

# VALLEY PLANET

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 6

#041708050708

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**April 17 - May 7, 2008  
Panoply Issue**

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

Panoply  
Schedule &  
Highlights

A Tribute to  
Spanky Alford

WildRose Cafe

"Backwater"  
Music

Chinese  
Spectacular



**Panoply 2008**

## On the Cover: Anna Braden - Panoply 2008 Poster Artist

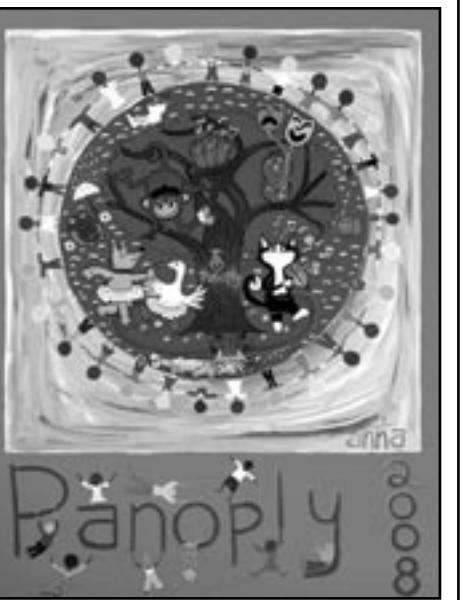
Anna Braden has been an artist all of her life, but she just realized her true talent in the last few years. She was born and raised in Huntsville and attended both the University of Alabama and Ole Miss.

In the past several years, Anna has excelled in her outsider art, even though she works 50 to 60 hours a week at her "day job." She has found time to produce over 500 acrylic medium paintings on all types of surfaces to include canvas, metal buckets, plywood, glass, and paper...just to name a few.

In 2002, Anna was awarded the contract to design, develop, and paint the City of Huntsville's new folk art t-shirt design, unveiled by Huntsville's Mayor Loretta Spencer that May. In December 2006, she created a wonderful "Noah's Ark" painting for world-famous race car driver, Alex Gurney - son of racing legend Dan Gurney. In fall 2007, Anna designed the artwork for a wine label for Château Ross winery and vineyard in Springfield, TN.

Anna is very excited and appreciates her selection to create the poster art for the 2008 Panoply Arts Festival, presented by Boeing. Her work has been a popular attraction at the Festival since 2005, her booth always crowded by kids of all ages. Along with her familiarity with Panoply, the whimsical and family-friendly nature of her art made her a natural candidate for producing this year's poster...and the first look at her final artwork assured The Arts Council that they had made the right choice.

Anna's initial inspiration for the painting was the Big Spring International Park—specifically the pond and one of the islands. One day while



## Lil' Malcom & the House Rockers

May 4 at Knights of Columbus



## Letters To The Planet

**There is nothing more fun for us than getting your letters and emails.  
PLEASE keep sending them in. We may not print them all, but we'll try. Please send your comments to  
[opinions@valleyplanet.com](mailto:opinions@valleyplanet.com). Thanks everybody!**

A friend sent me this regarding spending of our tax rebate checks. Maybe your readers would get a kick out of it.

How to use Your IRS Rebate check...  
As you may have heard, each of us will be getting a tax rebate check to stimulate the economy. If we spend that money at Wal-Mart, all the money will go to China. If we spend it on gasoline it will go to the Arabs. If we purchase a computer it will go to India. If we purchase fruits and vegetables it will go to Mexico, Honduras, and Guatemala. If we purchase a good car it will go to Japan. If we purchase useless stuff it will go to Taiwan and none of it will help the American economy.  
We need to keep that money here in America. The only way to keep that money here at home is to spend it at yard sales, since those are the only businesses still in the US!

Enjoy,  
Betty Boop

## Panoply 2008 Schedule

**AT&T Valley Jubilee Stage**  
Friday April 25  
5:15 NEEMA International Performing Arts Center  
6:00 Southern SASS Studio of Dance  
7:00 Choreography Competition  
Honorable Mention Performance  
Umdabu Dance Company (South African Traditional and Contemporary Dance)

**Saturday April 26**  
10:15 Boot Scootin' Line Dancers of Crestwood Hospital  
11:00 Huntsville Swing Dance Society  
11:45 Huntsville Dance Academy  
12:30 Rocket City Chorus (Barbershop Harmony)  
1:30 Dancentre South  
3:00 North Alabama Dance Center  
3:45 Alabama Youth Ballet  
4:45 Cajun-Zydeco Connection  
5:45 Huntsville City Schools Dance Magnet Company  
6:30 Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko (Okinawan Festival Drums)

**Sunday April 27**  
12:30 Valley Dance Theatre  
1:15 AAA Stars and Clowns  
2:00 Huntsville Ballet School and Community Ballet Association  
2:45 Jill's School of Dance  
6:30 Microwave Dave and the Nukes (Blues Music)

**DRS Test and Energy Management, LLC. Showcase Stage**  
Friday April 25  
5:15 Cristina Lynn & Chuck Rutenberg (Country)  
7:15 Nashville Songwriters Showcase

**Saturday April 26**  
10:00 THE OFFICIAL ALABAMA STATE FIDDLING CHAMPIONSHIP (Junior-Junior Division)  
11:00 Junior Division  
2:00 Master Division Preliminaries  
4:00 Adult Division  
5:30 Senior Division  
7:00 Master Division Finals  
8:00 Award Ceremony

**Sunday April 27**  
12:00 Geico "Homegrown Talent Competition Showcase Finals  
3:30 Joyful Noise Showcase  
6:00 Juice (Classic Rock)

**International Performing Arts Stage**  
Friday April 25  
5:30 The North Alabama Seibukan Karate Schools-NASKS  
6:30 Mohr4 (Celtic Fiddlers)

**Publix Super Markets Charities Kid's Stage**  
Friday April 25  
5:15 The Ms. Johnnie Blues Band  
6:30 The Flashbacks (60's, 70's, 80's Rock, Pop, R&B)  
8:00 DiscOasis (70's Groovin')

**Saturday**

10:15 North Alabama Flute Choir  
11:30 Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theatre

12:15 Rainbow Rhythm Band (Washboard Band, "Old-Time" Music)

1:00 Umdabu Dance Company (South African Traditional & Contemporary Dance)

3:00 Huntsville Youth Orchestra's Philharmonic

4:00 Doctor Osborn's Newfangled Medicine Show

5:00 Rocket City Jazz Orchestra

Alabama A&M

The Millers (Blues, Rock)

**Sunday April 27**  
12:30 Doctor Osborn's Newfangled Medicine Show

1:00 Northeast Community College Jazz Band

2:00 Farmer Jason (Children's Performer – Interactive Music)

3:30 Madison Community Band

5:00 Farmer Jason (Children's Performer – Interactive Music)

6:45 Panoply 2008 Festival Orchestra (Conducted by Joe Lee, HYO)



203 Grove Ave., Huntsville AL, 35801, phone 256.533-4613

## IN THE PLANET

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**Two tickets to the Chinese Spectacular for the fifth caller who says The Valley Planet Rocks!**

**Call 256 533-4613 and leave a message!**

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## Letter From the Publisher

Publishers Clearing House, where are you? Powerball numbers, why do you elude me? Who wants to be a millionaire? Hey Meredith Vieira, I do! Yes it is that time of year when I day dream of long days in the South Florida Keys with flip-flops, cutoffs and a pocketful of money to blow! Spring fever has its grip on me and I cannot shake it. Are there any volunteers to run the Valley Planet, pay for my plane fair and accommodations and let me have a Spring Break? Please call or email me at your earliest convenience!

Of course, if I leave this big city, I will miss out on all of the happenings this month...The VP Events Calendar is overflowing. But surely once I return, sun burnt and refreshed, one of you would fill me in. Okay, enough. As you all know, the Panoply Outdoor Arts Festival is April 25 through the 27. This issue includes the highlights and the schedule so be sure to check it out. Theatre productions are numerous as are poetry readings, live music and art shows. Patios are open for lunch and cocktails, gas grills are firing up and the garden centers are like madhouses. I am obviously not the only one with the fever! We love the letters and emails you send in, keep them coming!

Wistful Jill

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**Two tickets to Rent at VBC for the first person to correctly call in with the name of the local blues artist that has a show called Talkin' the Blues on WLRH radio.**



## Unchained Maladies

### Ricky Thomason Writes

Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts and murders itself. There was never a democracy yet that did not commit suicide. The jaws of power are always open to devour, her arm is always stretched out to destroy the freedom of thinking speaking and writing. Liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the People who have... an indisputable, unalienable, indefeasible, divine right to that most dreaded and envied kind of knowledge, I mean the characters and conduct of their rulers. There is danger from all men. The only maxim of a free "government" ought to be to trust no man living with power to endanger the public liberty. Liberty cannot be preserved without general knowledge among people."

John Adams

Who's angry? Me?

Damn right I am.

And if you aren't, you're not paying attention. Even worse, many have their heads in the sand and don't want to see. There are none so blind...

Americans have suffered through almost eight years of a presidential administration that will undoubtedly be judged as the worst in history.

One day people will look back at the staggering combination of stupidity, incompetence, malfeasance, and criminal greed that is / was the Bush administration and wonder how in the hell We, the People ever allowed this to happen to our country.

Americans succumbed to the most blatant politics of fear and in the name of "battling Al Qaeda and other extremist groups" surrendered rights and freedoms will take years to recover, if we ever get them back. We meekly submitted to warrantless searches, eavesdropping and on all forms of our electronic communications.

We watched patriotism turn into a nationalism that brooked no criticism, and if anyone even questioned what the administration was doing they were branded a traitor who didn't love the troops or country.

The value of your house is down about 12% - equity right out of your pocket. Your 401K -- if you're lucky enough to have one - is likely down 20%. All of this money went from your pocket to where?

Before anyone gets their Republican hackles up, let me assure you that the Democrats are guilty of sitting on their collective asses and being bullied into rubber-stamping whatever the smirking First Moron wanted. They watched like spectators at a tennis match as the Executive Branch waged war on the Judicial, sometimes ignoring them entirely.

Those who watch the HBO mini-series, "John Adams" can't help but wonder how the founding fathers would feel about today's government by corporation.

Something tells me they'd be a bit angry themselves, possibly enough to stage another revolution. In a democracy, government should fear the people, not vice versa.

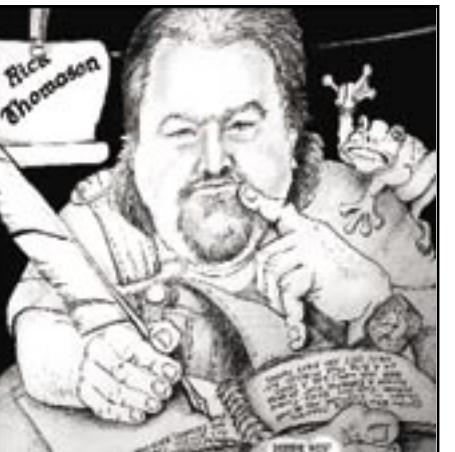
Getting Bush out of office isn't enough. He, Cheney and Rumsfeld should be tried for high crimes and treason.

They who control the media control the message. While screaming about "The Liberal Media," Rupert Murdoch's right-wing FOXes, Rush Limbaugh and clones feed us bullshit about the cause, reasons, conduct and total FUBAR that is the for-profit war in Iraq.

Iraq is nothing more than American Industry waging war on a country while the U.S. military takes the casualties; 4000 and counting. And for what? Al Qaeda wasn't there before we invaded. If Bin Laden was the object, he was in Pakistan. If it was in retaliation for 9-11 - most of the hijackers were Saudi.

Fighting terrorism? The war in Iraq is a terrorist recruiter's dream; Iran is the clear winner.

The truth hurts; all of this carnage was orchestrated for oil and the associated business dollars that come with rebuilding a country



## Lauderdale

by Shelia Carlee

I popped in the CD, Heart Failure by Lauderdale not knowing at all what to expect; I hate to read reviews or bios of new music before I listen. A little 'Intro' and then 'Wasted Life', 'Exhale', and 'Falling', they are rockin' right along. A bit of the Gin Blossoms, Goo Goo Dolls and a touch of R.E.M. was what popped in my head. Great tap your foot, driving down the road tunes. By track 5 'Breathless P.M.' comes in with some great acoustics and slide as a nice surprise.

It doesn't stop there though. 'Fireworks' kicks things back in. With 'Eighteen' you get a pleasant surprise when they slow it down a little but keep the driving sound with that R.E.M. vibe. 'Valentine' struck a Neil Young chord for me. I could go on for each track, but suffice to say they just keep things going steady down to the last track 'The Edge'; an acoustic tune that winds things down nicely. Now don't get me wrong with my comparisons to other groups or musicians. That is just how my brain processes music. These guys definitely have their own unique sound.

These guys are all over the place in a good way!

Now I do my research and get the scoop on this group after jamming on the album for a couple of days. Well, low and behold, these guys were born and raised in the infamous Muscle Shoals area renowned for its history

as one of the most influential areas in music history. Being a Southern raised rocker myself, what can you say but Hell Yeah boys! Originally founded in 2005, they went through a few member changes until the current members settled in. All the songs on Heart Failure are written by vocalist/guitarist Niles Lee, and along with drummer Patrick McDonald, bassist Corey Hannah and Daniel Stoddard on lead guitar, they have the sound of a really tight group of musicians who know what they want to get across in their music and lyrics. They played the local scene in the Shoals getting rave reviews and their first gig at The Nick in Birmingham (a hot venue to say the least) and will be back there again on April 24th, 2008 and they also have an upcoming show here in Huntsville on May 9th, 2008 at the Crossroads so be sure to mark your calendars. Two of their songs were also featured in the film 'Like Moles, Like Rats' by local Huntsville filmmaker Jim Torres.

For something new to add to your music repertoire, this is an album worth checking out. For more show dates, photos and videos, or to order a copy of the album, head to their website, [www.myspace.com/LAUDERDALEMUSIC](http://www.myspace.com/LAUDERDALEMUSIC) and check it out.

It's the great unknown of success. Now that what I've worked for and hoped for has come together, rather than relaxing into, I worry what will take it away, but there's more. I don't question whether or not I'm good enough or deserving, instead I say, "Wow, what else can I do?" The stakes are raised. The bar has been pushed up and all of the sudden everything is new and scary. If I can climb that mountain, what other ones am I capable of defeating?

It's far too easy to bow your head and accept life for what it is. When you stand up and face the fire, climb the mountain, defeat the lion and so on, you realize you're stronger than you thought. What's worse, you can do more. It's easy to fail. It's harder to succeed. Once you've met a goal, you must accept that you aren't as dumb as you thought. And knowing that you're standing on a path toward great things is a hell of a lot scarier than the path toward "Okayville."

I carried this with me for a few weeks and finally someone said the words that made it right. Tim Solley put his hand on my shoulder and told me I was normal. He's a former teacher and principal; he knows everything. His words were plentiful on the topic, but what resonated with me was the following: you can do it. He was right. I can deal with it - and like that, I knew I could.

Your hard work pays off. Soon there will be more. But until then, enjoy the fools on top, take in the view. Accept that you are something greater than you thought. Now wait. Life is about to become beautiful with mystery again.

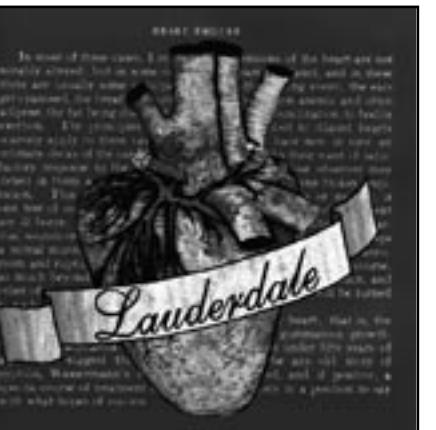
The original cast, re-directed by Gayl Miller (who, along with Leslie Boffil, won the 2007 Wings for Best Director for Show with Music), will be singing and dancing their way into your hearts as they try to raise money to bury their four dead sisters who died of botulism and are waiting in the freezer.

With only four benefit performances, tickets will go quickly! Call Renaissance Theatre at (256) 536-3117 to make your reservations.

Show dates and times, along with ticket prices, are Thursday, April 24 at 8:00 pm, tickets \$20 each; Friday, April 25 at 8:00 pm, tickets \$20 each; matinee show on Saturday, April 26 at 2:00 pm, tickets \$14 each.

Kaye Lewis-Jones plays Sister Hubert, the Rev's right hand nun in charge of the novices, and Kaye plays her with plenty of attitude, especially when she lets it all out with the ever popular audience favorite, "Holier Than Thou".

Sister Robert Anne, street-smart and poignant,



ALLISON GREGG

## PARTY OF ONE

The Fear of Success and the Safety of Failure

On my wall hangs a piece of art that reads:

"I don't know how long I can do this," he said. "I think the universe has different plans for me" and we sat there in silence and I thought to myself that this is the thing we all come to and this is the thing we all fight and if we are lucky enough to lose, our lives become beautiful with mystery again and I sat there silent because that is not something that can be said."

"I don't know how long I can do this," I say to myself. I can't just keep pretending everything is okay. It's not. I'm not. My life has hit that spot where I'm trying desperately to fight that thing, for me the thing is the consequence of success. With a stomach full of worry and anxiety, I headed out for my favorite hike, fully prepared to have myself a conversation with God about this internal struggle.

By the time I got to the top of Monte Sano, the dogs were tired and I was ready to say my peace and head home. As I began to thank

God for the gifts, the dogs kept their eyes on a peculiar duo smoking and complaining about women. The smell of beer radiated from their general area. "Excuse me," I wanted to say, "excuse me. But this is my spot. This is where I come to work out some things. I didn't come here to listen to you whine and bitch, to inhale your smoke, or smell your beer. This is my moment on top, and I have no desire to have it compromised by you two."

But I didn't say that. I didn't say anything. I soaked in the beauty before me and pushed out the people behind me who are ruining MY MOMENT. I pulled in a deep breath before heading back down the mountain. Just then, the anxiety grew and that brought a desire to either puke or jump. Again, I did none of the above. I should have been really happy that Monday afternoon. I really should. That morning I started my weekly report on WZYP, the week before we closed the books on another opening retreat, the dogs are well behaved, I am healthy, and (best of all) it was payday.

But what I've come to see is what scares me in life isn't the safety and security of failure, those lively nuns from Theatre Huntsville's 2007 Wings Award-winning production graciously agreed to get back onstage to help out at Renaissance.

Ron Simmons (2007 Wings winner for Music Direction) returns as Music Director and pianist extraordinaire, along with his band of musicians: Tom Ed Moore, Joe Manning, and Clay Sloan.

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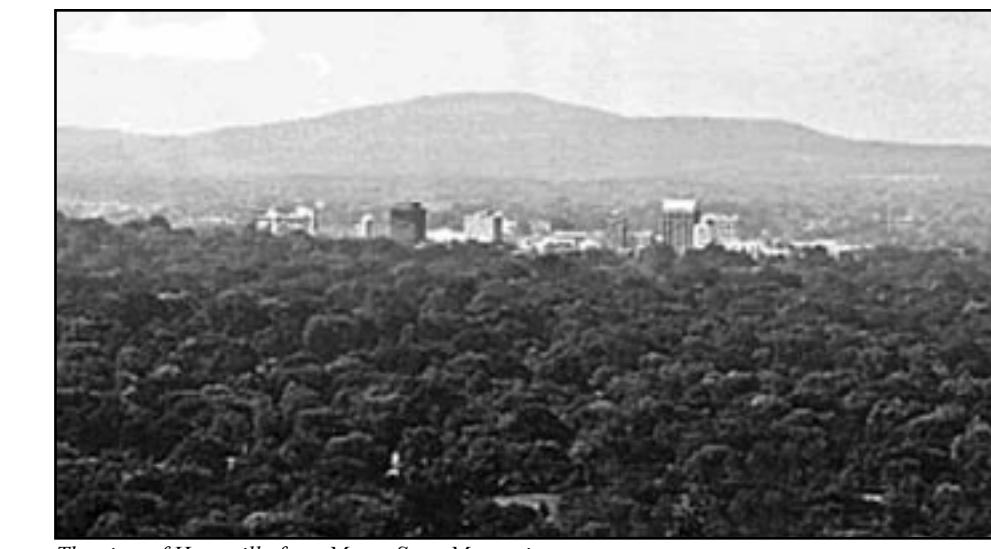
The view of Huntsville from Monte Sano Mountain



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**Renaissance THEATRE  
AT LINCOLN CENTER**

The Theatre Huntsville 2007 Wings Award winning cast and production of  
**NunSense**  
A MUSICAL COMEDY

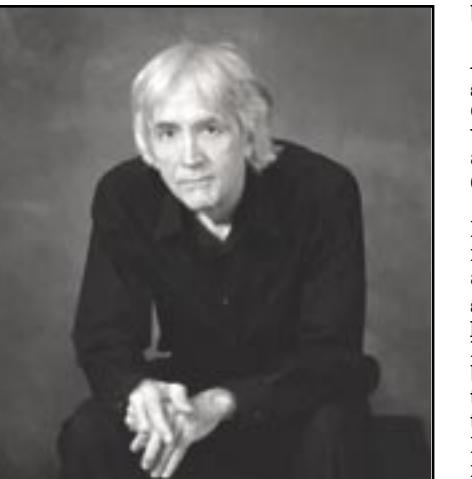
Book, Music and Lyrics by  
**Dan Goggin**

Directed by Gayl Miller-Alexander  
Musical Direction by Ron Simmons Choreography by Jessica Alexander

**April 24-26, 2008**

**Renaissance Theatre Chair Lift Fundraiser**  
April 24 & 25 @ 8:00 pm — Tickets \$20 • April 26 @ 2:30 pm — Tickets \$14  
April 26 Wine and Cheese Gala & Silent Auction @ 6:30 pm, Show @ 8:00 pm — Tickets \$35

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bike) (Ostersund, Sweden; February).

A building contractor was caught by a security guard simulating sex with a canister vacuum cleaner (and claiming that he was merely vacuuming his underpants, which he said was a "common practice" in his native Poland) (London; March).

People continue to purposely maim themselves in various schemes. Daniel Kuch allegedly had a friend shoot him in the shoulder so he could get time off work (and was arrested for telling police that it was a drive-by) (Pasco, Wash., February). And Elizabeth Hingston, 24, let her boyfriend break her leg by jumping on it so that the pair could claim insurance proceeds worth the equivalent of \$200,000 (Plymouth, England, November). And Zachary Booso, 19, shot himself in the cheek, shoulder and thigh so that he could brag to his friends and ex-girlfriend that he is involved with gangs (Brownsburg, Ind., March).

#### Undignified Deaths

A 39-year-old man who had been cited 32 times for driving without a seat belt (and who finally rigged a fake belt in his car to create the illusion that he was belted in) was killed in a low-impact car crash that would not have been fatal to a belted driver (Okata, New Zealand; coroner's inquest, February). And a 74-year-old man died of hypothermia after sneaking out of a nursing home at 4:30 a.m. to smoke (Winnipeg, Manitoba; January). And a man and a woman were fatally struck by several vehicles on the Trans-Canada Highway after they had continued a fight from their stopped car out to the middle of the road (Chilliwack, British Columbia; February).

#### LEAD STORY

Irish director-playwright Paul Walker's production of "Ladies & Gents" opened for a March run in New York City 29 blocks north of Broadway in a public restroom. According to an Associated Press report, the entire play takes place among the porcelain in a bathroom in Central Park, portraying "the seedy underside of 1950s Dublin," with the audience of 25 standing beside rows of stalls, near "spiders, foul odors and puddles of questionable origin." Walker proudly admits that he wanted to take the audience "out of their comfort zone" to create "a different energy." Actor John O'Callaghan recalled that rehearsals were especially difficult: "One man actually came in and had a pee right in front of us."

#### Accidents Will Happen

Police officer Thomas Wilson pleaded guilty to having 8,742 images of child pornography on his computer, but the judge acknowledged that Wilson might have acquired them "somewhat accidentally" (Brisbane, Australia; March).

Ernest Simmons was convicted of attempted murder of two sheriff's deputies despite his defense that he only "accidentally" shot at them (11 times, using two guns) (Orlando, January).

Accused purse-snatcher Derrick Dale, 21, said that the purse fell on his foot and (according to the arrest report) "the next thing he knew, (it) was in his hands" (Destin, Fla., January).

#### Least Competent Criminals

This Getaway Plan Works Better in July: James Jett, 33, was arrested in Blount County, Tenn., in February after attempting to evade police by jumping into the Little River and submerging all but his face. However, the high temperature that day was only 36 degrees (F), and by the time he was discovered, he was suffering from hypothermia.

#### Recurring Themes

More People Having Sex with Inanimate Objects:

Art Price Jr., 40, was charged with public indecency for several instances of walking naked into his back yard and (according to neighbors' videos) simulating intercourse with a picnic table (Bellevue, Ohio, March).

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## Chuck Shepherd's News of the Weird

#### LEAD STORY

China's societal self-improvement in preparation for the 2008 Olympics continues. The Beijing Tourism Bureau ordered hotels to re-translate English signs hoping to avoid such notorious past gaffes as "Racist Park," which is now "Park of Ethnic Minorities," and a cafe's attempt to salute Western visitors with "Welcome, big nose friends." And the Beijing Olympics Committee has been training hostesses for months to stand in military-like precision, straight enough to hold a sheet of paper between their knees, and to smile continuously, showing "six to eight teeth" (even if placing a chopstick in the mouth sideways is necessary for practice). There are height and weight requirements for the hostesses, and each must have an upper-to lower-body ratio of no more than 11-to-13, to eliminate, according to local newspapers, "big bottoms."

**Too Much Time on Their Hands**  
It struck Leo Hill, 81, of Lakewood, Colo., that he was being shorted sheets of toilet paper (in the 12-pack, whose rolls allegedly yielded fewer sheets than similar rolls in the 4-pack), and he earnestly counted 60 rolls, sheet by sheet, concluding that the shortage amounted to enough paper to service one sit-down session per roll. He took his complaint to the Denver Post (and even to the Better Business Bureau), but the reporter, trying to replicate Leo's work, found no shortage, in Leo's brand or eight others.

Jonathan Lee Riches is believed to be the most prolific lawsuit-filer ever to operate from behind bars. His "docket" now includes more than 1,000 cases in just over two years (with eight more years to go on a federal sentence for fraud), including claims totaling several trillion dollars from "injuries" inflicted on him by such people as President Bush, Martha Stewart, Steve Jobs, Britney Spears, Tiger Woods (luggage theft), Barry Bonds (illegal moonshine production), and football player Michael Vick (\$63 billion for allegedly stealing Riches' pit bulls and selling them on eBay so that Vick could in turn buy missiles from Iran).

#### Inexplicable

Prison reformer James McDonough revealed in February the extent of the mess he inherited when taking over the Florida Department of Corrections in 2006 (40 officials charged with crimes, 90 fired, 280 demoted) and said much of the problem centered on inter-department softball. Even though former officials had admitted to contract kickbacks and frequent taxpayer-funded "orgies," McDonough said, "I cannot explain how big an obsession softball had become. People were promoted on the spot after a softball game ... to high positions in the department because they were able to hit a softball out of the park ... The connection between softball and the parties and the corruption and the beatings (of prisoners) was greatly intertwined."

Making artistic, themed scrapbooks is a \$2.6 billion industry in the U.S. (nearly one-fifth as large as the adult-video industry) and has a "Hall of Fame" as protective of its morals as baseball's, which has shunned gamblers and steroid-users. According to a January Wall Street Journal report, one "superstar" scrapbooker, Kristina Contes, was recently kicked out of the hall for violating etiquette by displaying another's photo inside her scrapbook in a competition. Contes said the oversight was inadvertent but that she is now shunned within the community for her grave offense and called "labelwhore."

A 36-year-old man faced several charges after allegedly masturbating on a woman's bicycle seat (explaining that he felt "an overwhelming calm" when he smelled the handlebars of a woman's

#### Cultural Diversity

In October, the government of Singapore, anxious about the city's declining birth rate, began teaching its high school polytechnic students in formal courses on how to flirt. Said Isabel, 18:

"My teacher said if a guy looks into my eyes for more than five seconds, it could mean that he is attracted to me, and I stand a chance," according to a March Reuters dispatch. The course includes "love song analysis" and how to chat online.

Officials in the Shivpuri district of India's Madhya Pradesh state, needing a promising program to slow the country's still-booming birth rate, announced in March that men who volunteer for vasectomies will be rewarded with certificates that speed them through the ordinarily slow line to obtain gun permits. Said an administrator, the loss, through vasectomy, of a "perceived notion of manliness" would be offset "with a bigger symbol of manliness."

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## Huntsville to Host Last Chinese Spectacular of '08

by Mary Silver

**A**rts, scholars, politicians and business people are praising the Divine Performing Arts Company's Chinese Spectacular during its world tour, which ends at the Von Braun Center in Huntsville on May 6th. For example, Amerigo Fabbri, the Dean of Pierson College at Yale University, attended the final performance of the company in New York in January. "The show is spectacular, I mean amazing," he said.

New York show "It was very good. I think the Divine Performing Arts' performance delivers the very essence of the Chinese culture. It introduces the true Chinese culture to America."

#### Complete Authenticity

In Atlanta, before the first performance of the world tour, choreographer Vina Lee said every aspect of the show is carefully researched to ensure complete authenticity.

"They're doing a great job bringing together the history of Chinese culture. The sound effects, the visual effects, the special effects, the singing, and the dancing—it's just amazing."

The Communist Party tried to destroy traditional Chinese Culture during the "Great Cultural Revolution," burning books, razing temples, and forcing children to denounce their parents. Traditional Chinese culture required reverence for the divine, humility, and respect for elders, teachers and parents. Lee said the essence of Chinese culture is humility, and that the dancers and musicians try to practice humility as they create the work, carefully considering each other's ideas.

Kelly Wen, one of the hosts who bilingually introduce each segment, said she met a



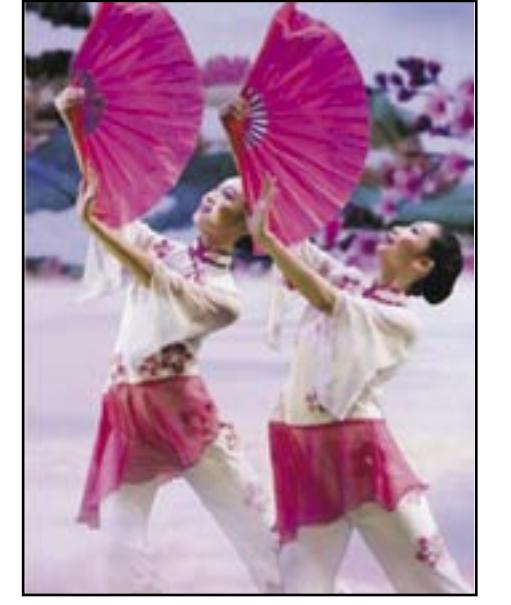
Chinese man, an executive with an overseas Chinese newspaper, who attended one of the company's performances. She said he told her he had been to many, many Chinese shows, but none of them felt genuine to him. She said he told her "Thank you. I know in my heart this is real."

me—one is six and the other is eight. Both of them had a wonderful time," he said.

"It is a beautiful picture about the greatness of China—a picture of how ancient and profound the culture is. I think that we [Westerners] can appreciate it."

Some audience members have said the modern pieces were their favorites, including Dr. Randolph Gardner and his wife and office manager Caroline Gardner. After seeing the show on January 4th in Atlanta, they talked almost at the same time, eyes shining. Mrs. Gardner: "It was amazing, very spectacular." Dr. Gardner: "Enlightening." Mrs. Gardner: "It was lovely how they incorporated values into the stories." Dr. Gardner: "Unity against oppression." He was referring to "The Power of Awareness," in which people in a park protect a mother and daughter when Communist Party members attack them.

Chinese Spectacular is visiting North America, Europe, Asia and Australia this winter and spring. The New York based company ends the tour at the Von Braun Center in Huntsville, Alabama on May 6. For more information about upcoming shows, please see [www.BestChineseShows.com](http://www.BestChineseShows.com).



#### Children Had a Wonderful Time

A member of the Czech Parliament, Marek Benda, saw the Chinese Spectacular in Prague on March 10.

"I find it fascinating. I have a feeling it is partly made for Western culture, enabling us to understand it. I have two children with

# Historic Home Tour & Cemetery Stroll

The Huntsville Pilgrimage Association's annual Pilgrimage Weekend is a wonderful way to start your summer! The Pilgrimage Weekend kicks off with the Historic Home Tour on Saturday, May 3rd, from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Six historic homes located in Twickenham, Old Town, and Five Points Historic Districts will be featured this year. Each home reflects styles of the present owners, as well as a taste of the history each home holds.

Along with the homes, the Church of Nativity, Episcopal, will be featured, with an organ recital by Suzanne Purtee, Organist and Choirmaster, at 2:00 p.m. Three lovely gardens from historic homes are also featured in the tour, complete with old-fashioned lemonade for your taste buds.

On Sunday, May 4th, many historic characters come alive at the Cemetery Stroll in Maple Hill Cemetery, from 2:00 until 4:30 in the afternoon. Maple Hill Cemetery is working toward becoming a national landmark, in part because it is one of the only cemeteries with both Union and Confederate soldiers. On May 4th, over 60 historic characters, including some of those Union and Confederate soldiers, and the five governors buried in the cemetery, will talk about the role they had in the history of Huntsville and how they came to love this city. The Stroll is free and is a wonderful opportunity for adults and children to learn about the uniqueness of this landmark cemetery. Donations are accepted.

Proceeds from both the Historic Home



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Organ Recital at Church of Nativity  
Saturday, May 3 at 2 pm  
**Voices from the Past**  
Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll  
Sunday, May 4, 2008 • 2 to 4:30 pm  
This free event features actors in period costumes reenacting more than 60 former Huntsville residents.

For more information, visit  
[www.huntsvillepilgrimage.org](http://www.huntsvillepilgrimage.org)

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## What Then Must We Do?

by Bonnie Roberts

I am taking a little hiatus from my own prosy thoughts, and I am hoping, in these two poems of mine, to give you an example of how my own heart contains opposing "truths" like I spoke of from my "head" in the last issue of the Valley Planet. A large part of me is a political activist and wants everything "bad" changed, right here and right now. But, on reading my "Free Will Astrology" in the Valley Planet--of all places!--I was advised to settle for incremental changes. And perhaps that advice is wise, and will end up in my living a longer life in order to help make those changes. The first poem, "A Television Guru Said That Life Is Only As Hard As You Make It" was inspired

lighting candles on front porch railings, opening the window the way you like it, turning down quilts that smell like hot chocolate.

From now on,  
I am a believer  
in pillow mints and Norwegian spas  
in rescue-mission Philadelphia:  
Shit is delicious.  
Shit is gold.

No one will bash you in the skull, anywhere  
you walk.  
Life is easy,  
unless you make it hard.

--copyright, Bonnie Roberts, 2006

2) Since I Died

I can sit in traffic  
and watch the cars go by  
like notes  
in a stream of music.

The infinite and the finite  
exist on different sides  
of the blue patterned curtain with yellow  
flowers your mama hung in your bedroom, or  
on different sides of a maple leaf that hangs  
from a limb.  
One side shiny, the other pale.

If you turn it,  
you can see the moment,  
like you want.

Endless as suicide,  
quick as a bee sting.  
Quick as suicide,  
endless as a bee sting.

A hailstorm can be cold,  
or it can be a hot day in a purple garden of  
petunias where you walk in squashy dirt, where  
you find a fat worm to feed to a sick blue jay  
nestling.

And cars can be musical notes passing by,  
playing something soft and soothing in your  
head, that once ached.

The traffic light will become  
the green of your cat's eyes,  
all those years looking from the sill,  
surrounded by white fur,  
or snow.  
Just a blink.

Maybe both of these poems are true. Let me  
know what you think.

1) A Television Guru Said That Life Is Only as  
Hard as You Make It

Famine is really  
going to the refrigerator in the middle of  
the night and finding cold chicken under the  
crinkled foil and slicing red tomatoes after  
you've had the twenty-four-hour bug and can  
finally eat regular food again.

Babies dying bloody in a dry land war  
are peach blossoms falling from trees,  
scraping against bark on the way down  
in a cool wind,  
landing in rivers,  
floating to sea like fragile boats of dew.

A knife to the belly is the softness  
of Ms. Opal's old lady motion  
when she spreads butter and grape jelly  
on warm biscuits  
at tea time around the kitchen table.

In the Everglades.  
Seminole young men toss onto garbage heaps  
only rare orchids from baskets made by hand  
on Hopi reservations, where everyone wears  
cactus flowers and sees the returning outline of  
Black Kachina in desert sky.

On hot asphalt, ice swans circle above and  
land in champagne and rose bud lakes before  
sunset turns everything to a blazing copper pot  
filled with rice and meat or carrot stew for the  
malnourished, who are really actors, wearing  
trick-sticks for arms and legs.

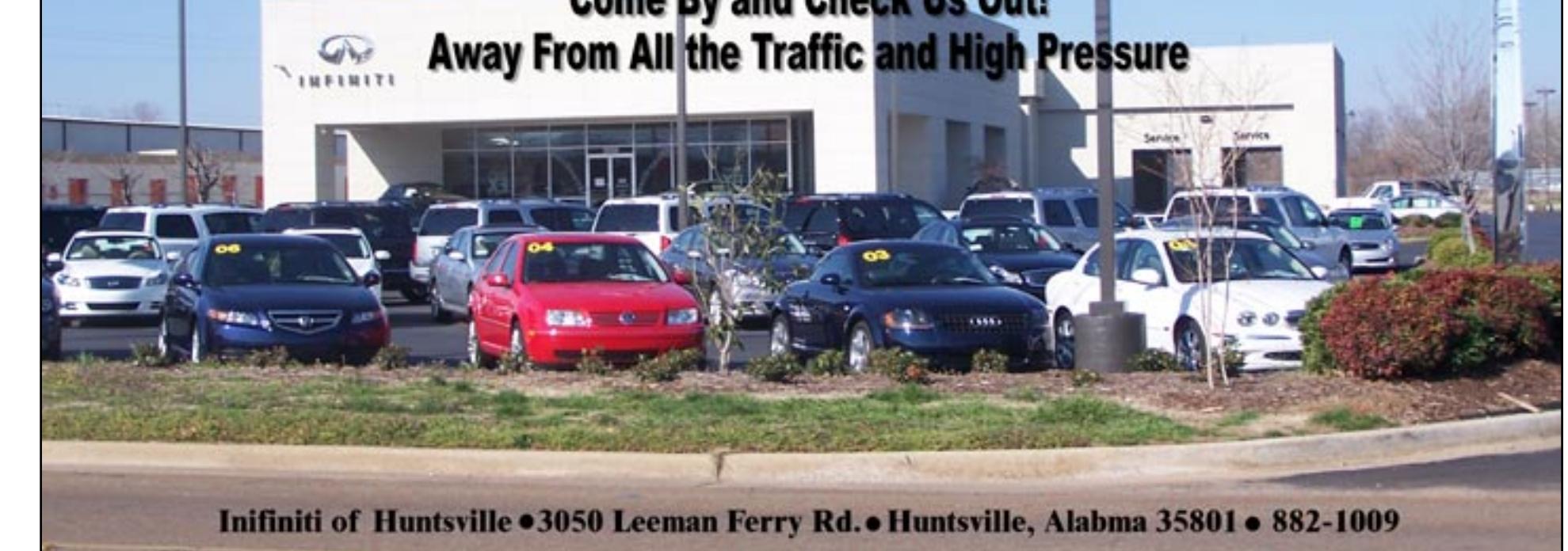
Loneliness at three a.m., if you just won't fight  
it;  
friends drawing you a vanilla bath,

copyright, Bonnie Roberts, 2006

## Infiniti of Huntsville Announces Its New Pre-Owned Department!

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that can best be described as "forged in evil."  
They creep me out. They just do.

My favorite part was the Swing-A-Long Bridge. A suspension bridge. Oh, I do love a good suspension bridge. Jump jump jump. Run run run. (I wouldn't recommend doing that, but I did anyway. Do as the adventurer says, not as she does. A fall will equal death. Not suitable for acrophobes.)

It's a long trail, and each little area has a name. One group of rocks is called the Fat Man's Squeeze (it is quite narrow). There's a Goblin's Underpass, a Lover's Leap (complete with legend), and a viewing area where you can see seven states (not Hawaii). They also have transplanted wildflowers and a ton of plants (with labels), and even have their own deer. Deer Park is home to the rare Fallow deer, imported from Europe in the 30s.

It's quite breathtaking, that is, until you get underground. Underneath the beauty that is Rock City Gardens lies nightmare fuel. Gnomes. Way back when in the early days of Rock City, there was a woman named Frieda Carter who was very interested in European folklore (her husband Garnet is the one that pioneered the "See Rock City" barn sign.) At the end of the Rock City trail is an underground cave area known as Fairyland Caverns. It is a little folklore wonderland...with black lights!

Gnomes, fairy tales reenacted by statues. One area has music and about every nursery rhyme ever. Kids love it. I, however, am deeply disturbed by some of it. I'm sorry, but gnomes on a ferris wheel are just unnatural...yet terribly hypnotic.

So that's my trip to Lookout Mountain. I missed a few things so a return trip isn't out of the question. But for now I will sit and wait for a gnome anti-defamation group to subpoena me, or kidnap me in the night (I sure hope the Valley Planet pays the ransom).

**adventures  
in the tennessee valley**  
....and a little beyond



by: Tina Leach

Beware of Gnomes!

If you've lived in the South for longer  
than...oh, five minutes, you've seen  
about a bazillion (actual number, not an  
exaggeration) signs. Well, it took a while, but  
the subtle advertisements finally wound their  
way into my head, and like a good hypnotized  
zombie I chanted the ever present mantra: See  
Rock City.

But not here.

I've seen happier people in rush hour traffic.  
I'm guessing the ticket machines set the  
pace. Ticket machines must be one of the  
circles of hell for the non-computer literate  
(for the people waiting in line behind them as  
well). The waiting area was a jumbled mess  
of failed attempts at buying tickets, keeping  
groups together, and shouting at missing family  
members. Seriously, people were just freaking  
out, frantically saving seats on the train.

Being confronted with this much stress, we did  
what a normal, rational person would: we got a  
case of the giggles.

Everyone did seem to calm down once the  
train started. Or is it a cable car? It runs on  
rails and cables near as I can tell. I mean, it  
couldn't just run on rails. It would need a space  
shuttle engine to make it straight up Lookout  
Mountain, and on the way down...well let's  
just say it would go so fast that you'd be at the  
bottom before you left the top.

Walking distance from the top is Point  
Park. It was built in 1905 near the Civil War



"Battle Above the Clouds" site, and contains  
monuments, a museum, and memorabilia.  
Unfortunately, I didn't go. The day can only  
hold so much adventure.

You can also walk to Rock City from here.  
There are signs posted, but I'm ashamed to  
say that I did not. I wasn't sure of the actual  
distance and it was a little chilly. I opted to  
ride the Incline down and drive to the Rock  
City parking lot. Apparently I'm a fair weather  
adventurer.

Finally we got to Rock City Gardens. It's  
absolutely beautiful. Pretty rock paths,  
waterfalls, and the location of an all out fight  
between the gods. (That last statement may  
actually have only happened in a Neil Gaiman  
novel.)

Rock City has been around since rocks were  
invented. Sure, a few things have been added.  
I doubt the likelihood of a natural souvenir  
stand formation, but for the most part, it's all  
natural. It is a walking tour, so if you don't  
wear comfy shoes, no one will feel sorry for  
you and your sore feet. You will then be forced  
to sit on one of the benches throughout the park

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## April 25 & 26: Celebrate Poetry, Drink Coffee

by Jennifer Roberts

Come celebrate poetry at the 7th annual Limestone Dust Poetry Festival at the Huntsville Public Library, 915 Monroe Street, on Saturday, April 26. The festival kicks off at noon. For a list of festival events, times, guest speakers, and more, stay tuned to [limestone dustpoetry.org](http://limestone dustpoetry.org). Submissions for the 2008 festival anthology are closed, but the public is still welcome to take part in the poetry, the food, the fun, and the prizes. Attendance is free, but donations are appreciated.

The Limestone Dust Poetry Festival endorses freedom of speech; however, we request open mic attendees respectfully use discretion as a courtesy to Stearns Coffee, their patrons, and the general audience.

A pre-festival open mic will be held in the classy and cozy back room at Stearns Coffee, 2113 Whitesburg Drive (directly behind Steak-Out), on Friday, April 25 from 6:30-8:

Saturday, April 26 (open at 7 am) before we rendezvous at the library for more festivities. For more about Stearns, visit them online at [stearnscoffee.com](http://stearnscoffee.com).

3 pm. This event is also open to the public. Stearns is the official coffee house of the Limestone Dust Poetry Festival and is our kind open mic host. We ask that festival and open mic attendees support Stearns in return. (The espresso is fabulous!)

The public is also welcome to join guest and anthology poets, festival organizers, and more at Stearns Coffee on the morning of

April 24



## Founder of HeartStrong Comes to Huntsville

Marc Adams, Lambda Literary Award finalist and Silver Pen Award recipient for his autobiography, *The Preacher's Son* will be speaking at a special community event sponsored by PFLAG-Huntsville and the North Alabama Pride Coalition.

The Preacher's Son chronicles Marc's life growing up gay as the son of a fundamentalist Baptist minister in rural Pennsylvania. He went on to attend, by choice, Jerry Falwell's Liberty University. He shares about his years as an ex-gay. It culminates with his coming out to terms with being gay and his coming out to his fundamentalist Baptist Christian family.

Marc will share some of his life's story, talk about his latest book, *(lost)Found*, as well as HeartStrong, Inc., the non-profit organization he co-founded. HeartStrong, Inc., is a non-profit educational organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students of religious schools, colleges, and universities. HeartStrong has provided hope and help to GLBT students who have endured faith-based anti-GLBT bullying in religious schools around the world since 1996.

All of Marc's books and resources will be available for purchase, including his latest book (the much anticipated follow up to *The Preacher's Son*, *(lost)Found*). For more information about Marc Adams [www.meetmarcadams.com](http://www.meetmarcadams.com).

The speaker begins at 2pm on Saturday, April 26th at the Flying Monkey (2211 Seminole Drive, Huntsville). Light refreshments will be served starting at 1:30.

## The Hill Country Revue at Crossroads

by Jennifer Roberts



## FILM EDIFICATION

Through a Glass Darkly

One of my favorite series of books as a child was the collection *Choose your Own Adventure*, where you choose the direction the plotline would take. If you choose correctly, there was a happy ending. If you choose poorly, well you might end up dead. Film has great power in that it can show us different perspectives. In real life, we are locked into our bodies and confined to viewing the world through our own eyes. Movies can release us from that restriction and show us things through other characters' perspectives.

For example, the great Christopher Nolan film *Memento* has an unusual perspective of telling the story backwards from a character suffering from short-term memory loss.

The following is a list of my favorite movies that distort normal perspective:

*Melinda and Melinda* – Characters sitting around a dinner table debate whether life is a comedy or tragedy. To illustrate each point, they tell a simple story; one from a comedic point of view, and on the flip side, a tragic point of view. Written and directed by Woody Allen.

*Blow Up* – A photographer bored with his life thinks he has witnessed a murder captured in a picture he has taken. With each subsequent enlargement of the negatives, he slowly puts together the puzzle.

*Being John Malkovich* – Written by the quirky screenwriter Charlie Kaufman, this is a movie that literally gets inside a character's head; real life actor John Malkovich.

*Sliding Doors* – Everyone's life can be dramatically changed if your timing is off for just a few seconds. This is a great 'what if' movie starring Gwyneth Paltrow that shows two parallel stories; each showing a different decision.

I wish I could stick around and write more, but I now need to decide whether to watch *Who's Your Caddy* or *Trainspotting*.

*Ed Killingsworth, film nerd, still wishes he had chosen puppeteering as his profession.*

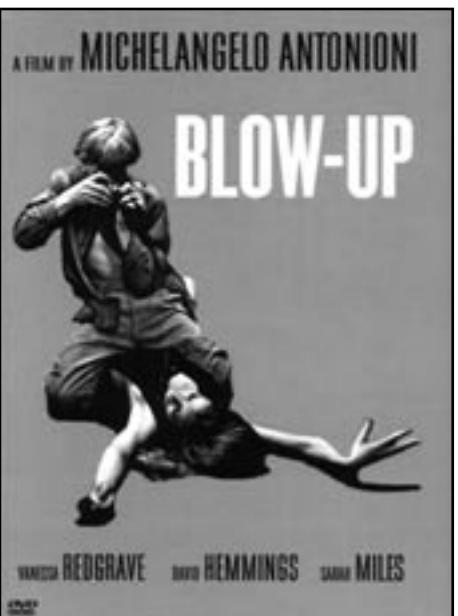


*Rashomon* – Classic from the legendary Japanese filmmaker Akira Kurosawa. A murder takes place in ancient Japan, and four different viewpoints are given, each with a different perspective. This movie begs the question – what is truth?

*Run Lola Run* – A young lady has twenty minutes to pay back 100,000 Deutsche marks owed to some gangsters, or her boyfriend will be killed. The film presents us with three different scenarios. With only an 88 minute running time, this German movie is one of the fastest-paced pictures I have ever seen.

*The Usual Suspects* – Great caper-gone-wrong film taken from the point of view of one suspect. I won't spoil any further plot details, but put this on your NetFlix if you have not seen it yet.

*Short Cuts* – Intersecting day in the life tales



of Los Angeles residents, woven together by the late Robert Altman.

*Being John Malkovich* – Written by the quirky screenwriter Charlie Kaufman, this is a movie that literally gets inside a character's head; real life actor John Malkovich.

*Sliding Doors* – Everyone's life can be dramatically changed if your timing is off for just a few seconds. This is a great 'what if' movie starring Gwyneth Paltrow that shows two parallel stories; each showing a different decision.

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*Ed Killingsworth, film nerd, still wishes he had chosen puppeteering as his profession.*



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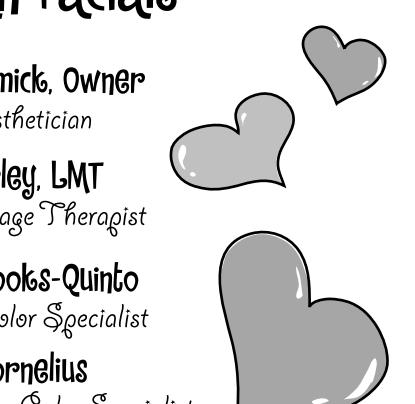
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# A True Treasure is Lost

## A Tribute to Spanky Alford

Chalmers Edward Alford  
(or as most of us knew him)  
Spanky  
May 22, 1955 - March 24, 2008

On Tuesday, March 25th I got the dreaded news from several sources that Spanky had crossed over. It wasn't so much a surprise as a shock to my system. I had known for years of Spanky's deteriorating health, but still I was not prepared for the pain I experienced when Donnie Cox first gave me the news. Marcus Pope supplied the details of the service.

The world, and our community of musicians, has given up yet another of our musical treasures at far too young an age. The loss to his immediate family is beyond measure. For all of that I have deep regret. The greater loss, perhaps, is not that of a music industry icon however, but rather of one of the most decent, kind, honorable and humble men who ever lived.

I want to try to describe Spanky for those of you who were not fortunate enough to know him personally, but this is hard to do in mere words. Maybe because I have all these visions of his expressions and reactions to things, or maybe because Spanky's life was



© Ginny Suss  
Taken in the studio by Ginny Suss during recording of Al Green's new Album "Lay It Down", scheduled for release on May 23, 2008

so musical it seemed more like a soundtrack, and you have to hear a soundtrack. How do you try to explain, to someone who didn't hear it for themselves, a guy who, while most noted for his incredible jazz guitar phrasings on hollow body jazz boxes, could pick up any kind of guitar and play any style, as if he had invented and perfected the genre himself. To call him simply amazing doesn't begin to do him justice. In fact any praise I might utter is gross understatement. I suggest you Google Spanky and enjoy some of what you find. Spanky was credited on different albums under different names. When you search, search for Spanky Alford, Eddie "Spanky" Alford, Chalmers "Spanky" Alford, and combinations.

He was also very spiritual and one of the most generous souls I ever knew. Once as we were walking down the sidewalk, we passed a fellow sitting down we had never seen before. After a few steps Spanky said to "wait a minute". I saw him turn around, walk up and introduce himself, and inquire if everything was all right with the man. Upon learning the young man was depressed and going through a hard time, he found a quiet and private place to sit, and talked with the guy for over an hour, really listening to him, encouraging him, offering advice and trying to instill a bit of hope. I saw and spoke with that young man a couple of years later and he confided in me that Spanky had saved his life. He said he was seriously considering suicide and had made the decision to go through with it, and a few moments later Spanky walked past him, turned and walked back and asked if he was O.K. When I told Spanky about my conversation with the young man, he played down his own significance, and just said, "Something told me that kid needed to talk to somebody". We never spoke of it again.

I could write for days and not run short of interesting, sometimes funny or outright amazing stories about Spanky. I would, however, rather share a few comments by others about what Spanky meant to their lives. I recorded these statements at a musical memorial and tribute held for Spanky at Saint Luke's Missionary Baptist Church on Friday night, March 28. Well before the program began it was standing room only, with an estimated crowd of nearly two thousand. A host of great musicians and artists from near and far were present to pay their respects in song, poems and by sharing memories of Spanky. The performances were tremendous and deeply moving. One after another stepped up to the mic to describe the details of how Spanky had played on their album, helped with their career, made connections for them, encouraged them, personally enriching their lives. And most made reference to what a spiritually uplifting and healing effect Spanky had brought to their lives. There were many funny tales of everyday experiences, from the studio and the road. These were people who knew Eddie "Spanky" Alford as a colleague, collaborator, as a man with a wonderful sense of humor, and most importantly as a dear and cherished friend. An emotional throng of friends and fans hung on every word, with the occasional "amen".

The comments below were made about Spanky after the program by some of those in attendance, and reflect the high regard of his peers and fans.

"I met Spanky around 1982, when he started the gospel group Sons of Christ. He was my guitar teacher. I was amazed at how he could play everything by George Benson. Spanky was the most inspirational guitar player I ever ran across. He was patient, kind, and would teach you anything you wanted to learn. When I heard the news of Spanky's death I was just crushed, like my heart just

fell on the ground, and there's still a big empty spot in my soul right now that Spanky is gone. His legacy will live on through all these musicians he touched, not only in the Huntsville area, but nationwide. Spanky, Leshone, rest in peace." - Leshone Lankford

"He meant to me what he meant to everyone else, and that was just pure music, love, the pure essence of both, and we'll miss him" - A tearful Jim Parker

"Spanky was really an awesome guy, an awesome musician, and an awesome pool player, a really nice guy who loved God. He taught me about playing in the pocket and I just really appreciated knowing him." - Chris Eldridge, independent drummer.

"I actually had the pleasure of playing with Spanky, and I just like the whole atmosphere he would bring with him when he would play, because he knew what he was gonna do before we knew what we were gonna do, and while we would be on stage trying to decide what song we were gonna play, Spanky would just go ahead and start playing a song and everybody would just join in. It was Spanky's show and he knew how to keep everybody in order. That's what I remember most about Spanky" - Reggie Smith, Saxophonist

"I first played with Spanky when I was about 17 or 18 years old. I had seen him at the Jazz Factory. It was the most fun I'd ever had on a gig, at that age. I didn't know who I was playing with at the time, if I had I probably would have just gotten up and left, or choked, but Spanky was a great man. The guy had music flowing through his veins, and every note he played was right from his soul, and translated. I think he left more of an impact on people than probably he ever knew. He'll be missed." - Brian Palmieri, drummer

"I just wanted to say I really enjoyed working with Spanky and playing around with him, he was an inspiration to my life. I love him and I'll always have him in my heart." - Shawn Moore, saxophone player

"Spanky, he was my everything when it comes to music. He taught me when I was an infant, and I grew into a music ministry through him." - Alvin Kirby, bass player

"Spanky was a wonderful guy. I never knew a musician who knew as much music and could play as well as he did, he was just unreal. I saw him a couple of weeks ago, walked into the store where he was teaching at T. Shepards, and he said "You got your guitar?" I told him no, and he told me to get one off the wall. He gave me a lesson right there on the spot. I asked him what I owed him and he just waved me off and said, "You don't owe me nothin'." That's just how Spanky was. He was such a genuine fellow, and I loved him to death." - Josh Oliver, friend and guitar student

"Spanky was definitely a good friend of mine. I met him in 1985 and we traveled the road together with The Mighty Clouds of Joy. One thing I will have to say about Spanky, if you came to any quartet show, you could find Spanky in any dressing room, and Spanky would have a crowd surrounding him, and he was gonna be serenading people, playing anything from Country & Western to Gospel to Jazz to the Beverly Hillbillies. Spanky just did it all. I'm just so glad to be here to support my brother and his wife, Shirley. Thank God for the angels God has blessed her with and Brother Spanky, we love you man, we love you Shirley and we'll see you on the other side, Uncle Eddie - Alphonso "Cheese Burger" McClain, Mighty Clouds of Joy

"Spanky worked along with me here at St. Luke's Church. He was also planning to play on my project that's coming up with college and high school gospel choirs. I went to him and said I had an idea to do a recording, and I wanted him to play on it because of his expertise and he was working with me on that project. He was a great person to know." - Michael Marshall, Director of Worship, St. Luke's Missionary Baptist Church

"I met Spanky about eight years ago. I didn't know who he was, but he turned out to be a great friend, and he is a great spirit in my



Spanky's wife Shirley Alford, his son Taiwin, and his two grandsons Dejuan and Desmond Alford  
Photo by Todd T. Oneal

"I am a dear friend of Spanky's and also a student. Spanky taught me to love my guitar and he taught me how to play my guitar. He helped teach me how to make my guitar talk and to make beautiful music. Spanky was a phenomenon in his own life and he became a phenomenon in my life." - Stephanie Strong, guitar student and friend

"Spanky was my guitar teacher and a dear friend and I guess I was his favorite chef. I used to cook all this food and we shared such good times, and I will miss my dear friend very much." - Vincent Reed, guitar student and friend

"The thing about Spanky that strikes awe is how gentle a man he was and how giving a man he was, and how he cared so much for people. He will be sorely missed as our guitarist from the music ministry, but more than that we will be missing a serious and dear friend. We pray God will bless Shirley. We were glad to be a part and be able to house a musical tribute in his honor." - Pastor T.C Johnson, Pastor St. Luke's Church

"I've been knowing Spanky since 1985 and he's always been a caring and loving person and we'll miss him and hope to see him soon in Heaven. Not too soon, but in a twinkling." - Marcus Pope, percussionist extraordinaire and friend

"He was the greatest man I've ever known." - Tre Calhoun, musician

"I'm Spanky's oldest sister, originally from Philly, but I moved to Darlington, S.C., and I'm going to miss him - Lois Alford, Spanky's sister



for his wife and family and heal them. One thing I know, he still lives in our hearts, and when we reflect on some of the things or conversations it brings a smile to your face and I love him and he will always live in my heart." - Deacon Alford, Spanky's cousin.

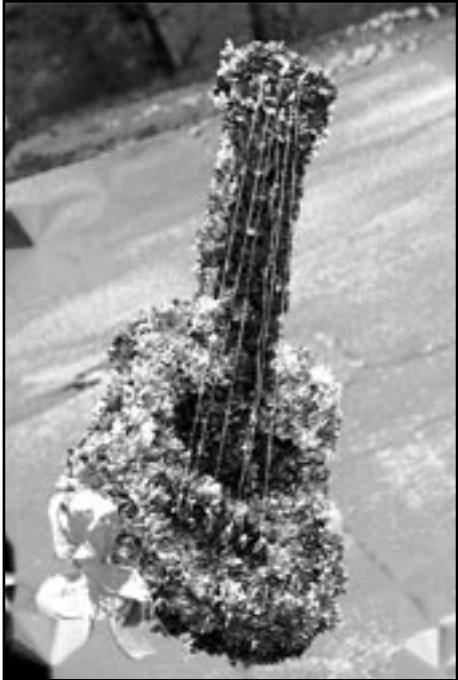
"I just want to say that my dad is going to be truly missed. I learned a lot from my dad over the years, and I wanna say that he was a legend in my book and a legend in many other people's eyes. He was the greatest dad that any child could ever have. I know he's looking down and smiling right now, and I'm going to join him one day. God bless you and we love you dad." - Taiwin, son of Spanky Alford

\*\*\*  
Spanky was working on a CD of his own which will soon be released. The title is "From Me To You" by Spanky Alford. There is also a plan to release a DVD of Spanky's guitar teaching techniques. Stay tuned. You can read other comments at <http://www.myspace.com/spanky15>.

So many people who wanted to make comments for this article were unable, due to the sheer numbers and time constraints. As part of a continuing tribute to the legacy of Spanky Alford, The Valley Planet will post this article in the blog section of our MySpace site, where further comments about Spanky and what he meant to the lives of those he touched may be added in the future. Check in often for updates at <http://www.myspace.com/valleyplanet>.



Cedric Draper (Keyboard), Norris Jones (guitar), and Kelvin Wooten (bass) and others at St. Luke M.B. Church. Photo by Todd T. Oneal





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## DR ANARCHO's

### Rx for Old Stuff That Don't Suck

Mark Knopfler placed only 27th in Rolling Stone magazine's 100 Top Rock Guitarists of All Time poll. I thought he got short shrift. His virtuosity aside, his originality alone should have placed him in the top ten. But they didn't ask my opinion then and I'm sure they couldn't care less what I think now.

Besides his work with Dire Straits, Knopfler's solo albums are further proof of his genius.

Some songwriters' works have a common sound / style that makes their work instantly recognizable as "them." This isn't necessarily a bad thing, just a fact.

Knopfler's songs are different enough in scope, style and feel as to sometimes make it hard to believe the same guy wrote them all. Sure he wrote "Sultan's of Swing," but you may or may not realize that he also wrote Tina Turner's smash hit, "Private Dancer." It's easy to understand why Mark Knopfler is, in addition to all his other accomplishments, a much sought-after film score composer.

Dire Straits took off with rocket speed in a time otherwise dominated by disco music on the one hand and punk on the other. They proved there were still enough people left with musical taste to support real rock done right. They have gone on to become one of rock's most highly respected bands.

For all of Dire Straits' popularity they are a group that never toured extensively. Some think this may be because their legendary reputation as a "fighting band" may be true. It's said they can hardly get along long enough to make studio albums, much less suffer through grueling tours together.

For me, that's a pity. I love live performances and recordings of them. I like to know a group can actually do it in real time and doesn't depend on studio magic and lip-sync like the Milli Vanilli's, Britney Spears, and Christina Aguilera of the world.

Dire Straits can definitely do it. That's why they are:

*Dr. Anarcho's Rx for Old Stuff That Don't Suck: Dire Straits – Alchemy.* This 2 Disc set was released in June of 1996. It's an import and that makes it rather pricey.

You may note that although it's two CDs, there are only 11 songs total. As you might expect, the live versions of the songs are expanded and rearranged with extended solos and more of Knopfler's guitar wizardry. Three of the tracks run in excess of 10 minutes and one of them clocks in at 13-plus. The total playing time of the set is 1.5 hours. Rest assured you'll feel like you got your money's worth.

In the introduction to Dire Straits' greatest hits album, "Sultans of Swing," British music journalist Robert Sandall wrote, "Anybody who finds nothing to love here has either got a problem with the essential fabric of rock and roll or cloth ears."

He is right about that and Alchemy proves it further. Alchemy is a must for any serious Dire Straits / Mark Knopfler fan and a great introduction for the casual listener. What's not to love? It's an hour and a half of musical magic.

Disc 1:  
1. Once Upon A Time In The West  
2. Espresso  
3. Romeo And Juliet  
4. Love Over Gold  
5. Private Investigations  
6. Sultans Of Swing

Disc 2:  
1. Two Young Lovers  
2. Tunnel Of Love  
3. Telegraph Road  
4. Solid Rock  
5. Going Home- Theme From 'Local Hero'



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April 25

## The Valley's Most Complete MUSIC CALENDAR

### THURSDAY APRIL 17

Philby's Pourhouse, Groove  
Russ T's (Scottsboro), Live Music  
Sammy T's Music Hall,  
David Allan Coe with Special Guest Backwater  
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville), Karaoke  
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14),  
Black Label and Senseless  
The Brick, Highly Kind  
The Docks (Scottsboro), James Grant Band  
The Nook, Open Mic with Greg Rowell 6-9  
The Station, Handshake Promise  
Voodoo Lounge Bar & Grill, Live Music  
West End Grill, Karaoke

### SUNDAY APRIL 20

Casa Montego,  
Live Jazz featuring Devere Pride Trio  
Club Oz, Karaoke w/ Miss Sweet "T"  
Hopper's, DJ Justin (8-12)  
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16),  
Pla'Station  
Jazz Factory, Jim Cavender  
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Dave Anderson  
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Crush  
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),  
Karaoke  
Partner's (See ad pg. 14), Karaoke  
Philby's Pourhouse, Milestone  
Russ T's (Scottsboro), Jacob Lyda  
Sammy T's Music Hall, Ladies Night w/Live Music  
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville), Karaoke  
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), 5 O'Clock Charlie  
The Brick, Microwave Dave  
The Docks (Scottsboro), Trey and Kenny  
The Nook, Larry Woellhart 6-9  
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill,  
Ladies Night w/Ben Trussell

### FRIDAY APRIL 18

11th Frame Bar, Karaoke  
801 Franklin (See ad pg. 27),  
Kim and Donnie Cox (7pm)  
Benchwarmer, Too, Cream Pie  
Benchwarmer, Too, Big Daddy Kingfish  
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Triple X  
Club Oz, So Deaf Friday w/DJ Travis /  
Silhouettes of Illusion w/Misticka Blaze  
Coffeetree Books & Brew (See ad pg. 20),  
Larry Woellhart  
Crossroads (See ad pg. 14),  
Old Crow Medicine Show  
El Herradura, Pat Nickel's One Man Band  
Finnegan's Pub, Sing Along with Nancy  
Furniture Factory, The Scratch Band  
Hard Dock Cafe, Straightforward  
Hog Wild, Live Music  
Hopper's, Peter and the Wolf (8:30)  
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16), Juice  
Jazz Factory, Trio El Camino + The Swing Shift  
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Toy Shop w/Leslie  
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Full Circle  
Moody Monday's, Karaoke  
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),  
Voodoo Dogs  
Partner's (See ad pg. 14),  
Lisa Busler and Kira Hughes  
Philby's Pourhouse, Mongoloid Jesse and Jesse  
Port of Madison (Holiday Inn),  
Roberta and Hot Mixx 7-11  
Russ T's (Scottsboro), Live Music  
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville), Karaoke  
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), The Ugli Stick  
The Brick, 3 Hour Tour  
The Docks (Scottsboro), James Grant Band  
The Nook, Southern Rock Three 5-8  
The Station, Crush  
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, Chris Nathan

### TUESDAY APRIL 22

Benchwarmer, Too, Karaoke  
Coppertop (See ad pg. 16),  
HDK Karaoke with Howie  
Hopper's, Janice's Karaoke (8-12)  
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16),  
Jim Cavendar  
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Marge Loveday  
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Rudy Mockabee and the Music Company  
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),  
Karaoke  
Philby's Pourhouse, Chad Reeves  
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville),  
Karaoke Contest  
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), Tom Cremeens  
The Nook, OXR 6-9  
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, Dave Anderson

### WEDNESDAY APRIL 23

3rd Base Grill, David Anderson 9 p.m.-1 a.m.  
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Bike Night w/Live Music  
Cazadeores, Open Mic Hosted by Scott Morgan  
Coffeetree Books & Brew (See ad pg. 20),  
Songwriter's Jam 7pm  
Furniture Factory, Howler 2  
Hopper's, Dave Anderson (5-8)/Lil' Ed (8-12)  
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16), Toy Shop  
Jazz Factory, Don and Kim  
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Live Music  
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15),  
Tim Jennings, Boogalunk  
Moody Monday's, Karaoke  
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),  
Karaoke  
Philby's Pourhouse, Mike Roberts  
Russ T's (Scottsboro), KB and Coach  
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville),  
Karaoke Contest  
Hard Dock Cafe, Mojo Mixers  
Hog Wild, Whiskey Straight  
Hopper's, Peter and the Wolf (8:30)  
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16), Full Circle  
Jazz Factory, The Crackerjacks + The Swing Shift  
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Slip Jig  
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Crush  
Maria Bonita Grill and Cantina, Aclarion  
Moody Monday's, Karaoke  
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),  
Steven Foster and Howler

### SATURDAY APRIL 19

Benchwarmer, Too, DJ Brandon  
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Mike and Lee  
Club Oz, Karaoke w/ Miss Sweet "T"  
Crossroads (See ad pg. 14), Hill Country Revue  
(featuring Cody Dickinson and Chris Chew of North Mississippi Allstars) with Special Guest Matt King  
Finnegan's Pub, Slip Jig  
Hard Dock Cafe, Booty Shakers  
Hog Wild, Live Music  
Hopper's, Peter and the Wolf (8:30)  
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16),  
Dikki Du and The Zydeco Krewe  
Jazz Factory, Open Delta + Charlie Lyle Quintet  
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Bob Walters Banned  
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Full Circle  
Moody Monday's, Karaoke  
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),  
Karaoke  
Partner's (See ad pg. 14), Kip Taylor

### THURSDAY APRIL 24

Benchwarmer, Karaoke w/Carol  
Benchwarmer, Too, DJ Brandon  
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Kenny and Costa  
Club Oz, Karaoke w/ Miss Sweet "T"  
Crossroads (See ad pg. 14), The Avett Brothers  
Finnegan's Pub, Slip Jig  
Furniture Factory,  
Huntsville Alive Party with Jerry Fordham  
Halftime Bar and Grill,  
Tune Doctors Karaoke w/Brian Holder  
Hopper's, DJ Justin (8-12)  
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16),  
Pla'Station  
Jazz Factory, Jim Cavender  
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Dave Anderson  
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Crush  
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),  
Karaoke  
Partner's (See ad pg. 14), Kip Taylor

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Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Nobody's Fault  
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),  
Karaoke  
Partner's (See ad pg. 14), Karaoke  
Philby's Pourhouse, Toy Shop  
Russ T's (Scottsboro), Jacob Lyda  
Sammy T's Music Hall, Ladies Night w/Live Music  
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville),  
Karaoke Contest  
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), 5 O'Clock Charlie  
The Brick, Live Music  
The Docks (Scottsboro), Trey and Kenny  
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## MUSIC

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

### SATURDAY APRIL 26

11th Frame Bar, Karaoke  
801 Franklin (See ad pg. 27),  
Don Henderson (7pm)  
Belvidere Market, Live Music Jam Session  
Benchmark, Live Music  
Black Water Hattie's, Dave Anderson  
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Big Nose Roy  
Boomers, The Legend Band  
Club Ozz, Tribal Thunder Saturdays Dance Party w/DJ Travis  
Coffeetree Books & Brew (See ad pg. 20),  
Open Mic Night 7pm  
Furniture Factory, Jerry McAllister  
Hard Dock Café, Hot Rod Otis  
Hog Wild, Whiskey Straight  
Hopper's, Peter and the Wolf (8:30)  
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16), Kickstand  
Jazz Factory, Devere Pride Trio + Charlie Lyle Quintet  
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Marge Loveday Duo  
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Room 240  
Moody Monday's, Karaoke  
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),  
Karaoke  
Partner's (See ad pg. 14), DJ Shelle Dance Party  
Philly's Pourhouse, Leaving Madison  
Russ T's (Scottsboro), 12 Miles South  
Sammy T's Music Hall, W2YP and Sammy T's Pajama Party  
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville), Karaoke  
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), Easy Mornin Rebel  
The Brick, Five O'Clock Charlie  
The Docks (Scottsboro), Dan and Jon  
The Nook, Gentle Ben and his Trained Guitar 6-9  
The Station, Live Music  
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, The Crackerjacks  
West End Grill, Karaoke

### SUNDAY APRIL 27

Casa Montego, Live Jazz featuring Devere Pride Trio  
Club Ozz, Karaoke w/ Miss Sweet "T"  
Hopper's, DJ Justin (8-12)  
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16),  
Christina Lynn and Chuck Rutenburg with Off the Hook  
Jazz Factory, Jim Cavendar  
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Dave Anderson  
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Crush  
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),  
Karaoke  
Partner's (See ad pg. 14), Karaoke  
Philly's Pourhouse, Milestone  
Russ T's (Scottsboro), Jacob Lyda  
Sammy T's Music Hall, Ladies Night w/Live Music  
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville), Karaoke  
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), 5 O'Clock Charlie  
The Brick, C.O.Jones  
The Docks (Scottsboro), Trey and Kenny  
The Nook, Microwave Dave 6-9  
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, Ladies Night w/Ben Trussell

### FRIDAY MAY 2

Casa Montego, Gentle Ben and his Trained Guitar 6-9  
The Station, Live Music  
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, The Crackerjacks  
West End Grill, Karaoke

### MONDAY APRIL 28

Benchwarmer, Too, Karaoke  
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16), Reese  
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Acoustic Open Mic hosted by Greg Rowell  
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),  
Karaoke  
Partner's (See ad pg. 14), Open Mic Sunday  
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), Karaoke

### TUESDAY APRIL 29

Benchwarmer, Too, Karaoke  
Coppertop (See ad pg. 16), HDK Karaoke with Howie  
Club Ozz, Night w/ Live Music  
Hopper's, Janice's Karaoke (8-12)  
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16),  
Kozmic Mama  
Jazz Factory, Ganz and the Geezers + Swing Shift  
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Live Music  
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Rudy Mockabee and the Music Company  
Moody Monday's, Karaoke  
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),  
The Crawlers  
Partner's (See ad pg. 14), Live Music  
Philly's Pourhouse, Fearless Four  
Port of Madison (Holiday Inn),  
Roberta and Hot Mixx 7-11  
Russ T's (Scottsboro), Live Music  
Sammy T's Music Hall, Live Music  
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville), Karaoke  
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), Sidewinder  
The Brick, Straight Forward  
The Docks (Scottsboro), Trey and Kenny  
The Nook, Southern Rock Three 5-8  
The Station, Live Music  
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, Live Music

### WEDNESDAY APRIL 30

Benchwarmer, Too, Karaoke  
Coppertop (See ad pg. 16), HDK Karaoke with Howie  
Club Ozz, Night w/ Live Music  
Hopper's, Janice's Karaoke (8-12)  
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16),  
Lacy Atchison  
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Marge Loveday  
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Rudy Mockabee and the Music Company  
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),  
Karaoke  
Philly's Pourhouse, Chad Reeves  
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville), Karaoke Contest  
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), Backwater  
The Nook, OXR 6-9  
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, Dave Anderson

### THURSDAY MAY 1

Benchwarmer, Too, Karaoke  
Blue Parrot (Guntersville),  
Bike Night w/Mike and Katherine  
Cazadeores, Open Mic Hosted by Scott Morgan  
Coffeetree Books & Brew (See ad pg. 20),  
Songwriter's Jam 7pm  
Furniture Factory, Chuck Rutenburg and Christina Lynn  
Hopper's, Dave Anderson (5-8)/Lil' Ed (8-12)  
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16),  
Five O'Clock Charlie  
Jazz Factory, Microwave Dave  
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Live Music  
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Big Daddy Kingfish

### FRIDAY MAY 2

Benchwarmer, Too, Karaoke  
Blue Parrot (Guntersville),  
Bike Night w/Mike and Katherine  
Cazadeores, Open Mic Hosted by Scott Morgan  
Coffeetree Books & Brew (See ad pg. 20),  
Songwriter's Jam 7pm  
Furniture Factory, Chuck Rutenburg and Christina Lynn  
Hopper's, Dave Anderson (5-8)/Lil' Ed (8-12)  
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16),  
Five O'Clock Charlie  
Jazz Factory, Microwave Dave  
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Live Music  
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Big Daddy Kingfish

### SATURDAY MAY 3

Benchwarmer, Too, Karaoke  
801 Franklin (See ad pg. 27), Live Music  
Belvidere Market, Live Music Jam Session  
Benchmark, Live Music  
Black Water Hattie's, Patrick Nichol  
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Hot Rod Otis  
Boomers, The Legend Band  
Club Ozz, Tribal Thunder Saturdays Dance Party w/DJ Travis  
Coffeetree Books & Brew (See ad pg. 20),  
Open Mic Night at 7pm  
Coppertop (See ad pg. 16), Local Orbit  
Crossroads (See ad pg. 14), Boombox  
Flying Monkey Arts Center, Jimmy Henderson  
Acoustic Blues and Jazz Guitar (7:30-9:30, 55)  
Furniture Factory, Fearless Four  
Hard Dock Café, Big Daddy Kingfish  
Hog Wild, Chad Bradford  
Hopper's, Peter and the Wolf (8:30)

### WEDNESDAY MAY 8

Benchwarmer, Too, Karaoke  
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Bent Russells  
Club Ozz, Karaoke w/ Miss Sweet "T"  
Finnegan's Pub, Slip Jig  
Halftime Bar and Grill, Lance Almon Band  
The Brick, Tim Tucker  
The Station, Crush  
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, James Irvin

### THURSDAY MAY 9

Benchwarmer, Too, Karaoke  
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Bent Russells  
Club Ozz, Karaoke w/ Miss Sweet "T"  
Finnegan's Pub, Slip Jig  
Halftime Bar and Grill, Lance Almon Band  
The Brick, Tim Tucker  
The Station, Crush  
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, James Irvin

### FRIDAY MAY 10

Benchwarmer, Too, Karaoke  
801 Franklin (See ad pg. 27), Live Music  
Belvidere Market, Live Music Jam Session  
Benchmark, Live Music  
Black Water Hattie's, Christian Bradley  
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Big Nose Roy  
Boomers, The Legend Band  
Club Ozz, Tribal Thunder Saturdays Dance Party w/DJ Travis  
Coffeetree Books & Brew (See ad pg. 20),  
Open Mic Night at 7pm  
Coppertop (See ad pg. 16), Southern Blood  
Flying Monkey Arts Center, Skryxl, The Rudy Barnes Breakup (9pm, \$5)  
Furniture Factory, Jerry Fordham  
Hard Dock Café, Leaving Madison  
Hog Wild, Back Water  
Hopper's, Peter and the Wolf (8:30)  
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16),  
Microwave Dave and the Nukes  
Jazz Factory, Frank Sinatra  
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Live Music  
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Big Daddy Kingfish  
Moody Monday's, Karaoke  
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),  
Karaoke  
Philly's Pourhouse, Donnie Cox  
Russ T's (Scottsboro), KB and Coach  
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville), Karaoke Contest  
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), Scott Boyer Jr.  
The Brick, Live Music  
The Docks (Scottsboro), Live Music  
The Station, Live Music  
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, Live Music

### SATURDAY MAY 11

Benchwarmer, Too, Karaoke  
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Bent Russells  
Club Ozz, Karaoke w/ Miss Sweet "T"  
Finnegan's Pub, Slip Jig  
Halftime Bar and Grill, Lance Almon Band  
The Brick, Tim Tucker  
The Station, Crush  
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, James Irvin

Moody Monday's, Karaoke  
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),  
Karaoke  
Philly's Pourhouse, Ben Trussell  
Russ T's (Scottsboro), KB and Coach  
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville),  
Karaoke Contest  
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), Scott Boyer Jr.

The Brick, Tim Tucker  
The Station, Crush  
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**The Huntsville Stars take on the Jacksonville Suns April 24-28.**



For more information about the Stars' affordable family fun, visit [www.huntsvillestars.com](http://www.huntsvillestars.com) or call (256) 882-2562.

## Single and Fabulous in the rocket city by Fifi Bordeaux

### On the Red Carpet

Would you buy a new rug, rolled up, from an expensive interior decorator, if you were not allowed to see the design? Or a bargain rug from a thrift store, with promise, yet still unrolled to reveal the inside?

Tripping hard over a new Person of Interest (P.O.I.), without plush floor covering to break the fall, men and women both tend to be guilty of buying the rolled rug, without viewing the pattern inside. Oooh, the anxiety! Will the patterns of character, interests, and behavior match my relationship color scheme? What if the rug's worn from years of rolling luggage (baggage), or stains from bleeding hearts? Things that cannot be resolved, from the carpet cleaner namesake, or the best of relationship therapists.

Fifi offers the following advice: Observe the rolled rug from the outside first. Is it worn from partying? Or has its shell been Scotch guarded? Is it rough around the edges, or softened with fringe (benefits)? Ask politely probing questions about the inside, to see what you can. Family history: "Have you been featured on 'Antiques Road Show'?" Relationship history: "Do you have any stains, either from a wounded heart, or

other less mentionables which are visible only under a black light?", "Have you lain beside similar rugs, or tend to hang out with runners?" Stability: "Have you moved frequently, are you fixed adhesively?"

Once the assessment has been made, decide if you want to purchase, but only with the return policy established: this product may be returned due only to manufactured defects. It will take time to discover the defects, major or minor, as all rugs have them. Some defects are better disguised by intricate patterns of masked behaviors that seem so enticing in the beginning, yet unravel rapidly once past the deadline to return. Others have more subtle defects, with less severity, while maintaining aesthetic appeal; are worth keeping. Even if they form fabric balls when you try to vacuum them, or beat them to make them the shape rug you want them to be.

Unroll the rug slowly; it's a relationship you cannot rush. If you've observed carefully, you'll be happily walking the red carpet, blinded only by paparazzi flashbulbs, instead of a P.O.I. who lies like a rug!

Look for Fifi's Single and Fabulous column, exclusively in future issues of The Valley Planet.

## REGIONAL CONCERTS

### BIRMINGHAM

April 11, **Blue Man Group**, BJCC Concert Hall  
April 24 & 25, **Keith Urban and Carrie Underwood**, Arena at Gwinnett Center  
April 25, **Santana**, Chastain Park Amphitheatre

April 25, **Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band**, Phillips Arena  
May 2, **Cat Power**, Tabernacle

May 3, **Sheryl Crow**, Chastain Park Amphitheatre  
May 5, **Seether and Flyleaf**, Tabernacle

May 8, **Radiohead**, Lakewood Amphitheatre  
May 14 & 16, **Eagles**, Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre at Encore

May 17, **Travis Tritt**, Lakewood Amphitheatre  
May 20, **Filter**, Masquerade Atlanta

May 24 - 26, **James Taylor**, Chastain Park

April 26, **Amy Grant**, Cannon Center for Performing Arts

May 15, **Alicia Keys**, FedExForum

April 19, **Casting Crowns**, Sommet Center

April 24, **Bon Jovi and Daughtry**, Sommet Center

May 18, **George Jones**, Ryman Auditorium

May 20, **KT Tunstall**, Ryman Auditorium

## LISTINGS

### PUBS & TAVERNS & CLUBS & BARS

11th FRAME BAR  
8661 Hwy 27, Madison, 256-722-0015

2nd STREET MUSIC HALL  
208 2nd Street, Gadsden 256-547-0010

3rd BASE GRILL (2 locations)  
1792 Hwy 72 E, Huntsville, 256-852-9191  
7904 S. Memorial Parkway, 256-882-9500

801 FRANKLIN  
801 Franklin Street, Huntsville, 256-519-8019.

ADRIAN'S  
1405 Sunset Drive, Guntersville, 256-582-3106

ALLEN'S GRILLE & GROG  
9076 Madison Blvd, Madison, 256-722-8514.

THE BARN  
2510 Ready Section Road, Toney

B.B. PERRINS SPORTS GRILLE  
608 Holly St. NE, Decatur, 256-355-1045

BENCHWARMER FOOD & SPIRITS  
2998 University Drive, Huntsville, 256-539-6268.

BENCHWARMER, TOO!  
3000 University Drive, Huntsville, 256-489-9600.

BLACK WATER HATTIE'S  
10000 S. Memorial Parkway, 256-489-3333.

BLUE PARROT MARTINI & CIGAR LOUNGE  
7001 Val-Monte Drive, Guntersville, 256-582-0930.

BOGEY'S  
412 Main St, Guntersville, 256-582-2860

BOOMERS  
125 Albert Mann Rd, New Hope, 256-723-3029

BOONDOCKS  
Hwy 69, Guntersville, 256-582-3935

BUFFALO'S CAFE  
8020 Madison Blvd, Huntsville, 256-772-4477

CACTUS JACKS  
1117 Jordan Ln, Huntsville, 256-721-6384

CAHOOTS  
114 WestMarket Street, Fayetteville, 931 433-1173

CASA MONTEGO  
Jonathan Dr, Huntsville, 256-858-9187 or 714-0155

CD'S PUB AND GRILL  
107 Arlington Dr, Madison, 256-773-4477

CHARLOTTE'S PLACE  
1117 Jordan Ln, Huntsville, AL 35816

CHIPS & SALSA CANTINA  
10300 Baileys Cove Rd SE, Huntsville, 256-880-1202.

CLUB MIRAGE  
4701 Meridian Street, Huntsville, 256-851-2920.

COPPER TOP BAR & GRILL  
200 Q Oakwood Ave., Huntsville, 256-536-1150

CRICKETS  
3810 Sullivan St., Madison, 256-464-3777

CROSSROADS, THE  
115 Clinton Ave, Huntsville, 256-533-3393.

EMBER CLUB  
10131 Memorial Parkway, Huntsville, 256-881-0057

END ZONE, THE  
1969 University Drive, Huntsville, 256-536-2234.

ESQUIRE CLUB  
3701 Governors Dr., Huntsville, 256-534-7303

FINNEGANS PUB  
3310 Memorial Pkwy S, Huntsville, 256-881-9732

FURNITURE FACTORY BAR & GRILL  
619 Meridian Street N, Huntsville, 256-539-8001.

GENO'S PUB  
1015 6th Ave, SE, Decatur, 256-355-9998

THE GREEN ROOM  
Jordan Lane, Huntsville, 256-837-2232

HARD DOCK CAFE  
3755 U.S. Hwy. 31, Decatur, 256-340-9234

HALF TIME BAR AND GRILL  
8873 Highway 72 W, Madison, 256-430-0266

HOG WILD SALON  
2407 Memorial Pkwy, Huntsville, 256-533-7446

NETWORKS  
2140 Gunter Ave, Guntersville, 256-505-0966

VINOTINI'S  
7143 University Dr, Huntsville, 256-722-2080

VISIONS  
6404 University Dr, Huntsville, 256-722-8247

VODOO LOUNGE BAR AND GRILL  
110 Southside Square, Huntsville, 256-534-6116

WINN SPORTS GRILLE  
4250 Baldwin Dr. SW, Huntsville, 256-881-8878.

ZIG ZAG MARTINI BAR & GRILL  
2020 Country Club Ave, Huntsville, 256-534-4441

THIRSTY TURTLE  
4800 Whitesburg Dr, Huntsville, 256-881-5079

WINE & SPOTLIGHTS  
1087 County Line Rd, STE B, Madison, 256-325-3779

THE STATION  
8694 Madison Blvd, Madison, 256-325-1333.

STEVE'S BILLIARDS & LOUNGE  
2322 Memorial Pkwy, Huntsville, 256-539-8919.

THE HORSE  
2021 Golf Rd, Huntsville, 256-881-8820

THIRSTY TURTLE  
4800 Whitesburg Dr, Huntsville, 256-881-5079

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VISIONS

# Stretching the Creative Envelope

by Bonnie Roberts

**F**riday, March 28, I held a poetry soiree in my home for my dear friend and talented poet, Irene Latham. Irene has just published her first volume of poetry, *What Came Before*, with Negative Capability Press in Mobile.

Irene is an envelope stretcher's envelope stretcher. And that's just one reason I love her poetry. She doesn't hold back in what she wants to say, even though she uses restraint in not telling the story, but allowing the images to speak for themselves. Just when one thinks she has taken a metaphor or an idea as far as she can, she pushes it just a little bit more.

Further, Irene is not afraid to be who she is or to say who she is. To me, that is one of the essential marks of an outstanding writer.

What writer would not want to stretch the creative envelope? Middle is boring. Middle doesn't challenge. Middle may not cause a ruckus, but it is like walking down a stretch of interstate concrete with only "Eat at Bob's" billboards to keep one company.

Even in her choice of topics, Irene goes to the edge: "Why Moths Have No Mouths" is one of her titles, and one of my favorite poems from this collection. In the poem, she compares human passion and need to the moth's "hunger pangs":

How simple it must be then  
when she catches a delicious scent  
calling from across the field  
to transfer one hunger to another,  
to put all her energy into speaking  
this new language of lust,  
to send and receive messages  
in which no wrong

words are possible,  
no misunderstandings,  
just two creatures starving  
and finding solace in the dark.

--Irene Latham, copyright 2007

And in "First Day of Winter," listen to this poet push the edges of the creative envelope:

"Somewhere glaciers that haven't moved for hundreds of years/shift ever so slightly, give/birth to currents only lantern fish see . . . Somewhere the last leaf drops/unnoticed from the limb of a dogwood, /lands square on the back of a beetle/who stills at the sudden shade." --Irene Latham, copyright 2007

The poet could have used simply the word "fish." Instead, she says "only lantern fish see." Immediately, the reader is pushed further into the realm of the poet's world. The word "lantern" itself evokes ideas of seeking in the dark, or experiences the reader may have had using a lantern, and, thereby, adding more layers of richness to the poem.

**Aaron Greer** will be hosting a beginner **Lindy Hop Dance Class** at 8p.m. at **Rocket City Dance Club**, 2614 Artie St. every Thursday this month. Cost is \$10.

**April 17-19** **The Renaissance Theatre** presents "**Space Rangers & the Viper Menace**" at 8p.m. Call (256)536-3117 or visit [www.renaissance-theatre.net](http://www.renaissance-theatre.net) for more information. (See ad pg.)

**April 17-20** **The J.C. Leyendecker in the Golden Age of Illustration** exhibit will be on display in the **Huntsville Museum of Art**. Joseph Christian Leyendecker (1874-1951) was some of the most popular of its day during his long career his work. The exhibition includes approximately 50 paintings, sketches, original magazine covers and advertisements from the collection of the Haggan Museum of Art in Stockton, CA.

**To obtain a copy of What Came Before, e-mail irenelatham@charter.net**

## Huntsville Alive! First Birthday Party Pictures



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Over 15,000 hard & soft back books including autographed & collector editions

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Free Wireless Internet 256-880-6121

(across from Grissom High School)  
Mon - Sat 6 am - 9 pm  
Sun 8 am - 3 pm



Jo and Microwave Dave

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**April 17**

Voice you vote with the **Huntsville Young Professionals at Rock the Vote: Educate, Engage, Elect** from 6-9p.m. at the Roundhouse. Visit <http://rockthevote.eventbrite.com> to pre-register for the event. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door.

**Honor (or Curse) the IRS with the Huntsville Alive! Tax Freedom Night at the Furniture Factory** from 6-8p.m. \$10 gets you appetizers, drink specials and live music provided by Acoustic Connection

**TVAF** is pleased to present **Greg Ingram**, Chick-fil-A's senior manager of marketing to discuss how the "Eat Mor Chikin" campaign has revolutionized Chick-fil-A's sales and public relations. "2 Cows & A Billboard" will be presented from 11:30a.m.-1p.m. at the **Redstone Federal Credit Union's Education Center** on Wynn Dr. Member cost for the luncheon is \$15. TVAF extends a warm welcome to non-members, whose cost for the event is \$20. Students with valid identification card may attend for \$5. The luncheon fee can be paid upon arrival or in advance at [tvaf.org](http://tvaf.org).

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**To obtain a copy of What Came Before, e-mail irenelatham@charter.net**

**April 17-27** Leonardo's scientific and technical drawings have captured people's imaginations for centuries. The **Inventions of Leonardo da Vinci** is an interpretive exhibition of models built from his drawings that invite visitors to explore the master's concepts. It will be on display at the **Huntsville Museum of Art**. In the spirit of the Inventions of Leonardo da Vinci exhibition, the Huntsville Museum of Art is hosting the DaVinci Challenge: Inventors Competition! Criteria for the inventions are available at [www.hsmuseum.org](http://www.hsmuseum.org). You can also call the Huntsville Museum of Art at 535-4350 ext. 217 for more information.

This year marks the **Huntsville Museum of Art's 21st Annual Youth Art Month (YAM)** exhibition of student artwork. This exhibition will showcase more than 200 works of art by kindergarten through grade 12 students.

**April 17-30** **Yuri Ozaki** will exhibit her works at the **Huntsville Times Gallery**. Ozaki is a self taught artist from Japan. She works in Oil, watercolor, pencil, charcoal, and pastel. More information about Yuri can be found at [www.ozakifineart.com](http://www.ozakifineart.com).

**Kathryn Lansing Vaughn**, the **HAL Limelight Artist** for this month, will exhibit a retrospective exhibit entitled **After Only 49 Years of Art Lessons-An Artist Confesses!** The public is invited to attend. For additional information contact HAL at 534-3860.

**Doris Sisk and Vicki Garner** will be exhibiting at **Stearns Coffee** during the month of April. Stearns Coffee is located at 2113 Whitesburg Drive in Huntsville, AL. For more information, call HAL at 534-3860.

**April 17-May 23** Applications for **Leadership Huntsville/Madison County Class 22** are now available. The 10-month program includes one theme per month and covers economic, governmental, social service and quality of life topics among others. Leadership Class 22 will start in August and finish in May 2009. Applications are available on Leadership's website at [www.leadershiphsv.org](http://www.leadershiphsv.org), or by calling 535-2032.

**April 17-May 31** Randy Wells and Jerry Brown will exhibit works of art at the Heritage Club during the months of April and May. For additional information, please contact HAL at 534-3860.

**April 18** **"Out of the Kitchen and Out of the Box"** is an all women's art exhibition that will open at **Motlow Community College's Eoff Fine Art Gallery** in Tullahoma, TN. All proceeds from the sell of books and aprons at the event will go to help support "Look Good...Feel Better" a community-based, free, national public service program that teaches female cancer patients how to cope with the appearance-related side effects of chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

**Friday Night at Lowe Mill** presents "Coffee Break" with artist Robert Daniel. The artist reception is a free event and will be held from 6-9 pm downstairs at Lowe Mill, 2211 Seminole Drive, Huntsville, AL 35805 ([www.lowemill.net](http://www.lowemill.net)) Tina's Cantina will be open for dinner from 5-9 pm.

**Huntsville High Theater** proudly presents "Les Miserables-School Edition" at 7:30p.m. on Friday and Saturday and at 2:00p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for students and senior citizens. Order tickets online at [www.hspanthertheater.com](http://www.hspanthertheater.com). Group discounts are available by calling (256)883-4589.

**Contra Dance** with live music by Ed Baggot and Elsie Peterson and with calling by Gary Nelson will be held in gym of **Faith Presbyterian**, corner of Airport Rd. & Whitesburg Dr. All ages are welcome: singles, couples & families. Admission is \$7.00, \$4.00 for students, and free for ages 12 & under. See [secontra.com](http://secontra.com)/NACDS.html for more info or call 837-0656.

Local artists and others are invited to set up a booth at the **Flying Monkey Arts Center** and sell their wares to the public for **Artist Market**. There will be art, jewelry, vintage clothing, and more interesting things for sale inside our facility, safe from rain. We now have air conditioning.

**Vertical House Records** at the **Flying Monkey Arts Center** will celebrate **Record Store Day with Music, Sales & More** from noon until 4p.m!

Turn your trash into art and your art into cash at the **Recycled Art Contest** and the **Flying Monkey Arts Center**. All entries are made from recycled items. Come and vote for your favorite entry. Contest will be held from noon until 4 p.m.

**A Latin/Ballroom Dance** will be held from 8-10p.m. at the **Rocket City Dance Club**. Cost is \$10.

Newly published local author **William Drinkard** ([www.williamdrinkard.com](http://www.williamdrinkard.com)) will be speaking about his new book **Elom**, at the **NASFA** meeting, 6-8p.m. at **BookMark Bookstore**.

**Tennessee Valley Vipers** will take on Louisville at home, the **Von Braun Center Arena**, at 7:30p.m.

**April 19-20** **Dreamfield Productions** presents **A View from Earth, an Earth Day Celebration**. Bring your chairs, blankets, and umbrella to 600 County Road 209, Collingsville, AL for this **Go-Green Day** and Concert Event! Gates open at 10:30 a.m. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$6.50 for children ages 7-12, and free for children ages 6 and under. Advance tickets can be purchased with a discount at [www.dreamfieldproductions.net](http://www.dreamfieldproductions.net).

**Rick DellaRatta and Jazz for Peace** is a Benefit Concert for the **Tennessee Valley Jazz Society**. It will begin at 6p.m. at the **Butler High School Fine Arts Facility**. Admission is \$35.00 at the door or \$25.00 in advance. RSVP is desired. See [www.jazzforpeace.org](http://www.jazzforpeace.org) for more information.

**The Princess Theatre Center for the Performing Arts** presents the musical revue **Beguiled Against The Songs of Rodgers and Hart** at 7:30 p.m. The production is the **Annual Broadway Revue Benefit for the Princess Theatre**, featuring a talented cast of local artists under the direction of Betty Rocha. Reserved tickets are \$22.00-\$15.00 and available online at [princesstheatre.org](http://princesstheatre.org) or at the Princess Theatre Box Office. Student and teacher discount tickets are \$15.00. For more information, call 256-340-1778 or visit: [www.princesstheatre.org](http://www.princesstheatre.org).

**April 19**

**Trudi Gardner** will be giving a workshop in **Feng Shui** from 11am to 1pm at **The Dream Maker** 4004 Triana Boulevard in Huntsville. The workshop will focus on how Feng Shui minimizes stress and creates serenity while impacting such areas as relationships, prosperity, health, and the mind/body/spirit connection. Cost of the workshop is \$30. For information contact Trudi Gardner 256-772-6999

**April 20** **The Dixie Derby Girls** will take on the Nashville Roller Girls in their first home bout at **Roller Time Skate Center** in Huntsville. The bout will start at 7:30 p.m. The doors open at 6:30. See [dixiederbygirls.com](http://dixiederbygirls.com) for tickets or more information. Call (256)489-7655 to contact Roller Time Skate Center.

**Encounters: Robin Rogers Opening Gallery Walk by the Artist** will begin at 2p.m. in **Grisham Gallery of the Huntsville Museum of Art**. A reception in the Beck Meeting Room will follow. Admission is free for members and \$7 for non-members. See [hsmuseum.org](http://hsmuseum.org) for more information.

**April 20-June 29** **Encounters: Robin Rogers** exhibition will be opening at the **Huntsville Museum of Art**. Engaging ceramics by Florida potter Robin Rogers, who specializes in raku firing, a 16th-century Japanese technique that creates a cracked, iridescent finish on designs the artist takes from nature. See [hsmuseum.org](http://hsmuseum.org) for more information.

**April 21** **Naomi Alexander** is hosting **intermediate Salsa** classes every Monday this month at 8:00pm at **Rocket City Dance Club**, 2614 Artie St. Cost is \$10.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

**April 22** The Huntsville Christian Women's Connection Monthly Luncheon, themed "Spring Fashion Extravaganza" will be held from 11:30a.m.-1:00p.m. at the **Huntsville Country Club**, 2601 Oakwood Ave. Cost is \$15, inclusive. Reservations, essential for the luncheon and for childcare, are due by Thursday April 17. Call Betty at (256)837-8286 or Nancy (256)883-1339.

**Scott Horton** will speak on "Watchdogs or Dog Paws? Politics and the Alabama Press" at 7p.m. in the **Shelby Center** at the **University of Alabama in Huntsville campus**. The event is free and open to the public. More information is available at [www.northalabamamediaform.org](http://www.northalabamamediaform.org) or, contact Linda Haynes at 256-489-3884 or [lhaynes@knology.net](mailto:lhaynes@knology.net).

**April 23** A free **Zydeco CD Dance** sponsored by the **Cajun Zydeco Connection (CZC) of Huntsville** will be held at the **Eagles on 10th Street** off Bob Wallace. A Panoply Rehearsal will be held from 6:30-7:30 followed by a dance until 9 PM. See [czdance.com](http://czdance.com) for more information.

**April 23-26** **38th Annual Racking Horse Spring Celebration** will be held at the **Celebration Arena** located on Highway 67 East in Decatur. Featuring different classes and divisions of Racking Horses, entries from over 25 states compete for honors, as well as over \$21,000 in prize money, the Spring Celebration kicks off the start of the Racking Horse show season. The competition begins each night at 6:30. New to the celebration is a Kid's Day with games and inflatables on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Admission to the children's area is free. See [www.rackinghorse.com](http://www.rackinghorse.com) for more information.

**April 24** **Aaron Greer** will be hosting a beginner **Lindy Hop Dance Class** at 8p.m. at **Rocket City Dance Club**, 2614 Artie St. every Thursday this month. Cost is \$10. Call Aaron Greer at (256)534-4994 or see [www.rcdcace.com](http://www.rcdcace.com) for more information.

**April 24-26** **Renaissance Theatre's Main Stage** presents **Theatre Huntsville's 2007 award-winning cast and production of "Nunsense"** by Dan Goggin, Friday and Saturday night at 8p.m., and at 2:30 on Sunday. Tickets for these showings are \$20. The play will also be shown at 8p.m. Sunday with wine and cheese and a silent auction beginning at 6:30p.m. Tickets for this showing are \$35. For more information call the Renaissance Theatre at (256)536-3117. (See ad pg.)

**Huntsville High Theater** proudly presents "Les Miserables-School Edition" at 7:30p.m. on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and an addition showing at 2:00p.m. on Sunday. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for students and senior citizens. Order tickets online at [www.hspanthertheater.com](http://www.hspanthertheater.com). Group discounts are available by calling (256)883-4589.

**April 25** A pre-festival open mic will be held in the classy and cozy back room at **Stearns Coffee**, 2113 Whitesburg Drive from 6:30-8:30. This event is open to the public. Stearns is the official coffee house of the **Limestone Dust Poetry Festival** and is our kind open mic host. For more about Stearns, visit them online at [stearnscoffee.com](http://stearnscoffee.com).

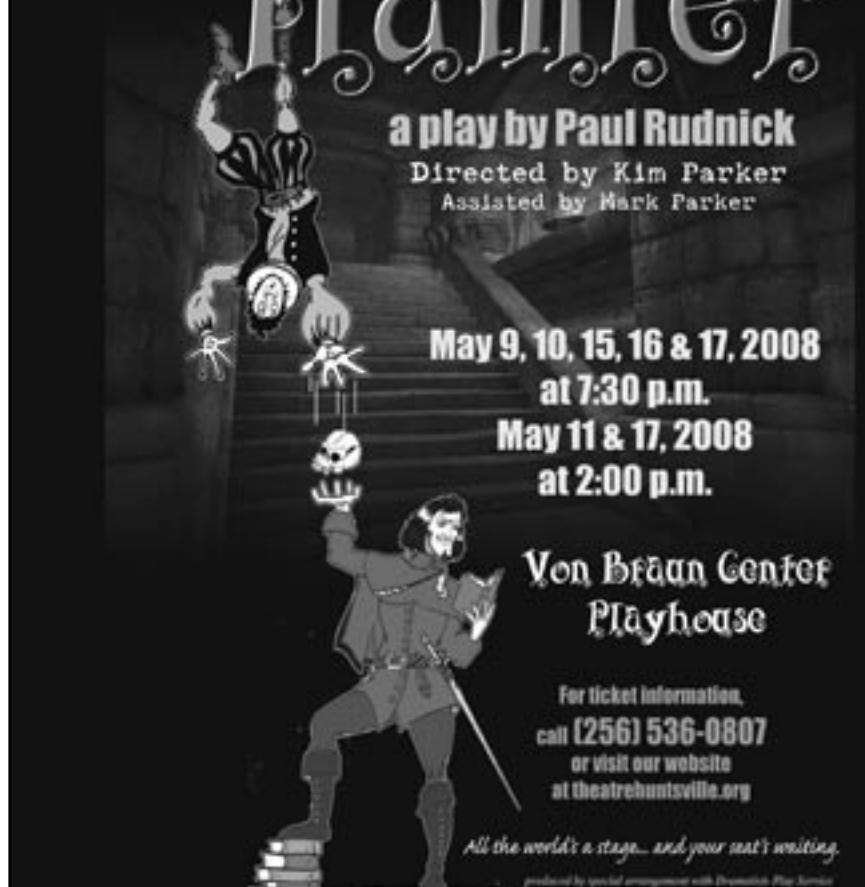
**Friday Night at Lowe Mill** brings "Twango Bango" to the back dock from 6-9 p.m. "Twango Bango" is the pairing of classical guitarist Phil Weaver with drummer Ivy Joe Milian. Seating is provided outside, as well as blankets and an art table for the kids. This is a family friendly event. There is no charge for this event, but donations are welcome. Tina's Cantina will be open with dinner specials from 5-9 pm.

**Abigail Washburn & The Sparrow Quartet**  
featuring **Béla Fleck**  
with Casey Driessen  
and Ben Sollee



\$25  
Thursday, May 1  
(256) 534-6455  
[www.merrimackhall.com](http://www.merrimackhall.com)  
MERRIMACK HALL PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Theatre Huntsville presents  
**I Hate Hamlet**  
a play by Paul Rudnick  
Directed by Kim Parker  
Assisted by Mark Parker



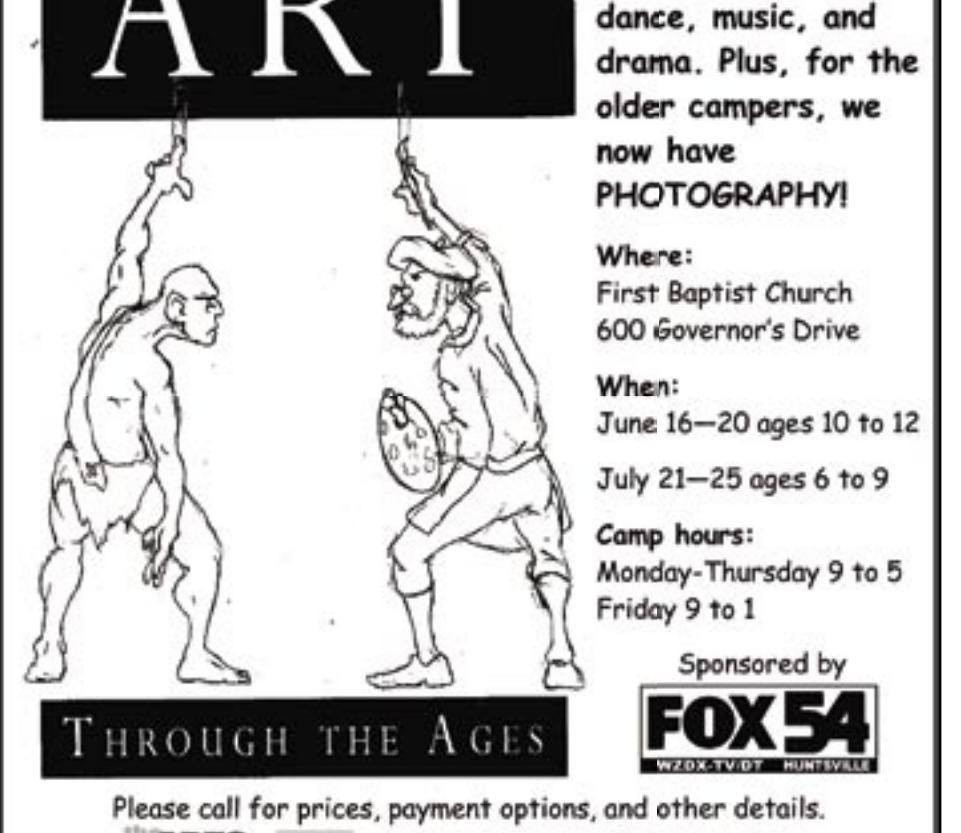
May 9, 10, 15, 16 & 17, 2008  
at 7:30 p.m.  
May 11 & 17, 2008  
at 2:00 p.m.

Von Braun Center Playhouse  
For ticket information,  
call (256) 536-0807  
or visit our website  
[at theatrehuntsville.org](http://theatrehuntsville.org)

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**Join The Arts Council for our annual Summer Day Camp!**

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First Baptist Church  
600 Governor's Drive

When:  
June 16-20 ages 10 to 12  
July 21-25 ages 6 to 9

Camp hours:  
Monday-Thursday 9 to 5  
Friday 9 to 1

Sponsored by **FOX 54**  
**WZDX-TV-DT HUNTSVILLE**

Please call for prices, payment options, and other details.  
**the ARTS COUNCIL**  **256-519-ARTS (2787)**  
[www.artshuntsville.org](http://www.artshuntsville.org)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

Meet and Mingle will start the evening off with a New Orleans fare at 6:30 pm followed by the concert at 8 pm. General Admission tickets are \$45 (includes 1 drink coupon and general admission seating) and Lagniappe tickets are \$150 for 2 people (includes 4 drink coupons, the new Michelle Malone Sugarfoot CD and priority seating) can be purchased at Townhouse Galleries (Presenting Sponsor), The Fret Shop (Gris-Gris Sponsor) and the JANA office. For more information, visit the Junior Achievement website at [www.janaonline.org](http://www.janaonline.org).

**May 3 Whistle Stop Festival & Rocket City BBQ** in Huntsville is held in May every year at the **Historic Huntsville Depot**. Join the people of Huntsville for a great time of outdoor entertainment and socializing at one of Huntsville's best festivals. For more information see <http://rocketcitybbq.com>.

**May 4 Antique Car and Tractor Show and Street Fair** will be held in the town of **Trinity**. Live country and bluegrass music, food vendors, and children's activities will fill the streets while also benefiting the Trinity Volunteer Fire Department. Activities will be held at **Municipal Park** located on Preston Drive in Trinity from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. General admission is \$5 per person. For more information contact Scott Owens at (256)303-0609.

**May 4-29 Naomi Alexander** is hosting **intermediate Salsa** classes every Monday this month at 8:00pm at **Rocket City dance club**, 2614 Artie St. Cost is \$10. Call Naomi Alexander at (256)534-4994 or see [www.rcdcdae.com](http://www.rcdcdae.com) for more information.

**April 28-29 Rent** will be performed at the **Von Braun Center** at 8pm. See [vonbrauncenter.com](http://vonbrauncenter.com) for details.

**April 29 Cheeburger Cheeburger** is generously donating a portion of all profits from both of their restaurants to support the **Youth Orchestra**. At various times throughout the day and evening, small groups and soloists from the Youth Orchestra will be playing some of their favorite pieces. As a special treat this day, the Huntsville Youth Orchestra's Novice and Beginning String Orchestras will be holding open rehearsals on the patio of the Providence Cheeburger restaurant from 4:45 until 7:00. Call (256)885-3700 to contact the Cheeburger Cheeburger on Whitesburg, or (256)830-4222 to contact the one in Providence.

**April 30-May 2 Come out and support the HYP BBQ Booth at Whistle-stop's Shadetree Cooker's Competition** from 2-6pm, at the Huntsville Roundhouse Depot. For more information see <http://rocketcitybbq.com>.

**May 6 AAUW (American Association of University Women)** presents Eric H. Seemann, Licensed Psychologist and Assistant Professor, Dept. of Psychology UAH, speaking on "The Introvert Advantage" at the **Bevill Center** UAH, 550

**Madison Ballroom Dance Studio** (located at 9076 Madison Blvd, Ste. C/D, Madison, AL) hosts a **practice party** every Saturday night from 8-10 pm. Pre-recorded contemporary and classic favorites are played for dancers to practice their ballroom and Latin dance moves. Cost is \$5/person at the door. Check out our calendar of events at [www.madisonballroom.com](http://www.madisonballroom.com) for group class schedules and other studio events.

**Contra Dance** with live music by **Wolves A Howlin'** and calling by **Nashville's Ed Doss** will be held in **gym of Faith Presbyterian**, corner of Airport Rd. & Whitesburg Dr. All ages are welcome: singles, couples & families. Admission is \$7.00, \$4.00 for students, and free for ages 12 & under. See [secontra.com/NACDS.html](http://secontra.com/NACDS.html) for more info or call 837-0656.

**May 7 Yoga Classes with Casey Bakula** will be held from 8:30-9:15pm at the **Flying Monkey Arts Center**, also RYT will be hosted by Squeaking Tribe Puppets. For more info call (256) 679-7143 or go to Your Yoga.

**May 7-11 Merrimack Hall Performing Arts Center** presents **The Great American Trailer Park Musical** at 7:30 Wednesday-Friday, and 2pm. and 8pm. on Saturday, and at 2pm. and 7pm. on Sunday. Tickets are \$35 each. For tickets and information see [www.merrimackhall.com](http://www.merrimackhall.com) or call (256)534-6455.

**May 8-10 The Huntsville Pilgrimage Association** will host **a Historic Home Tour** of homes in Twickenham, Old Town, and Five Points, and well as Church or the Nativity, Episcopcal from 10a.m.-4pm. As part of the tour Suzanne Purter will perform an organ recital at the church. For more information, you may call the Huntsville Pilgrimage Association at 256-533-9460 or Margaret Strickland at 800-772-2348, or visit our website at [www.huntsvillepilgrimage.org](http://www.huntsvillepilgrimage.org) (See ad pg.)

**May 11 Renaissance Theatre** presents **Murder on the Nile** by Agatha Christie at 8pm. on Friday and Saturday, and at 2:30pm. on Sunday. See [www.renaisancetheatre.net](http://www.renaisancetheatre.net).

**May 12 "I Hate Hamlet!"** will run May 9, 10, 15, 16, and 17 at 7:30 pm, and May 11 and 17 at 2 pm. Parental discretion is advised, for although this show is "for anyone who loves to laugh," according to Stocks, "I don't think I would bring the kiddies—it's a bit risqué." For ticket information, call (256) 536-0807, or visit the **Theatre Huntsville** website at [www.theatrehsv.org](http://www.theatrehsv.org).

**May 13 The Alabama Renegades**, Huntsville's only full-contact women's football team, will play their first home game at 7pm. at **Alabama A&M's Louis Crews Stadium**. Please visit [www.alabamarenegades.net](http://www.alabamarenegades.net) for more information on the Alabama Renegades.

**May 14 Local artists** and others are invited to set up a booth at the **Flying Monkey Arts Center** and sell their wares to the public for **Artist Market**. There will be art, jewelry, vintage clothing, and more interesting things for sale inside our facility, safe from rain. We now have air conditioning.

**May 15 HAL-5** presents a free public lecture. **Mr. Stephan Davis**, Deputy Mission Manager for Ares I-X, Marshall Space Flight Center will be speaking on "Ares I-X: First Flight of a New Generation." 7:00 PM at the **Huntsville - Madison County Main Public Library**, 915 Monroe Street. Ares I-X will be the first launch of a new vehicle for human space exploration in 28 years. A social will follow. For more information contact Ronnie Lajoie at 256-509-3833 or space@knology.net or visit [www.HAL5.org](http://www.HAL5.org).

**May 16 Flying Monkey Open House** will begin at 7pm. Admission is free.

**May 17 Monkey Speak** will begin at 8 p.m. at the **Flying Monkey Arts Center**. Admission is \$5. See [www.flyingmonkeyarts.org](http://www.flyingmonkeyarts.org) for more information.

**May 18 Old Towne Coffee Shoppe** will host **Drum Circle** on the first Friday of every month. Visit [www.myspace.com/otcs](http://www.myspace.com/otcs) for more information.

**May 19 Mardi Gras on the Moon Concert** featuring Michelle Malone. Malone has played with ZZ Top, Joan Jett, the Indigo Girls and Johnny Winter. Junior Achievement of Northern Alabama, Inc. (JANA) has organized a night of fun on May 2nd with Malone at the **U.S. Space & Rocket Center's new Davidson Center for Space Exploration**. A

**May 20 The Posey Peep Show** will perform some of their classic bits in the Posey Peep Show Classic at 9pm and the **Flying Monkey Arts Center**. Admission is \$6. See [www.flyingmonkeyarts.org](http://www.flyingmonkeyarts.org) for more information.

**May 21 The Monrovia Art Fest** will be held from 10a.m. to 6p.m. at the **Artistic Minds Gallery**, corner of Jeff and Old Monrovia. Artists and vendors are needed: Jewelry, Water Painting, Wood, Pottery, Mixed Media, Photography, Glass, Sculpture, Printmaking, Oil Painting, Clothing, Other Art, Musicians, Poets, Actors, and food vendors. Please Call Vonda or Diana for more info/questions at the Gallery: 256-489-0335

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 25**

This exhibition was organized by the Walter Anderson Museum of Art, Ocean Springs, MS. See [hvsmuseum.org](http://hvsmuseum.org) for more information.

**Lil' Malcom and the House Rockers** sponsored by the **Cajun Zydeco Connection (CZC)** of **Huntsville** will be held from 4-7pm. at the **Knights of Columbus Hall**, 3053 Leeman Ferry. An introductory lesson will be taught at 3:15pm. Admission is \$10 for members and \$12 for non-members. See <http://czdance.com> for more information.

**May 5 The Atrium Gallery** presents its next exhibit, "Life through a Pinhole," featuring pinhole photographer **Sarah Kittinger**. The show will include photographs created with Kittinger's handmade pinhole cameras and will be presented in the First Floor Atrium, **Huntsville-Madison County Public Library**. For more information, call Sophie Young 532-5940.

**May 5-6 June 27 "Life through a Pinhole"** will be on display at the **Huntsville-Madison County Public Library**. This is a display of photographs created with Sarah Kittinger's handmade pinhole cameras. For more information see <http://hpl.lib.al.us/> or call (256)532-5940.

**May 6 AAUW (American Association of University Women)** presents Eric H. Seemann, Licensed Psychologist and Assistant Professor, Dept. of Psychology UAH, speaking on "The Introvert Advantage" at the **Bevill Center** UAH, 550

**Sparkman** The lecture is free and open to the public. Dr. Seemann will explore personality types and type theory, and how this is different from the concept of a "trait." He will show how the concept of type is important in communications, leadership style, problem solving, and parenting. We will meet and greet -5:30PM, dinner (\$20) at 6PM, program at 6:30PM. Seats are available for non-diners. Reservations should be made by May 1 for both dinners and non-diners with Lois Guendel 880-8643 or [herb.guendel@knology.net](mailto:herb.guendel@knology.net).

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## OFFICE MEMO:



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Then tune in to Star 99 in the mornings for the Scott and Dee Dee show to see who wins lunch on us!

Brought to you by Star 99, Nothing but Noodles, James Carpets, and Eyecare Associates of East Huntsville.

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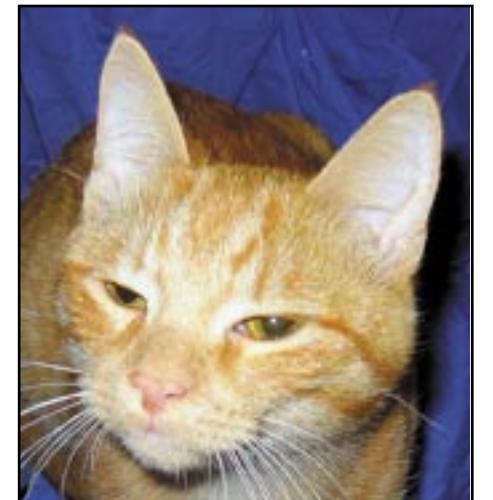


## Auntie Jen's Animal Crazy

I'd like to devote this column to dispelling some common myths about "Animal Control." Many people hear those words, and they think mean dog catchers, complaints, dog and cat dramas of one kind or the other, euthanasia, and more. I must admit, many years ago, I used to be one of those people myself. But now that I have had a closer look, I've had a total change of heart that I'd like to share with my readers.

Our city's Animal Control, which was renamed Huntsville Animal Services in 2001, is not the enemy—they are our friends, and they are friends to animals. They are not a group of heartless people who "put down" animals; they are a group of kind, hard-working people who do their best to save as many animals as possible by encouraging adoption and responsible pet ownership, among many other efforts. Furthermore, Huntsville Animal Services is under the direction of Karen Hill Sheppard, D.V.M.—a hero to animals and animal lovers in Huntsville and beyond.

If you have a pet (aka "child") or you are considering getting one, it is in your best interest to visit Animal Services' site, [www.hsvcity.com/animal](http://www.hsvcity.com/animal). They offer everything you could want in terms of information on caring for a pet. One page is dedicated to a breakdown of annual pet care for dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, small birds and more. There is also a link to the Red Cross' pet first aid training course, as well as a schedule of those upcoming sessions offered by the Madison/Marshall County chapter.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

**The Fallen Officers' Memorial Motorcycle Run** will be held by Elk's Lodge, 725 Franklin St. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and the first bike out will be at 10:00 a.m. Last bike in should be at 3:00 p.m. Cost is \$15 a rider and \$10 a passenger. All funds will be donated to the Huntsville Police Foundation. Contact Doug Smith at (256) 503-3454 or James M. Henley Jr. at (256) 539-2520 or (256) 882-3406.

Local artists and others are invited to set up a booth at the **Flying Monkey Arts Center** and sell their wares to the public for **Artist Market**. There will be art, jewelry, vintage clothing, and more interesting things for sale inside our facility, safe from rain. We now have air conditioning. See [www.flyingmonkeyarts.org](http://www.flyingmonkeyarts.org) for more information.

**Madison Ballroom Dance Studio** (located at 9076 Madison Blvd, Ste. C/D, Madison, AL) hosts a **practice party** every Saturday night from 8-10 p.m. Pre-recorded contemporary and classic favorites are played for dancers to practice their ballroom and Latin dance moves. Cost is \$5/person at the door. Check out our calendar of events at [www.madisonballroom.com](http://www.madisonballroom.com) for group class schedules and other studio events.

Join HMA President **Clayton Bass** as he explores the remarkable variety and distinctive beauty of three generations of the Anderson family's creative expression, seen in **Shearwater Pottery: The Legacy of Walter Anderson**. The Gallery Walk begins at 2 p.m. in the **Beck Room** of the **Huntsville Museum of Art**. Following the presentation, a reception in Clayton's honor will be hosted by the Art Krewe in the Beck Room. See [hvmuseum.org](http://hvmuseum.org) for more information.



(The next one is coming in June.) If you need assistance or have questions about spaying and neutering, Animal Services' site has the information you need. Plus, if you are looking to adopt a needy animal, there is a link for "Pet of the Week," as well as a link to Petfinder.com for finding rescues—both mixed breeds and purebreds. You can also learn safety tips to prevent pet poison, including a link with a direct phone number for the ASPCA's Animal Poison Control Center (888-426-4435). If you'd like to view a list of pet food recalls, the City offers that, as well.

Now, on a lighter note, if you haven't seen their Dog Spot Web site, you really should check it out. It's easy to navigate and offers directions, pictures, rules, and a place for your feedback. If you'd like to "Become a Friend" of Dog Spot, or get involved with helping in fund-raising to provide Huntsville's first dog park with additional pet and people-friendly amenities and pet-related networking opportunities, please explore the Dog Spot link near the top of the home page, to the left of their hours of operation, address, and phone number. (If you don't have Internet, you can call them at (256) 883-3782, M-F from 9-5 and Saturday from 9-3). Auntie Jen is also involved in volunteer fund-raising for Dog Spot, so feel free to email me directly at [Jennifer@auntienjepetsitter.com](mailto:Jennifer@auntienjepetsitter.com), and I will pass your ideas along to the City.

Huntsville Animal Services has upcoming adoption events where you can meet your potential future family members. One upcoming adoption event will be an Open House on Saturday, May 3. Auntie Jen will be there with a Dog Spot booth. Check their site periodically for updates and more useful pet-friendly information.

Know something you think Auntie Jen needs to know? Have a suggestion for Dog Spot, or an Auntie Jen column idea? Email me, and Auntie Jen will help you help animals.



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## A WildRose by Any Other Name Would Taste as Sweet

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Huntsville, AL

(256) 539-3658  
(256) 539-3659 – fax  
wildrosecafe@bellsouth.net  
www.wildrosecafe.com

**Breakfast**  
Mon-Fri 7:00 a.m.-9:30 a.m.  
**Lunch**  
Mon-Fri 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.



There's nothing more comfortable than a mom and pop establishment, whether it be a little Hungarian restaurant in Chicago, a little Italian café in Naples, or an off-road Cajun eatery in some nook in NOLA. It's a phenomenon that marries well with Southern hospitality.

WildRose Café has that feel; a little beyond the typical "meat-and-three" restaurant, but with a heavy touch of hometown in its atmosphere: you enter the front door and



are immediately surrounded by posters and other PR materials from area plays, musical theatre, dance recitals, and more, with representations of Mardi Gras and other festive occasions, as well. Owner Diane Hollingsworth is surely a supporter of the arts.

An upstairs area gives a more private dining spot, while downstairs has the keen feel of old times in its bar area, the type of seating that makes you want to call somebody Daddio and order a malted. You order, you sit a bit, and then you pick up your food at the end of said bar.

Recently, John and "Nose" Barisa and I visited the little café on Northside Square. I ordered the Shepherd's Pie (let's face it, the Anglos are well represented in the genetics of the South and I love pub foods), black-eyed peas, marinated artichoke salad, and the cornbread, the latter based on a recommendation of one of the employees. The Barisas had chicken breast with white sauce – nothing says North Alabama like white sauce – mashed potatoes and gravy, yams, and a nice, fluffy-looking biscuit. Not quite cathead, which is fine with me, but big enough to satiate your cravings for the "staff of life."

My Shepherd's pie was delicious and, though I'm not a connoisseur of onions by a long shot, the favoritism shown to this particular entrée by the locals is well deserved; it was a nice-sized helping, to boot. I never knew shepherds were so tender. The black-eyed peas were good, not salty, not bland, but middle-of-the-road spiced. Another welcomed side was the salad, with a very piquant vinaigrette. I love artichokes, so one would be hard pressed to concoct a way in which I wouldn't devour them. Recommended or not, the cornbread I found a bit dry; on the flip side, John's biscuit looked inviting enough to bring me back for breakfast, and soon. There are a lot of breakfast biscuit options on the breakfast menu, and that's no less than enticing. The Barisas found the chicken a tad dry, though the white sauce was a help in this case. The yams required...and I hesitate to neologize, but I'm quoting Nose...more "candification." This may well be a



personal taste—for me, extra sugar just sends me into the outer orbits of obnubilation. The potatoes and gravy, as well as the biscuit, were very good. As I surmised. Alas, we had neither room nor time for dessert, but that will be remedied soon enough.

We found the service when ordering efficient and businesslike, and the service counter side homey, personable, and warm. WildRose is a pleasant experience; they handle customers well and the atmosphere is relaxing and congenial. But bring your own Splenda!

In addition to word-of-mouth from loyal lunch and breakfast clientele, WildRose has picked up a reputation as a reputable and oft-used catering service for our area, and great things have been heard, for instance, about some of its special dinner nights held in conjunction with various Renaissance Theatre productions. You might consider this option for your next party or family get-together.

Customer reviews, along with the breakfast and (ever-changing) lunch menus are available on the website, which benefits you both in picking the café as your destination and saving that precious lunch time through a little foreknowledge of the Specials of the Day. Next time you're on the square, drop in...and drop off a poster while you're at it.



## the rocket city beat

Just found out the skinny on Sam and Greg's—they are now opening on Thursday nights...gotta get ready for those heat-beaten crowds. They kicked off March 27 with Chip Gulbro & Friends (formerly The Hot Club of Huntsville) as their guest artistes, and followed up with a private party for the Maltese Falcon cast and crew the week after. They've also recently added barista Niko Bates to their employee roster—VP readers ought to know who HE is... Next up, the opening of the café's JavaGalleria art gallery, slated for May, when you can shout "Au Lait!" to the jazzy works of Ahmad Austin of Alabaster!



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511 Jordan Lane, 256-837-2433

910 Airport Rd SW, 256-880-2131

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BISTRO LA LUNA

7001 Val-Monte Drive, Guntersville, 256-582-0930.

B&J RESTAURANT

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BONEFISH GRILL

4800 Whitesburg Dr., 256-883-0643

BUFFALO WILD WINGS

2750 Carl T. Jones Dr., Huntsville, 256-650-4115

CAFE 113

113 Grant St. SE, Decatur, 256-350-1400

CAFE MICHAEL

5732 Hwy 431 S, Huntsville, 256-539-9113.

CLOUD 9

114 West Market Street, Fayetteville, 931 433-1173

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4925 University Drive, 256-722-0620

2740 Carl T. Jones, 256-882-1230

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109 Washington Street, Huntsville, 256-704-5555.

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2119 U.S. Hwy 431, Guntersville

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2941 St. Mallard Pkwy, Decatur, 256-355-0330

ELK RIVER COFFEE COMPANY

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JAVA JAZZY CAFE (2 Decatur Locations)

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**The South's All-Embracing ARTSTRAVAGANZA!**

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**Dance, Theatre, Music, Food, Fireworks, FUN, and so much more!!!**

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**Alabama State Council on the Arts**

**Friday-Sunday, April 25-27, 2008**  
**Big Spring International Park**  
**Downtown Huntsville, AL**  
**(256) 519-ARTS (2787)**  
**www.panoply.org**

**presented by...**

**BOEING**

Panoply, as always, has some great children's activities. This year they welcome a new character to its roster of performers—

**valleyplanet.com**  
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## Panoply Arts Festival April 25-27 Not Just For Kids

PANOPLY has been a Huntsville Tradition for over a quarter century! This year, Panoply 2008 has some acts you do not want to miss and they are not for kids only! The Festival will showcase the best in local and touring performers, offering four stages featuring jazz, gospel, bluegrass and musical theater. DiscOasis, and the Nashville Songwriter's Showcase perform on Friday, the Maple Hill Band, The Millers, The State Fiddling Championship are all on Saturday and Microwave Dave and the Nukes, KUSH and Juice play on Sunday. There will be art, dance, theatre, music, food, fireworks and much more! Boasting weekend crowds of over 90,000 attendees, with a record-breaking 2007 attendance of 140,000, this festival is one of the "Alabama Top Ten Tourism Events." A few of the highlights for this year, as well as the stage schedules are included. For more information, go to [www.panoply.org](http://www.panoply.org).

The Millers (formerly known as the Clayton Miller Band) are a family group, three brothers and their father, who have made national headlines. The Millers have opened for, or shared the stage with, Stevie Wonder, John Popper of Blues Traveler, Alicia Keys, India Arie, Keb Mo, Kanye West, Jamie Foxx, Joe Bonamassa, Ziggy Marley, Joss Stone, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Mississippi Heat, Buddy Guy, B.B. King, James Cotton, Walter Trout and Ricky Skaggs. The Millers will appear at the Panoply Arts Festival on the Publix Super Markets Charities Kid's Stage, anchoring the WJAB/Alabama A&M Jazz and Blues Showcase on Saturday, April 26 at 7:45 p.m.

Umdabu is a Birmingham-based dance theater dedicated to the preservation and presentation of traditional and contemporary South African history and culture, particularly that of the Zulu people. The Umdabu Dance Company will appear at the Panoply Arts Festival during the following times: Saturday, April 26 at 1:00 on the Publix Super Markets Charities Kid's Stage and Saturday, April 26 at 3:15 on the International Performing Arts Stage.

As always, The Art Marketplace is one of Panoply's "crown jewels," and this program allows connoisseurs a first chance to preview and purchase art before the marketplace is open to the festival public. The marketplace's public hours are Saturday, April 26 from 10:00 a.m. Until 9:00 p.m. And Sunday, April 27 from noon until 8:00 p.m.

The Arts In Action Tent offers an unusual opportunity for Panoply guests: the chance to experience an "up close and personal" view of the creative process at work as professional artists and handcraftsmen reveal the inner workings of their various art forms through continuous educational demonstrations.

Arts Central is a place to sample the year-round arts offerings available throughout the Huntsville/Madison County area. This is where you need to go to enter drawings for door prizes, a chance to win tickets, passes, artwork, and other must-have items for the true art lover! Members of The Arts Council, Inc. will promote their organizations and activities at Panoply through brochures, posters, and flyers announcing seasons, shows and special events.

Food? You ask...? Each year, festival goers fill themselves on such varied fare as funnel cakes, Dippin' Dots, and all the Buffalo Rock products they can drink. So do festival workers! To keep the customers coming, Panoply brings back old favorites, but also offers new treats to tempt the taste buds. New food vendors this year include: Pacific Rim Noodle-House – Noodles with veggies and a delicious mango tango on the side; Refreshment Concepts, LLC – Italian ice; German Roasted Nuts – Sugar- and cinnamon-spiced, roasted nuts and, cheesecake; Georgie's Greek Tasty Foods – The name says it all...; McRae's Foods – Barbecue.

Panoply, as always, has some great children's activities. This year they welcome a new character to its roster of performers—

internationally acclaimed singer-songwriter Jason Ringenberg as the children's music character, "Farmer Jason". His roots-oriented CD's about farming and farm have proved very popular. Disney's magazine Family Fun called the former title "one of the Top 5 kids' CDs of 2003." His music takes children to a musical forest where they experience its diversity and beauty; the songs also teach subtle lessons about ecology, exercise, and history. Farmer Jason's interactive musical children's show will appear at the Panoply Arts Festival on the Publix Super Markets Charities Kid's Stage on Sunday, April 27 at 2:00 and 5:00 p.m.

The Kid's Art Yard at Panoply 2008 is packed with fun activities the whole family can enjoy. Between "the yard" and the pavilions of the Global Village, the Panoply Arts Festival offers over a dozen FREE make-n-take activities located throughout the park. There are two new activities to The Kid's Art Yard, they are Cardboard Creatures and Disco Fish. These join ten other FREE activities, including: Clay Play; Crazy Hats; Discover Music; Easel Art; Face Painting; Mask-A-Rade; Panoply Percussion; Panoply Posies; Stained Glass Art; and Stamp It Out.

Check out the new Panoply 2008 t-shirt created by local artist Jason Morgan. It is a family friendly, whimsical design featuring a family of ducks (the Big Spring's constant residents); each enjoying a different branch of all art has to offer!

Global Village is back again this year with four new nations brought into the fold to join an old favorite! The nations selected for this doorway into Huntsville's remarkable cultural diversity include: Norway, South Korea, Peru, Malaysia and Germany. A centerpiece of the festival celebrations, Panoply's Global Village focuses on entertainment, education, and the "art" of ethnic diversity. It is a clarion call for hope and greater unity for the future, and adds to the eclecticism of the festival's offerings.

The Art Educator's Tent will be used to showcase and sell the work of public and private school art teachers or art instructors and professors teaching in area colleges and universities. Each piece chosen will be available for sale to the public at a price determined by the artist. A percentage of each sale will be retained by The Arts Council to help fund Arts in Education programs conducted throughout the year.

Panoply Guest Artists this year are: Catherine Chambers of Montgomery, Darrell Ezekiel of Sylacauga, Cara Hoffman of Decatur, S. Renee Prasil of Hampton Cove and Myrtice West of Centre. Each of these artists is selected based on the uniqueness or quality of their work and each is chosen for only ONE Panoply.

Panoply 2008, presented by Boeing is an annual three-day outdoor arts festival held in April at the Big Spring International Park in downtown Huntsville. The Arts Council's goal is to give their community the best in theater, music, dance, artworks, and then some! And through the community outreach of Title Sponsor Boeing, they do: Panoply 2008 boasts choreography, "homegrown" talent, visual art, fiddling, photography, and playwright competitions; an ethno cultural exhibition; children's make-n-take activities; seasoned performers; and the next addition to your art collection...topping it off with a cornucopia of festival food and a grand display of fireworks in an inspiring celebration sure to entertain visitors of all ages. This year's festival is April 25 through the 27<sup>th</sup> and more information may be found at [www.panoply.org](http://www.panoply.org) or by calling 256 519-2787. Admission is FREE for children 12 and under. A weekend Panopass is \$10 (please purchase in advance) and a day Panopass is \$5. Panoply is open on Friday, April 25, from 5:00 – 9:00 p.m.; Saturday, April 26, from 10:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m., and Sunday, April 27, from 12:00 – 8:00 p.m.

**valleyplanet.com**  
**READ THE PLANET. IT'S FREE!**

## Free Will Astrology

by Rob Brezsny

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** A reader from Fiji is encouraging me to pay a visit. "Fiji is heaven on earth," she says. "You'll be ecstatic here." While I have no doubt that's true, it's hard for me to imagine being any more ecstatic than I am when I travel to Hawaii. It, too, has resemblances to paradise. And the plane flight there takes five hours less and is \$600 cheaper than the jaunt to Fiji. Do I really need a more heavenly heaven on earth than, say, Waimoku Falls Trail in Maui? I expect you're facing a metaphorically similar situation, Aries. The question you may want to ask yourself is this: Should you pine and aim for a state beyond perfection, or will mere perfection serve you just as well?

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** The Washington Post solicited ideas from readers about innovative strategies for wasting time. I'll offer you a few in the hope that they'll inspire you to take a major break from the Big Pressing Issues you're obsessed with. It's high time, in my opinion,

to give yourself an enormous amount of slack . . . to forgive yourself for not being perfect . . . to dissolve any guilt you feel for not having accomplished all your life goals yet. In that spirit, consider the following time-wasters: (1) Send letters to the editor about grammatical mistakes in the classified ads. (2) Make yourself the world's top expert on a person randomly chosen from the phone book. (3) Keep a logbook in your bathroom to verify that the toilet bowl cleaner really does work for 1,000 flushes. (4) Set the Guinness record for time spent reading the Guinness Book of Records.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** "The great theme is not Romeo and Juliet," said poet Anne Sexton. "The great theme we all share is that of becoming ourselves, of overcoming our father and mother, of assuming our identities somehow."

This is certainly your great theme, Capricorn. And it's especially important for you to devote yourself to it now. You're at a turning point in your life-long transformation. You're being presented with a clear-cut choice between sinking back into the ill-fitting yet comfortable mold that others have shaped for you, or else striding out into the frontier in a brave push to become a higher, deeper, more complete version of yourself.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** "We only hear questions that we are able to answer," said Friedrich Nietzsche. Luckily for you, Aquarius, there are two big, long-simmering questions for which you have recently begun to sniff out the answers. That means you're now able, at least potentially, to hear those questions. I have three pieces of advice to help ensure that you actually hear them. First, wash your brain out so it's got more free space in it. Second, give your listening skills a tune-up. Third, meditate on Edgar Allan Poe's idea that "Those who dream by day know many things which escape those who dream only by night."

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** Back in 1995, I began seeing a psychotherapist whose influence ultimately improved me in thousand ways. At the end of our first session, she handed me a note as I left. It read: "If you don't articulate your conscious desires, your unconscious patterns will come true." She gazed at me firmly and said, "Don't come back until you've proved to yourself that those words are true. All my work will be of no use to you unless you take them to heart." It took me exactly 23 days to prove to myself that what she'd written was true. Now I offer you the same challenge, Pisces. Spend the upcoming week in intense contemplation on the hypothesis, "If you don't articulate your conscious desires, your unconscious patterns will come true."

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** This would be a perfect time for you to write your ultimate personal manifesto. I'm talking about composing a sweeping statement of the core ideas that fuel your lust for life. To get you in the mood, take a look at the following lyrics from Danny Schmidt's song "Company of Friends": "I believe in restless hunger . . . I believe in private thunder . . . I believe in inspiration . . . I believe in slow creation . . . I believe in lips on ears . . . I believe in being wrong . . . I believe in contradiction . . . I believe in living smitten . . . I believe our book is written by our company of friends."

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** "The Japanese believe that crying babies grow fast," wrote John Flinn in the San Francisco Chronicle, "and that the louder an infant wails, the more the gods have blessed it." The astrological omens suggest that a similar principle will soon hold true for you: The more you sob and blubber, the smarter you'll get. The louder you howl and moan, the more likely you'll be to attract benevolent influences and unexpected help.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** In order for some plants to thrive in the tropical forests of South America, they need bats to eat their fruits and poop out their seeds while flying around. Biologists call the bat excrement by a more lyrical name: seed

## Jazzin' Up Spring in The Big Easy

by Fonda Davis

which loosely translates to "a little something extra". The lagniappe you get with this Festival that you can't get at any other festival is the unparalleled Food Fair offering more than 100 varieties of authentic Louisiana cuisine and a stunning array of one-of-a-kind crafts available around the grounds in the Festival's juried crafts areas. With food offerings like Pecan Catfish Meunière, Seafood Mirliton Casserole, Fried Crab Cake w/ Smoked Tomato & Jalapeño Tartar and of course the New Orleans staples Muffuletta, Po Boys, and Crawfish Etouffée just to name a few, it is clear that this is NOT your typical festival food.

Mahalia Jackson and Duke Ellington reportedly formed the first New Orleans Jazz Festival in 1970 when while attending the Louisiana Heritage Fair in Congo Square, they came upon the Eureka Brass Band leading second-line marchers through the Festival grounds. Ms. Jackson was handed a microphone and started singing, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Tickets to Jazz Fest are on sale by specific weekend, with each ticket valid for a single day's attendance. Tickets for Thursday, May 1 are \$30 in advance, \$40 at the gate. Tickets for any other Festival day are \$40 in advance, \$50 at the gate. Children's tickets (ages 2 - 11) are only \$5 in advance or at the gate. Tickets are available at [www.nojazzfest.com](http://www.nojazzfest.com) and [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com), at all Ticketmaster outlets or by calling (800) 488-5252.



## Renegades Gearing Up For 2008 Season

Things are looking up for the Alabama Renegades, Huntsville's only full-contact women's football team. This season, the Renegades will be playing at Alabama A&M's Louis Crews Stadium, one of the finest NCAA I-AA football facilities in the country. With the addition of Coaches Ron Burrell, Brady Wakefield, and Carlos Mathews, the ladies of the TN Valley will be ready for the 2008 football season.

The action begins on April 19 with their first game against their biggest and most physical rival, the Chattanooga Locomotion. With the first two games away, the Renegades will be ready for their first home game of the season on May 3rd with the Cincinnati Sizzle. The Sizzle is owned and coached by NFL Veteran, Ickey Woods. This season the Renegades face some of their favorite opponents including the Pensacola Power and the Kentucky Karma.

Making their way from other football teams are Hayley Howard, a linebacker who came from a team in another league and Ella Banghart, a veteran linemen from the Chattanooga Locomotion. Returning vets include quarterback Nancy Byrd, linemen Charlene Cyr, Lori Campbell, Kelly Hardy,

Please visit our website for more information on the Alabama Renegades. [www.alabamarenegades.net](http://www.alabamarenegades.net)



# Gossip

by Billy Joe Cooley

Motorcycle adventurer **Bill Crego** joined our table for lunch at Blue Plate the other day. Kept us mesmerized.

Our friend **Sammy Butler** is boasting a new knee, having fallen from a ladder and broken the old one.

**Kelly and Dan Close** have returned from New York City where they were celebrating their second wedding anniversary. Had a swell room overlooking Times Square. Her ma and pa, Vicky and **Jimmy Jackson** stayed home.

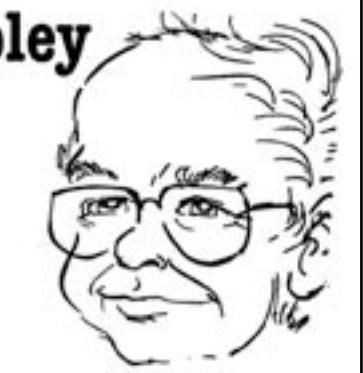
Transplanted Oklahomans **Billy and Mary Ann Walker** were greeters the other night when Birmingham Southern's concert choir performed at First Methodist downtown.

And whatever happened to guitarist **Woody Johnson**? Readers keep asking about him and his wife **Shirley Jo**.

**Gary Bridge** was hit hard by that winter flu that went around. Lost 17 pounds, but is regaining.

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Guitarist **Thad Clark** and friends, with a garnering of kin and neighbors, has helped his mama **Julia** celebrate still another birthday.

Farewell to our friend **Ozelle Lawhorn**, who recently passed. We grew up with her kids and were in love with daughters **Peggy and Ellen**. Our boyhood 'best pal,' **Calvin Hudson**, now a Florida neurosurgeon, married the lovely **Ellen**.

How nice to read the wisdom of **Eddie Koger**, a guest columnist this

information or advance ticket orders visit [www.dixiederbygirls.com](http://www.dixiederbygirls.com)

Join all the rollergirls at the after party for food, fun, spirits and live music at Benchwarmer on University Drive. For more info or advance ticket orders visit [www.dixiederbygirls.com](http://www.dixiederbygirls.com)

Roller derby is a competitive, contact sport with no choreographing. Theatrics are part of the game, but nothing is fake or scripted. This is the only sport that brings together the love of roller skating, fierce competition, and brawling, fishnet, miniskirt, lipsticked melodrama!

The game is played in heats or "jams" that can last up to 2 minutes. There are 3 fifteen minute game periods (This is subject to change) with an unlimited number of jams in each. Two teams play in each jam, with 5 players in the rink for each team – the pack

Each pack starts with 1 pivot, 1 jammer, and 3 blockers. The packs start with their pivots in front, blockers in the middle, and jammers in the back. On the first whistle, the packs take off, and on the second whistle, the jammers fight their way through the pack in an attempt to become the lead jammer. After lapping the packs once, the jammers receive



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4747 Bob Wallace Avenue, Huntsville, 256-830-4447.

HUNTSVILLE STAR  
Joe W. Davis Stadium, 3125 Leeman Ferry Rd, Huntsville, 256-882-2562.

year for Huntsville Times. We remember when as a kid he bagged groceries for Lucky's Supermarket.

Scottsboro pawnbroker **Jim Green** is planning another trip to **Floyd Hardin**'s annual neighborhood gathering in May at the **Jackson Way Barbershop** corner.

Our crowd will converge on the streets of South Pittsburg, Tenn., on Saturday and Sunday, April 26-27, for the National Cornbread Festival. Among us will be **Timothy Jones**, broadcasting part of the doings over WWIC, Scottsboro.

This month's Good Samaritan award goes to home repairman **Stephen Lambruschi**, who also is a professional fisherman and does good deeds for stranded motorists. 990-3155.

My pro-wrestling friend **Steve Wilson** (you know him as **Lethal Luther**) has been visiting his mom in Florida and has gained some weight. "Gotta lose it, gotta stay competitive," says he.

Speaking of Florida, that's where our disc dervish friend **Riley Gibson** is still spinning the memory hits in the panhandle. He was once a popular Huntsville spinner.

A country group called **Walker Street Opry** will perform Sat. night, May 10, at the regular musical in Doctrinal Bible Church.

## The Grand Ole Derby!

The Dixie Derby Girls will host their season opener against the newly formed "Nashville Music City Rollergirls" on Sunday, April 20th at Roller Time Skate Center in Huntsville. Doors will open at 6:30 and the bout starts at 7:30. Half time entertainment will be provided by Southside Skate Shop.

If you've never seen roller derby live, now is your chance. The Nashville Music City Rollergirls will have their hand full with The Dixie Derby Girls. Our local Derby Girls are well known for their hard hits and aggressive attitudes. It is not uncommon to see them send an opponent flying into the crowd to keep them from scoring! This long awaited bout will be dedicated to all of the teachers in the Valley. The first fifty teachers to show their badge get in FREE. Admission is \$10 and is free for ages 6 and under. For more information call 256-489-7655. For more

## LISTINGS

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## REAL ESTATE

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Looking for versatile guitarist who likes to play funk, rock and groove style music. Call Bryan at 655-4178

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Searching for experienced female vocalist/musician or male/female guitarist that sings or Keyboardist that also sings for high-tech TRIO Band. Prefer baby-boomer era artists with roots in the 60's, 70's, Blues, Motown, Rock, Country etc., genre. Must be professional, dependable, focused, reliable transportation, pro equipment, no drugs, no alcohol, willing and able to commit to the mutual goals of the band. Not a "bar band" per se. Will be doing predominately wedding receptions, Corp. party's, special occasions, etc. Rehearse 2X a week.

I am a veteran of the HSV club scene, owed booking agency and have played in many Bands. Much equipment & lights. John, 256-468-4233 johnnymack7@midnightspring.com

Guitarist forming instrumental Surf band. Need drummer, bassist, 2nd guitarist/ keyboardist for show on 4/19. Other gigs to follow. Mix of covers and original material. Vintage or reissue gear a plus. email: Gretschman66@aol.com

For sale: 15.5 inch Viola. Case, bow, headrest. great condition. \$700.00 or best offer. 701-641-4307.

Veteran, professional guitarist and singer looking to start a Band or join a Band with mature, experienced players. Duo, trio or full band? Prefer Classic Rock, Blues, Motown, Hard Rock but not metal. Influences: Clapton, Hendrix, Allman Bros., Skynyrd, Led Zeppelin, Grandfunk RR, Santana, Bad Company, Eagles, Joe Walsh, Gary Moore to name a few. I am dependable, drug free, alcohol free, non-smoker. Pro equipment and gear. 35 plus years experience. Veteran of local club scene. 256-461-2903. John

Rhythm guitarist seeking to join/ form alternative/rock band ask for dave 256-682-7663

For Sale:  
1985 Fender MIJ Stratocaster, white, gigbag, dig on bottom. \$600 obo. 2005 SX SPJ-62 Sunburst Bass (Fender P/Jazz copy) w/ T-J strings \$125 obo.  
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