving the sort of anthem-like songwriting that elevated *Infinite Arms* to such heights you'll likely be disappointed. But taken on its own terms *The Valley Wind* is a bucolic and engaging listen, revealing an artist whose best work certainly is yet to come. ★★★

music

Beirut at the Orange Peel

BY JAMES CASSARA



Beirut Photo: Kristianna Smith

Having followed 2007's *The Flying Club Cup* – a musical love letter to France and its people – with an equally compelling nod to our Southern border friends in Mexico (2009's *Zapotec EP*), it's only natural to speculate where Beirut's leader Zach Condon's songs would land next.

Like a musical version of *Dora the Explorer*, Condon welcomes each new adventure with genuine gusto and wonderment, yet few might have predicted the inward journey he's chosen. Witness the recently released *The Rip Tide*, a collection of tracks filled with introspection, keen observation, and the sort of memorable (and deliciously quirky) songs for which he is already known. Its nine songs speak of love, friendship, isolation, and community, in both universal and deeply personal terms.

At a mere quarter century of age Condon has assembled an album exposing a depth of honesty that outstrips the simplified nomadic troubadour image of his past. Musically it marks a distinct leaping

off point for Beirut. The songs have an immediacy that contrasts the complexities of his previous (and at times overwrought) compositions.

It seems Condon has mastered the subtle art of emotional addition via textural subtraction.

One of 2006's most unexpected indie success stories, Beirut combines a wide variety of styles, from pre-rock/pop music and Eastern European Gypsy styles to the alternately plaintive and whimsical indie folk of the Decemberists to the lo-fi, homemade psychedelic experimentation of Neutral Milk Hotel.

At the heart of this sonic hybrid was a teenager from Albuquerque, New Mexico, not exactly known as a musical Mecca, making *Gulag Orkestar*, all the more surprising. Something of a prodigy, multi-instrumen-

talist Zach Condon began making one-man do-it-yourself bedroom recordings in his early teens; several years later he claimed to have recorded an entire

album of '50s-style doo-wop material and a collection of electronic pop songs inspired by the Magnetic Fields, a claim I'd be hesitant to challenge. Indeed, Condon's dolorous vocal delivery and low, somewhat shaky pitch owes more than a nod to the Fields' Stephin Merritt.

After dropping out of high school, Condon claims to have traveled through Europe at the age of 16, in the process becoming exposed to the Balkan folk and Gypsy music that's at the heart of *Gulag*. Back home in Albuquerque, he crossed paths with fellow New Mexican Jeremy Barnes

(formerly of Neutral Milk Hotel), whose own albums share similarly ethnographic interests with Condon's.

With the help of Barnes and his musical partner Heather Trost, Condon recorded the songs that would make up Beirut's debut largely on his own, playing accordion, keyboards, saxophone, clarinet, mandolin, ukulele, horns, glockenspiel, and percussion along with Barnes' drums and Trost's cello and violin. After an early version of the album was offered to the smallish Ba Da Bing! Records label, the newly christened band was offered a deal.

Condon moved from Albuquerque to Brooklyn, where he put together a floating collective of part-time band members for live performances. Following the release of *Gulag Orkestar* Condon was (perhaps unfairly) pegged as a one-man cross between Jeff Mangum, Conor Oberst, and Sufjan Stevens. The EP *Lon Gisland* followed soon thereafter, which lead up to *The Flying Club Cup* later that year. Since then Condon has achieved a level of productivity that would make Ryan Adams envious.

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WNC Jazz Profiles: *Liberated State*

BY EDDIE LESHURE

Liberated State was formed in the spring of 2010 when trumpeter Sean Smith and vibraphonist Jason DeCristofaro met one another at a jazz jam in Asheville.

Sean and I played a version of *Butterfly* together at the jam, and upon hearing each other's musical approach we both realized we had similar musical views," says DeCristofaro. "Instantly, we formed a close friendship and musical collaboration."

The first show was at the now closed Rocket Club in West Asheville, where two of the band's current members first joined the group. Jason knew that Matt Getman and Micah Thomas were the logical choices to fill the saxophone and drum set positions.

"Matt has a unique and beautiful sound that provided a perfect contrast to Sean's aggressive playing. Immediately, I knew Micah was the drummer for the group with his fearless, creative and energetic approach." By the end of that summer, Daniel Iannucci rounded out the ensemble by becoming its bassist. "Daniel is one of the most intuitive musicians I've ever met and is the heart beat of the whole ensemble, plus he's written some excellent compositions for the group."

The band's sound is a unique one which was no accident. "Sean and I revere the Miles Davis Quintet – they're the group that we continue to aspire to

be like. The sound of a trumpet and tenor saxophone playing the melody, supported by aggressive and exciting drums and bass was something we firmly decided upon from the onset. The only difference was that we had a vibraphone playing chords instead of a piano."

To expand the sound palette, the band often features conguero/percussionist Isaac Wells and guitarist Shane Perlowin, known for his work with the Ahleuchatistas.

"The band's popularity has wildly exceeded our expectations," says Jason. "Sean and I started the group as a way of playing our compositions with an ensemble, and we never imagined doing anything more than a couple of shows at local galleries annually. The praise the group has received has been a pleasant surprise!"

The success of *Liberated State* is surprising considering its purpose as an ensemble. "Nothing is off limits – Sean and I are mad scientists taking aspects of all the different genres we're inspired by to create something that's entirely new." Among the fused works are Smith's compositions "Moonbloom," a minimalist/aleatoric work in the style of Steve Reich, as well as "Dervish," which combines melodic aspects of Middle Eastern music with Afro-beat



Liberated State Photo: Frank Zipperer

rhythms. DeCristofaro's "Anansi," is based on West African rhythmic groupings and his composition "Pop Hit" is a combination of R&B and Gospel melodies altered by very dissonant and impressionistic harmonies.

"Some of the music the band does is jazz, but Sean and I have very eclectic tastes, so many of our compositions are influenced by other genres, notably world music, R&B and contemporary classical idioms." The ensemble is dedicated to discovering new musical ideas, creating a global and hybridized sound for the 21st century.

"Humanity is at a unique point in its history right now – we're experiencing the effects of a truly global culture. It's our hope that our music represents a melting pot of ideas where something new is created. Creating something entirely new that doesn't neatly fit into a category is always risky, and it was the reason Sean and I initially never saw the group being as successful as it's

become. Ironically enough though, I think this is the very thing that's drawn so many people to our music." DeCristofaro adds, "Being in a city like Asheville that's so rich in culture has allowed us to create our art in a supportive environment that appreciates and understands what we're setting out to accomplish."

"I've been following this band for over a year as a lover of jazz and as a photographer shooting live music in WNC. *Liberated State* simply gets better and better each time I hear them. These musicians form a tight group who love to play music with each other, and their fans can feel the energy they generate with each piece of original music they perform."

~ Frank Zipperer, *The Music Shooter*

www.reverbnation.com/liberatedstate



Share Eddie LeShure's passion for jazz with **Jazz Unlimited on MAIN FM** each Wednesday 7-10 p.m., at 103.5 or MAIN-FM.org.

Reel Take Reviewers:

MICHELLE KEENAN is a long time student of film and a fundraiser for public radio.

CHIP KAUFMANN is a film historian as well as a program host on WCQS-FM.

Both are members of the Southeastern Film Critic's Association (SEFCA).



Illustration of Michelle & Chip by Brent Brown.

BRENT BROWN is a graphic designer and illustrator. View more of his work at www.brentbrown.com.



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

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Questions/Comments?
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Blackthorn

Short Take: Old school Western speculates on what would have happened if Butch Cassidy had lived to a ripe old age.

REEL TAKE: Once a mainstay of American movies, the Western has all but disappeared over the last 30 years. Attempts by high profile stars like Clint Eastwood (*Unforgiven*), Kevin Costner (*Open Range*), and Brad Pitt (*Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford*) to revive the genre ultimately failed to do so but they did provide us with some thought provoking films filled with fine performances. *Blackthorn* is another addition to that short list of films.

Actor-playwright Sam Shepard, who at 68 has aged wonderfully, portrays James Blackthorn, an alias used by the legendary Butch Cassidy, who we learn did not die in Bolivia in 1908 even though the Sundance Kid did. He has managed to maintain a low profile breeding horses there while keeping in touch with family members back in the U.S. Wanting to return home to see them before he dies, he sells his horses and sets out only to be sidetracked by an inexperienced young criminal (Eduardo Noriega).

Most of the rest of the film follows their adventures together culminating in something of a surprise but ultimately satisfying ending. Adding spice to the mix, in another one of his patented idiosyncratic performances, is Irish actor Stephen Rea as a Pinkerton man who never really believed Cassidy died. The film essentially belongs to these three characters and becomes, like a number of classic Westerns, a eulogy to a vanished way of life and those still adhering to it.

In addition to the fine performances, another thing that *Blackthorn* shares with a number of great Westerns from the past is its beautiful cinematography. Shot on location in Bolivia (for financial reasons as well as for authenticity), the film is full of beautiful landscape images that recall John Ford and Sergio Leone. The photography



Sam Shepard is terrific as an aging Butch Cassidy in the highly regarded Western *Blackthorn*.

from Juan Ruiz Anchia by itself is worth the price of admission.

If you combine it with the performances of everyone involved, along with a fine music score from Lucio Godoy and tight direction from one time screenwriter Mateo Gil (*The Sea Inside*), then you have an unqualified winner that should

please non-Western fans and that deserves to be much better known than it is. Unfortunately by the time you read this, *Blackthorn* will have already left the local cinema so keep a sharp eye out for the DVD release which should be just around the corner.

Rated R for violence and language.

REVIEW BY CHIP KAUFMANN

Hugo

Short Take: Martin Scorsese's first 3-D film is visually stunning and a love letter to cinema but some family audiences may find it slow and uninvolving.

REEL TAKE: James Cameron has stated in interviews that *Hugo* features the best 3D photography he has ever seen and that includes his own film *Avatar*. That's quite a recommendation. A mainstream audience will enjoy the movie for that reason alone but those who are aware of film history will be able to get a lot more out of it.

Based on a bestselling book by Brian Selznick and set in 1931, *Hugo* tells the story of a 12 year old boy (Asa Butterfield) who lives inside the clock room of a Paris railway station. Also in the station is a sad old man (Ben Kingsley) who runs a small toy shop there. After getting caught for stealing parts from him, Hugo begins an adventure that will change both of their lives.



Asa Butterfield and Chloe Grace Moretz discover the joy of movies in Martin Scorsese's 3D adventure film *Hugo*.

It turns out that the toy vendor was once a famous movie director during the early days of cinema but who has now been totally forgotten. With Hugo's help and that of the vendor's ward (Chloe Grace Moretz), his wife (Helen McCrory) and a shy film scholar (Michael Stuhlbarg), things take a turn for the better with ultimate vindication but not until there are several trials and tribulations.

Based on the story of real life French filmmaker Georges Melies, who was a fantasy and special effects pioneer (his 1902 film *A Trip to the Moon* has the iconic shot of the Man in the Moon with a rocket ship stuck in his eye), *Hugo* is also about a subject that is dear to Martin Scorsese's heart...film preservation.

Scorsese is first and foremost a filmmaker and he uses this opportunity to give us a quality mystery/adventure story that incorporates the 3D process into its very being. *Hugo* features camera tricks and editing techniques that are a clinic all by themselves. It also has a powerhouse supporting cast that includes Sacha Baron Cohen, Jude Law, Emily Mortimer, Richard Griffiths, and even the 89 year old Christopher Lee.

The only problem I see with *Hugo* is that it's being marketed as family entertainment, which it is, but it is far more likely to appeal to adults than it is to children. It has several characters with their own stories and it has a deliberate sense of pace that will make it difficult for children and some adults to keep up with.

Hugo is the type of film that doesn't require repeated viewings but it will be enhanced by them. See it on the big screen if you can and in 3D. This is one movie that is worth that extra expense.

Rated PG for thematic material, action/peril, and some smoking.

REVIEW BY CHIP KAUFMANN



Leonardo DiCaprio is almost unrecognizable in Clint Eastwood's bio pic *J. Edgar*.

J. Edgar

Short Take: Biopic about J. Edgar Hoover directed by Clint Eastwood

REEL TAKE: Going in to Clint Eastwood's *J. Edgar*, I had misgivings. Eastwood is a powerful director and DiCaprio's performance looked strong. Still, Hoover was such a loathsome character, I couldn't imagine sitting through it. However loathsome that character may have been, he was an enigma in many ways and a curiosity to many.

J. Edgar spans more than half a century, tracing Hoover's life from his early career to his death. Eastwood dances between what is known fact and what is believed to be more than just idle speculation. What we do know is that the man who dealt the hand of judgment and justice to so many others had secrets about his own life that, if known, could have destroyed his career.

Leonardo DiCaprio plays the titular character. Supporting actors Judi Dench, Naomi Watts and Armie Hammer round out his trusted inner circle – his mother, his assistant, and his assistant director of the FBI and purported lover. Eastwood succeeds at extracting amazing performances from his cast. Makeup is responsible for DiCaprio's physical transformation, but there is something else in DiCaprio's performance where he surrenders to the role; you are hard pressed to find any trace of DiCaprio in much of the film. That said however, you are also hard pressed to find Armie Hammer beneath his makeup as well, but this doesn't seem to be for any more profound reason than they used leftover makeup from *The English Patient*.

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film reviews

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J. Edgar's relationship with his mother and relationship with Clyde Tolson are fascinating, and do not seem far fetched given what we do know. Both relationships, however, are quite tragic in a sense. His mother was so proud of her son in so many ways, but no matter his power or accomplishments, she would never have permitted a 'daffodil' for a son. We then have a severely repressed homosexual man hiding his truth from the public and from himself.

Eastwood succeeds brilliantly in crafting a biopic that shows the horror and humanity of perhaps the most insidiously powerful man in 20th Century America. The result is a fact-based yet probing portrait. Much to my amazement and chagrin Eastwood earned my empathy for J. Edgar Hoover. He doesn't shy away from Hoover's flaws, ambition, or hypocrisies, but he gives us his interpretation of why Hoover was the way he was. In the end we don't even know if Hoover knew the difference between fact and fiction in his own life, but we have a more human portrait that doesn't pick sides.

J. Edgar hasn't fared so well with critics, though I am really at a loss as to why. (maybe it's that make-up job on Armie Hammer). From what I've seen so far, it is surviving on world of mouth. Everyone I know (critics and civilians) who has seen it has been pleas-

Theatre Directory

Asheville Pizza & Brewing Company

Movieline (828) 254-1281
www.ashevillepizza.com

Beaucatcher Cinemas (Asheville)

Movieline (828) 298-1234

Biltmore Grande

1-800-FANDANGO #4010
www.REGmovies.com

Carmike 10 (Asheville)

Movieline (828) 298-4452
www.carmike.com

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Flat Rock Theatre (Flat Rock)

Movieline (828) 697-2463
www.flatrockcinema.com

Four Seasons (Hendersonville)

Movieline (828) 693-8989

Smoky Mountain Cinema (Waynesville)

Movieline (828) 452-9091

antly surprised, even taken aback by how much they liked it and how intriguing they found it. *J. Edgar* is beautifully filmed well told. It should certainly be in the running for some awards in the coming months. See it if you can. It will no doubt surprise you.

Rated R for brief strong language.

REVIEW BY MICHELLE KEENAN



Aaron Yelchin and Felicity Jones at the beginning of their long distance relationship in Drake Doremus' comedy-drama *Like Crazy*.

Like Crazy 🍷🍷🍷 1/2

Short Take: This documentary-like look at relationship between a British foreign exchange student and her American boyfriend has its moments but ultimately fails to impress.

REEL TAKE: The idea of a film that would portray a relationship honestly is hardly something new, but the advance word on *Like Crazy* is that it would be something different. Doing something different, however, doesn't always equate with doing something well. *Like Crazy* isn't a bad movie but ultimately it's an uninvolved one.

Writer-director Drake Doremus takes a quasi-documentary approach to the story of Anna (Felicity Jones), a British exchange student and the American boy Jacob (Aaron Yelchin) she meets in one of her college classes. They start up a romance which blossoms into a relationship that is interrupted when her visa expires. She winds up getting deported with no immediate hope of return. Back in England she finds a job writing for a magazine while he designs and builds furniture (the title refers to a chair that Jacob made for Anna).

They miss each other at first but gradually they get on with their lives including becoming involved with other people. As she can't come to the U.S. he decides to go to the U.K. and they get married in a civil ceremony. Eventually he has to return but she can't go with him due to her visa problem. Once again they drift apart and into other relationships but they just can't seem to forget each other. She finally makes it to the U.S. and they get back together but will it last?

The best thing *Like Crazy* has going for it are a number of fine performances. In addition to Jones and Yelchin, Alex Kingston and Oliver Muirhead as Anna's bemused parents, no matter what Anna does, light up the

screen whenever they're on. Jennifer Lawrence and Charlie Bewley as the respective "others" give solid and sincere performances.

The major flaw with *Like Crazy*, and it's a major one, is that I cared more for the other characters than I did for the principals. Director Doremus should have told screenwriter Doremus that if you don't care about the two main characters in a movie about the ups and downs of a long distance relationship then your ultimate reaction after leaving the theatre is going to be "So what?"

The "day-in-the-life" approach, combined with a few clever visual tricks like speeding up the action in an airport while one character never moves, keeps *Like Crazy* from becoming boring but it can't overcome the flaws in the script. The ending of the film almost redeemed it for me but not quite. As has often been the case with so many movies of late, I ultimately wasn't moved by what I saw and it wound up having no staying power.

Rated PG-13 for sexual content and brief strong language.

REVIEW BY CHIP KAUFMANN

Melancholia 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Short Take: A beautiful, albeit pretentious meditation on life, love and depression just as the world is about to end.



Kirsten Dunst faces the end of days in *Melancholia*.

REEL TAKE: Lars von Trier's (*Dogville*, *Breaking the Waves*) latest film is a painstakingly beautiful ode to depression, relationships and the end of the world. Set just days before a rogue planet (ironically called Melancholia) collides with Earth, the film tells the story of the strained relationship between two sisters. Justine is impetuous, beautiful and manic depressive. Claire (Charlotte Gainsbourg) is Justine's rock and sounding board. She cares about others and she cares about appearances. She has also married into an unbelievable life of privilege.

The film is broken into three parts; an esoteric Wagnerian opening, a chapter called 'Justine' and a chapter called 'Claire'. The opening is a highly stylized, intriguing yet pretentious and not just a little tedious sequence. Without ever really explaining the goings on, the two chapters give us perspective on the lives of our subjects. Justine's chapter is the wedding sequence, and it lasts

longer than the marriage does. We learn that the sisters have a loving but less-than-successful father (John Hurt) and a too-smart-to-believe-in-anything, cold fish of a mother (Charlotte Rampling). Claire's husband, John (Keifer Sutherland) is a man of business, science and massive wealth. Justine's new husband (Alexander Skarsgard) naively loves his troubled wife.

Claire's chapter takes place post wedding. They are now just days from the intersection of Earth and Melancholia. Claire is terrified that the world is about to end, but is trying to care for Justine who is barely functioning after one of her episodes. Meanwhile John tries to calm Claire, citing the passing of Melancholia as a once-in-a-lifetime event, insisting that the planet will merely pass by. As the fate of the world hangs over them, they all go about each day, trying to connect with one another.

Reports so far say that *Melancholia* is a movie that you either love or hate. By and large this is true. People who are attracted to this movie are about its only audience. For the rest, the opening sequence alone is enough to send some running towards the doors, especially if they were already subjected to Terrence Malick's *Tree of Life* earlier this year.

Melancholia is beautifully filmed and well acted. The movie belongs to Dunst, but Sutherland turns in a particularly good performance in an understated, supporting role. Supporting cast members, including Stellan Skarsgard, also turn in fine performances. Unfortunately, the story did nothing to make me care for its main character. In fact, not only did I not like Justine, I felt absolutely no empathy for her, and felt only a tad of empathy for those around her.

Bottom line, *Melancholia* is a little too esoteric and pretentious for my taste. I have never particularly gravitated to the Scandinavian filmmakers in general. That said, *Melancholia* did stay with me for a while, and it was intriguing to see. If *Melancholia* is your cup of tea, see it soon. It will not have the kind of audience that will keep it in the theatres for very long.

Rated R for some graphic nudity, sexual content and language.

REVIEW BY MICHELLE KEENAN

The Artist 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Short Take: This 21st century take on the silent movie is a valentine to Old Hollywood and to film lovers everywhere.

REEL TAKE: If things pan out the way they should then you should be able to catch this film in Asheville before the year is out. The Weinstein Company plans to release it briefly later this month so that it can qualify for the upcoming 2012 Academy Awards. After its very enthusiastic reception at the recently

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film reviews

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Jean Dujardin and Berenice Bejo invite you to relive the silent era in the award winning *The Artist*.

concluded Asheville Cinema Festival, a local showing seems assured.

French director Michel Hazanavicius, who also wrote the screenplay, wanted to take on the challenge of making a silent film, complete with black and white photography and title cards, in the 21st century. To say that he succeeded brilliantly would be an understatement. It has won numerous awards (including audience favorite) at various film festivals all over the world and received a 20 minute standing ovation at Cannes.

The setting is 1927 Hollywood. Silent superstar George Valentin (patterned after Douglas Fairbanks Senior and played by French actor Jean Dujardin) is about to be caught up in the transition to sound. While he is dealing with this crisis, young extra Peppy Miller (Berenice Bejo) to whom George had given her first opportunity, makes the transition to sound and is on her way up. The parallel to *A Star is Born* is obvious as are countless other references to classic Hollywood movies like *Citizen Kane* and *The Thin Man*, and that's part of the film's appeal to a modern day audience.

Along with the French performers, there are prominent roles for two veteran American character actors. John Goodman plays the Hollywood studio head, complete with fat cigar, while James Cromwell is George's loyal chauffeur (a reference to *Sunset Boulevard*). Both adapt themselves to the silent medium perfectly.

I could easily spend the rest of this review citing the various old movie references but *The Artist* is much more than just a simple homage. It's also a heartwarming story of two people headed in different directions with a healthy dose of old school comedy, where clever is king, thrown in. It also contains one of the most charming and erotic scenes ever captured on film with Berenice Bejo and an empty coat.

Right now, as we go to press with this final 2011 issue, I can unequivocally say that *The Artist* is my number one film of the year. Along with Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris*, it is in a class by itself. Speaking of *Midnight in Paris*, if you loved that film (and it played here for 20 weeks!) then you will love *The*

Breaking Dawn: Part 1 🍿🍿1/2

Breaking Dawn: Part 1 continues the mawkish love story between 18-year-old Bella Swan (Kristen Stewart) and her vampire boyfriend Edward (Robert Pattinson). This time around there's a baby. That's right; at only eighteen years old, Bella gets married and creates a half-vampire spawn. After a romantic and drawn-out honeymoon in Brazil, Bella struggles for her life as her dangerous baby grows inside her. While *Breaking Dawn: Part 1* is not a terrible movie, I doubt I would go to see it again if given the chance.

Bella and Edward's wedding takes up a sizable chunk of the film, and neither lead actor has the sufficient chops to carry the film during the honeymoon scenes. Kristen Stewart almost always wears the same

halfwit expression, and Robert Pattinson tries to appear cool and moody but often looks mildly constipated. Meanwhile, Taylor Lautner decently plays hunky werewolf Jacob but, sadly, has a smaller part in the film. After the impressive battle scenes in *Eclipse*, viewers will be disappointed by the lack of action in *Breaking Dawn: Part 1*. However, I do not entirely blame the actors or the crew for the film's mediocrity. When I first read the book, I was disgusted by the turn the plot took.



Edward (Robert Pattinson) and Bella (Kristen Stewart) await the birth of their baby in *Breaking Dawn: Part 1*

Not only does Bella's pregnancy make for a slow story, it sends an irresponsible message to adolescents. If you are a *Twilight* fan, then obviously you're

going to see *Breaking Dawn: Part 1*. If you don't know the franchise or feel half-hearted about it then I would find something else to see. However, I must admit that my friend and I had a lot of fun mocking the movie. Though the film has a PG-13 rating, parents should exercise caution because the birth scene is particularly gory. Bottom line: there are better romances, and there are better action/adventure films. If you're not a fan then be

wise and save your money.

Rated PG-13 for disturbing images, violence, sexual/partial nudity, and thematic elements.

TEEN REVIEW

by Clara Sofia



Artist and if you show it that kind of support, then who knows? Maybe its limited engagement in Asheville will last that long.

Rated PG-13 for some disturbing images and a crude gesture.

REVIEW BY CHIP KAUFMANN

The Descendants 🍿🍿🍿

Short Take: A man works to reconnect with his family after his wife is in a boating accident.

REEL TAKE: Usually there's quite a media buzz prior to a Clooney movie opening. With Alexander Payne's *The Descendants* there seemed to be far less media circus than the norm. It opened in fairly limited release with great critical notices, though not much attention from E-News. I suspect as we move into awards season the buzz will increase as will Clooney appearances.

Directed and written by *Sideways* director Alexander Payne, *The Descendants* tells the story of a father trying to keep his family together after his wife suffers a boating accident. Clooney, who for my money is a formidable filmmaker and actor, gives one of his finest performances to date. It's an atypical role for the confirmed bachelor, but the tone of the performance is not.

Payne's films often resonate with the vulnerability of the human spirit, nor does he shy away from people's flaws. This film certainly shares those attributes but it also has a palpable realism to it that I didn't get from his other films.

Clooney is Matthew King, a successful lawyer, land baron and the descendant of a great Hawaiian king. He's married with



George Clooney, Shailene Woodley and Amara Miller in *The Descendants*.

two daughters and, as is often the case with successful businessmen, he's a unknowingly detached from his marriage and home life. When his wife suffers a life threatening injury from a boating accident he finds himself thrust to the forefront of the family scene. What he hadn't fully realized was how fractured their family had become, especially his marriage.

When faced with terminating her life support he begins a journey of healing and forgiving. The journey is tragically sad, yet often funny; Payne succeeds in striking and effective and subtle balance. Unlike *Melancholia* (see review on page 12) there's not a wink of pretentiousness here. These characters are real and even in their worst moments we care about them.

As if end-of-life decisions and wrangling his broken family were not enough, Matthew is also the trustee of thousands of acres of virgin Hawaiian land in Kauai; the financial fate of his fellow descendants and the commercial fate of the island rests on his shoulders. The question doesn't seem to be should they sell, but to whom. When a detail emerges from land deal that connects back

to the immediate story at hand, everything is clear, including his path.

Clooney's narrative is strong and is an engaging tool for the audience. His scenes with his young co-stars are equally strong. The film is well paced; it moves along, but still has a feeling that time has stopped while they grapple with the situation, just another subtle nuance. The film is well written and wonderfully acted. Last but not least, it's a bit of a love letter to Hawaii.

I saw *The Descendants* with my mother. We rarely get to see one another let alone see movies together. This was a wonderful movie to see with a family member. It made an excellent film a special experience.

Rated R for language, brief drug use and sexuality

REVIEW BY MICHELLE KEENAN

The Rum Diary 🍿🍿🍿

Short Take: The film adaptation of Hunter S. Thompson's first novel.

REEL TAKE: Even with Johnny (Captain Jack Sparrow) Depp in the lead of Bruce Robinson's *The Rum Diary*, box office receipts have not been particularly hot. With reviews also lukewarm, *The Rum Diary* has been largely overlooked. While not a great movie, it is certainly entertaining and is deceptively good.

Based on Hunter S. Thompson's first novel by the same name, the story takes place in 1959 Puerto Rico. Paul Kemp is a novelist of dubious credentials who's been picked up as a reporter for a rag tag American paper in San Juan. Hung over and rum-soaked,

'Movies' continued on page 14

film reviews

'Movies' continued from pg. 13

he makes a bad first impression on his new editor, Lotterman (the always great Richard Jenkins) and is quickly assigned to writing the astrology column and tourism puff pieces. Kemp is quickly introduced to a colorful cast of characters, not the least of which are the Michael Rispoli as Sala, the paper's photographer, and Giovanni Ribisi as Moburg, the paper's elusive, madly eccentric and Hitler-loving lead reporter. He also meets Sanderson (Aaron Eckhart), an American businessman poised to invest in and capitalize on the exploitation of Puerto Rican Tourism.

With his immersion to life in Puerto Rico comes two different worlds. The first is the world of the freelance reporter – home grown hooch, ratty apartments, beater cars and cock fights. The second is Sanderson's glamorous world – wealth, sweet living, big business, and corruption. Kemp's booze riddled wild ride through both worlds is enough to make Mr. Toad pale. Kemp himself is torn between the opportunity to prosper from Sanderson's plans and his obligation to expose Sanderson's plans to the Puerto Rican people. Sanderson's world has one last hold on him – a stunningly beautiful blond. Will journalistic integrity, love or greed win the battle? You'll have to see it to find out.

The film is beautiful. It's a time capsule to a bygone tropical paradise, perhaps only able to be glimpsed now in Havana and in parts of old San Juan. This alone is worth the price of admission. The project was obviously a labor of love for Johnny Depp, who was not just a fan of Hunter S. Thompson, but a friend. There has been some criticism that he's too old to play Kemp. If you didn't know how old Depp was the thought wouldn't even cross your mind, and

for my money it's an irrelevant point. The supporting cast is fantastic. It's the nuggets of Thompson's observations and what the cast does with their parts that elevate this movie. The story is linear, easy to follow and entertaining; it may even be a little too linear for its own good. It is flawed to be sure, but it has moments of greatness.

The Rum Diary is essentially the fictionalized account of Thompson's own experiences as a stringer in Puerto Rico in 1960. Interestingly the novel, written in 1961 and many times rejected, was not published until 1998, well after Thompson was a renowned writer. Unfortunately Thompson was renowned by then for many

things, including a lifelong love of drugs, alcohol and firearms. His politics, writing and lifestyle were polarizing to many. Perhaps this polarization is partly responsible for the response to *The Rum Diary*.

Thompson fans will enjoy the film; there are earmarks of the Thompson yet to be. However, this is not yet the Thompson of the Dr. Gonzo era, which makes it much more palatable to a broad audience. *The Rum Diary* may not have great staying power, but it is certainly worth seeing.

Rated R for language, brief drug use and sexuality.

REVIEW BY MICHELLE KEENAN



Giovanni Ribisi, Johnny Depp and Michael Rispoli star in the sun drenched and rum soaked film adaptation of Hunter S. Thompson's *The Rum Diary*.

Chip Kaufmann's Pick: "Metropolis (Moroder Version)"

Metropolis – Moroder Version (1984)

When this updated version of the 1927 Fritz Lang classic, done by music producer Giorgio Moroder (*Scarfaced*), appeared in 1984, the idea of combining contemporary pop music with a silent film was considered sacrilege. Once the furor died down and the film came out on VHS, it developed quite a cult following before disappearing for over 20 years. It has finally made its digital debut on DVD and Blu-Ray and it has been worth the wait.

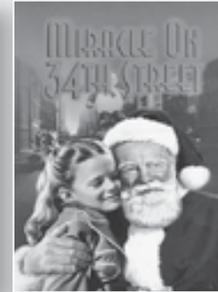
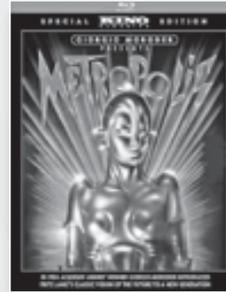
While not Fritz Lang's original version, the Moroder version is worthy of being seen because of how well the whole package has been put together. The color tints are beautiful and the editing of the film, pared down to 87 minutes from over 2 hours, is masterful. The traditional silent film title cards have been replaced with subtitles, which shorten the running time and give it a modern look.

The soundtrack by 80's superstars Pat Benatar, Freddie Mercury, Jon Andersen, Bonnie Tyler, and others is extremely effective and now has nostalgia value since it is almost 30 years old. It has been digitally remastered by producer Moroder and sounds better now than when the film was first released.

The editing in METROPOLIS was always ahead of its time and that makes it an ideal candidate for music video treatment. Adding contemporary music to silent films these days is nothing new and Moroder deserves credit for being a pioneer in this field and bringing a silent film classic to the attention of a new group of filmgoers. That was in 1984 and now he's doing it again.

If you've never seen METROPOLIS and think you don't like the idea

December DVD Picks



of silent movies, then this version is an absolute must. It clearly demonstrates how silent films are an art form unto themselves (see the review of *The Artist* on page 12) and how it can be reinterpreted for a new generation of viewers. The newly restored complete original *Metropolis*, all 140 minutes of it, is also available on DVD as well for those who want to check it out.

Miracle on 34th Street (1947)

While recently visiting family for Thanksgiving I watched the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade for the first time in years. In between the parade, the commercials promoted nothing but Black Friday madness. At some point during the morning someone mentioned that they had re-opened the investigation of Natalie Wood's death. So when I flipped to Turner Classic Movies later that afternoon and found *Miracle on 34th Street*, it seemed a particularly fitting DVD pick this month.

When I was a child, I didn't understand why *Miracle on 34th Street* was considered a holiday classic. I just didn't understand how people couldn't believe in the magic of Christmas. Flash forward several decades – it's the holiday classic for the realist and pragmatist in all of us. It's the first holiday film to draw attention to the commercialism of the season. It was also unusual in that one of its main characters was career woman and

Michelle Keenan's Pick: "Miracle on 34th Street"

single mother – after all, this is a wholesome, post war America.

Maureen O'Hara plays Mrs. Walker, a marketing executive for Macy's Department Store in New York City. She's a woman hardened by life and trying to make it in a man's world. She doesn't have time to enjoy silly things like parades or believe in nonsense like Christmas, and she's passed this pragmatic spirit on to her young daughter Susan (Natalie Wood). It's Thanksgiving Day and she's in charge of the Thanksgiving Day Parade.

The culminating moment of the parade is Santa Claus ushering in the shopping (er, I mean Christmas) season. When her Santa turns out to be old rumpot, she is saved when a charming old man named Kris Kringle (Edmund Gwenn) agrees to fill the role. He does indeed seem to be Santa Claus, so much so Macy's hires him for the Christmas season. Of course he can't be Santa Claus though, so eventually Macy's also has him institutionalized as insane. The fate of Christmas lies in the hands of a young lawyer (John Payne) who intends to prove old man Kringle is the real deal.

If you haven't seen *Miracle on 34th Street* in a while, this might be just the time to revisit it. If you've never seen it, it's mandatory holiday classic viewing. Edmund Gwenn is a pure delight as Kris Kringle (he's everything you ever wanted Santa to be).

Maureen O'Hara is lovely as Mrs. Walker; John Payne is the unsung hero of this film; the supporting cast of characters are an awful lot of fun, and last but not least Natalie Wood is forever young and innocent in this film, and given what we're likely to hear in the coming months about her death, that's nice.

Holiday Season Releases

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 2
Shame

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 9
Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy
Young Adult
The Sitter

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 16
Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 23
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo
Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 25
Extremely Loud and Extremely Close
We Bought a Zoo

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 30
War Horse



More details about these new films can be found online at www.rapidrivermagazine.com

local business spotlight

INTERVIEW WITH

Simone Bouyer

My explanation for the multitudinous cool things that appear in our lives: “magic!” Groceries appear on shelves. Floors are vacuumed. Another straight-to-DVD sci-fi movie gets produced. And this magazine appears in racks and on-line each month.

When I started contributing to *Rapid River Magazine* in 2009, I sent my column and pictures to a woman named Simone somewhere in cyber-space. And it isn't really magic: she and Publisher Dennis Ray work skillfully on every inch of every issue. I wanted to learn more about her and she agreed to an interview!

Greg Vineyard: I read on your site that you were Chicago-based. What brought you to Asheville, and what do you love about it?

Simone Bouyer: I came to Asheville in search of others who had escaped large cities. I knew I couldn't be the first to want more space, clean air, and a local community that works. I love that Asheville had everything on my list: natural beauty and recreation within walking distance, abundant rainfall for growing fruits and vegetables, affordable property ... it's rich in arts and culture, and off the beaten path.

GV: How did you get into design? What's your favorite type of project to work on?

SB: I was enrolled in a work/study program at a top advertising agency right out of high school. Once there I was hooked. So many people there took an interest in me and showed me how things worked. I started with just a t-square and an x-acto, and moved from there, over the course of 12 years, into computer generated layout and design.

These days, I love new projects and working with small businesses. I also love a challenge. My favorite projects and clients are the ones that are open to new ideas. If a client gives me enough space, and time, I can usually come up with an ad, postcard, brochure, or website, that exceeds their expectations, while showcasing their product or brand.

GV: When/how did you start with *Rapid River Magazine*?

SB: I have to give a nod to Byron Belzak, an unique writer, planner, and marketing genius. He encouraged Dennis to hire me to lay-out the paper in 2007. I didn't actually meet Dennis in person until months later. He is a great guy to work with. We'll talk for hours on the phone, tossing around ideas and making up new words, usually adjectives. When it comes to advertising and marketing, we seem to share the same ideas.

BY GREG VINEYARD



Simone Bouyer www.quickbrightsharp.com
Photo: Greg Vineyard

GV: I read that you are also a fine artist - what is your favorite art medium?

SB: When I made fine art it was in oil pastels on paper. Huge, larger than life portraits. I left all of that behind me when I moved here. Now nature inspires me - there is no greater artist!

GV: Culturally, what inspires you from the world of books, film, art or design?

SB: I enjoy smart comedy and contemporary ideas. TV shows: My Name is Earl, 30 Rock. Authors: Michelle Tea, Jeanette Winter-son, Daniel Quinn, David Sedaris. Movies: Idiocracy, The Horse's Mouth, and my favorite this year, Scott Pilgrim vs. the World. I just renewed my subscription to Wired magazine, which is a wonderland full of innovative design, technology and geekitude.

GV: And what inspires you from the world of people?

SB: I love all of the folks out there who are working for change. The folks occupying America, the 99%, the activists and writers and organizers who never sleep. Even in small towns like this.

GV: You mentioned the “intersection of art and design.” Can you talk more about that?

SB: Art and design are both creative endeavors. Now there is a new space where everything meets technology. Marketing and design have become more artsy, less linear. Small businesses today are incorporating more art and creative ideas into their planning and marketing materials. It's really an exciting time to be publishing or promoting or creating anything.

GV: What do you do to relax and recharge?

SB: I enjoy hiking, rafting, and horseback riding. Anything that gets me outdoors, away from the computer.

GV: Anything else you'd like to share here?

SB: Support your local publications, like *Rapid River Magazine*, by advertising. You'll be building brand recognition for

your business, attracting new customers, connecting with current customers, and contributing to the local economy. Our monthly advertisers are like family members. We love to hear from them, and we pass their stories on to you.

Thanks to Simone for her design, production and outlook on life. I'm inspired and I hope you are, too! Read more about Simone's services at www.quickbrightsharp.com, and see her ad, which appears in every issue, on page 5.



Greg Vineyard is an artist, art consultant and writer based in Asheville, NC. www.creativewayfinding.byregion.net.

His inventory reduction sale on ALL of his art takes place December 1-31 in Constance Williams Gallery, 9 Riverside Drive. Proceeds to benefit the Craft Emergency Relief Fund.

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world aids day

**The AIDS Memorial Quilt Display
– a Tapestry of Lives**

The AIDS Memorial Quilt, founded in 1987, is made up of beautifully sewn panels of love. They are unique, individual panels that pay tribute to people who have died from AIDS.

Many of the panels that will be included in this year's exhibit at Pack Place have been requested by local people here in Asheville, making the event even more special as it takes on a local connection. Each hand crafted quilt is but a snapshot of individuals who have left us much too soon.

The AIDS Memorial Quilt, housed in Atlanta, Georgia by the NAMES Project Foundation, contains the names of over 91,000 people and has been referred to as a National Treasure, and one of the most beautiful, moving examples of Folk Art.

AIDS MEMORIAL QUILT EXHIBIT

A Tapestry of Lives, Living with 30 Years of HIV/AIDS will be on display through December 3 at Pack Place in downtown Asheville. Hours: Sunday 1-5 p.m.; Monday-Friday 10-5 p.m.; Saturday 10-4 p.m.

WORLD AIDS DAY

December 1. Candlelight Memorial Vigil, Pack Place in downtown Asheville. Music by pianist and vocalist Robert Thomas, Pastyme, and the Men's Cantaria.



Photo: Leigh Mitchell

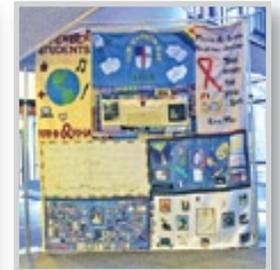


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INTERVIEW WITH

Joshua Spiceland

Capturing Life Through Art

Rapid River Magazine: Does work from mediums other than the ones you practice influence your artwork?

Joshua Spiceland: Yes. In terms of influence, I am a sponge and my filter is inclusive. Assuming that you mean work by artists working in other mediums, yes. These mediums include oils, watercolor, etching, screenprinting, and fiber art, among others. I absorb as much as I can visually from all types of artists. I appreciate sculpture and will often make drawings from photographs of sculptures in order to capture the perfect lighting.

RRM: You work across many mediums such as acrylic and colored pencil. How do you decide what medium you're going to use?



Joshua working live.

Do different subjects call you to use different mediums?

JS: I am drawn to acrylics because the drying time is well matched to my way of working, which is often spontaneous, one color at a time, letting each layer dry for a minute or two. I like the richness of colored pencils, acrylics, and other illustration type mark making tools I use.

The subject itself doesn't usually determine what medium is used. Often it is the

INTERVIEWED BY DENNIS RAY



Painting for the Watchmaker in the Haywood Park Hotel.

visual effect I am trying to achieve (i.e., atmospheric appearance vs. focused and crisp) which naturally calls for a certain technique to be used. I am also very interested in color theory, in an intuitive sense.

RRM: What person or incident taught you the most in regards to your artwork?

JS: I have had some good professors, both in high school as well as college, but the largest influences on me concerning my style and understanding of art have come from my studies in art history. Standard modern influences include Picasso, William Blake, Van Gogh, Salvador Dali. The other names of interest I can remember are Ernst Fuchs, Oliver Vernon, Tamara De Lempicka, Paul Klee, Damon Soule, Mars-1, Faile.

RRM: Do you have an art education or are you self-taught?

JS: I went to UNCA and studied painting, among other things. Before that I made an incredible amount of art, but most of it was on paper and was lost.

RRM: What is your favorite subject matter and why?

JS: I focused on beautiful, idealized personages for some time, studying from the renaissance. When I'm not drawing from past art historical movements, I'm looking at photographs. When I'm tired of representative work I make abstractions. Abstract art is my favorite art because it inhabits a realm of its own. It could represent music or your

'J. Spiceland' continued on page 24

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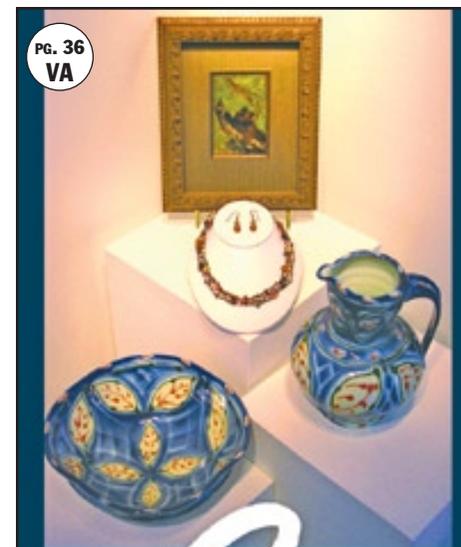
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holiday gift guide

Goldsmith Susan Marie Phipps

Susan Marie Designs is the downtown Asheville gallery and studio of goldsmith Susan Marie Phipps. Approaching the store you might soon notice Susan's cat Charlie, an outgoing orange tabby, basking in the sun on the window ledge, waiting to welcome you in. The fact that Susan faithfully brings Charlie with her to work five days a week (he takes Sundays and Mondays off) is revealing of her informal personal style. Once inside the gallery you'll find that the decor reflects Susan's balanced sense of jewelry design, being contemporary and uncluttered, elegant yet casual at the same time. She designs beautifully.

In addition to benefiting from her natural gift of artistic vision, the quality of her work is also the result of over thirty years of experience making fine gold jewelry. After training at the Penland School of Crafts in



Charlie

a specific stone, my store offers a large collection of the finest quality natural colored gemstones, pearls and diamonds from which to choose. Also I work with highly talented independent stone cutters who have won many awards for their innovative styles of cut. I can order in any type of stone for people to view at no obligation. But whether the customer needs a stone or already has a stone in an older piece of jewelry that they want redesigned, I'll be glad to provide drawings of several different concepts and work with them to create something uniquely theirs."

The atmosphere at Susan's gallery is always friendly and informal. A couple weeks back Kim, a newer customer, was over-

joyed with the diamond, pearl and purple sapphire pendant Susan had just custom made for her. Annette, a long-established customer, exclaimed in response, "That's the good thing about Susan's place. It's always happy." Charlie would agree.

The gallery also features the work of several other local artists. Graphic bird, botanical and folk scenes adorn the sgraffito carved porcelain wares of Karen Newgard.

Fine mixed hardwood furniture by Robb Helmkamp and gilded paintings by Robert Lock grace the floors and walls.



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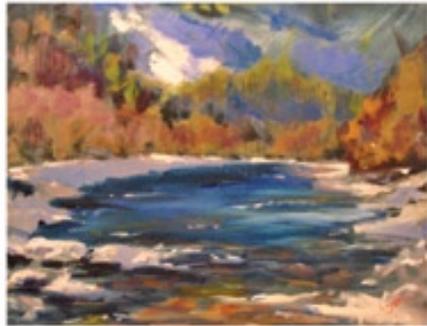
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Linda Cheek
Seasons on
the French Broad

Plein air and
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PG. 36
B

downtown biltmore ave.

Asheville Art Museum Holiday Events

ANNUAL HOLIDAY MARKET

Saturday, December 3

Find the perfect gifts for everyone on your holiday shopping list while browsing the latest additions to the Museum Shop's inventory. The Museum is delighted to showcase the diverse talent of local artists as well as a large selection of books, cards, handmade ornaments, jewelry, toys and a variety of unique items to suit any age or interest. Open during regular museum hours.

THE BIG CRAFTY

Sunday, December 4, noon to 6 p.m.

The Big Crafty returns this holiday season for another festive event featuring local artists and crafters, food, music, and fun for the entire family. The Museum is a proud partner of The Big Crafty event organizers and looks forward to hosting this FREE art and crafts fair at Pack Place in downtown Asheville. Free, family-friendly events, open to the public.

Asheville Art Museum, 2 South Pack Square, downtown Asheville • www.ashevilleart.org

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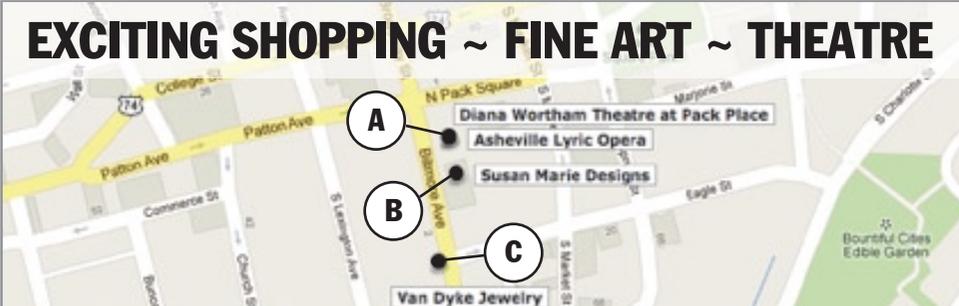


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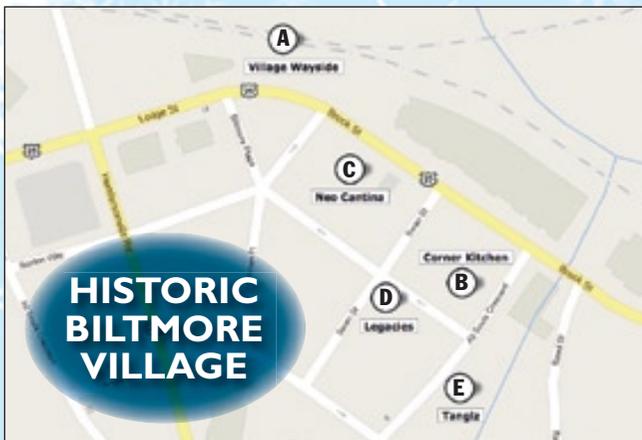
Susan Marie Designs presents works by

Robb Helmkamp



B

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shop biltmore village

Biltmore Village Dickens Festival

Set aside December 2-3-4 for a magical weekend of merriment, music and memories — all on the streets and in the shops, restaurants, and galleries of Historic Biltmore Village. It's the annual Dickens Festival, now in its 23rd year.



with the streetlights to enhance the ambiance. Shops will stay open both evenings until 7 p.m. with many of the shopkeepers dressed in Victorian-era garb. In addition, there will be horse-drawn rides all day Saturday and

Sunday. Chestnuts roasted on an open fire by chestnut roaster Sakshi Gentenbein will be available next to the main stage.

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



Biltmore Village Dickens Festival
December 2-4, 2011. Hours:
Friday, 5-7 p.m.; Saturday, 11-7 p.m.; Sunday, 1-5 p.m. For more information call (828) 274-8788 or visit www.biltmorevillage.com.

There's entertainment for every age and interest. The main stage will be filled continuously with musicians, choral groups, singers, dancers, and Montford Park Players. This year the Festival will feature more than 300 performers who, after their stage segments, will rove throughout the Village entertaining on the streets and in the shops and restaurants. Friday and Saturday evenings will feature main stage concerts for the entire family.

And when dusk turns into evening, more than 250,000 white lights outlining the historic Village buildings will combine

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The owners of the Corner Kitchen, Kevin Westmoreland and Joe Scully, put their personal best into their efforts for every guest. The entire service staff is committed to make each guest's experience the very best in ambiance, service, food, and value.

The kitchen is wide open, so that you can visit with the cooks and experience with all your senses the excitement and care that goes into every meal.



The Corner Kitchen
3 Boston Way, Biltmore Village
(828) 274-2439, www.thecornerkitchen.com

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explore biltmore village

Village Wayside Bar & Grille

Located in historic Biltmore Village in the original 1896 train depot is the Village Wayside Bar & Grille. They offer new twists on the classics we all know and love. Owners, Mark and Polly dreamed of their menu, incorporating the Midwestern and southern influences they grew up eating.



Craving something more substantial? Check out Potsy's Pigs, Hungarian style cabbage rolls, or fillet tips over a bed of house made hummus.

The Village Wayside serves lunch and dinner all day long with something

for everyone!

The Village Wayside Bar & Grille

30 Lodge Street, Biltmore Village
(828) 277-4121, www.villagewayside.com

Hours: Mon-Thurs 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Fri-Sat 11 a.m. until late – Sun noon to 9 p.m.

Try the turkey Reuben, slow roasted and brined in house with a sweet peach hibiscus tea brine, or Mark's favorite, the beef brisket, smoked in house and smothered in homemade Cheerwine BBQ sauce served with hand dipped local Kolsch beer battered onion rings.

Neo Cantina

HANDMADE SOUTHWESTERN FAVORITES WITH A TWIST

Located in the heart of Historic Biltmore Village, Neo Cantina uses only the freshest ingredients grown locally when available, including some from their own garden. Perfect for everything from an evening out with the family to a romantic lingering dinner.



Private dining for 10 to 100, plus off site catering allows Neo Cantina to be your fiesta headquarters in Asheville and in su casa.

Neo Cantina strives to be conscientious of our extended and immediate environments. It is our

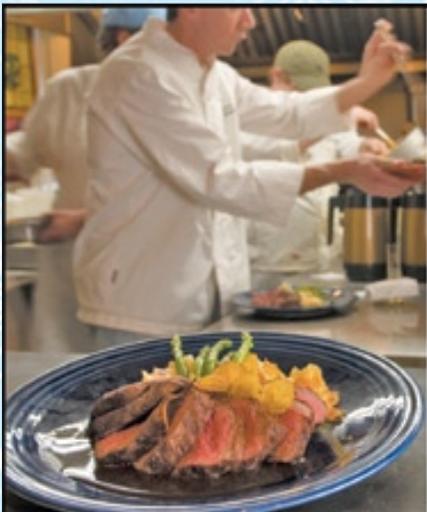
priority as a business, and as individuals to act in accordance with a long term plan towards worldwide sustainability, participating fully in the green revolution in cool Green Asheville.

Neo Cantina

10 Biltmore Plaza, Biltmore Village
www.neocantina.com

Housed in an old bowling center built in the 1940's, Neo Cantina continues a long tradition of great food, fun, and hospitality in a warm and welcoming environment.

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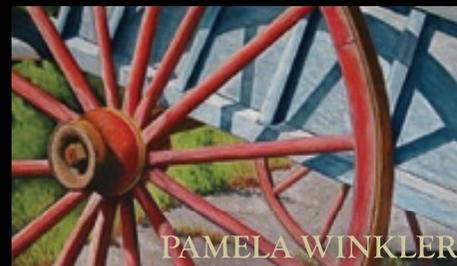
* www.craftguild.org * 828-298-7928 *

The Southern Highland Craft Guild is an authorized concessioner of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

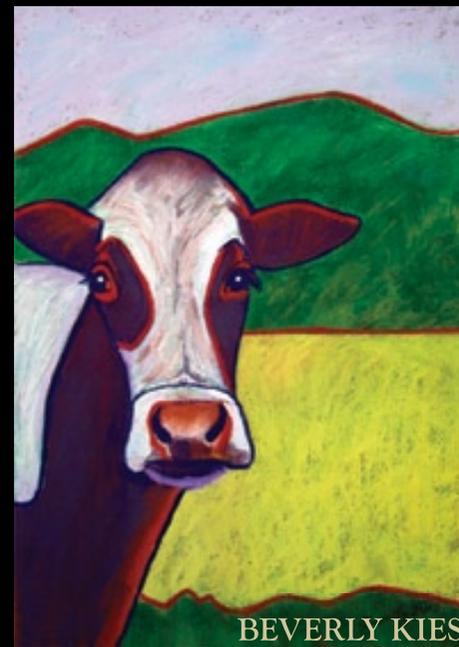
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PG. 36
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PG. 36
HA



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Haywood County Arts Council Hosts Christmas Dinner

The Haywood County Arts Council invites you to a Christmas Dinner and Christmas present raffle on Tuesday, December 6 from 7-9 p.m. at the Chef's Table, 30 Church Street in Waynesville.

Celebrate Christmas and celebrate the arts as you enjoy holiday fare served up by Chef Josh Monroe. The menu includes chestnut salad, one of three entrée choices,

and eggnog ice cream for dessert. And, a special gift raffle will provide the opportunity to find the perfect Christmas present to place under the tree or keep for yourself!

IF YOU GO: Tickets are \$50 per person including tax and gratuity. Alcohol purchases are extra. For more information call the Arts Council office at (828) 452-0593.

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PG. 36
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5 Walnut Gallery

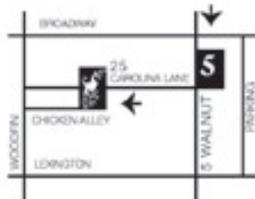
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PG. 36
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Karen Keil Brown

"Ethereal Landscapes"

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holiday gift guide

INTERVIEW WITH Paula Dawkins

Rapid River Magazine: Tell us a little about yourself and *Jewels that Dance*.

Paula Dawkins: I moved to Asheville in 1983 from Ashe County North Carolina ready to start a new direction and path. I had been making silver jewelry for ten years and traveling, selling at craft shows along the East coast. I couldn't see continuing doing the same thing the same way; after all I was changing my life completely. To make my story short, I was eating dinner downtown and saw a shop for rent. Presto, *Jewels That Dance* was born two months later.

I have never been one who makes long range plans or even thinks about the next step. I have found that as you travel down life's highway, all kinds of turns and forks appear on the horizon. As they get closer, I tend to take the one that says come on, it will be fun. Sometimes, it is a blessing and sometimes a curse. Either way, a new fork will appear shortly and with it a chance to move in a different direction.

RRM: Tell us a little about your first experience as a jewelry artist and designer.

PD: After graduation from Appalachian State University in 1972 – oh my gosh, I am getting old – I soon realized that I had to get a real job. This was a foreign concept to the hippie earth mother that

was masquerading as Paula Dawkins. I had a friend who had dropped out also. His name was now Motor – and he drove around in an old school bus. Motor told me I could make some serious money making jewelry and selling it at craft shows. I received my one day education in how to make silver jewelry and an application to a craft show in Richmond Virginia. I took my savings which amounted to maybe \$250 got some silver and started.

I made a shoebox full of rings, earrings and pendants and applied to the craft show. I was accepted. I took the bedspread off my bed, a piece of plywood with black velvet and nails held my selection of goods. Get this; I sold \$1000 worth of jewelry. Dollar bills, lots of them, credit cards weren't a part of the landscape back then. I threw the money in the air and danced around. Needless to say, I found my calling.

RRM: What do you love most about designing and creating your own jewelry?

PD: My life has changed over the years. Now I work almost totally on commission design-



Paula Dawkins

INTERVIEWED
BY DENNIS RAY

ing for my client. I never would have expected to find such satisfaction in this particular creative process. It is a collaboration between our minds, the client's and mine. The hardest part is to listen to what is not being said. We are so much more comfortable with words, but I believe that the true design comes from our intuition.

If I can be quiet enough, then I know what to make for my client. It is quite an amazing process. I often will be finishing their design, and I get a call wondering what is going on. It is as though we are connected on a different plane.

Designing in this manner gives me the opportunity to move from one style to another almost seamlessly. No longer do I have to worry about building on a style, staying in the same genre. I move from classical to modern, ancient to Victorian, ornate to minimalist

– sometimes in the same day. I use so many different techniques representative of different periods of jewelry. I never get bored.

RRM: What are some of your favorite materials to work and create with?

PD: This is a really simple question. I am totally enamored with high karat gold – 18

to 22kt. Platinum is fabulous to work in too. And fine quality gemstones. I love the color, the light play, the way the stones dance in the sunlight – magnificent!

RRM: How did you get your start in jewelry designing, and what have you learned over the course of being a designer?

PD: I had not fashioned myself a designer when I opened *Jewels that Dance* in 1983, just a craftsperson making jewelry. Along the way, I started pushing my boundaries. I developed a wholesale line and began selling to galleries. In 1993, I was recognized by *Jewelers of America* as one of the top ten new designers in the country. I guess that would be the day I considered myself a designer. How did I get my start? I just started!

With designing, the main thing I have learned is to trust my intuition. I instinctively know what to make. The mental challenge is to get my critical side out of the way and allow my creative side to run the show. Along the way, there are techniques to be learned, skills to be honed that enable me to reach new heights.



Sculpted black onyx and turquoise in 18k white gold with .42 ctw diamonds.

RRM: If you could sum up your look and aesthetic in three words, what would they be and why?

PD: Tough one. Three words – wow! How about – it is perfect! Perfect is such a funny word, but accurate. Although it might not be technically perfect to my critical eye, each design should be perfect for my client.

RRM: What is the most unusual piece you have made?

PD: I suppose it might be the bracelet I just finished. I have this wonderful client that loves creative jewelry. I am given the freedom to go follow my instinct and create. The bracelet was made of silver with amethyst crystals. The bracelet was challenging to make both conceptually and technically which was great fun for me.

Unusual isn't my main goal. I want to make jewelry that speaks of the person wearing it. I want it to become their statement, not mine. I want to be the conduit of inspiration.

RRM: How do you view jewelry design, and design in general?

PD: Jewelry is nothing more than personal sculpture. It should be able to be worn without effort, to be a part of your life, to be a statement about who you are. If I take that thought further out, a great design flows with life and says this is who I am.

RRM: Are there any fine art jewelers who have profoundly impacted your work?

PD: I love to look at the work of the masters and ancient jewelry. It amazes me how things were accomplished without all the tools that we have today. With some of the ancient jewelry, it is not technically perfect, but the detail takes precedent over the form. It seems that what they were trying to convey is the most important part of the art. I always try to remember this when designing.

Jewels That Dance

63 Haywood Street, Asheville, NC
(828) 254-5088
www.jewelsthatdance.com

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Holiday Sale



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gifts for *children*

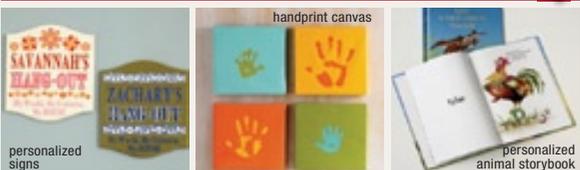
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*holiday gift guide*TWO NEW EXHIBITIONS AT
16 Patton Fine Art GalleryLINDA CHEEK – SEASONS ON
THE FRENCH BROAD

A published book illustrator, Linda Cheek's background in the field of illustration allows a spontaneous feel to her otherwise disciplined image. Her mastery of plein air and alla prima processes allows her the advantage of capturing the desired light, shape, color, value, and composition in her paintings.

"My mother and aunt were both artists, so I was encouraged early on, and then formally trained at Ringling School of Art, Sarasota, FL. Art has always been something I could not do without. I guess, as my sons say, I have always pushed a pencil or brush."



Linda Cheek. *Backwater Light*.
 Oil on panel. 16 x 20 in.



Signe & Genna Grushovenko.
Bike Boys. Oil on canvas. 40 x 30 in.
 (+ vintage photograph)

ports, then chooses an image from her collection of vintage photos that will mesh well with the style and palette of the underpainting.



Gallery visitors will be able to "complete the drawing" by filling in the figures on an unfinished Grushovenko painting.

Using the photo as reference, she executes a drawing in oil pastel and completes the painting in oil. The final results of their art partnership are multi-layered paintings with deep surfaces, crisp at first glance but rewarding the careful viewer with an undercurrent of complex tonality and colorplay.

Gallery visitors will be able to "complete the drawing" by filling in the figures on an unfinished Grushovenko painting. A drawing will be held for the finished piece.



Opening Reception, Friday,
 December 2 from 5 to 8 p.m.
 On display through January
 7, 2012. 16 Patton Fine Art
 Gallery, 16 Patton Ave., downtown
 Asheville. Gallery hours: 11-6 Tues-
 Sat. For more details please call (828)
 236-2889 or visit www.16patton.com.

'J. Spiceland' continued from pg. 17

neighbor's house or an experience you had five years ago.

RRM: Tell us about your murals and how you got started doing them.

JS: I was a part of the design and execution of the murals at Lexington under I-240 in the summer of 2008. After that I freelanced a huge piece that ascended a stairwell inside the now defunct Club 828.

I painted a laughing face between Dobra tea and Izzy's coffee on Lexington Street. The Watchmaker in the Haywood Park hotel commissioned a watch painting, then when I showed the sketch for that to the owners of the Chocolate Fetish, they told me of their idea for a piece.

RRM: What is your latest project?

JS: The mural for the Chocolate Fetish is a visual narrative showing the steps that cacao goes through to become chocolate. The four panels transition from depictions of natural scenes of

the cacao tree and pods, to illustrations of the fermentation and drying of the cacao beans. The third panel shows a suggestion of the industrial methods of processing the beans further, and the fourth panel shows kitchen confection of the chocolate.

In preparation, I did each drawing and then scanned and printed each element so I could arrange my composition on illustration board, which I presented to the Foleys, so we could dialogue about any changes that might need to take place.

The piece was painted with acrylics on masonite panels which were mounted inside the glass behind the shop, inside the hotel. We solidified the idea during the summer and I started painting mid-September.

It has been a lot of fun, and just like the project I did under the bridge, this project has taught me many things that I look forward to incorporating in my next endeavor.

Visit Joshua Spiceland at
www.joshuaspiceland.com

Frame It to a T

Celebrate the holidays with a one-of-a-kind gift. Frame it to a T is now offering 10% - 20% off all custom framing... just mention this ad. Asheville's Frame it to a T offers quality custom framing and design at a reasonable price. Using only materials of high quality and craftsmanship, Frame it to a T can frame that priceless photograph or piece of art in a unique and creative manner.

Owner Sean Robbins and his team's combined 45 years of experience and extensive knowledge of art and interior design make Frame it to a T one of Asheville's best kept secrets.

Frame it to a T is located just past the Biltmore Square Mall on Brevard Road. Contact them at (828) 665-7730 or check out www.frameittoato.com.

holiday gift guide

An Oasis of Chocolate

Christmas is an exciting time at The Chocolate Fetish. Regulars know we introduce new hand-made artisan chocolates during the holidays and visit to taste the new offerings and ship gifts to people on their Christmas list. This year we introduced the Elite series of our famous Ecstasy truffles.

The sophisticated Ecstasy Elite series builds on a tradition of excellence and takes it to the next level with unique flavors, intriguing textures, and custom blended European chocolates. They are available in the store and can be ordered on line in a special holiday assortment.

The Chocolate Fetish is decorated for the season and is an oasis of sweet sights, smells, and flavors. Experience the European ambiance and view all our holiday offerings displayed in antique cabinetry handmade right here in the mountains just like our chocolates. This Christmas remember to...

Enjoy and Give the Best™

BY BILL FOLEY



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Best Bet for Holiday Shopping

Join us for the Guild Artists' Holiday Sale at the Folk Art Center on December 3 and again on December 10. Members of the Southern Highland Craft Guild will be on hand in the center's auditorium on these two Saturdays to sell select work 10-50% off retail.

The sale is an excellent opportunity for the artist to liquidate overstocks and 2011 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, 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.*



Walt Cottingham
Birdhouse.

BY APRIL NANCE



Laurey-Faye Long, mugs. Photo: Tim Barnwell

More than 70 artists will be participating over the course of the two sales, with a different group of artists each weekend – so plan on coming to both for best selection! Visit www.craftguild.org for a complete listing of exhibitors.

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



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.

For the **Merriest Christmas** contact



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joe's brew notes



DECEMBER 2011 BREW NEWS

Winter is a wonderful season for Asheville beer enthusiasts. Our breweries treat us to a bunch of outstanding seasonal brews and the Winter Warmer Beer Festival returns.

Asheville Brewing recently released their Moog Filtered Ale and their (Warren Haynes) Christmas Jam Ale. Parts of the proceeds from each benefit the Moog Foundation and Habitat for Humanity respectively.

On Monday, December 5, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., **Bruisin' Ales** will conduct a special tasting for the WNC launch of San Francisco's award-winning 21st Amendment Brewing beer. Also, December 23 is Bruisin's 5th anniversary. Happy Anniversary – "live long and prosper"!

Green Man has released their new Black Forest Stout and, in January, will re-release their Russian Imperial Stout on draught and in their new 750ml bottles. Their sister organization the Next Generation Beer Co. now distributes beers from Nantahala Brewing in Bryson City, Olde Hickory in Hickory, and Buchi kombucha brewed in Asheville.

Highland Brewing has released a new seasonal "Thunderstruck Coffee Porter" using Dynamite Roasting Company beans and has re-released their iconic Cold Mountain.

Pisgah Brewing has re-released their Valdez coffee stout made with local Asheville Coffee Roasters' coffee beans; look for their San Francisco Lager and Doppelbock as well. Join Pisgah at the French Broad Chocolate Shop (South Lexington Avenue, Asheville) on Thursday, December 15 for a special pairing of Valdez with freshly made Valdez truffles. Mingle, listen to live music and enjoy complimentary tastes of the beer and

truffles (while they last). A pint and 2 truffles can be purchased for \$6. Check out either website for more information.

Wedge Brewing releases their scrumptious raspberry-flavored Imperial Stout on December 9.

The 5th annual **Winter Warmer** is scheduled for January 21, 2012 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Asheville Civic Center's exhibition hall. Your ticket gets you samples from 20+ regional craft breweries, locally catered food, music and this year plans are in place to serve some special beers from Deschutes Brewery, Bend OR. Deschutes is the US's 5th largest craft brewery and their beers are not distributed on the east coast. Also, expect an increase the number of food stations and "relief" stations; both were a bit overwhelmed last year (growing pains). Tickets are on sale now for \$39/person with some of the proceeds benefitting River Link's greenway expansion on the French Broad River. For more information and to purchase tickets visit brewscruise.com/beerfest.

The Thirsty Monk South has a team trivia contest that began in November, and takes place every Tuesday through February 7, 2012. The two teams with the most accumulated points will faceoff for a New Belgium Beach Cruiser.

On December 5, celebrate 21st Amendment Day (repeal of prohibition) at **Thirsty Monk Downtown** with the WNC debut of 21st Amendment Brewery's Back in Black and Brew Free or Die on draft. On December 8, Sierra Nevada's head brewer Terence Sullivan will be at the downtown location with 4+ Sierra beers on tap. Visit both locations December 21 for a Thirsty Monk Pint Night that features special holiday glasses.

Women of Beer – Brewing Professionals

BY JOE ZINICH

Moylan's 4,000-barrel brewery and supervises a staff of nine.

Born and raised in CA, Denise held a variety of jobs and regularly visited brewpubs enjoying the beer, the food, and the camaraderie. After a time she wanted to find a career she could feel passionate about, one that challenged her mentally and physically.

Her passions were beer and food and beer won. Never a home brewer she entered the UC-Davis brewing program. The program included an internship at Great Basin Brewing, which later hired her to brew. That led



Denise Jones, Brewmaster at Moylan's Brewery and Restaurant, selects hops.

to a job with Third Street Aleworks where she was brewmaster for 8 years prior to her current 5 years at Moylan.

Her advice to women who want to be brewers is "be prepared for long hours and hard work." Brewing requires constant movement, not great strength, and a willingness and ability to learn the brewing art as well as its science, which includes math, biology, and chemistry. Also, the title brewmaster adds hiring, firing, and training to the other duties. Be realistic in your salary expectations; "brewing is a lifestyle job." Your greatest reward is making a product you and others enjoy.

Denise brews a variety of "clean, stylistic beers" primarily American and English ales and lagers as well as seasonal specialties. If you'd like to try some of her brews, stop by Bruin' Ales in downtown Asheville. So far, I can recommend the Tipperary Pale, the IPA and the Moylander Double, all flavorful, delicious beer. For more information visit moylans.com.

As circumstances change, a successful brewery eventually requires more people. Positions are filled based on the brewery's needs and their philosophy. It is no surprise then that Highland Brewing with its reputation for consistent, high-quality beer chose to add a quality-control person to their staff. It's also no surprise the person is Erica Nelson.

Erica developed her passion for beer and brewing at her Dad's knee. He was a homebrewer and even at a young age she helped him brew. Over time his interest

As the third article in the "Women of Beer" series, this one is focused on women directly involved in beer production. The first in July 2011 was about Women Homebrewers and the second in October 2011 was about Asheville Beer Divas, a beer-inspired women's social club. All are written based on the premise the craft-beer flavor revolution increased women's interest in beer as a beverage of choice and the beer industry as an exciting career opportunity.

This article will feature Erica Nelson, the leader of Highland Brewing's quality assurance and quality control department, and Denise



Erica Nelson is the leader of Highland Brewing's Quality programs.

Jones, brewmaster at Moylan's Brewery and Restaurant in Novato, CA.

But first, as a review, brewing beer is the conversion, in a water base, of starch into sugar and the sugar into a drinkable liquid that contains alcohol and carbon dioxide. It becomes a more complicated process when the word "flavorful" is substituted for "drinkable". A flavorful beer requires the knowledge of a scientist and the soul of an artist; brewing it again and again requires experience and attention-to-detail.

To produce a tasty beer the brewer decides on its desired flavor, aroma, body, color, and alcohol content, and then chooses the starch base (any combination of various malted grains), bittering agents (hops and/or spices) and their addition times, yeast strain (to transform the sugar), and fermentation conditions (so the yeast can work effectively) to create a recipe. The brewer then sanitizes all the equipment (multiple brewing vessels and packaging containers) to kill bacteria (they like sugar too and ruin flavor), addresses the pH (acid/alkaline balance) and mineral content of the water (95% of beer), follows the recipe precisely and, if the correct brewing conditions are chosen, produces a savory brew.

In a commercial brewery all of that complexity and more is the responsibility of the brewmaster. They create the recipes, select the raw materials and equipment, and oversee each stage of the process. For a better understanding I spoke with Denise Jones, an award-winning brewer with over 17 years of experience. She is brewmaster at

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'Brew' continued on page 27

restaurants & wine

The Wine Steward's Nightmare Before Christmas - PLUS, ADVICE FOR HOLIDAY WINE SHOPPING

BY MICHAEL PARKER

Diner: "So, tell me about your pinots, ah.. What's your name?"
Me: (one) (two) (three) "Michael." I always answer this question after a conspicuous hesitation, to send a signal that I don't like giving my name. Diners don't need to know servers' names. Really, what's in it for them? Control issue? Got-your-number? On the bucket list: speaking the words of Blake, Alec Baldwin's character in *Glen-garry Glen Ross*, when asked his name. He said, "**** you. That's my name."

Him: "Ah. Michael. Nice to meet you." He extends his hand for a shake. This blows my mind. I am not a car salesman. I am a server. I'm not at this table to build a relationship. Now I need to go to wash my hands. Of course he didn't give his name.

Me: "Pinots?"

Him: "Yes Pinots."

Me: "Pinot Gris, Grigio, Blanc?"

Him: "Noir. Do you have Silver Oak?"

Me: "Oh. I didn't know they produced a Pinot Noir."
Him: "Uh.. the Cab."
Me: "Oh. Do you mean the softer one, from Alexander Valley? The one that..."

Him: "You have that?"

Me: "No."

Him: "So how about your Pinots. Do they have acid?"

Me: "Lysergic?"

Him: "What?"

Me: "Sorry. I worked in a winery. Sometimes the high tech words slip out."

Him: "How's this one?"

Me: "The Burgundy from Joil-lot? Old world style. Earthy."

Him: "What's earthy?"

Me: "Well, you can literally discern the dirt, the soil that produced the grapes. The French are very proud of..."

Him: "Does it have acid?"

Me: "Yes, but balanced. Are you trying..."

Him: "Ah. Sonoma. Sonoma's

good. This is from Sonoma?"

Me: "Sonoma Coast, there's a difference between..."

Him: "How's this Russian River one?"

Me: "Estate bottled, 5 years old, ready to drink. I sold..."

Him: "How's this Atalon?"

Me: "That Merlot is sold out. Sorry. Are you looking for a style that's..."

Him: "Well, all this talk about acid. I need to know about the acids in the wine."

At this point I have the feeling I'm being watched. True. His lady's eyes are fixed on me, as if she has money on when my eyes are going to roll. I'm a pro. She will lose this bet.

Him: "Have you had this Russian River one?"

Me: "I have tasted none of the wines that are not served by the glass. But I sold that one two nights ago and the customer..."

Him: "I'll take that one. What the hell."

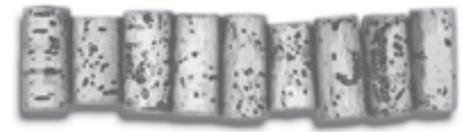
I think to myself, *And I'll take a pair of tall boots, the kind that can be hosed off, and a shovel, before I step back into this conversation. The shovel is not for the bull****. It's for the ****head.*

Him: "Is this a proper cab glass, Michael?"

Me: "Yes, Sir."

Moral of the story: Don't be this person. You don't have to sound like you can pass the test before you take charge of selecting wine for others. Just think before you think out loud. It's OK to trust some sales figures and customer feedback. It's also beneficial to allow your server to complete the answer to your question.

Oh yeah, others. This man abandoned all concern for his lady's preferences. In the end, it was about spending seventy to a hundred dollars to impress me as much as the lady, who, by the way, never saw the list and never knew the price.



HOLIDAY SHOPPING ADVICE

I surveyed some of Asheville's wine shops for a few pearls of holiday shopping wisdom, not specific recommendations, but advice for a wine shopping strategy.

Table Wine owner Josh Spurling advises, "Buy early. You may not find what you want if you wait. Think about it – shops don't stock up for January the way we do for December. Oh, and buy local." True. The bargains are moving as you read this.

Vinsite owner Les Doss speaks his wisdom with, "Know your importers." Indeed, this trick can prevent disappointment, save shopping time, and make you more independent. Some importers have very high standards you can consistently rely on.

Weinhaus owner Hunt Mallett wants you to think about this: "One case equals twelve gifts." Not only that, a second case is your grab-one-and-go time-saver as you are running out to another holiday party. The discount is sweet as well.

The Wine Guy's guy advises you to "Trust the man behind the counter." Yes, they have tasted hundreds of inferior wines so you don't have to.

The Wine Studio of Asheville is owned by the sweet and fabulous Jessica Gualano, Certified Specialist of Wine, Society of Wine Educators. She could not be reached for comment before deadline (my fault), but I'll bet her advice would include this: "Wine is fun, never forget that."

Finally, the much, much-missed Martin Pusser, the former wine wizard of Greenlife, wishes to soothe your nerves. "Don't worry so much about the perfect pairing. Trust what you like. Holidays are more about enjoying others." Word.

'Brew' continued from page 26

waned and hers grew. Erica became the brewer and her father the occasional assistant. After she earned a dual-major business and science degree at the University of Arkansas, she successfully completed the UC-Davis Master Brewers program and started her job search in the beer industry. At the time the beer scene in Arkansas was weak and a friend suggested she visit Asheville.

After her arrival, she submitted her resumes around town and received a job offer from Highland as a tasting-room bartender. Undaunted, Erica accepted, met the staff, worked hard, and pushed her knowledge and interest for a position at the brewery. Her persistence paid off when Highland asked her to play a leadership role in quality assurance and control.

Highland had a lot of basic tests in place but wanted to go into more depth on those tests and develop others. For example, beer is sensitive to oxygen; Erica developed a protocol to more accurately measure oxygen in bottled product important for flavor, shelf life, and to help optimize the packaging line. The job has proven to be challenging and rewarding and she recently brewed a pink-hued beer for breast cancer awareness (Areola Ale) on Highland's 3-barrel system. Sweet!

Erica's training, perseverance, and enthusiasm for great beer paid off. She recommends the same approach for others. The brewing industry is about the beer. It is very accepting of anyone who is enthusiastic, wants to learn and share, appreciate

and create great beer. If you want it, do it. She also recommends women check out the Pink Boot Society, pinkbootssociety.org, for inspiration and contacts.

"Women in beer" has been a noteworthy series. A lot of remarkable women shared stories about themselves and their view of an industry literally exploding with flavors and opportunities. Salud!



For nine years, Joe Zinich has been taking a self-guided, high-intensity tour of the Asheville beer scene. Contact him at: jinich@bellsouth.net.

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poetry & poets

Nikky Finney's Acceptance Speech, and Speechlessness

New Blog!

Hidden Springs is a reflection of Tom Baugh's continuing work as a Transdisciplinary Ecologist. Many of you may remember that Tom was our Poetry Editor several years ago. He was especially dedicated to helping provide voice for those who had not previously successfully expressed themselves through their poetry.

A number of contributors at that time were those searching for new paths in life and many of them were women. Tom is an Ecologist with substantial additional training and experience in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

The blog will include some of his previously published poetry from past issues of Rapid River Magazine. Join Tom on his new journey by visiting <http://hidden-springs.blogspot.com>.

STORIES TO HELP US THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS



Michael Reno Harrell

The Asheville Storytelling Circle presents a humorous look at holiday stress, challenging family dynamics and other seasonal issues. The program will feature Michael Reno Harrell, whose original songs and stories have been described as "Appalachian grit and wit." Also appearing are Gayle Childress, RoseLynn Katz, Chuck Parham and Charlie St. Clair.

IF YOU GO: At the Reuter Center on the UNCA Campus, December 11 at 2:30 p.m. Admission is \$5. Tickets available at the door. For more details call (828) 299-0748.

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My poetry column in last month's *Rapid River Magazine* offered one observer's reaction to the selection of Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer as the recipient of the 2011 Nobel Prize for Literature. What I didn't say overtly in that column is that any arts award—whether or not it is generally perceived as having been a justifiable decision—essentially reflects the opinion of a small group of people.

Certainly most arts award recipients deserve public acknowledgement for what they have achieved, yet the art of an award-winner is often taken more seriously—at least in the short term—than the work of other talented people whose artistic efforts are not deemed to be as relevant.

In the case of the Nobel Prize for Literature, numerous internationally significant authors who lived at least partly in the twentieth century were not selected for that award—including, among others, playwrights Chekhov, Brecht,

Ibsen, and O'Casey; fiction writers Twain, Tolstoy, Proust, Joyce, Hardy, Conrad, and Woolf; and poets Rilke, Machado, Borges, and Auden. The above-listed authors were all groundbreakers and master language-gardeners, but the Nobel Prize for Literature judges weren't sufficiently impressed by the crops they were producing.

Arts awards may ultimately reflect subjective judgments, yet sometimes the granting of a particular award can be truly inspiring—and not only to the recipient. Cultural historians sometimes cite William Faulkner's acceptance speech for his 1949 Nobel Prize for Literature award as among the more noteworthy public utterances by a private citizen in the past century or so.

Last month the media buzzed about another memorable acceptance speech for another literary award. At the National Book Awards ceremony in New York City, upon being named as the winner of that organization's 2011 award for poetry for her book *Heads Off and Split*, poet Nikky Finney shared her thoughts for the occasion, in the process generating both tears and cheers among those in attendance. Immediately after Finney's speech, actor and author John Lithgow, who hosted the ceremony, proclaimed it "the best acceptance speech for anything that I've ever heard in my life." The videotape of Finney giving the speech was subsequently widely viewed via the internet.

A native of South Carolina and a professor at the University of Kentucky, Finney is known in some circles as a central

member of the Affrilachian Poets—an informal collective of talented writers based in Kentucky who have shared the experience of being people of color living in Appalachia.

Finney's award-winning poetry book, published in early 2011 by Northwestern University Press, was her fourth full-length poetry collection; her other books have included a short story collection *Heartwood* and an influential anthology of African American poetry, *The Ringing Ear: Black Poets Lean South*.

In her acceptance speech, part of which is excerpted below, Finney traced her own valuation of words to the experience of racial discrimination and cultural suppression

endured by blacks in America since the colonial period:

"We begin with history. The Slave Codes of SC, 1739: a fine of one hundred dollars and

six months in prison will be imposed for anyone found teaching a slave to read, or write, and death is the penalty for circulating any incendiary literature. The ones who longed to read and write, but were forbidden, who lost hands and feet, were killed, by laws written by men who believed they owned other men. Their words devoted to quelling freedom and insurgency, imagination, all hope; what about the possibility of one day making a poem? The king's mouth and the queen's tongue arranged, perfectly, on the most beautiful paper, sealed with wax and palmetto tree sap, determined to control what can never be controlled: the will of the human heart to speak its own mind."

At that point Finney alluded to the audience seated before her at the ceremony as proof that the colonial powers had failed to control the enslaved Africans and their descendants: "Tonight, these forbidden ones move all around the room as they please. They sit at whatever table they want. They wear camel-colored field hats and tomato-red kerchiefs. They are bold in their Sunday-go-to-meeting best. Their cotton croker-sack shirts are black washpot clean and irreverently not tucked in. Some have even come in white Victorian collars and bustiers. Some have just climbed out of the cold wet Atlantic, just to be here. We shiver together."

Next, Finney began thanking people for their support during her journey of words. "Papa, chief opponent of the death penalty in South Carolina for 50 years, 57



Nikky Finney

Photo: Rachel Eliza Griffiths

BY TED OLSON

years married to the same Newberry girl, when I was a girl you bought every encyclopedia, dictionary, and Black history tome, that ever knocked on our Oakland Avenue door. Mama, dear Mama, Newberry

girl, 57 years married to the same Smithfield boy, you made Christmas, Thanksgiving, and birthdays out of foil, lace, cardboard, and paper maché, insisting beauty into our deeply segregated southern days."

Finney continued: "National Book Foundation and 2011 National Book Award judges for poetry, there were special, and subversive, high school English teachers who would read and announce the highly anticipated annual report, from the National Book Foundation; the names of the winners stowed way down deep in some dusty corner of our tiny southern newspaper."

And finally: "Dr. Gloria Wade Gayles, great and best teacher, you asked me on a Friday, 4 o'clock, 1977, I was 19 and sitting on a Talladega College wall dreaming about the only life I ever wanted, that of a poet. 'Miss Finney,' you said, 'do you really have time to sit there, have you finished reading every book in the library?' Dr. Katie Cannon, what I heard you say once still haunts every poem I make, Black People were the only people in the United States ever explicitly forbidden to become literate."

As a coda to a speech that seems destined to be remembered by many people, Finney punned: "I am now, officially, speechless."

And isn't that the unique achievement of poetry? Through finding a fitting configuration of words, phrases, and sentences—the stuff of speech—the poet conjures a reality that transcends words.



Ted Olson is the author of such books as *Breathing in Darkness: Poems* (Wind Publications, 2006) and *Blue Ridge Folklife* (University Press of Mississippi, 1998) and he is the editor of numerous books, including *The Hills Remember: The Complete*

Short Stories of James Still (University Press of Kentucky, 2012). His experiences as a poet and musician are discussed on www.windpub.com/books/breathingindarkness.htm

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.

authors ~ books ~ readings

Lola and the Boy Next Door

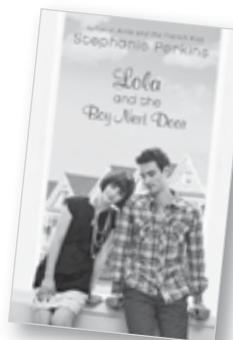
WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE PERKINS

“I believe all novels and films should have more kissing,” Asheville author Stephanie Perkins says on her website. Her debut novel, *Anna and the French Kiss* (Dutton 2011), was a polished gem, with a can’t-put-down story, memorable characters, a setting in the City of Love, and lots of angst about smooching. *Anna* sold so well, Perkins quit her library job and now writes full-time.

Her second novel, *Lola and the Boy Next Door*, is another winner — a different setting, but the same combination of empathetic teen characters, sparkling dialogue and cinematic imagery just waiting for Hollywood to call. Seventeen-year-old Lola lives in San Francisco with her adoptive

parents, an overly protective gay couple, Andy and Nathan. She’s a brilliant clothing artist who doesn’t believe in fashion. “I believe in costumes,” she says, “because life is too short to be the same person every day.” Her dream is to walk into her high school’s senior winter dance, dressed as Marie Antoinette.

Despite her parents’ disapproval, Lola is dating and sleeping with Max, a nice guy who happens to be a 22-year old rock musician. But Lola really loves Cricket, the college boy next door, who is a wildly imaginative inventor. Cricket’s twin sister, Calliope, is an ice skating champion whose



REVIEW BY MARCIANNE MILLER

fear of losing her brother has made her do horrible things to Lola. The plot thickens in cringing adolescent disasters, with Lola doing lots of stupid teen stuff while trying to make everyone proud of her

Teens prefer novels written in the first person and Lola’s voice is edgy, self-deprecating, genuine, and very funny. Hearing the novel in the audio version, enthusiastically narrated by Shannon McManus, was especially enjoyable.

***Lola and the Boy Next Door*, written by Stephanie Perkins, Listening Library 2011 (9 hours), www.stephanieperkins.com**

The Sandburg Connection

A SAM BLACKMAN MYSTERY, WRITTEN BY MARK DE CASTRIQUE

If there’s someone on your gift list who loves mysteries and Asheville, then you must introduce them to the Sam Blackman mysteries by Mark de Castrique.

The latest is *The Sandburg Connection*, which includes several trips to the poet Carl Sandburg’s famous historic house, Conemauga, and the nearby Flat Rock Playhouse.

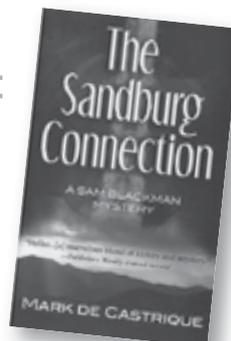
Sam and his partner Nakayla have offices on Pack Square, and it’s fun to follow them all over town and visit your favorite spots through their eyes. Their latest assignment is an insurance investigation in which they’re following a history professor who claims to be disabled from the mistakes of an incompetent surgeon.

If she were really not able to walk,

why did she climb the arduous path to the top of Glassy Mountain? Who pushed her to her death? What was meant by her dying words, “It’s the Sandburg verses.”

All the questions had me hooked. The characters are an amusing cross-section of western North Carolina characters — a teenage daughter with a temper, a nasty ex-husband, a musical boyfriend who’s gay, an actor who thinks he’s gorgeous, a theatrical director who wants to hit Broadway, and a pregnant goat with an attitude.

Woven into the present-day nefarious action is a fascinating Civil War mystery.



REVIEW BY MARCIANNE MILLER

The only thing wrong with the novel is that you immediately want to read the other Sam Blackman novels, *Blackman’s Coffin* (2008) and *The Fitzgerald Ruse* (2010). My suggestion? Have them all on hand.

Mark de Castrique’s website is terrific, with links to video tours of Asheville, lots of interesting tidbits for natives and tourists alike, and info on his many other writings.

***The Sandburg Connection*, a Sam Blackman Mystery, written by Mark de Castrique, Poisoned Pen Press 2011 (290 pages), www.markdecastrique.com**

Miss Julia Rocks the Cradle

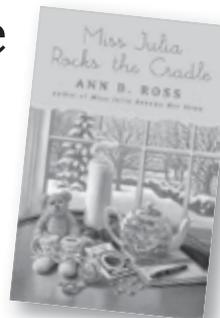
WRITTEN BY ANN B. ROSS

Miss Julia Rocks the Cradle is the 12th novel in Hendersonville author Ann B. Ross’s charming cozy series. In the first novel, *Miss Julia Speaks Her Mind* (2000), Miss Julia learned, after the death of her awful husband, that he had kept a mistress named Hazel Marie and their young son, Lloyd. Horrified, but refusing to hang her head in shame, Miss Julia moved them into her sprawling suburban mansion. As Miss Julia discovered throughout the series, out of terrible things can come wonderful joys — a message beloved by Ross’ devoted fans.

Ten novels passed. Now Hazel Marie’s new husband, private investigator J.D. Pickens, has moved in, too. Miss Julia herself just got married, but her husband, Sam

Murdoch, keeps stomping back to his own house. Lillian, housekeeper and font of wisdom, brings her great-granddaughter Latisha to work with her. Say “hi y’all” to benign chaos.

As *Cradle* opens, the body of a man is found in the garden shed of a neighbor, who happens to be Lloyd’s schoolteacher, and who lives across the street from Miss Julia’s least favorite person, the annoying Mr. Thurlow. Despite her promise to stay uninvolved, Miss Julia sneaks out late at night to poke her nose where it doesn’t belong. Meanwhile, making the novel a perfect holiday read, a huge snow storm descends. Hazel Marie, pregnant with twins, goes into early labor. All



REVIEW BY MARCIANNE MILLER

the men are gone, the power is out, a downed tree traps the car, and midwife Etta Mae is too flustered to handle things — so it’s left to Miss Julia and Lillian to birth those babies. And there’s still a mystery to be solved and a husband to be returned home. What a hoot!

***Miss Julia Rocks the Cradle*, written by Ann B. Ross, Viking, 2011 (310 pages), www.missjulia.com**

Marcianne Miller is a local writer. She’s completing her first novel, set in Asheville. She can be reached at marci@aquamystique.com.



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READINGS & BOOKSIGNINGS

Friday, December 2 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. FREELANCE FRIDAY with Joe D'agnese & Denise Kiernan. Meet and mingle. Wine donated by 5 Walnut.

Saturday, December 3 at 7 p.m. Chef and journalist KATHLEEN FLINN joins us to discuss *The Kitchen Counter Cooking School: How a Few Simple Lessons Transformed Nine Culinary Novices into Fearless Home Cooks*.

Wednesday, December 7 at 7 p.m. HILLARY JORDAN's previous novel, *Mudbound*, was a staff and bookclub favorite. Her new book, *When She Woke*, is an updated, dystopian take on *The Scarlet Letter*.

Friday, December 9 from 4 to 6 p.m. JULIA TAYLOR EBEL signs copies of her poetry collection, *Mama's Wreaths*.

Saturday, December 10 from 12 to 2 p.m. LAURIE BAKKE signs copies of her cookbook, *Laurie Bakke's Cookbook*.

Monday, December 12 at 5:30 p.m. NC STAGE COMPANY DRAMATIC READING.

Thursday, December 15 at 7 p.m. STITCH-N-BITCH. Bring your current projects, settle down with a hot cup of tea and talk shop with fiber artist and “Urban GypZ”, Stacey Budge-Kamison. This monthly event is open to the public.

Saturday, December 17 from 1 to 3 p.m. ELIZABETH ENGELHARDT joins us to sign copies of her book, *A Mess of Greens: Southern Gender and Southern Food*.



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Montford Park Players Promise a Creepy Christmas Carol

The Montford Park Players are taking their annual production of *A Christmas Carol* in a bold new direction this year, focusing on the darker side of Dickens.



BY JOHN RUSSELL

a number of problems for the non-profit theatre. The space needs some work to return it to grandeur. Every ticket sale contributes to the renovations.

New director, Kevin Smith, has always wanted to stage *A Christmas Carol* as he feels Dickens intended, as a call to generosity and goodwill, but also an unnerving warning against covetous materialism.

Kevin assures us that, while they are keeping the fun and the heart-warming moments, there will also be plenty of surprises, scares and show-cases of the desperation of the time.

"I didn't want to give people the same old thing they are expecting. I wanted to give people a new way to look at an old piece. This will not be your traditional *Carol*," he says.

Last year's move to the historic but aging Masonic Temple posed

In the meantime, the peeling plaster and time-worn look lend a creepy air to each show. The players promise you will "meet the awe-inspiring spirit of Christmas face-to-face once more."

IF YOU GO *A Christmas Carol*, December 8-23, 7:30 p.m. Thursday-Sunday, with 2:30 p.m. matinees on Saturdays and Sundays. Thursdays are "Pay What We're Worth" nights. Seats are limited, reserve yours today at montfordparkplayers.org, or call (828) 254-5146. Performances take place at the Asheville Masonic Temple, 80 Broadway St. in downtown Asheville.

A True Story of Transformation and Forgiveness

Murder as a Call to Love, written by Judith Toy, is the first book by a survivor of a family mass murder to identify mindfulness as the author's turning point toward forgiveness and love.

The young man who murders Toy's sister-in-law, and her two teen-aged nephews, hides in the garage in an affluent neighborhood, and waits until they are asleep. In the night, he bludgeons and stabs them to death, then flees. The perpetrator is Charles, the boy across the street, a family friend, just 19 years old.

Lost in grief, Toy falls into the welcoming arms of Zen. Five years later, through her newfound practice of daily mindfulness and meditation, she spontaneously forgives the killer. But before she can go to him and say,

"I forgive you," he hangs himself in his prison cell. Later, on the phone with the killer's mother, the two women cry together.

Here is the intimate, revealing story of Toy's life, and her love affair with Zen. After being ordained by Thich Nhat Hanh, whose teachings abound in this new book, she goes on to lead mindfulness practice in a medium-security prison where some of the young men know the murderer.

The killer's suicide does not relieve the family's grief. Toy believes it is a kind of moral regression for society to continue to legalize murder for murder. "There is no such thing



Judith Toy, author of *Murder as a Call to Love*.



Hillary Jordan

Book Club Favorite Hillary Jordan at Malaprop's, Wednesday, December 7 at 7 p.m.

Hillary Jordan's debut novel, *Mudbound*, received rave reviews and impressed thousands of book club readers. Her new book, *When She Woke* (Algonquin 2011), is a dystopian take on Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic, *The Scarlet Letter*. *Publishers Weekly* has already called it "one of the best books of the year... an instant classic for the 21st century."

www.hillaryjordan.com



Elizabeth S.D. Engelhardt
Photo: Marsha Miller

Southern Food Comes to Malaprop's, Saturday, December 17 from 1-3 p.m.

Elizabeth S.D. Engelhardt is both a foodie and an historian. Her newest book, *A Mess of Greens: Southern Gender & Southern Food*, is an intriguing look at the connection between food, gender and the massive economic and social changes in the South. After reading her book, you'll never look at barbecued ribs the same way.

www.ugapress.org/index.php/books/mess_of_greens

Malaprop's Bookstore/Café 55 Haywood Street, downtown Asheville. For more information call (828) 254-6734.

as closure, only a call to love."

This is the gripping tale of one woman walking through fire. It is a story of adventure, loss, torment, and in the end, forgiveness and an awakening to deep peace. This is a true tale of transformation.

***Murder as a Call to Love*, by Judith Toy, 264 pages, Cloud Cottage Editions, 2011. Available through www.murderasacalltolove.com, through Amazon and local book sellers. Also available as an ebook.**

artful living

Hsiang Yen's Enlightenment

BY BILL WALZ

A monk asked Joshu, "Does a dog have Buddha-nature?" To which Joshu replied, "Mu!"

In Chinese Ch'an Buddhism, the spiritual heir to ancient Taoism, and the precursor to Japanese Zen, the single syllable word, "Mu" represents enlightenment. It does not mean any exalted state of contact with heavenly visions of grandeur, or the extrapolation of complex metaphysical systems about astral dimensions or planes of reality. And, of course, it does.

In Buddhism and Taoism, spirituality is not sought in the realms of complex systems of philosophical/theological dogma. Quite the contrary, simplicity and the direct experience of union with Nature are the path to spiritual experience. Complex thought and systems of cosmology just get in the way.

So – "Mu" means "no mind." It means to be completely free of the delusional and egoistic contrivances of the mind that would have us believe that the spiritual experience is about attainment of heavenly visions or mastering astral planes. It means that enlightenment happens when we enter into a mind of absolute and direct clarity about the nature of the moment, beyond any intellectualization. And this is what leads us, without any pretentious ambitions, into realization of the permeating energy of a conscious Universe and the unified, multiple, simultaneous planes of existence.

This realization is represented in the classic Zen poem by the Chinese sage, Hsiang Yen (Kyogen in Japanese), who lived around 900 A.D.

*The sound of something struck,
and I forgot everything I knew.*

In the story associated with this poem, Hsiang Yen was a monk wrestling with the issue of enlightenment. He was a very intelligent and learned person, but all his knowledge and intellectual prowess could not bring him what he sought: the answer to the question of existence, to the nature of his true Self.

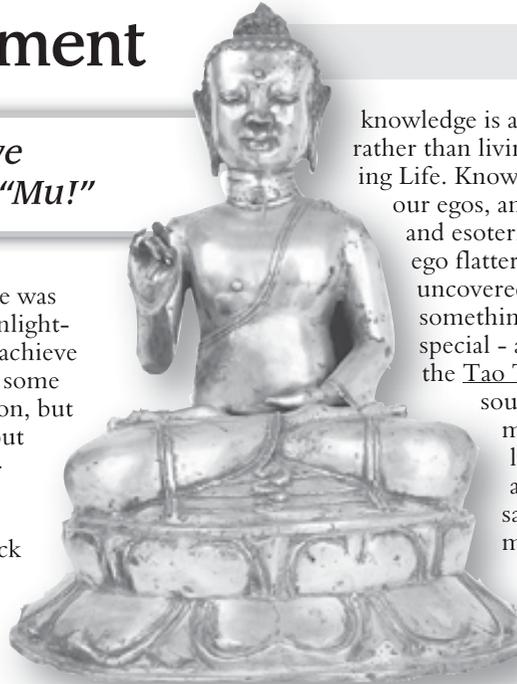
One day, his teacher instructed him, "Don't tell me what you have learned from your reading of the sutras (Buddhist texts), but give me an essential word about your Self before you came out of your mother's womb, before you knew east from west."

Hsiang Yen was at a loss. He desperately went back to researching through every esoteric text he could find, but to no avail. In despair he left the monastery and took up a hermit's life at a long abandoned and dilapidated temple. One day, while cleaning the yard, lost in his thoughts, he tossed aside a broken clay tile and the sound of the tile striking and breaking

against a bamboo tree was the moment of his enlightenment. He did not achieve enlightenment from some new bit of information, but rather, by breaking out of the maze of information that already filled his head.

The startling crack of the tile against the tree cut through all thought and intellectualization and brought him to sudden realization: the meaning of his life, his true Self, was completely contained in that moment in simple presence. While he was thinking about the meaning of life, he had been missing the experience of Life. The sound of the breaking tile woke him up, and there he stood, right in the middle of Life, with eyes opened for the first time.

In Taoist, Ch'an and Zen literature, this theme of sudden realization of true self, of pure existence beyond any learned knowledge is repeated frequently. Knowledge is, in fact, often represented as an impediment to enlightenment, because



knowledge is always talking about, rather than living and experiencing Life. Knowledge also appeals to our egos, and the more complex and esoteric it is, the more our ego flatters us that we have uncovered something special, something that will make us special – and "enlightened." In the *Tao Te Ching*, the original sourcebook of Taoism, made up of 81 short lessons or sections, and attributed to the sage, Lao Tzu, approximately 2600 years ago, it says in the third lesson:

The Master leads by emptying people's minds and filling their cores,

by weakening their ambition and toughening their resolve.

He helps people lose everything they know, everything they desire, and creates confusion in those who think that they know.

~ (Mitchell translation)

This is precisely what Hsiang Yen's teacher did for him when he requested: "give me an essential word about your Self before you came out of your mother's womb, before you knew east from west." He boxed out Hsiang Yen's intellect and left him to sink or swim in the current of

the river of Life. He challenged Hsiang Yen to realize pure knowing, that which is our natural mind before it is shaped and contorted by society and ambitions of specialness, including for some, "enlightenment."

No knowledge other than what could be called the pure knowledge that is attainable only by being wholly present, vibrantly alert, and without preconception in the midst of the mystery of Life can awaken or enlighten us. We are born with this capacity – what Zen calls "original mind" – and then we are "educated" out of it by society and its so-called knowledge, telling us "east from west." This capacity, also known as, "Buddha-mind," is the felt knowing that exists only in the purity of the moment directly lived. It cannot be intellectually explained.

To understand Zen poetry, then, we must grasp that it is not written to stimulate the intellect. It is written to share a moment of Life lived immediately, and in so doing, awaken our natural mind. Here. Now. – "Mu!" – To empty people's minds and fill their core.

Spring has hundreds of flowers; autumn the clear moon.

Summer has cool winds; winter has snow.

If busyness doesn't take your mind, you will know.

~ Mumon (app. 1200 A.D.)



Bill Walz teaches meditation and mindfulness in university and public forums, and is a private-practice meditation teacher and guide for individuals in mindfulness, personal growth and consciousness.

He holds a weekly meditation class, Mondays, 7 p.m., at the Friends Meeting House, 227 Edgewood. By donation.

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

REDISCOVER CHRISTMAS WITH ACTS OF RENEWAL

Since its inception in 2007, the holiday theater presentation at the Black Mountain Center for the Arts has been "Rediscovering Christmas," an original production by Acts of Renewal principals Carol Anderson and Jim Shores.



BY RITA VERMILLION

husband-wife duo's material has been aired on PBS and other national TV and radio shows.

Carol Anderson Shores says, "We've

performed this show throughout the country... there's always a lot of laughter and, by the end, a sense of connection and celebration that I think people long to find during this season."

IF YOU GO: *At the Center for the Arts in Black Mountain, 225 W. State Street, Wednesday and Thursday, December 21-22 at 7 p.m. Performances generally sell out. Reservations are highly recommended. Although the show is family-friendly, it is not geared toward children. Tickets are \$15 and are available through the office at (828) 669-0930.*

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healthy lifestyles

Confirmation

BY MAX HAMMONDS, MD

News Flash! The largest report on lifestyle and colon-rectal cancer ever published concludes that Americans can largely prevent the disease by maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active, drinking less alcohol, consuming only moderate amounts of red meat and avoiding processed meats. Really!?!?

The American Institute for Cancer Research has reported on 263 new papers about colon-rectal cancer to add to the 749 papers already in their data base. Their conclusion? “Forty-five percent of colon-rectal cancer cases could be prevented if we ate more fiber-rich foods and less meat, drank less alcohol, moved more and stayed lean.”

When all of these studies are considered together, here are some of the facts. *Note: Cancer researchers grade probable cause for cancer on a scale of: 1 - no evidence; 2 - not probable; 3 - probable; and, 4 - convincing.*

1. The evidence is convincing that alcohol consumption increases colon-rectal cancer risk – as well as many other cancers.

2. The evidence is convincing that overweight people have an increased risk for colon-rectal cancer – especially for those with increased abdominal fat – as well as other cancers.

3. The evidence is convincing that sedentary people are at increased risk for colon-rectal cancer – as well as several other cancers.

But did you notice these two interesting facts in the above statement?

1. Eating 3.5 ounces a day (24.5 ounces per week) of processed meats (smoked, cured, salted, preserved) increased colon-rectal cancer risk by 36% .

2. Eating 3.5 ounces a day (24.5 ounces per week) of red meat (beef, pork, lamb) increased the risk of colon cancer by 17% - and minimally increased the risk of cancer at less than 18 ounces per week.

3. (3.5 ounces is the size of the palm of your hand.)

Now add one more piece of the puzzle.

1. The evidence is convincing that fiber-rich foods (whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and beans) are protective against colon-rectal cancer – as well as several other cancers.

Hmmmmmm.

Meat is one of the foods with the lowest fiber content, despite how chewy it can sometimes be when it is old or overcooked. Add this to the carcinogens of high heat grilling or frying. Add this to the potential of hormonal, bacterial or viral cancer causes in meat.

One can begin to see why colon-rectal cancer is highly linked to red meat eating and certainly to processed meat eating.

Many of the national researchers are coming to the conclusion that a lifestyle of no alcohol, lean body mass, active exercise, and a diet of fiber-rich foods with no meat eating would lead to an even lower risk of colon-rectal cancer – as well as many other cancers.

The evidence has been confirmed. What is your choice?

Green the RAD Beautification Project

BY GREG VINEYARD

Socially-conscious Asheville is known not only for its thriving art scene, but also for its significant amount of intra-community support. Asheville GreenWorks works tirelessly with thousands of volunteers to tackle all sorts of projects like cleanup of watershed zones and removing invasive plant species, as well as educating our community about ways to help keep Buncombe County “clean and green.”

Because the River Arts District is in an industrial area, Asheville Greenworks saw the need to make it more user- and visitor-friendly, giving birth to the program “Green the RAD,” where they collaborate with partners to “keep up neglected and underutilized outdoor spaces in the RAD.”

The in-studio artists at Constance Williams Working Artist Gallery are donating \$275 to sponsor one month

of “Green the RAD.” Each of the five artists will pay Asheville Greenworks an equal portion from their proceeds from their next group show, “Art = Beauty,” which opens December 10 at 9 Riverside Drive.

Asheville Greenworks is a River Arts District business, good neighbor, RADA Associate Member, and a friend to all. The artists sincerely appreciate how they benefit from the beautification projects already undertaken, and submit a friendly challenge to their neighbors to help sponsor “Green the RAD” throughout 2012.

This show is a direct statement about how visitors’ holiday shopping results in a donation to a great local non-profit. The quality and variety of art shoppers find from these five studio artists is a microcosm of the River Arts District and Asheville experience — good stuff, perfect as a



Works by Constance Williams, Jenny Mastin, Cassie Ryalls, Angelique Tassistro, Greg Vineyard.

holiday gift, or for oneself — a wonderful representation of all our artistic region has to offer.

The “gallery-within-a-gallery” is in the center of the room, allowing one to walk into and all around it, immersed in a space filled with local, quality, affordable and remarkable creations. The experience is expanded by being able to see Constance’s painting studio in the round, and to visit the upstairs working clay studios.

Find great handmade art at all price points by in-studio artists Constance Williams, Jenny Mastin, Cassie Ryalls, Angelique Tassistro, and Greg Vineyard.

IF YOU GO Opening reception for *Art = Beauty*, and artist meet-and-greet takes place Saturday, December 10, from 1 to 4 p.m. The show runs through January 11, 2012. Show and main gallery are open seven days a week, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 9 Riverside Drive.

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thoreau's garden

Houseplants: Bringing the Outdoors In!

Leaves come in light, medium, and dark shades of green, not to mention yellow or cream-colored, are often streaked with colors ranging from pink to red to white. Some leaves have colored chlorophyll that instead of green actually tints the leaf bright red or shocking pink. The combinations and variations are as endless as your imagination. So forget about lilies, roses, and colorful petunias, and think about plants that have great foliage as opposed to beautiful flowers.

So consider, for example, the Chinese Evergreens. The botanical name for the Chinese evergreen is *Aglaonema* from *aglaos*, meaning bright and *nema*, for thread, perhaps referring to the shining stamens of the flower. I asked a number of houseplant experts if anyone knew the derivation of the name but nobody had a clue.

The common name of Chinese evergreen originated with *Aglaonema modestum*. According to "The Aglaonema Growers Notebook," this particular plant has been in continual cultivation by the Chinese for centuries and is found in the northern part of Thailand, in adjoining Laos, and in areas of both China and North Vietnam. The book, by the way, is now out of print but well worth the search.

The author, Roy N. Jervis, treats nineteen species and reminds us that only twelve are in general cultivation and although there are less than twenty-four botanically valid species, the varieties, forms, and cultivars in use today total more than one hundred names.

Aglaonemas belong to the Araceae or Arum Family and include herbs, climbers, and a few shrubs, all with large simple or compound leaves and a flower that—like the calla lily and the flamingo flower—consists of a modified leaf called a spathe that surrounds a spadix, a column covered with numerous tiny flowers, male on the top and female on the bottom.

Another word applied to these plants is tough. They succeed in very dim light—surviving with as little as ten to fifteen foot candles (one foot candle is the amount of light shed by one candle one foot away on white paper in darkened room) but preferring at least the light from a north window for a few days every month or additional illumination from artificial lighting.

Potting soil should be well-drained and include peat moss. A good mix here is soil, peat moss, and sand, one-third each. Keep the mix evenly moist and too, Chinese evergreens respond well to self-watering pots.

They will also grow quite well in pure water. Any vessel that will hold water will serve—except for copper, brass, or lead. Take the plant out of the pot, remove the excess earth, then carefully wash the roots in clear, tepid water.

Add a few small pieces of charcoal in

BY PETER LOEWER



Drawings 1, 2, and 3 are Chinese Evergreens; 4 is a Satin Pothos; and 5 is the Devil's Ivy.

Illustration by Peter Loewer

the bottom of the container then add the plant and enough water to cover the roots and part of the stem. Never let any leaves remain under the water surface as they will rot. Don't forget the charcoal: It is important because it will keep the water clean. As the water evaporates, replace it with fresh water. And don't use chlorinated water. If that's all you have, run a sink-full of water and let it sit for 36 hours and do not use water softened by a home appliance. Plants do not like the chemicals involved.

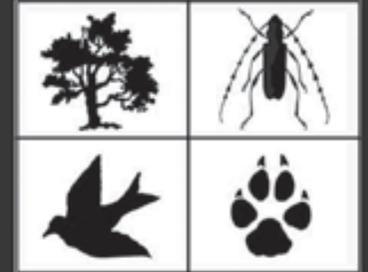
Temperature can be a problem since these plants must be kept warm, especially when grown in water. The roots are especially sensitive to cold. During the day 75° to 85°F are ideal with a drop of ten degrees at night.



Peter Loewer, shown here, examining the blossoms of early-blooming Lenten roses, is a well-known writer

and botanical artist who has written and illustrated more than twenty-five books on natural history over the past thirty years.

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AUTUMN & WINTER IN THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIANS

The 7th Annual Autumn Juried Group Exhibit of the Carolinas' Nature Photographers Association will be on display at the Biltmore Estate's Deerpark Inn through December. In addition to autumn images, additional juried photographs depicting winter scenes in the Southern Appalachians have been added.

The vibrant colors of fall, the beauty and starkness of winter, and the rich, natural diversity of western North Carolina are captured in 25 images of this juried group exhibit. The photographers represented in the exhibit belong to the Asheville Region Chapter of The Carolinas' Nature



Dennis Oakley, *Winter's Walk*

Photographers Association and live in Western North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

The images in this exhibit include close-ups and broad landscapes; snow covered vistas; flora and fauna; stunning natural steams and mountain views. The photographers reflect the diversity of the region: men and women, amateurs and professionals, 20somethings and seniors.

IF YOU GO: Juried Group Photography Exhibit of

the Carolinas Nature Photographers Association ~ Asheville Region, at Deerpark Inn, Biltmore Estate, Asheville. On display until January 1, 2012.

what to do guide™

Events at the Weinhaus

Friday, December 2

Biltmore Estate – an eye opening look at how the wines are made and the specialized equipment used to make them, followed by a delicious small plate dinner afterwards. 6 p.m. Price: \$65 all inclusive. Call the Weinhaus for reservations at (828) 254-6453.

Thursday, December 15

Restaurant Solace with Chef/Owner Bryan Kimmett. Solace is a community table where diners share comfort, food, and conversation. Join us as we pair wines to Chef Bryan's coursed meal. Begins at 7 p.m. Price: \$55 all inclusive. Call the Weinhaus for reservations at (828) 254-6453.

Friday, December 30

Friday Night Flights at the Weinhaus will feature Bubbly! We will run the gambit from prosecco, through cava, to Champagne style wines. A sparkling red wine will likely make an appearance for variety's sake. The wine will be accompanied by light hors d'ouvres. The price is \$10. From 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Weinhaus.

The Weinhaus, 86 Patton Avenue Asheville, NC (828) 254-6453



through December 4 Dashing Through the Snow

Take a trip to Tinsel, Texas for the latest comedy from Asheville's favorite playwrighting trio! In this family-friendly Christmas comedy, a colorful parade of eccentric guests arrive at the Snowflake Inn and proceed to deck the halls with holiday hilarity! More fun than a joy ride in a one horse open sleigh! Written by Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope and Jamie Wooten. Directed by Michael Cheek. Performances run Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. Tickets from \$12-\$22. (828) 254-1320, www.ashevilletheatre.org.

Friday, December 2 It's a Small, Small Work

The Haywood County Arts Council's Gallery 86 presents the fourth annual small works show. On display through Friday, December 31, 2011. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday. An Art After Dark reception will be held from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. All artwork is for sale. Gallery 86 is located at 86 N. Main Street in Waynesville, NC. Free and open to the public.



Clelia Hand, Angel



Friday, December 2 Points to Remember

An opening reception will be held for the Asheville Gallery of Art's featured artist, Cathy Searle, from 5 to 7:30 p.m. On display through Saturday, December 31, 2011. The gallery is located at 16 College Street. (828) 251-5796, www.ashevillegallery-of-art.com.

Saturday, December 3 Holiday Stories & Songs

From 3 to 5 p.m. Storytellers: Elena Diana, Karen-eve, Roselynn Katz, Sandra Gudger, Pete Koschnik. Musicians: Buddy Davis & Cindy Carpenter. Adults and 10+; Free to all, donations accepted. Fletcher Feed & Seed, 3715 Hendersonville Rd. Information: (828) 329-8112.

Saturday, December 3 Nuestras Voces, Nuestras Historias/Our Voices, Our Stories

Opening reception from 7-9 p.m. Exhibit dates: December 3-30. Curated by Victor Palomino. Featuring work



by Chris Corral, Sandra Garcia, Victor Palomino, Martha Skinner + Kenna Sommer. The ARTERY, 346 Depot Street, Asheville, NC.

Thursday, December 8 Ashvegas Saloon

Break out your cowboy hats and spurs for this wild west themed party complete with a casino-style gameroom and entertainment provided by Eleanor Underhill and Friends, Andrew Fletcher of Firecracker Jazz Band, and Members of Seduction Sideshow Burlesque! From 5:30-8:30 p.m. at the Asheville Music Hall, 31 Patton Ave. \$25 with RSVP via Facebook or by emailing info@ashevillarts.com. \$30 at the door. Ticket includes beer, wine, and food, www.ashevillearts.com.

Saturday, December 10 The Marketing Of Madness: Are We All Insane?

A documentary, see www.cchr.org. From 1-4 p.m. Henderson County Library, 301 North Washington Street, Hendersonville, NC. (828) 697-4725, www.henderson.lib.nc.us

Saturday, December 10 Christmas in the Valley

8th Annual Arts and Crafts Show at Owen Middle School from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the school gym. Professional juried artisans, music, local barbeque, homemade concessions and a raffle. Professionally handcrafted items include pottery, metalwork, woodwork, fabrics, jewelry, and so much more. Free children's area to include crafts and Santa. For more information call (828) 686-7917.

Saturday, December 10 Buddha's Enlightenment Celebration & Craft Sale

Shop for hand-made, hand-crafted pottery, crafts, and artwork donated by the

Christmas Brass

The Smoky Mountain Brass Band, conducted by John Entzi, presents its annual Christmas programs.

Sunday, December 4 at 5 p.m. – Hazelwood Baptist Church, Waynesville, NC

Tuesday, December 6 at 7 p.m. – Groce United Methodist Church, East Asheville

The thirty-member band performs a wide variety of musical styles, from Marches and Hymn tunes to Classical, Jazz, Pops and classic British Brass Band repertoire.

The concerts are free and open to the public. A free will offering will be collected.

Concerts at St. Matthias Church

December 4 – Musicke Antiqua Lessons and Carols.

December 11 – Reynolds-Miller Chorale Christmas Concert at 3:30 p.m.

December 18 – Song of the Sky Chorus

January 1, 2012 – An Afternoon in Vienna, Chamber Orchestra Gala

Concerts are held on Sundays at 3 p.m. unless otherwise noted. The historic church is located just off South Charlotte Street at Max Street, on the hill across from the Public Works building (1 Dundee St.). Free will donations.

Great Tree Zen Temple sangha. Bring two or more food items for Manna Foodbank. We will add your name to a drawing to win one our unique Buddha Mugs! From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Urban Dharma, 29 Page Avenue, next to Capt's Bookshelf. Ceremony from 11-11:30 a.m. Refreshments served. (828) 645-2085 or www.greattreetemple.org for more information.

Saturday, December 10 Horizons Past and Present



Photographs by Jon Michael Riley. Opening reception 7 p.m. at Grace Community Church, 485 Cardinal Road, Mills River, beside Asheville Jaguar/Land Rover. On display through January 9, 2012. Visit www.graceinfo.org or www.jonmichaelriley.com

Saturday, December 10 16th Annual Montford Home Tour

Tour holiday decorated homes in Asheville's oldest historic neighborhood from 1 to 5 p.m. Enjoy Shakespearean actors, and homemade baked goods during the tour. Located down the street from Asheville's Visitors Center. Tickets are \$20, available at the Visitors Center Gift Shop and online at www.montfordtour.com

Sunday, December 11 Asheville Community Band

Traditional Holiday Concert at 3 p.m. in the auditorium of Asheville High School. Admission is \$8, students admitted free. Tickets may be purchased at the door and from band members. Call (828) 254-2234 for more details.



Sunday, December 11 Benefit for Billy Constable

Bands: Big Daddy Bluegrass Band, Asheville Blue Grass Collective (featuring Larry Keel-Natural

Bridge and Town Mtn.), Jason Burleson and the Blue Grass Buddies, and Nikki Talley. \$10 suggested donation. Doors open at 6 p.m., silent auction will close at 9 p.m. All proceeds help offset Billy's medical expenses. For more information visit www.billyconstable.com. The Grey Eagle, 185 Clingman Avenue, Asheville. (828) 232-5800, www.thegreyeagle.com.

Sunday, December 11 Blue Ridge Orchestra Holiday Concert

All your favorites, including sleigh rides by Mozart, Prokofiev, and Leroy Anderson and a special appearance by Connell Sanderson, bagpipes. Folk Arts Center on the Blue Ridge Parkway at 4 p.m. Tickets: \$15 adults; \$5 students. Available at the Wine Guy, 555 Merriam Avenue, (828) 254-6500, or online at www.blueridgeorchestra.org.

December 15-18 The Santaland Diaries

This year marks the 10th Anniversary of The Santaland Diaries at ACT. Tom Chalmers once again dons the striped tights as Crummet the Elf. Written by David Sedaris and adapted for the stage by Joe Mantello, this holiday classic is definitely more naughty than nice! Performances run Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday afternoons at 2:30 p.m. All tickets \$15. For more information visit www.ashevilletheatre.org.



Friday & Saturday, December 16-17 Button Wagon

Buttons, Bending, Illusion, and a Giant Burlap Rabbit! Hop aboard the Button Wagon, a circus/theater performance of mixed up proportions and mind bending contortions. At the BeBe

Theater. Doors at 7:30, show at 8 p.m. The BeBe Theater, 20 Commerce Street, Asheville, NC. Tickets sold at the door. \$10-20 sliding for adults. \$5 for kids (12 and under)

Monday, December 19 Billy Jonas

Making innovative use of "found objects" (buckets, broom handles, bottles, keys, and more) as well as traditional

DECEMBER EVENTS ~ ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ OPENINGS ~ SALES

what to do guide™

The Blue Ridge Ringers

Community handbell ensemble of Henderson County, under the direction of Robert Currier of Brevard, will present the following concerts free of charge.

Saturday, December 3

– Henderson County Public Library, Auditorium, 2 p.m.

Tuesday, December 13

– Transylvania County Public Library, Brevard, NC, 12-1 p.m.

Thursday, December 15

– Polk County Public Library, Columbus, NC, 6 p.m.

Saturday, December 17 – Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, US 64, Brevard, NC, 4 p.m.

The 15 ringers ring five octaves of Malmark handbells and three octaves of Malmark handchimes. For more information, call (828) 692-4910, or email blueridgeringers@gmail.com



instruments, Billy helps audiences discover the music within common items and within themselves. Part of

Diana Wortham Theatre's Mainstage Young Audiences Series. 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place. Tickets \$6-\$7. Tickets and information: (828) 210-9837 or www.dwththeatre.com.

December 27-30

Holiday Arts Extravaganza

From 1 to 4 p.m. daily for students in grades 1-4. Campers will enjoy fun-filled afternoons creating art of all kinds. Pre-registration is required. Admission is \$18 daily for members and \$20 for non-members.

Please contact Erin Shope, School + Family Programs Manager at (828) 253-3227 ext. 121 or email eshope@ashevilleart.org for more information. Asheville Art Museum, 2 South Pack Square.

Monday & Thursday Evenings Open Drawing

Live Model for Figure Drawing, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. \$7 (Adults) \$5 (Students). The Fine Arts League of the Carolinas, a non-profit Art School, 362 Depot Street, Asheville, NC. For more information call (828) 252-5050 or visit www.FineArtsLeague.org.



Courtney Martin, Clay Vases

Toe River Studio Tour – December 2, 3, and 4

Studios and galleries in Burnsville, Spruce Pine, Bakersville and Little Switzerland, NC are open noon to 4 on Friday, December 4, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, as part of a FREE self-guided tour. Whether you want contemporary or traditional, two- or three-dimensional, works to look at or to use, you'll find a wide selection.

A meet-the-artists' reception takes place on Friday, December 2 from 5-7 p.m. at the Spruce Pine TRAC Gallery at 269 Oak Avenue.

Studio map guides can be picked up at any participant's studios, either TRAC galleries, or downloaded from the TRAC website, www.toeriver-arts.org. Call (828) 682-7215 for more details.

Best in Show



by Phil Juliano

Callie & Cats



by Amy Downs

Corgi Tales



by Phil Hawkins

Dragin



by Michael Cole

Perspectives



December 2-5

Festival of short plays with student directors at UNC Asheville. "The Maids," "No Exit," and "Almost Maine," 7 p.m. Friday, December 2, and 8 p.m. Saturday, December 3, Carol Belk Theatre.

"Let Me Hear You Whisper," 7 p.m. Saturday, December 3, and 7 p.m. Monday, December 5, Rhoades Hall, room 132.

"Something Unspoken" and "Lie to Me," 2 p.m. Saturday, December 3, and 7 p.m. Sunday, December 4, Highsmith University Union Grotto.

"Lie to Me" will also be performed at 9 p.m. Friday, December 2 in Highsmith University Union Grotto.

Festival is free and open to the public; no tickets necessary. Details: (828) 251-6610 or visit drama.unca.edu/theatre-unca.



A Swannanoa Solstice

Sunday, December 18

World renowned musicians Al Petteway, Amy White and Robin Bullock are joined by a wealth of storytellers, dancers, and musicians. Diana Wortham Theatre, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets \$35, Students \$30, Children 12 and under \$12; Student rush day-of-show (with valid I.D.) \$10. Tickets/Info: (828) 257-4530 or online at www.dwththeatre.com.

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Creaures Café, 81 Patton Ave, Downtown Asheville. Tuesday-Thursday, 5:30 p.m. to 12 a.m. Details at (828) 254-3636, or visit www.creaturescafe.com.

CLASSES ~ AUDITIONS ~ ARTS & CRAFTS ~ READINGS

fine art

INTERVIEW WITH *Philip DeAngelo*

Rapid River Magazine: Please give us some background information about yourself and your journey as an artist.

INTERVIEWED BY DENNIS RAY

Philip DeAngelo: The right teacher can make all the difference. My fourth grade art teacher constantly encouraged me with my work, and my high school art teacher showed me that I could do what I loved for a living. There was about a 10 year period after college that I just stopped creating and worked in corporate sales.

In 1997, a friend and I decided to open a fine art gallery which led to opening an art publishing company about six years later. By the time my wife, Tina, and I discovered Asheville in 2007, the prints from our publishing company were being sold in more than 60 countries.

After visiting Asheville I realized that I had lost my joy as an artist and was creating art for the wrong reasons. I think God allowed me to realize the goals I thought were so important as an artist early in my career, so that I would be ready when the real thing came along. Tina and I felt so connected with Asheville that we closed the gallery and publishing company, sold our farm, and moved to Asheville within the year.

I think that the River Arts District is something artists can search their whole lives for and never find. We have never been happier or felt more connected to a community than we do now.

RRM: You and your wife are, as you say, a "team." How would your art, and your approach to art, be different had you two never met?

PDA: I guess you never know what an alternate future could have held, but I truly can't imagine life without her. Tina has her degree in art history, and she is everything I'm not. Her gift for organizing and detail allows me to pursue my creative dreams. I know I would not have had the courage to drop everything and move to Asheville without her.

RRM: What is your art about? What do you want people to feel/realize/experience when looking at your artwork?

PDA: My wife and I are in love with the beauty of the mountains, and most weekends you'll find us hiking. My paintings these days are explorations in texture and color, using the forms of trees as my focal point. They are a



Forbidden Fruit

celebration of life, creation and everything that makes life worth living.

There are two symbolic elements in most of my work that I have become known for. The first are trees, which for me are iconic and can be used to illustrate our feelings, relationships, and the seasons of life. The second, is the distinct horizon line that is based on the principle of the "golden section" or the "divine proportion" that is found throughout nature. The horizon line, for me, always symbolizes the hope of things to come.

The final element that might set my work apart are the substrates I choose to paint on. I love painting on interesting physical textures such as cork, museum board, and old ceiling tins. Also, I love incorporating the visual textures of fabrics and the swirling patterns I find in certain grains of wood.

As an artist, I am always trying to convey a feeling or story to the viewer. However, I have become much more interested in what my work means to my collectors. I find that I crave the stories people tell me about my work and how it affects them.

RRM: How do you conceptualize your images? Do you draw from memories, or from photographs or locations?

PDA: I usually have about the next five or six paintings rolling around in my head before I have the opportunity to get to them. It's funny, the older I get the more visual I become, and the more I need to get things on paper quickly. There was a time I could have a painting rolling around in my mind for six months or more before starting to paint, but those days are gone.

I am a terrible photographer, but I can be inspired by a great photo-



Philip DeAngelo in his studio. Photo: Paul Howey



Autumn Rush



No Greater Love

graph. I generally translate the image into raw forms and general composition, leaving the details behind. Often, when I work directly from a photograph, my mind will wander, I get creatively lazy and the painting starts to look too much like the photo.

RRM: What inspires you to create?

PDA: I believe in a God and creator who is in love with beauty, and my relationship with Him influences everything that I do.

RRM: How do you know when a piece of art is finished?

PDA: I think one of the hardest things for an artist to learn is when to stop. After you ruin enough paintings by taking them too far, you learn when to stop.

RRM: What do you think of the artists' community in WNC?

PDA: I have never been anywhere like it. Most of the country sees art as simply a luxury. Art in WNC is viewed as a necessity for good living. It doesn't matter if it is music, dance, theatre, food, pottery, or painting, it is all done with a creative urgency in Asheville. I am surrounded by like-minded people who realize the importance of creativity, both in the creation of it and the consumption of it.

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shops

INTERVIEW WITH
Chef Josh Monroe

Rapid River Magazine:
What makes for an
unforgettable dining experience?

INTERVIEWED BY DENNIS RAY

Josh Monroe: An unforgettable dining experience begins with the basic components of the meal. We strive to bring fresh locally grown ingredients that are then prepared in our kitchen right before our customers. All entrees are prepared by the Executive Chef with creativity and style.



Josh Monroe of the Chef's Table.
Photo: Liza Becker

The experience continues with a long term staff to maintain an atmosphere of family and community.

RRM: Tell us a little about the Chef's Table.

JM: The Chef's Table has been a part of Waynesville for eight years. The Executive Chef bought the restaurant three years ago from the original owner, Richard Miller, who also owns The Classic Wineseller.

RRM: Your cuisine has been specifically developed with wine pairing in mind. Can you give us some examples?

JM: The restaurant hosts wine dinners around five times a year with wine makers flown in from California. Each dinner features the wine makers' choice wines paired with our expertly selected cuisine.

RRM: Where did your love of wine originally come from?

JM: Wine actually chemically alters the taste of a meal. Our Executive Chef enjoys the challenge of finding the perfect pairing to create the most enjoyable cuisine experience possible.

RRM: What is your personal favorite wine you recommend to customers and why?

JM: Our Executive Chef loves the Molly Dooker line, from their value wines to their most expensive. Each wine is inspired, from its taste to its labelling.

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