

VALLEY PLANET

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 6

#041708050708

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April 17 - May 7, 2008
Panoply Issue

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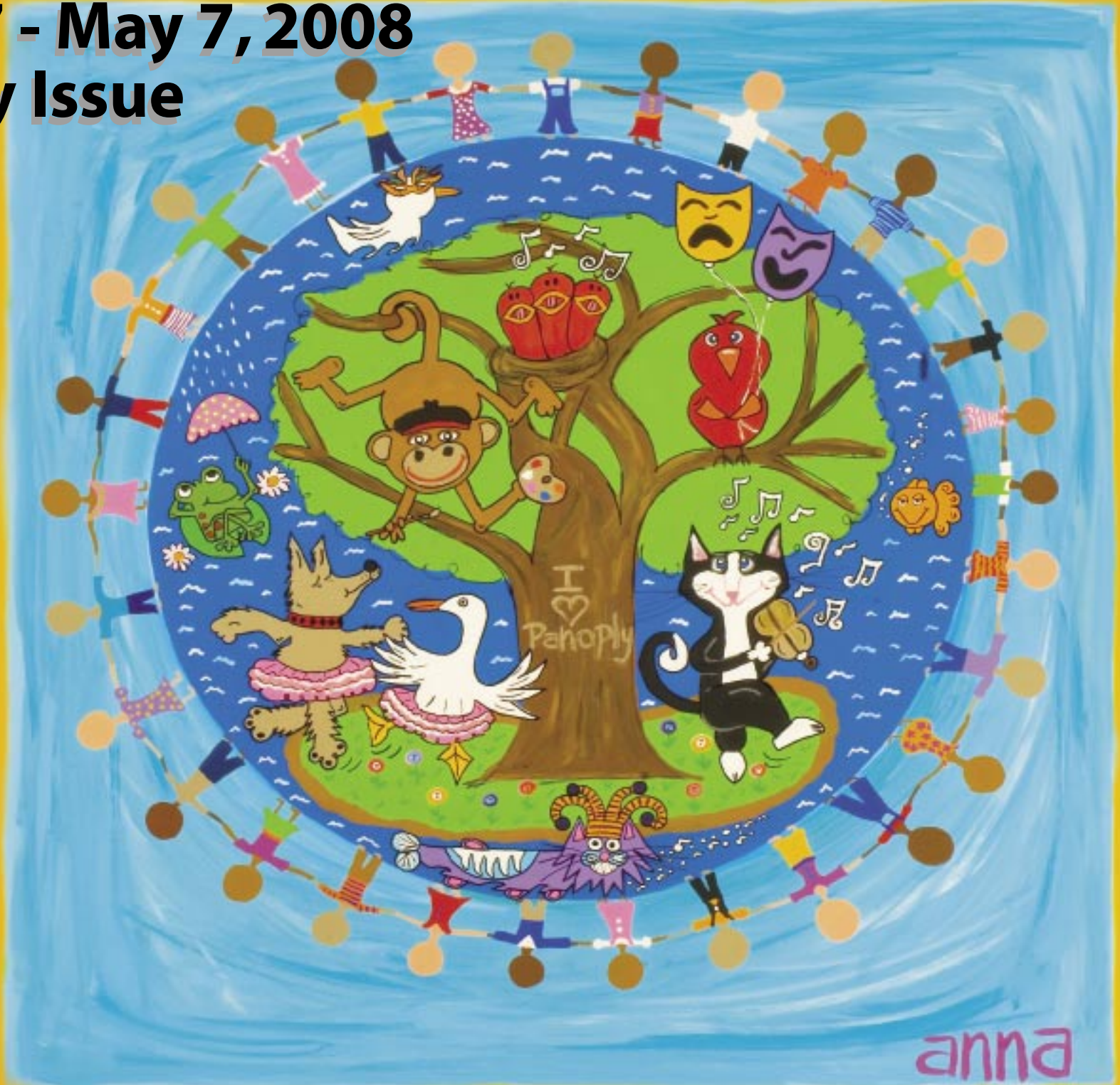
**Panoply
Schedule &
Highlights**

**A Tribute to
Spanky Alford**

WildRose Cafe

**"Backwater"
Music**

**Chinese
Spectacular**



Panoply 2008

On the Cover: Anna Braden - Panoply 2008 Poster Artist

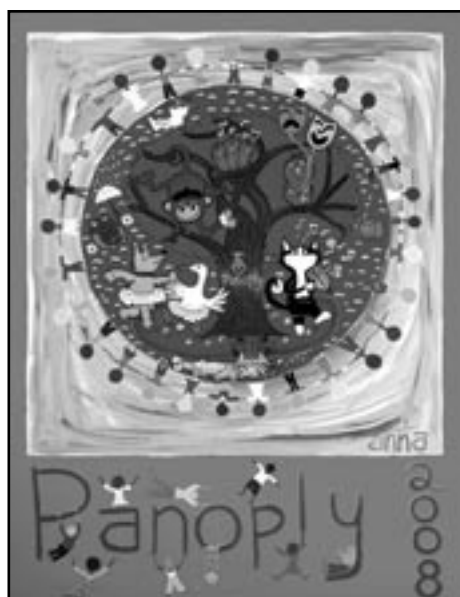
Anna Braden has been an artist all of her life, but she just realized her true talent in the last few years. She was born and raised in Huntsville and attended both the University of Alabama and Ole Miss.

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



walking in the park, she saw a girl climb up in one of the park's trees...that's when she got the idea to paint a tree, full of animals, on one of the islands surrounded by the pond. These cheerful animals represent all the art forms that are showcased at Panoply: theatre, visual arts, dance, and music—as well as the Official Alabama State Fiddling Championship. In addition, the figures surrounding the tree and pond are representative, as well; symbolic of both the many people who attend the festival and the "global village" that is Panoply.

Anna's next goal is to apply her art to children's book illustrations to gain a wider audience for her work. For further information, please visit her website: www.blueharvestart.com.

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. 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
8:00 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
12:30 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)



Saturday April 26
10:30 Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko (Okinawan Festival Drums)
11:30 David Boling (Irish Uilleann Pipes)
12:30 Philippine-American Association of Alabama, Inc.
1:45 Maple Hill Band (Celtic & Old-Time Music)
3:15 Umdabu Dance Company (South African Traditional & Contemporary Dance)
6:00 Sirqus of Jreams (Belly Dance Troupe)
7:00 Moe O Hakina Hema (Polynesian Dance Troupe)

Sunday April 27
12:30 The North Alabama Seibukan Karate Schools-NASKS
1:30 Maple Hill Band (Celtic & Old-Time Music)
3:00 Mike Ball & The Madison Mountaintop Band
4:00 Philippine-American Association of Alabama, Inc.
6:30 KUSH (Reggae)

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
6:15 Alabama A&M
7:45 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)



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He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought -
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

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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!

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.

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.

The news media - once the people's watchdog -- has been rendered toothless, bought and paid for by a few huge corporate conglomerates that gobbled up station after station and newspaper after newspaper. Most people are too ignorant to see that consolidation of media outlets under the control of a few conglomerates kneecaps democracy as we have known it in the United States.

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.

Yes, I said "for profit." 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



artwork by Debbie West

you've destroyed.

Isn't it convenient that Vice President Cheney's old firm - Halliburton, where he was CEO - was so handy to snarf up all the no-bid contracts awarded for services in Iraq. Trailer truckloads of money poured into an ever-widening sinkhole.

When told that 66% of Americans now oppose the war in Iraq, Cheney's answer was, "So?"

Who else has won big? Big oil. Who put Bush in office? Big oil.

It's a little publicized fact that they're more American civilian personnel in Iraq than military. We hear little about the huge, shadowy private security firm called Blackwater, a.k.a The Republican Guard, answerable to no one, immune from any laws or conventions worldwide.

No matter who wins the presidential race and inherits this mess in Iraq, there will be no quick withdrawal; there is far too much corporate profit to allow that to happen.

So, we borrow a few billion dollars per week from China to pay for a war in Iraq and as a result, the dollar is worth about 15 cents. High oil prices -- and profits -- have put the US economy in the tank, in recession and headed to hell on a go-cart.

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?

One way or the other, Halliburton and Exxon-Mobil et al.

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.

What John Adams said bears repeating: The only maxim of a free "government" ought to be to trust no man living with power to endanger the public liberty.

The clown that endangered the public liberty was appointed president. Then Americans were stupid enough to elect him for four more years.

Are you angry yet? If you aren't, you're in denial, or work for Halliburton or an oil company.

Remember that Adams also said, Liberty cannot be preserved without general knowledge among the People.

If the general knowledge I see among the People today is all we're depending on to preserve liberty, we're screwed, big time.

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 and check it out.

is played by Laura Price (nominated for a 2007 Wings).

The ballerina nun, Sister Mary Leo, is portrayed by the show's choreographer, Jessica Alexander (nominated for a 2007 Wings).

And everyone remembers Elizabeth Wright as forgetful Sister Mary Amnesia and her little Sister Mary Annette. Elizabeth won the 2007 Wings for Best Performance by a Female in a Supporting Role with Singing.

Rounding out the cast will be Mark Moore (nominated for a 2007 Wings) as the oh-so-surprising Sister Mary Montenegro, and Tommy Walker and Micah Hoder as two of the Mount Saint Helen's students.

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

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.

On Saturday, April 26, the final performance will be preceded by a Silent Auction along with a Wine and Cheese Gala beginning at 6:30 pm, with showtime at 8:00 pm. Tickets for Saturday evening's festivities, including the show, are \$35 each.

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,



The view of Huntsville from Monte Sano Mountain

Chef's Table
Gourmet Tapas Dining
Join us for Lunch!
Complimentary Homemade Dessert with this Ad!
Tuesday - Friday 11am - 2pm
Tuesday - Thursday 5pm - 9pm Friday and Saturday 5pm - 10pm
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THE NEW RATED CHOICE
ACME
ACCEPT NO OTHERS

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

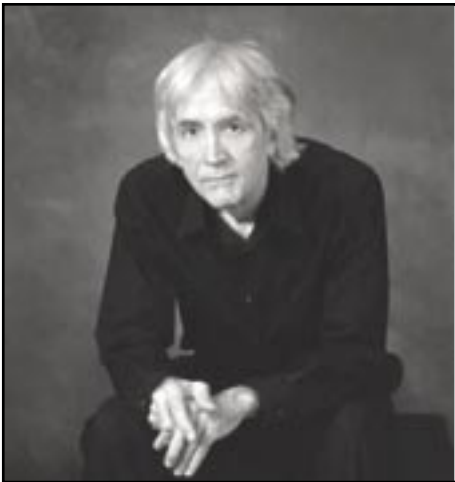
It struck Leo Hill, 81, of Lakewood, Colo., that he was being shorted sheets of toilet paper (in the 12-pack, whose rolls allegedly yielded fewer sheets than similar rolls in the 4-pack), and he earnestly counted 60 rolls, sheet by sheet, concluding that the shortage amounted to enough paper to service 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 (\$83 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 into his back yard and (according to neighbors' videos) simulating intercourse with a picnic table (Bellevue, Ohio, March).



Orlando "public artist" Brian Feldman celebrated Feb. 29 (Leap Day) by devoting himself to "leaping," according to a report on WOFL-TV. For the entire 24 hours, beginning at midnight, Feldman leaped off a 12-foot-high platform every three minutes and 56 seconds (a total of 366 times). Said Feldman, "I thought it would be a good idea to get people to think how they spend their day."

Unclear on the Concept

German artist Markus Kison created a full-body burqa, the robe that devout Muslim women wear for modesty, but equipped to send a digital signal of the wearer's face to anyone nearby via Bluetooth. According to a February report in Der Spiegel, Kison reasoned that, since nothing in the Quran specifically forbids it, women can use it to determine their own personal levels of modesty.

First, Arkansas Tech University canceled outright its production of the Stephen Sondheim play "Assassins" (containing some violence) because of "recent tragic events" on campuses, but then relented because of the hard work that the students had already put in. In February, the production was staged in full, one time, to an audience solely of participants' families, who presumably could handle the violence. However, even that showing took place without the play's prescribed guns, even though they were only wooden props. (The "guns" were later discarded but only after being sawed in half.

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).

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

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 1960s 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."

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

Artists, 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.

"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."

Wai Eng, Director of Finance for Comcast, saw the opening night show in Atlanta. He said he had seen many performances around the world. "This is probably more grand than any of them. I mean the production, the quality." He said he wished his business was growing as fast as the Chinese Spectacular shows. The New York based company expects to reach 650,000 people during the 2008 tour. It has visited London, Paris, Prague, and Berlin, and Taipei. It is no ordinary dance group.

Delivers the Essence

The show is meant to do more than entertain. It showcases 5,000 years of Chinese history. From national hero Yue Fei, to Mulan, to ultra feminine "Water Fairies," from the hospitality of Mongolia to the archer who shot down nine suns, to modern people of kindness and courage, the Chinese character is revealed. Arthur Yu, an artist from Beijing, said of the



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."

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.

Flights of imagination are part of the show, too. Over and over again audience members said they liked the colors, the costumes, and the big, bold drums. Many loved the grace of the Mongolian Bowl dance, in which beautiful girls welcome guests while balancing bowls of tea on their heads. Others enjoyed the masculinity of the drummers, or the heroism of General Yue Fei, who agonized over leaving his widowed mother alone in order to defend his country. She counseled him to put his country first. During the Song Dynasty his talents were needed.

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

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."

More than one hundred dance students accompanied their teacher to the show in Denver on December 12th of 2007. The show was an eye-opener for the children. During an interview, one child said that the show was, "Really, really, really, really good!"

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.



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

Tour and the Cemetery Stroll go to restore and maintain the monuments, statuary, and headstones in the historic sections of Maple Hill Cemetery. Huntsville is proud to have an appreciation of its past, and this is a wonderful way to learn and enjoy its history.

Admission to the Historic Home Tour is \$17 for tickets purchased in advance; \$20 for tickets purchased on the day of the Tour; and \$15 for groups of 20 or more. Box lunches can be purchased at Church of Nativity for \$10 each between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., so you can make an entire day of the event. Reservations for the lunches are encouraged, but not required.

Brochures and tickets for pre-sale are available at Belk, Harrison Brother's Hardware, the Greenery, Summer Classics, Golden Griffin, AL Christopher, Inc., Railroad Station Antique Mall, Rivenbark & Roper, LLC, and Lawren's. In Madison, tickets are available at Hartlex Antiques and Interiors, and in Decatur, at Sam Frank & Moore.

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.

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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 when some, what I deem, insipid and out-of-touch (to say the least) news reporter actually made that statement regarding America's poor and troubled. For any of you who know me at all, you might imagine my outrage. The second poem, however, "After I Died," written sometime after I had actually suffered cardiac arrest in 2001, was inspired by an existential moment at a stop light at the intersection of Drake Avenue and Whitesburg several years ago. For just a peaceful, ecstatic moment or two, I was able to experience a different level of reality through my imagination. Instead of choosing to become frustrated in the lines of honking traffic, I let my mind wander and found a way to actually reinterpret my own experience. No, it was not hallucinatory, and I was not on drugs. I suppose it was choosing to redefine my own experience. I wish I could do that all the time, but, unfortunately, I cannot. I am certainly not saying that the poor of America or the poor and suffering of this world can imagine themselves out of poverty, lack of proper health care, and an environment of crime and war. What I am saying is that I (we) can perhaps do as much good for others by approaching the outrageous situations in the world with a sense of peace as we can with a sense of rage. Or, maybe, we realize that we change what we can change, and that some things are out of our control, and these we let go or else lose our own souls to the tumult around us.

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 Blue 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,

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.

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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.

At any tide, on one leg or two, we stand in sun in St. Joseph Bay beside our warm-feathered crane, while rain falls on the sleepy tin roof of childhood.

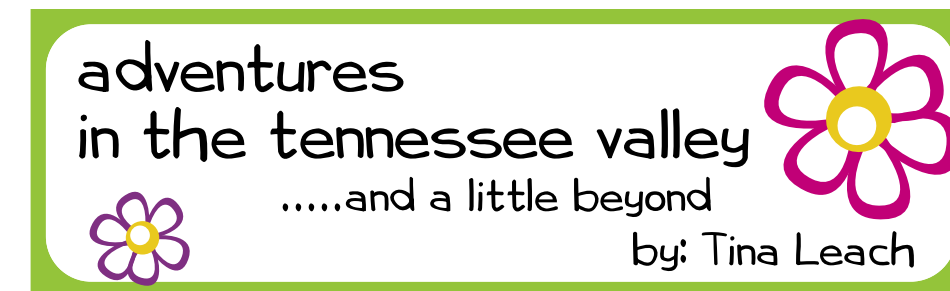
Jung was right. Heaven is what you think it will be. And if you think you deserve Hell, Hell is what you get. I've been to Heaven, and I'm there now, watching its glinting river

until the light changes.

I swim to the left, downstream into and across the China Sea, or to an afternoon of wild blackberries in wind that bob around my front porch

in no particular direction.

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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.

Rock City: the city of rocks (unincorporated). A tourist trap with a dark side. It's a little known fact that Rock City is run by an underground gang of gnomes. Stay on the path, keep to the straight and narrow, and, if you see one, never, never look him in the eye. Sure they may look all cute and innocent, but there is something sinister, almost evil in their playfulness. Or maybe I just have lawn ornament issues.

Lookout Mountain is one of those areas where you're just skipping along and all of a sudden--BAM-- you're in a different state. Rock City is actually in Georgia. Ruby Falls and the Incline Railway are in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Travel tip: Just go to Chattanooga and follow the signs. You don't have to know which state you're in. You could have the IQ of a piece of string and still manage to find Rock City.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. I didn't actually go to Rock City first thing. First, I--well, first I ate lunch--but after that I went to the Incline Railway.

Never in my life have I seen such confused, stressed out people. Not sure why. Usually tourist areas are full of happy vacationers, folks decked out in their finest tacky vacation apparel (which for some reason usually includes shorts, regardless of the outside temperature), arms full of cameras, children on sugar highs.

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

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).

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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 limestonedustpoetry.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.

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:

30 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 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.

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

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.



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 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.

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 April 24



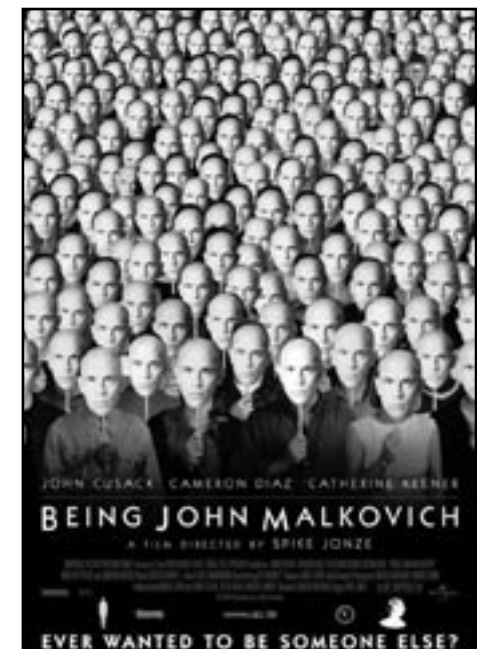
Through a Glass Darkly

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.



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.

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.

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A True Treasure is Lost A Tribute to Spanky Alford

by Sonny Edwards

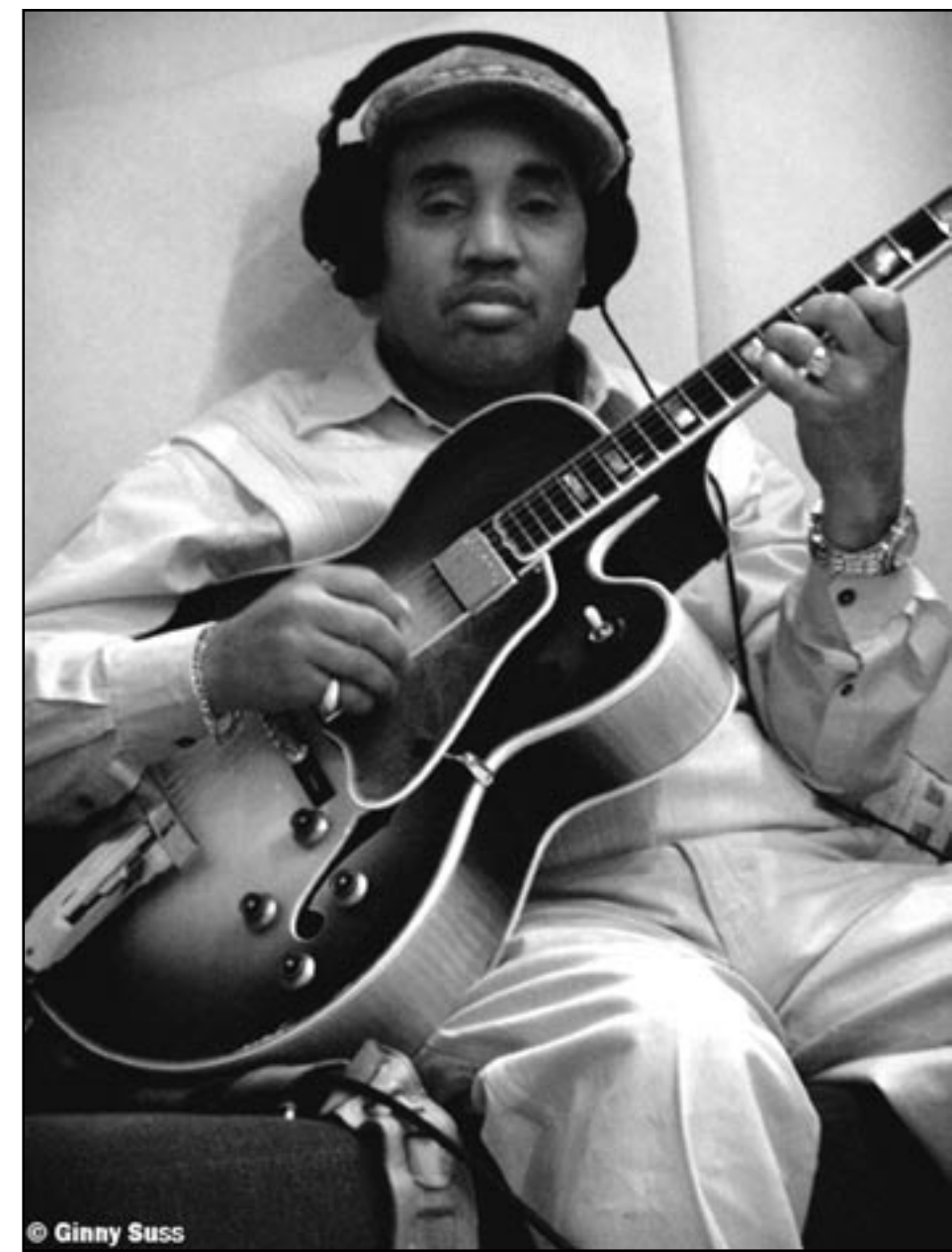
Chalmers Edward Alford
(or as most of us knew him)
Spanky
May 22, 1955 - March 24, 2008

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

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 one of the true GREAT people I have had the privilege to call my friend. Not just the masterful guitarist, considered by many to be one of the world's best jazz guitarist, but also the great and wonderful man. Spanky was always giving to others, responding to the constant request of his time, talents, and resources. Regardless of how exhausted and in need of rest, or how much pain he might be in, he always responded positively. I don't believe I ever knew anyone whose life was more a reflection of the love and peace of Jesus Christ. Spanky is home now. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him and his music, but never forgotten.



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

Spanky was so many things to so many people. A loving husband to his beautiful wife, Shirley. A proud father and grandfather. A true friend to many people all across this country and beyond. He was a good listener. If you had a problem, and needed to find a solution, he was a great advisor. If you had a story to share he was attentive. If it was a funny story he made it all the more so with his response. His smile and laughter were priceless. As in everything Spanky, his timing was flawless. And he had fantastic and funny stories of his own.

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

"I met Spanky in 1995 and we have been great friends ever since then. He has befriended my Father, he's been a light shining on my whole family. We had a lot of good times. When we would finish doing shows on the road I would often go to his room, and even after the concerts he would still be playing, steadily being a blessing to people. He has definitely left a legacy and we just want to pay tribute to him, and we want to thank God for his wife Sister Shirley, and we hope and trust everyone will continue to pray for the family." - Ron Staples, Mighty Clouds of Joy

"I met Spanky way back in '77 I believe. I'm gonna make this real short. The bottom line is everybody has great things to say about Spanky...so do I. My words for Spanky would be what a man, what a man, what a man what a mighty good man!" - Tony Grady, bass player, Mavis Staple group

"Spanky played with me for a lot of years, and I always knew that he was a genius on the guitar, and a great, great person. We talked constantly, and we had just talked two weeks ago about him playing on the new project we've got coming out soon, and he was mentioning some songs he wanted me to do, and he was gonna help me with. I'd just like to say to Huntsville, and to everyone who might read this article, it's a great loss to have lost Eddie Alford, better known as Spanky. He is going to be missed." - Joe Ligon, lead singer and founding member 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

life and a great instructor. I stayed under his tutelage for as long as I could. I'm going to miss him. I just hope he's in a better place than we are, and in time I'm going to try to carry his legacy as best I can with all that he taught me." - Reggie Cook, guitarist and friend

"I met Spanky about 12 years ago at a local music store, and Spanky was one of the gifted ones who God gave a special gift to. One thing I will always remember about Spanky is he was always willing to share his gift with anybody and everybody who might ask him to, and I believe God made him even better because of that. I'm grateful I had the chance to know Spanky. He was a lot of encouragement to me when I started to play guitar. To his wife, I pray for her and her family, and hope she will continue to carry on his legacy." - Noel Lee, student and friend



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

I'm glad we had this opportunity to see so many people and talk about Spanky. I grew up with him, and he was a big inspiration in my life. I'm not in the field of music, but I always admired him for what he did, and the different people he helped. When he got sick, many times when he was going through his trials and tribulations, I would be there to try and encourage him. I'd try to say some things that would comfort him, but he was the kind of guy, when you tried to encourage him, he'd wind up encouraging you. He never complained regardless of what his situation might be, he was a straight up fellow and he always talked about Jesus. He was a man with a Christian heart and he shared his love. He loved his family, his wife, and his children. They say he was a legend, and I don't know what a legend is supposed to be about, but I know he was a beautiful human being. We are all going to miss him and I just ask everyone to pray



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>.





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COMING UP AT THE SPORTS PAGE...

April 18th The Ugli Stick
April 19th Black Label/ Senseless
April 25th from North Carolina The Hickabillies
April 26th Easy Mornin Rebel
May 2nd Sidewinder/ Haven
May 3rd Hot Soup
May 9th Kozmic Mama
May 10th Cadajama

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Monday David Anderson
Thursday Sive O' Clock Charlie
Sunday Karaoke with Doc

See more music that's GOOD at the Page!!!



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Sat 6-2 Live Music
Sun 4-10 Social Sunday
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Marge Loveday
April 25

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's 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. I 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'



The Valley's Most Complete MUSIC CALENDAR

**THURSDAY
APRIL 17**
Benchwarmer, Karaoke w/Carol
Benchwarmer, Too, DJ Russ
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Kenny and Costa
Club Ozz, 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), 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, Cream Pie
Benchwarmer, Too, Beach Party
Black Water Hattie's, Big Daddy Kingfish
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Triple X
Club Ozz, So 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 Café, 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, Mongaloid 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

**SATURDAY
APRIL 19**
11th Frame Bar, Karaoke
801 Franklin (See ad pg. 27),
Greg Chambers (7pm)
Belvidere Market, Live Music Jam Session
Benchwarmer, Hard Rock Show
Benchwarmer, Too, DJ Brandon
Black Water Hattie's, Cracker Jacks
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Four Door Ramblers
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), Deltones
Crossroads (See ad pg. 14), DJ Night
Furniture Factory, Room 240
Hard Dock Café, 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

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 and Grill, Live Music
West End Grill, Karaoke

**SUNDAY
APRIL 20**
Casa Montego,
Live Jazz featuring Devere Pride Trio
Club Ozz, Karaoke w/ Miss Sweet "T"
Hopper's,
Edgar (Brunch, 11-2)/Janice's Karaoke (8-12)
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Sunday Blues Jam hosted
by Freddy Earl and the Blues Mercenaries
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),
Karaoke
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), Karaoke

**MONDAY
APRIL 21**
Benchwarmer, Too, Karaoke
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16),
Christina Lynn and Chuck
Kaffeeklatsch @Night,
Acoustic Open Mic hosted by Greg Rowell
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),
Karaoke
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville), Karaoke
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), David Anderson
The Nook, Jerry Fordham 6-9
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, Kristin Cothron

**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
Cazadores, Open Mic Hosted by Scott Morgan
Coffeetree Books & Brew (See ad pg. 20),
Songwriters' 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, Boogafunk
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
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), Donnie Cox
The Brick, Scott Boyer
The Station, Big Daddy Kingfish
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, James Irvin

**THURSDAY
APRIL 24**
Benchwarmer, Karaoke w/Carol
Benchwarmer, Too, DJ Brandon
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Mike and Lee
Club Ozz, Karaoke w/ Miss Sweet "T"
Crossroads (See ad pg. 14), Hill Country Revue
(featuring Cody Dickson and Chris Chew of North
Mississippi Allstars) with Special Guest Matt King
Finnegan's Pub, Slip Jig
Halftime Bar and Grill,
Tune Doctors Karaoke w/Brian Holder
Hopper's, DJ Justin (8-12)
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16),
Kozmic Mama
Jazz Factory, Three Generations
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Dave Anderson

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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
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill,
Ladies Night w/Ben Trussell

**FRIDAY
APRIL 25**
11th Frame Bar, Karaoke
801 Franklin (See ad pg. 27), Christina Lynn and
Chuck (7pm)
Benchwarmer, Charger
Black Water Hattie's, Hot Rod Otis
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), 5 O'Clock Charlie
Club Ozz, So So Deaf Friday w/DJ Travis /
Silhouettes of Illusion w/Misticka Blaze
Coffeetree Books & Brew (See ad pg. 20),
Live Music
Coppertop (See ad pg. 16), Turner Family Band
Crossroads (See ad pg. 14), Wayne Mills
El Herradura, Pat Nickel's One Man Band
Finnegan's Pub, Sing Along with Nancy
Furniture Factory, Big Daddy Kingfish
Hard Dock Café, 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
Partner's (See ad pg. 14), Marge Loveday
Philby's Pourhouse, Seducing Alice
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), Hickabilly's
The Brick, Plato Jones
The Docks (Scottsboro), Dan and Jon
The Nook, Southern Rock Three 5-8
The Station, Jamie Fox and Three Crown Deep
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, Toy Shop

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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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
Benchwarmer, 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
Philby's Pourhouse, Leaving Madison
Russ T's (Scottsboro), 12 Miles South
Sammy's Music Hall,
WZP and Sammy'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,
Edgar (Brunch, 11-2)/Janice's Karaoke (8-12)
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Sunday Blues Jam hosted by Freddy Earl and the Blues Mercenaries
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

**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
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville), Karaoke
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), Dave Anderson
The Nook, Jerry Fordham 6-9
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, Scott Boyer

**TUESDAY
APRIL 29**
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),
Lacey 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
Philby'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

**WEDNESDAY
APRIL 30**
3rd Base Grill, David Anderson 9 p.m.-1 a.m.
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

Moody Monday's, Karaoke
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15), Karaoke
Philby's Pourhouse, Ben Trussell
Russ T's (Scottsboro), KB and Coach
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville), Karaoke Contest
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), Scottie R.
The Brick, Tim Tucker
The Station, Crush
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, James Irvin

**THURSDAY
MAY 1**
Benchwarmer, Karaoke w/Carol
Benchwarmer, Too, DJ
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Donnie and Kim
Club Ozz, Karaoke w/ Miss Sweet "T"
Coffeetree Books & Brew (See ad pg.20),
James Smith the Autoharp Man kicks off Spring
Appalachian Tail Music Tour (6:30)
Finnegan's Pub, Slip Jig
Halftime Bar and Grill,
Tune Doctors Karaoke w/Brian Holder
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
Philby's Pourhouse, Milestone
Russ T's (Scottsboro), Jacob Lyda
Sammy'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, 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**
11th Frame Bar, Karaoke
801 Franklin (See ad pg. 27), Juice
Benchwarmer, Live Music
Black Water Hattie's, Four Door Ramblers
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Foster Howler Band
Club Ozz, So So Deaf Friday w/DJ Travis /
Silhouettes of Illusion w/Misticka Blaze
Coffeetree Books & Brew (See ad pg.20),
Live Music
Crossroads (See ad pg. 14), First Fridays
El Herradura, Pat Nickel's One Man Band
Finnegan's Pub, Sing Along with Nancy
Furniture Factory, The Scratch Band
Hard Dock Café, Full Circle
Hog Wild, Chad Bradford
Hopper's, Peter and the Wolf (8:30)
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
Philby's Pourhouse, Fearless Four
Port of Madison (Holiday Inn),
Roberta and Hot Mixx 7-11
Russ T's (Scottsboro), Live Music
Sammy'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

**SATURDAY
MAY 3**
11th Frame Bar, Karaoke
801 Franklin (See ad pg. 27), Live Music
Belvidere Market, Live Music Jam Session
Benchwarmer, 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)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

MUSIC

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16),
Lance Almon Band
Jazz Factory,
Jerry McAllister + Charlie Lyle Quintet
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Toy Shop
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Pot Luck
Moody Monday's, Karaoke
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),
Karaoke
Partner's (See ad pg. 14), Karaoke
Lisa Busler and Kira Hughes
Philby's Pourhouse, The Grenadines
Russ T's (Scottsboro), Live Music
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville), Karaoke
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), Hot Soup
The Brick, Barnstormers
The Docks (Scottsboro), Tony Brooks Band
The Station, Live Music
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, Live Music
West End Grill, Karaoke

**SUNDAY
MAY 4**
Casa Montego,
Live Jazz featuring Devere Pride Trio
Club Ozz, Karaoke w/ Miss Sweet "T"
Flying Monkey Arts Center,
Rolling Jazz Revue (7pm, 55)
Hopper's,
Edgar (Brunch, 11-2)/Janice's Karaoke (8-12)
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Sunday Blues Jam hosted by Freddy Earl and the Blues Mercenaries
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), Karaoke

**MONDAY
MAY 5**
Benchwarmer, Too, Karaoke
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16),
Jim Cavender, Mambo Gris Gris
Kaffeeklatsch @Night,
Acoustic Open Mic hosted by Greg Rowell
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),
karaoke
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville), Karaoke
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), David Anderson
The Nook, Jerry Fordham 6-9

**TUESDAY
MAY 6**
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),
Ant and Andrew
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), Backwater
The Nook, OXR 6-9
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, Dave Anderson

**WEDNESDAY
MAY 7**
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, Cliff Darby
Hopper's, Dave Anderson (5-8)/Lil' Ed (8-12)
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
Philby'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, Pat and "Pals"
The Station, Live Music
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, James Irvin

**THURSDAY
MAY 8**
Benchwarmer, Karaoke w/Carol
Benchwarmer, Too, DJ
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Bent Russells
Club Ozz, Karaoke w/ Miss Sweet "T"
Finnegan's Pub, Slip Jig
Halftime Bar and Grill,
Tune Doctors Karaoke w/Brian Holder
Hopper's, DJ Justin (8-12)

Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16),
The Crackerjacks
Jazz Factory, James Irvin
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Dave Anderson
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'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, Edgar
The Docks (Scottsboro), Adam Hood
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill,
Ladies Night w/Ben Trussell

**FRIDAY
MAY 9**
11th Frame Bar, Karaoke
801 Franklin (See ad pg. 27),
Don Henderson (7pm)
Benchwarmer, Live Music
Black Water Hattie's, Christian Bradley
Blue Parrot (Guntersville), Saw Mill Road
Club Ozz, So So Deaf Friday w/DJ Travis /
Silhouettes of Illusion w/Misticka Blaze
Coffeetree Books & Brew (See ad pg.20),
Live Music
Crossroads (See ad pg. 14),
Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit
El Herradura, Pat Nickel's One Man Band
Finnegan's Pub, Sing Along with Nancy
Furniture Factory,
Chuck Rutenburg and Christina Lynn
Hard Dock Café, Live Music
Hog Wild, Back Water
Hopper's, Peter and the Wolf (8:30)
Humphrey's Bar & Grill (See ad pg. 16), Hot Soup
Jazz Factory, Shامتown + The Swing Shift
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Live Music
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Full Circle
Moody Monday's, Karaoke
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),
JD and the Badboys
Partner's (See ad pg. 14), Marge Loveday
Philby's Pourhouse, Live Music
Port of Madison (Holiday Inn),
Roberta and Hot Mixx 7-11
Russ T's (Scottsboro), Trey, Kenny, and Coach
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville), Karaoke
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), Kozmic Mama
The Brick, Erin Mitchell
The Docks (Scottsboro), Live Music
The Nook, Southern Rock Three 5-8
The Station, Live Music
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, Live Music

**SATURDAY
MAY 10**
11th Frame Bar, Karaoke
801 Franklin (See ad pg. 27), Live Music
Belvidere Market, Live Music Jam Session
Benchwarmer, Live Music
Benchwarmer, Too, DJ June bug
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 Banes Breakup (9pm, 55)
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),
Pla' Station
Jazz Factory, Jim Cavendar + Charlie Lyle Quintet
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Live Music
Lee Ann's (See ad pg. 15), Silver Streak
Moody Monday's, Karaoke
Olivia's Sports Bar and Grill (See ad pg. 15),
Karaoke
Partner's (See ad pg. 14),
Partner's Pride of Kings and DJ Shelle Dance Party
Philby's Pourhouse, Mike Roberts Band
Russ T's (Scottsboro), Trey, Kenny, and Coach
Sammy's Music Hall, 17th Floor
Sandy's Roadhouse (Guntersville), Karaoke
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), Cadajama
The Brick, Live Music
The Docks (Scottsboro), Live Music
The Station, Live Music
Voodoo Lounge Bar and Grill, Live Music
West End Grill, Karaoke

**SUNDAY
MAY 11**
Casa Montego,
Live Jazz featuring Devere Pride Trio
Club Ozz, Karaoke w/ Miss Sweet "T"
Kaffeeklatsch @Night, Sunday Blues Jam hosted by Freddy Earl and the Blues Mercenaries
Sportspage (See ad pg. 14), Karaoke

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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, nor 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 30, **My Chemical Romance**, Sloss Furnace

HUNTSVILLE
April 20, **Martina McBride**, Von Braun Center Arena
May 1, **Rodney Carrington**, Von Braun Center Concert Hall

MEMPHIS
April 26, **Amy Grant**, Cannon Center for Performing Arts
May 15, **Alicia Keys**, FedExForum

NASHVILLE
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)
1722 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
6076 Madison Blvd., Madison, 256-772-8514.

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, TOOI
5000 University Drive, Huntsville, 256-489-9600.

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

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

BOGEY'S
412 Mann St., Guntersville, 256-582-2860

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

BOONDOCKS
Hwy 69, Guntersville, 256-582-3935

BUFFALOS 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, whuntsville, AL 35816

CHIPS & SALSA CANTINA
10300 Bailey 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
1031 Memorial Parkway, Huntsville, 256-881-0057

END ZONE, THE
1909 University Drive, Huntsville, 256-536-2234.

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

FINNAGAN'S 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 SALOON
2407 Memorial Pkwy, Huntsville, 256-533-7446

HOMEPORT
20076 N. Memorial Pkwy, Huntsville, 256-852-8800

HOPPER'S
5903 University Drive, 256-830-0600

HUMPHREY'S BAR & GRILL
109 Washington Square, Huntsville, 256-704-5555.

INDICO JOE'S
7427 Hwy 72 W, Madison, AL 256-489-9393

INSOMNIA
6402 Hwy 72, W, Huntsville, AL 35806

KAFFEKLATSCH @NIGHT
103 Jefferson Street, Huntsville, 256-536-7993.

KICKERS
8716 Madison Blvd, Madison, 256-772-0701

LEEANN'S
415 Church St, Huntsville, 256-489-9300

LISA'S LOUNGE
2373 N. Memorial Pkwy, Huntsville, 256-534-9520

MASON'S PUB
115 Clinton Ave., Huntsville 256-704-5575

MOODY MONDAYS
718 Church St, Huntsville, 256-533-4005

MOONDOGS
2002 13th St. SW, Huntsville, 256-534-8844

NETWORKS LOUNGE
2140 Gunter Ave., Guntersville

THE NOOK
3305 Bob Wallace Ave. 256-489-0911

OLIVIA'S
1009 Henderson Rd, Huntsville, 256-837-4728

OTTER'S
5 Tranquility Base, Huntsville, 256-830-2222.

PARTNERS
627 Meridian St., Huntsville 256-539-0975

PHILBY'S POURHOUSE
111 Jefferson Street, Huntsville, 256-512-5858.

PORT OF MADISON
9035 Hwy 20 W, Madison, 256-772-7170

ROSEBERRY PUB & GRILL
Hwy 67, Scottsboro, 256-574-4231

RUGGIE'S
4620 University Drive, Huntsville, 256-895-0795.

RUSST'S
Hwy 79, Scottsboro, 256-259-0641

SAMMY T'S MUSIC HALL
116 Washington Street, 256-539-9974.

SANDY'S ROADHOUSE
12740 Hwy. 431 S, Guntersville, 256-571-0450.

SCOOTER'S
Willow St, Scottsboro, 256-575-0800

THE SHACK
105 Swancott Road, Triana 256-461-0227.

SPORTS PAGE LOUNGE & DELI
9009 Memorial Pkwy S, Huntsville, 256-880-9471.

SPORTS ZONE
3429 Hwy 31, Decatur, 256-350-9702

STEM AND STEIN WINE CELLAR AND BAR
1087 County Line Rd. STE. B, Madison, 256-325-3779

THE STATION
8894 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

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

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

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

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

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

WINGS SPORTS GRILLE
4250 Balmoral Dr. SW, Huntsville, 256-881-8878.

ZIG ZAG MARTINI BAR & GRILL
2030 Country Club Ave., Huntsville, 256-534-4441

Get Back to Your Roots With Backwater *by Southern Tracks*

Southern Tracks is always on the lookout for great music and it's even better when we find it close to home. Ask Backwater where they play and they will tell you anywhere that has electricity. That says it all about four guys who dream of making it big and have the talent and the drive to get there. Heavy on the country with some great southern rock thrown in for good measure, this is a band you don't want to miss. Brian Dawson belts on lead vocals and plays rhythm, Chris Eldridge rocks lead guitar and backup vocals, Tim O'Brien jams bass and backup vocals and Jason Miller keeps them all in line on the drums.

We met the guys from Backwater at Bishop's, a local hole-in-the-wall, and had a chance to talk about their history, influences, and trying to break into the music industry. They've all been playing "since dirt was around" but only together for a little over a year. You wouldn't know it from hearing them play though. It's apparent these guys draw a crowd with voices in the audience singing along to not only the covers, but their own tunes as well like "That's the Stuff", "Come On Birmingham" and "I Don't Hate You Anymore."

ST: How do you select your covers?

Brian: This kinda started out as Chris and I taking a looking at modern country tunes, what we dug, what we like, what could help get us off the ground... the beauty of this is we get to do what we like but at the same time, it's good stuff that the crowd understands and digs...

Jason: A lot of it stems from rock, southern rock, stuff we grew up on...

ST: Obviously the crowd loves it, we spoke with a few guys out in the crowd and asked them what do you like most about Backwater and they told us the original songs, I think you guys are just on the verge... tell us what's going on with the demo.

Brian: We have our first demo recording out, it's three songs and it got a touch of radio play. We're working on our up and coming one, it's probably going to be a four song EP, it's got some really strong songs on it, one of which we've been told is going to take us where we want to go...

Chris: We actually got signed to a production deal about five or six months ago... we got the demo out from a guy named Jimmy Nutt... we cut some songs, sent them out to a bunch of different record labels... they passed the first time but we got a lot of fans out of it, you know... and the second go 'round he thinks it may be a little better... and 93.3 the Wolf is behind us quite a bit, so we'll see... We're lucky, you know, to be together only a year, year and a half, and (we) get to play together four or five nights a week... it's a pretty good bit so I'm pretty excited about it.

ST: So how does it work? One night you might be playing Bishop's and that face in the crowd you've never seen...

Brian: That's exactly it... you play every gig like it's the one, you know, you try to anyway... you play like someone who matters is going to see you and scoop you up, that's what you do, you try to do every one of them like that.

ST: You guys are opening for David Allen Coe, how did that come about?

Chris: That came about through Sammy Taylor and also our booking agency. I've been playing with Sammy and Jay (Jason Miller) off and on since Sammy's was a hallway... in different bands, The Land - with the guys from Heartland, we played in Black Label together, we were the founding members... hell man, we've just been around a long time,

since Sammy started basically and anytime something cool comes through, he (Sammy) tries to help us out... help me out y'all...

Brian: You pretty much summed it up man. We've worked real hard here in North Alabama and of course our hometown to try to get people on our side, people who appreciate us working so hard to get to where we're going... we're not trying to step on anyone's toes... but we work real hard for everybody and if you do it long enough it will pay off...

ST: Tell us about your influences. Obviously you guys are country but there's a lot of rock in there... (to Chris) you're the eighties hair band guy right?

Chris: (Laughing) Very much... man I love love love all the eighties hair metal guys. I think that Mick Mars (from) Motley Crue is one of the best freakin' guitar players, very good slide player but also my roots are very Southern, you know what I mean? So Skynyrd, Allman Brothers, all that kind of stuff. My great-grandfather, I.D. Stanford played with Bill Monroe, so bluegrass is a big deal, so as I get older... just kinda goes back to where you come from I guess. So here I am, pretty excited about it, happy to be with these guys, they all understand what's going on... real happy to be here.

ST: Good deal... Mr. Mike right?

Tim: Tim.

ST: Tim, I'm sorry, drummer.

Tim: Bass player... (laughter ensues) all us white folk look the same, you know how that works.

ST: Yeah, we've only had about twelve shots tonight, you guys are forcing us to drink... after every second song "DRINK!! DRINK!!"

Tim: That's part of it, that's our job man, that's what we do...

ST: Ok, influences?

Tim: Alright, I'm a bass player, influences let's see, there's quite a few... gosh, I started out playing lead guitar years ago. So lots and lots of eighties rock, same stuff Chris listened to and played. Then I came down to this area, Tennessee, Alabama... and got more into bass... got really into funk, funk rock... Mother's Finest, Chili Peppers, stuff like that...

ST: Claypool?

Tim: Claypool, oh yeah oh yeah... just, you know, playing all that cool shit... and actually I was playing in a party band with Chris and he got me into this stuff and I've been having a lot of fun with it... modern country's some cool stuff, good vocals, good songs, well written, lots of fun to play...

ST: You guys are getting a little edgy, you're taking the covers and just really putting an edge on them and it's nice...

Chris: Have you guys ever been to a new country concert, ever seen Dierks Bentley or any of those guys... if you see these guys it's like Marshalls, Les Pauls, it's like an AC/DC concert in '86.

ST: All right, influences (to Jason).

Jason: Grew up on southern rock, 80s metal, I'm returning back to my roots, the older I get... go back and listen to all the old classic stuff. But I like everything from grunge to funk to southern... a little bit of everything. I've had the opportunity to play with a lot of bands and I've had to learn all kinds of music... so I'm not near as anal as I used to be about what I want to hear

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or listen to, cuz as long as your privileged to play then they, you can't ask for anything more.

ST: Brian?

Brian: Early on, I was raised on country, a little bit of bluegrass. As time wore on, I got into a little bit of rock 'n roll... I was pretty big into the Seattle scene for quite a bit, kinda got past that and started focusing on other things. Just like what Jay said, as time wears on, I'm kinda getting back to my roots and really what I'm made of...

And that's what it's all about, getting back to your roots. People love music for a lot of different reasons. There's something about country that pulls you in, maybe it's that familiar story or maybe it's just the feeling that you're home. Whatever it is, Backwater brings it.

For more Backwater, check out backwatercountry.net and be sure to catch one of their live shows. Watch out for those socials though!

- 04-18-08 Bishop's
- 04-19-08 Sammy T's Opening for David Allen Coe
- 04-21-08 Bishop's Acoustic
- 04-28-08 Bishop's Acoustic
- 04-29-08 Sports Page Acoustic
- 05-06-08 Sports Page Acoustic
- 05-09-08 Hog Wild
- 05-10-08 Hog Wild
- 05-15-08 Hooter's Bike Night
- 05-16-08 Sports Page
- 05-23-08 Bishop's
- 05-24-08 American Legion

Check out the *Southern Tracks*' podcast at www.jmkn.com/southerntracks.html

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Stretching the Creative Envelope

by Bonnie Roberts

Friday, 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.

The poet could have said "a leaf dropped from the limb of a tree and landed on an insect." Okay, but not nearly as compelling as her choice to "stretch" the imagery further, to make each image specific. It is the "last" leaf of the "dogwood" limb that lands "square" on the "beetle."

Irene Latham lives in Birmingham. She is the mother of three sons. Irene won the 2008 Alabama Book of the Year Award from the ASPS.

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

Huntsville Alive! First Birthday Party Pictures



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 a valid identification card may attend for \$5. The luncheon fee can be paid upon arrival or in advance at tvaf.org.

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 for more information. (See ad pg.)

April 17-April 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 Haggin Museum of Art in Stockton, CA.

April 17-April 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.hsvmuseum.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.

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 day 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.leadershipsv.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.lowemil.net) Tina's Cantina will be open for dinner from 5-9 pm.

April 18-20
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.hhspanthertheater.com. Group discounts are available by calling (256)883-4589.

Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theater presents **The Gingerbread House in the Forest at the VBC Playhouse**. Tickets are \$10 and may be reserved by calling (256)539-6829.

10th Annual United Cherokee Pow Wow in **Guntersville** at the **National Guard Armory** (3550 Creek Path Rd). Dancing and Drumming all weekend! Friday is Kids Day! No Admission! Saturday and Sunday is only \$5 a car load. For more information please call 256-582-2333 or visit us online at www.uacan-online.org. Bring your lawn chair and spend the day! We have various demonstrators and artists throughout the weekend.

April 18-May 17
Relay for Life will be hosting events across **North Alabama**. Sponsored by the **American Cancer Society**, Relay for Life offers everyone in the community an opportunity to participate in the fight against cancer. The overnight event remembers those who have lost the fight against cancer and honors those who have survived. For more information on forming a team: call your American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345.

April 19
Dreamfield Productions presents **A View from Earth, an Earth Day Celebration**. Bring your chairs, blankets, and umbrellas to 600 County Road 209, Collinsville, 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 will a discount at 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 for more information.

The Princess Theatre Center for the Performing Arts presents the musical revue **Beguiled Again-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 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.

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 for group class schedules and other studio events. This party is themed **Kentucky Derby with a Hat Parade**.

Join Land Trust Vice President Mike Dalen for an unforgettable outing, **Earth Day Celebration: Hike to the Walls of Jericho** is approximately a 6 hour strenuous hike. It starts at 9 a.m. Hiking Equipment you'll need includes long pants, comfortable shoes with good tread & bottled water. In case of rain, hikes will be cancelled. Hikes are free to the public, donations accepted.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

Rhyme Spot 12 will be held at **Ovation Arts Center in Madison**. (8006 Madison Pike Suite 11-B.) (Check the website for updates and possible location changes.) **RhymeSpot Spoken Word Showcase** is an poetry show and open mic in Huntsville that's happening on the third Saturday of every month. See www.myspace.com/rhymespot for more information. The Rhyme Spot Birthday will feature Shuan Judah, A FreeVoice, Jahbu, Odessey and more! See www.myspace.com/rhymespot for more information.

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/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.williamhdrinkard.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
47th Annual Art on the Lake will be held at the **Guntersville Rec Center** on the corner of Sunset Drive and Highway 69 from 10a.m. until 5p.m. on both days. The weekend fun includes food, games, and live musical entertainment. Admission is \$2.00 for ages 6 and up. Call (256)571-7590 to contact the Guntersville Rec Center.

The UAH Craft Show is a fundraiser for the athletics department. It is open to artists, craftsmen, and specialty vendors. For more information see www.uahcraftshow.com.

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 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 hsvmuseum.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 Rodgers, who specializes in raku firing, a 16th-century Japanese technique that creates a crackled, iridescent finish on designs the artist takes from nature. See hsvmuseum.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.

Call Naomi Alexander at (256)53404994 or see www.rcdcdace.com for more information.

April 22The **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 Lap Dogs? 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.northalabamamediareform.org or, contact Linda Haynes at 256-489-3884 or lahaynes@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 for more information.

Yoga Classes with **Casey Bakula** will be held from 8:30-9:15p.m. at the **Flying Monkey Arts Center**, also RYT will be hosted by Squeaking Tribe Puppets. For more info call (256) 679-7143 or visit <http://www.youryogasite.net/>.

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 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.rcdcdace.com for more information.

April 24-26
Renaissance Theatre's Main Stage presents Theatre Huntsville's 2007 award-winning cast and production of "**Nonsense**" 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.hhspanthertheater.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.

Friday Night at Lowe Mill brings "**Twango Bango**" to the back dock from 6-9 pm. "Twango Bango" is the pairing of classical guitarist Phil Weaver with drummer Ivy Joe Milan. 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.

Purgatory Lounge hosted by Sweet Lucy and the Dreaded Firefly will begin at 9p.m. at the **Flying Monkey Arts Center**. Admission is \$6. See www.flyingmonkeyarts.org for more information.

First Annual Charity Bachelor Auction will be at **Focus Martini Bar and Grill**. Proceeds will benefit the Phenomenal Young Women Program. For more information please contact us by email at sistersontheMOVEal@yahoo.com or by phone at (256) 289-1373. This event is being put on by the Huntsville Urban Network.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

April 25-27
Don't miss **Panopoly in Huntsville's Big Spring Park!** Panopoly boasts choreography, "homegrown" talent, visual art, fiddling, photography, and playwright competitions; an ethno cultural exhibition; children's make-n-take activities; multiple stages featuring jazz, gospel, bluegrass, musical theater, ballroom dancing, a songwriter's showcase, and kid-friendly performances (each spotlighting local, area, and regional performers); and the next grand addition to your art collection. Call 256-519-2787 or go to www.panopoly.org for more information. Admission is FREE for children 12 and under. A weekend Panopass is \$10 (please purchase in advance) and a day Panopass is \$5. Panopoly 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. See schedule in this issue of the VP. (See ad pg.)

Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theater presents **The Gingerbread House in the Forest** at the **VBC Playhouse**. Tickets are \$10 and may be reserved by calling (256) 539-6829.

April 26
Come celebrate poetry at the **7th annual Limestone Dust Poetry Festival** at the **Huntsville Public Library**, 915 Monroe Street. The festival kicks off at noon. For a list of festival events, times, guest speakers, and more, stay tuned to limestone dust poetry.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. For more information see http://hpl.lib.al.us/ or call (256) 532-5940.

HSDS and UAH Dance Club sponsored **Swing Dance** will be held at the **Flying Monkey Arts Center** at 8 p.m. A free beginning swing lesson will be given at 7 p.m. Admission is \$12 for adults, \$7 for students, and free for UAH students. See www.flyingmonkeyarts.org for more information.

Legendary bluesman **Willie King** will perform in

ATHENS at the **Southern Crossroads' 3rd Annual Best Buckin' Barbeque Cook-off**. Local talent will also be performing throughout the event. Entertainers include the Valley Cats, Atomic Noise, and the Athens High School Jazz Band. Local musician Barry Kay will perform for the cooks on Friday evening. For an entertainment schedule, visit www.bestbuckinbbq.org. Other activities include arts and crafts, children's activities, and lawn mower races that evening. See www.bestbuckinbbq.org for more information.

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.

Support the Family Services Fundraiser by joining the scenic rolling hills **bicycle tour** around Madison and Marshall Counties in northern Alabama. Best riding in north Alabama; Paint Rock River, Grant Mountain! Registration is \$35. Register by mailing in form or on-line by going to Active.com.

GPS 101 on Wade Mountain Preserve is a perfect family hike; starting at 10 a.m., it's a 2.5 mile moderate hike. Hike Leader David Young will discuss the historical significance of Trough Springs Hiking Equipment you'll need includes long pants, comfortable shoes with good tread, poison ivy block, & bottled water. In case of rain, hikes will be cancelled. Hikes are free to the public, donations accepted. For more information visit www.landtrust-hsv.org or send an email to questions@landtrust-hsv.org.

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 for group class schedules and other studio events.

The Founder of HeartStong, Marc Adams will be speaking at a special community event sponsored

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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by PFLAG-Huntsville and the North Alabama Pride Coalition. Marc will speak at **The Flying Monkey** at 2 p.m. Light refreshments will be served starting at 1:30 p.m. For more information about Marc Adams www.meetmarcadams.com.

The HYP event **Taladega Tailgate** will be held from 3-5 p.m. at **Southern Adventures** (for Go-Karts) then at **Wings** (for snacks and beverages). Cost is \$15 (includes Go-Karts). Contact Kathy at kabradsha@yahoo.com for more information.

April 28
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.rcddcace.com for more information.

April 28-29
Rent will be performed at the **Von Braun Center** at 8 p.m. See 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 28
If you missed the last sign-up, here's your chance to take the next round of **Pilates in the Galleriest!** Only 20 people per class and participants must bring their own Pilates mat. The cost is \$50. Register by emailing atrefry@hsvmuseum.org or calling 535-4350 ext. 228. The class will be held from 5:15-6:15 p.m. in the Huntsville Museum of Art.

May 1
For those of you looking for a relaxing place to unwind or somewhere to start your evening, the **Huntsville Museum of Art** will have free food and wine, plus a different style of music coordinated by Windham Entertainment at the last of the series of **Art After Hours**. Meet with friends and enjoy the Museum's latest exhibitions for spring, including *The Inventions of Leonardo da Vinci*, J.C. Leyendecker, YAM 2008 and Shearwater Pottery. Museum members are free; guests are asked to make a \$5 donation. See hvsmuseum.org for more information.

Merrimack Hall Performance Art Center presents **Abigail Washburn & The Sparrow Quartet** featuring Bela Fleck. The Sparrow Quartet unites Bela Fleck's mastery with Washburn's virtuoso banjo, Sollee's cello and classically-trained Driessen's bluegrass fiddle for a sound no folk fan can resist. Tickets are \$25. For tickets and information visit www.merrimackhall.com or call (256) 534-6455. (See ad pg.)

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.HALS.org.

May 2
Flying Monkey Open House will begin at 7 p.m. Admission is free.

Monkey Speak will begin at 8 p.m. at the **Flying Monkey Arts Center**. Admission is \$5. See www.flyingmonkeyarts.org for more information.

Old Towne Coffee Shoppe will host **Drum Circle** on the first Friday of every month. Visit www.myspace.com/otcs for more information.

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

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.

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.

An 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.

Come out and support the **HYP BBQ Booth** at **Whistle-stop's Shadtree Cooker's Competition** from 2-6 p.m. at the Huntsville Roundhouse Depot. For more information see http://rocketcitybbq.com.

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 for group class schedules and other studio events.

Contra Dance with live music by **Wolves A Howlin'** and with 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 contra.com/NACDS.html for more info or call 837-0656.

The kick-off of the **CASA Community Garden** season is **CASA's Annual Plant Day** (there will be two this year). Volunteers will be preparing beds, planting, and prepping for the **CASA Community Garden** season from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. Contact Jim Call at jimcall@casagarden.com for more information.

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, Episcopal from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. As part of the tour Suzanne Purtee 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. (See ad pg.)

The Alabama Renegades, Huntsville's only full-contact women's football team, will play their first home game at 7 p.m. at **Alabama A&M's Louis Crews Stadium**. Please visit www.alabamarenegades.net for more information on the Alabama Renegades.

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 for more information.

May 4
There will be an informative **Cemetery Stroll** through **Maple Hill Cemetery** beginning at 2:30 with a closing ceremony to honor **Madison County's 200th Anniversary** at 4:30 p.m. This is a fast fun way to learn a lot of Huntsville History. 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.

May 4-July 13
Shearwater Pottery: Three Generations of Southern Masters from the Hogan Collection will be on display at the **Huntsville Museum of Art**. The exhibition includes 86 works by Peter and Jim Anderson decorated by Walter Anderson, Patricia Findelsen and Christopher Stebly, from the collection of Christopher & Kristen Hogan.

This exhibition was organized by the Walter Anderson Museum of Art, Ocean Springs, MS. See hvsmuseum.org for more information.

Lil' Malcom and the **House Rockers** sponsored by the **Cajun Zydeco Connection (CZC) of Huntsville** will be held from 4-7 p.m. at the **Knights of Columbus Hall**, 3053 Leeman Ferry. An introductory lesson will be taught at 3:15 p.m. 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-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 - 5:30 PM, dinner (\$20) at 6 PM, program at 6:00 PM. 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.

May 7
Yoga Classes with **Casey Bakula** will be held from 8:30-9:15 p.m. 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 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Saturday, and at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets are \$35 each. For tickets and information see www.merrimackhall.com or call (256) 534-6455.

May 8-10
Renaissance Theatre presents **Murder on the Nile** by Agatha Christie at 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday. See www.renaissancecetheatre.net.


May 9-17
"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.

May 9
Don't miss the **Bring Your Own Beard Tour** featuring **Becoming The Archetype**, **Inhale Exhale**, **A Plea for Purging**, **Once Nothing**, **Misery Chastain**, and **Bad Omen** to be held at **Friendship Church**, 16479 Lucas Ferry Road in Athens. Doors open at 5:30, show starts at 6:00. Admission is \$12 at the door. For more info visit myspace.com/earshotpromotions or email earshotpromo@gmail.com.

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 for more information.

May 10
The Monrovia Art Fest will be held from 10 a.m. to 6 p.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



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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. 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.



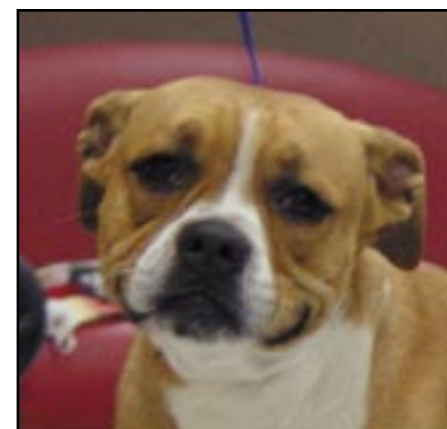
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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The Fallen Officers' Memorial Motorcycle Run will be held by Elk's Lodge, 725 Franklin St. Registration begins at 9a.m. and the first bike out will be at 10:00a.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 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 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 for group class schedules and other studio events.



(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@auntiejenpetsitter.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.

May 11 Trough Springs: 143rd Anniversary of Johnston's Surrender will begin at 2p.m. It's approximately 3 miles round trip. Hiking Equipment you'll need includes long pants, comfortable shoes with good tread & bottled water. In case of rain, hikes will be cancelled. Hikes are free to the public, donations accepted. For more information visit www.landtrust-hsv.org or send an email to questions@landtrust-hsv.org.

Celebrate Singles, Complete in Christ will be held in **Spanish Fort, Alabama**. All of the catered meals, Friday evening through Monday morning, and Battleship tour are included in the cost of \$130, as well as all concerts and programs. Early registration is recommended due to limited space, and the cost will be \$155 after March 31. For more information on how to register, go to www.faithfamillionline.com. All other pertinent information is on the website, including hotel accommodations, schedules, costs of free time activities, and links to the artists and guests. If you need further information, call 251-626-1379.

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 2p.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 hsvmuseum.org for more information.



Huntsville Animal Clinic

Lisa Jackson, D.V.M.



Open Monday-Friday
7:30a.m.-5:30p.m.



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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

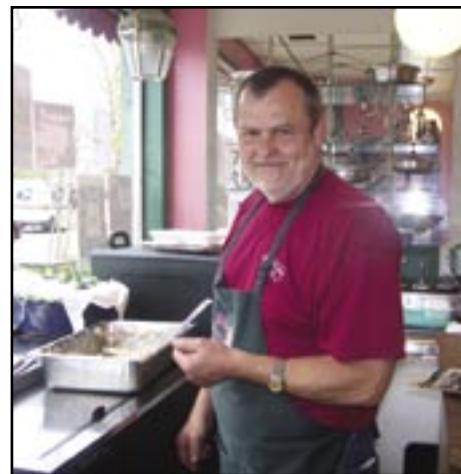


are immediately surrounded by posters and other PR materials from area plays, musical theatre, dance recitals, and more, with representations of Mardi Gras and other festive occasions, as well. Owner Diane Hollingsworth is surely a supporter of the arts.

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, a 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 off-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 artists, 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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 April 18-19 "Weekend in Wine"
 May 2 "Hops Festival"
 May 17 "Women and Wine"

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LISTINGS LISTINGS@VALLEYPLANET.COM CONT. FROM 18 DINING

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 801 Franklin Street, Huntsville, 256-519-8019.
- APPLEBEE'S**
 3150 N. Memorial Pkwy, Huntsville, 256-859-4200
 11331 Hwy 72 E, Athens
- BEAUREGARD'S (3 Huntsville locations)**
 1009 N. Memorial Pkwy, 256-512-0074
 511 Jordan Lane, 256-837-2433
 975 Airport Rd. SW, 256-880-2131
 1421 H. Paramount Dr., Huntsville, 256-489-5380
- BISTRO LA LUNA**
 7001 Val-Monte Drive, Guntersville, 256-582-0930.
- B&J RESTAURANT**
 Hwy 231 S., Lacey Springs, 256-880-0521
- THE BLUE PARROT**
 7001 Val Monte Drive, Guntersville, 256-582-0930
- 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.
- CAHOOTS**
 114 WestMarket Street, Fayetteville, 931 433-1173
- CHEF GREEN'S ON THE FOUNTAIN**
 Fountain Row, Huntsville, AL 35801
- CHILI'S (2 Huntsville locations)**
 4925 University Drive, 256-722-9620
 2740 Carl T. Jones, 256-862-1230
- CHOPHOUSE, THE**
 109 Washington Street, Huntsville, 256-704-5555.
- CLAYVILLE SNACK BAR**
 21192 U.S. Hwy 431, Guntersville
- CRAWMAMMA'S**
 5000 Webb Villa, Guntersville, 256-582-0484
- CUES STEAKHOUSE**
 12801 U.S. Hwy 431, Guntersville,
- D&L BISTRO**
 7300 SW Memorial Pkwy, Huntsville, 256-881-7244, located in Main St. South
- THE DOCKS**
 417 Pembree, Scottsboro, 256-574-3071
- DOLCE**
 365 The Bridge Street, Huntsville, 256-327-8385
- EDEN'S EAST**
 2413-B Jordan Lane, Huntsville, 256-721-9491
- FURNITURE FACTORY BAR & GRILL**
 619 Meridian Street N, Huntsville, 256-539-8001.
- GAME DAY GRILL**
 10871 County Line Rd. STE E, Madison, 256-461-8082
- GREEN HILLS GRILLE**
 5100 Sanderson Street NW, Huntsville, 256-837-8282.
- GRILLE 29**
 445 Providence Main, Huntsville, 256-489-9470.
- HAZEL GREEN FAMILY RESTAURANT**
 13903 Hwy 231-431 N, Hazel Green 256-828-7959
- HOOTERS**
 4730 University Drive, Huntsville, 256-722-0166.
- HUMPHREY'S BAR & GRILL**
 109 Washington Street, Huntsville, 256-704-5555.
- INDIGO JOE'S**
 7407 Hwy 72 W Madison, AL 256-489-9393
- JAZZ FACTORY**
 109 North Side Square, Huntsville, 256-539-1919.
- K C'S CORYOTE CAFE**
 419 Old Town St., Guntersville, 256-582-1676
- LE BISTRO DU SOLEIL**
 300 Franklin Street, Huntsville, 256-539-7777
- LOGAN'S ROADHOUSE (3 Huntsville locations)**
 4249 Balmoral Drive, Huntsville, 256-881-0584
 University Drive NW, Huntsville
 2315 Bellline SW, Decatur, 256-432-2746
- MAIN STREET CAFE**
 101 Main Street, Madison, 461-8096
- MAMA ANNIE'S**
 4550 Meridian Street N, 489-3275
- THE PALETTE' CAFE**
 5000 Whitesburg Drive, Huntsville, AL, 256-533-2230
- PAUL'S BAR & GRILL**
 7145-C Hwy 72 W, Huntsville, 256-722-2080.
- THE RESTAURANT**
 2167 Winchester Hwy, Kelso, TN, 931-433-9946
- SCENE AT BRIDGE STREET**
 370 The Bridge Street, Huntsville,
- SHEA'S EXPRESS**
 415 E Church St, Huntsville AL, 532-5277
- SWAMP JOHN'S RESTAURANT**
 2850 N. Memorial Pkwy, Huntsville, AL 851-7760
- TINA'S CANTINA @ Lowe Mill**
 2211 Seminole Drive, Huntsville, 256-457-0977
- TGI FRIDAY'S**
 4933 University Drive NW, Huntsville, 256-830-2793
- TOP O' THE RIVER**
 7004 Val-Monte, Guntersville, 256-582-4567
- WEST SIDE COFFEE PLACE & CAFE**
 26998 Sandlin Rd., SW, Decatur, 256-353-2025
- WILD FLOUR BISTRO**
 501 Jordan Ln., Huntsville, 256-722-9401
- WINGS SPORTS GRILLE**
 4250 Balmoral Dr. SW, Huntsville, 256-881-8878.
- ALABAMA BREAD COMPANY**
 975 Airport Rd., Huntsville, 256-882-2010.
- ANGEL'S ISLAND COFFEE**
 4319 University Drive NW, 256-830-6400
 1120 Memorial Pkwy SW, 256-464-5300
 8969 Hwy. 20, Madison, 256-464-5300
- AROMA'S**
 6225 University Dr. NW #24, Huntsville, 256-425-0495
- BROKEN EGG CAFE**
 2750 Carl T. Jones Dr., Huntsville
- CAFE BABA**
 300 Church St., Huntsville, Museum of Art, 256-539-0683
- CAFE DOMAIN**
 6585 Hwy 431 S, Ste. C, Huntsville, 256-519-2323
- COFFEE CREATIONS**
 616 HWY 31, S ATHENS, AL 35611
- COFFEE AND TEA COMPANY**
 Madison Square Mall, Huntsville 256-837-7085
- COFFEE TREE BOOKS & BREW, THE**
 7900 Bailey Coes Rd., Huntsville, 256-880-4644
- CRACKER BARREL (2 Locations)**
 2801 Drake Ave, Huntsville, 256-881-4177
 120 Cleghorn Blvd., Madison, 256-461-7670
- DAILY BREW**
 2941 St. Mallard Pkwy, Decatur, 256-355-0330
- ELK RIVER COFFEE COMPANY**
 117 Main Avenue North, Fayetteville, 931- 438-9888
- JAMO'S CAFE**
 413 Jordan Lane NW, Huntsville, 256-837-7880.
- JAVA JAAY CAFE (2 Decatur Locations)**
 1713 6th Ave. SE, Decatur, 256-251-8553
 1801 Bellline Rd., Colonial Mall, 256-350-6700.
- KAFFEFLATSCH**
 103 Jefferson Street, Huntsville, 256-536-7993.
- LAGNIAPPE'S COFFEE CAFE**
 119 East Moulton, Decatur
- LITTLE DINER** (across from Chuckee Cheese)
 1219 Jordan Lane, Suite A, Huntsville, 256-837-6971
- MAMA ANNIE'S**
 4550 Meridian St. N, Huntsville, 256-489-3275
- O'HOULIHAN'S**
 101 East Market Street, Fayetteville 931 433-0557
- OLDE TOWNE COFFEE SHOPPE**
 511 Pratt Ave NE, Huntsville, 256-539-5399
- SOMEONE'S IN THE KITCHEN**
 11243 S. Memorial Pkwy, Huntsville 882-9073
- STEARNS COFFEE**
 2113 Whitesburg Dr., Huntsville, 256-534-0513
- SUBWAY**
 14450 hwy 231-431 STE A, Hazel Green
- WILD ROSE CAFE**
 121 North Side Square, Huntsville, 256-539-3658
- CAJUN**
- CAJUN CAFE**
 704 Hwy 231 Lacey's Spring 256-650-5586
- PO BOY FACTORY**
 815 Andrew Jackson Way, Huntsville, 256-539-3616.
- TIM'S CAJUN KITCHEN**
 114 Jordan Lane, Huntsville, 256-533-7589.
- MEDITERRANEAN**
- PAPOU'S**
 110 South Side Square, Huntsville, 256-534-5553
- CASA OLE**
 Corner of Pratt & Russell, Huntsville, 256-327-5555
- CAJUN BURGERS, DELI & PIZZA**
- BELLACINO'S PIZZA & GRINDERS (2 locations)**
 4851 Whitesburg Dr. 256-880-9656
 8572 Madison Blvd, Madison, 256-774-1918
- BIG ED'S PIZZERIA**
 903 North Parkway Huntsville 256-489-3374
- C.F. PENN HAMBURGERS**
 121 E. Moulton St., Decatur, 256-553-1903
- CHEEBURGER, CHEEBURGER (3 locations)**
 5000 Whitesburg Dr., Huntsville, 256-885-3700
 300 Hughes Rd, Madison, 256-464-9990
 Providence Main, Huntsville
- DALLAS MILL DELI**
 500 Pratt Ave. Huntsville, 256-489-4240
- DUFFY'S DELI**
 2324 Whitesburg, Huntsville, 256-533-4179
- FIREHOUSE SUBS**
 3022 S. Mem. Pkwy, Huntsville, 256-880-8246
 4275 University Dr., Huntsville, 256-971-8989
 8572 Madison Blvd., Madison, 256-774-8028
- MALLISTER'S DELI (2 Huntsville locations)**
 4800 Whitesburg Drive S, 256-880-1557
 1480 Perimeter Pkwy, 256-425-0034.
- RED ROBIN GOURMET BURGERS**
 2720 Carl T. Jones Dr., Huntsville, 256-650-1367
 365 The Bridge St., Huntsville, 256-327-8530
- SAM & GREG'S GELATO CAFE**
 119 North Side Sq., Huntsville, 256-533-9030
- SCHLOTZSKY'S DELI (3 locations)**
 4319 University Drive NW, 256-830-6400
 1120 Memorial Pkwy SW, 256-464-5300
 8969 Hwy. 20, Madison, 256-464-5300
- SOUL BURGER**
 2900 Triana Blvd. SW, Huntsville, 256-534-8585
- STANLIEO'S SUB VILLA (2 Huntsville locations)**
 605 Jordan Lane, 256-837-7220
 602 Governors Drive, 256-536-6585
- TONY'S ITALIAN DELI**
 119 James Madison Drive SW, Huntsville, 256-772-444
- BBQ**
- BB PERRINS**
 608 Holly St, NE, Decatur, 256-355-0980
- PETE'S BOYZ BBQ**
 255 Pratt Ave., Huntsville, 256-539-5007
- CLEM'S BBQ & FISHERY**
 3700 Blue Spring Rd., Huntsville, 256-852-6661
- DREAMLAND**
 3855 University Dr., Huntsville 256-539-7427
- GIBSON BBQ (4 locations)**
 3319 Memorial Pkwy., Huntsville, 256-881-4851
 8412 Whitesburg Drive, Huntsville, 256-882-0841
 735 Hwy 72 E, Huntsville, 256-852-9882
 1715 6th Ave., SE, Decatur, 256-350-6969
- MERIDIANVILLE BBQ**
 11537 Hwy. 231N, Meridianville, 256-828-3725
- OLE HICKORY PIT BBQ**
 5901 Maplewood New Market, 256-859-2824
- SIMMON'S BBQ**
 10099 SOUTH MEMORIAL PARKWAY, 256-882-5030
- SMOKEY'S BARBEQUE**
 8073 Hwy 72 W, Madison, 256-721-0300
- TAILGATER'S BBQ**
 5638 Hwy 53, Huntsville 256- 852-3388
- THOMAS PIT BBQ**
 Hwy 72, W, Madison, 256-837-4900
- HOME COOKING**
- BILL'S CAFE**
 111 East Market St., Fayetteville, 931 433-5332
- BLUE PLATE CAFE**
 3210 Governors Drive, Huntsville, 256-533-8808
- ERNEY'S**
 1695 Putaski Pike NW, Huntsville, (256) 533-5734
- G'S COUNTRY KITCHEN**
 2501 Oakwood Dr., Huntsville, 256-533-3034
- MAMA ANNIE'S**
 4550 Meridian St. N, Huntsville, 256-489-3275
- MULLIN'S**
 607 Andrew Jackson, Huntsville, 256-539-2826
- ROLO'S CAFE**
 505 Airport Rd., Huntsville, 256-883-7656
- MEXICAN & SOUTHWESTERN**
- BANDITO BURRITO (2 locations)**
 3017 Governors Dr SW, Huntsville, 256-534-0866
 208 Main St., Madison, 256-461-8999
- CASA OLE**
 13989 Hwy 231-431 Hazel Green, 256 828-6000
- CASA BLANCA MEXICAN RESTAURANT (4 locations)**
 7830 Hwy 72 W, Ste 230, Madison 256-864-0360
 140 Browns Ferry Rd, Madison, 256-464-6044
 7900 Bailey Cove Rd, Huntsville 256-883-4447
 1802 Hwy 72 E, Ste D, Athens 256-771-0130
- EL CAMINO REAL**
 41782 Hwy 231, Meridianville, 256 828-2942
- EL MARIACHI (3 locations)**
 14450 Hwy 231/431 N Hazel Green, 256-828-1466
 1836 Winchester Road, Huntsville 256-851-1725
 7193 Hwy 72 W, Madison, 256-890-9000
- EL PALACIO**
 2008 Memorial Pkwy SW, Huntsville 256-539-6075
- GUADALAJARA MEXICAN RESTAURANTS**
 11208 S. Memorial Pkwy, Huntsville 256-882-7311
 8572 Madison Blvd, Madison 256-774-1401
- LA ALAMEDA**
 3807 University Drive NW, Huntsville, 256-539-6244
- LITTLE ROSIE'S TAQUERIA**
 4781 Whitesburg Dr S, Huntsville, 256-882-0014
- MARIA BONITA GRILL & CANTINA**
 125 E. Moulton St., Decatur, 256-552-1903
- PERITO'S**
 3508 Mem. Pkwy, S, Huntsville, 256-858-0059
- ROSE'S MEXICAN CANTINA (2 locations)**
 6125 University Drive, 256-922-1001
 7480 S. Memorial Pkwy, 256-382-3332
- ITALIAN**
- ALFONSO'S**
 2400 6th Ave. SE, Decatur, 256-355-1045
- CARRABAS**
 Parkway Place Mall, Huntsville, AL 35801
- LA STRADA**
 524 Gutter Ave., Guntersville, 256-582-2250.
- LUCIANO**
 964 Airport Road SW, Huntsville, 256-885-0505
- RICOTON'S ITALIAN GRILL**
 107 N. Court St., Florence, 256-718-1002
- ROMANO'S MACARONI GRILL**
 5901 University Drive, Huntsville, 256-722-4770
- TELLINI'S CAFE & GRILL**
 4855 Whitesburg Dr, Huntsville, 256-881-9155
- JAPANESE**
- EDO JAPANESE RESTAURANT**
 104 N. Intercom Drive, Madison, 256-772-0360
- LOVE SUSHI**
 2000 Cecil Ashburn Dr. ATE 102, Huntsville., 256-885-1818
- MAMA Y'S ASIAN HOUSE**
 6920 University Dr. Huntsville, 256-830-4433
- MIKATO JAPANESE STEAK HOUSE & LOUNGE**
 4061 Independence Dr. NW, Huntsville, 256-830-1700.
- MIKAWA RESTAURANT**
 1010 Heathland Dr, Huntsville, 256-837-7440.
- MISO HOUSE**
 404 Jordan Lane, Huntsville, 256-489-7766
- MIYONO JAPANESE RESTAURANT**
 404 Jordan Lane NW, Huntsville, 256-533-7771
- MIYAKO**
 10013 South Parkway, Huntsville, 256-880-9879
- ROYAL BUFFET**
 2003 Drake Ave, Huntsville, 256-883-8998
- SHO GUN JAPANESE STEAK & SUSHI BAR**
 3991 University Drive, Huntsville, 256-534-3000.
- TOKYO JAPANESE STEAK HOUSE & SUSHI BAR**
 1105 Wayne Road, Huntsville, 256-217-1719
- THAI**
- PHUKET**
 Providence Town, Huntsville
- SURIN OF THAILAND (2 locations)**
 975 Airport Rd SW, Huntsville, 256-213-9866
 Hwy 72, Madison
- THAI GARDEN RESTAURANT**
 800 Wellman Ave. NE, Huntsville, 256-534-0122
- CHINESE**
- ASIAN CITY**
 10871 County Line Rd. STE C, Madison, AL, 256-772-8282
- CHINA MOON**
 11700 S. Memorial Pkwy, Huntsville, 256-880-2626
- DING HOW II**
 4800 Whitesburg Dr., Huntsville, 256-880-8883
- JADE PALACE**
 4925 University Drive NW, Huntsville, 256-830-2458
- PANDA**
 5000 Whitesburg Dr., Suite 128, 256-880-3220/880-1395
- TAI PAN PALACE**
 2012 Mem. Pkwy, S, Huntsville, 256-539-5797
- GERMAN**
- HILDEGARD'S**
 2357 Whitesburg Dr., Huntsville, 256-512-9776
- OL HEIDELBERG CAFE**
 6125 University Drive NW E14, Huntsville, 256-922-0556.
- CARIBBEAN**
- ISLAND JERK**
 2501 Jordan Ln, Huntsville, 256-489-4774
- MAMA MONTEGO INTERNATIONAL LOUNGE**
 5117 Jonathan Drive, Huntsville, 256-858-9187.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

Panoply Arts Festival
The South's All-Embracing ARTSTRAVAGANZA!

“Alabama Top Ten Tourism Event”

Juried Art Marketplace

Children's Art Activities

Official Alabama State Fiddling Championship

Global Village

Dance, Theatre, Music, Food, Fireworks, FUN, and so much more...

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

presented by... **BOEING**

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.

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 Fox, 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 handicraftsmen 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 tea 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 eclectic mix 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 Ezekial 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 27th and more information may be found at 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 Breznsky

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.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): In her book *Dr. Tatiana's Sex Advice to All Creation*, biologist Olivia Judson extols the male members of the fruitfly species *Drosophila bifurca*. Although they are barely one-eighth of an inch long, their sperm can be up to 2.3 inches long. If a man were capable of the same prodigious production, his sperm would be as big as a whale. Metaphorically speaking, you Geminis now have the ability to generate phenomena on this scale. That's why I hope you will devote all your ingenuity and resourcefulness to creating an intricate, beautiful masterpiece, not a humongous, complicated mass of confusion.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Lewis Thomas was a physician who wrote elegantly about biology in books like *The Lives of a Cell*. I want to bring your attention to his meditation on warts. "Nothing in the body has so much the look of toughness and permanence as a wart," he wrote. And yet "they can be made to go away by something that can only be called thinking . . . Warts can be ordered off the skin by hypnotic suggestion." (tinyurl.com/3clzc5) Thomas regarded this phenomenon as "absolutely astonishing, more of a surprise than cloning or recombinant DNA." According to my astrological reckoning, Cancerian, you currently have a comparable marvel at your disposal. Using the power of your mind, you can shrink, dissolve, or banish a wart-like vexation.

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

rain. It's not too much of a stretch to invoke this relationship as an apt metaphor for your life right now, Libra. Like the bat-dependent plants, you now require the help of fertility agents whose work may be a bit messy.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): It's the Week of the Fabulous Smirk. Not the Week of the Arrogant Smirk or the Vengeful Smirk or the Hateful, Whiny, Passive-Aggressive Smirk. Rather, the Smirk that Passeth All Understanding, The Wise, Charitable, Forbearing Smirk. The Uber-Smirk that says, "I've figured out what everyone's hiding, and I love them anyway." You are ready, Scorpio, to explore the Divine Smirk that arises naturally when you have outwitted an obstacle that was obscuring the truth from you; when you have finally seen through the delusion you were under and guessed the secret you weren't smart enough to see before.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): This would be a good week for you to compete in a flamethrower competition. You'd probably win. Why? Because according to my analysis of the astrological omens, you currently have an unprecedented knack for playing with fire. You would most likely also be victorious in a marshmallow-roasting contest or a jump-over-the-bonfire tournament. And you would probably do surprisingly well in any activity that might be described as "sitting in the hot seat."

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 a 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."

Homework: What's the bravest thing you ever did? What do you imagine will be the next brave thing you do? Testify at RealAstrology.com; click on "Email Rob."



Jazzin' Up Spring in The Big Easy

by Fonda Davis

Tapping deep into my inner psychic, I see that there will be Widespread Panic, Burning Spears, Elvis sightings and lots of Wonder in New Orleans, LA starting April 24. And that is only the beginning, which is a good thing for those of us who love music and especially those who love the annual New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival.

This year's festival, the 39th in the Festival's storied history, will be held across two consecutive weekends, April 25-27 and May 1-4. The addition of Thursday, May 1, brings the festival back to its first full seven day schedule since 2005. Though the festival is officially hailed as a Jazz festival, the organizers pride themselves on the diversity of the musicians scheduled to play and this year's lineup has claimed to have assembled the most diverse mix of rhythm & blues, rock, jazz, country, blues, gospel, world beat, and more to date. With acts such as The Neville Brothers, Stevie Wonder, Billy Joel, Jimmy Buffet, Tim McGraw, Santana, Sheryl Crow, Widespread Panic, Dr. John, Al Green, Diana Krall, Keyshia Cole, Robert Plant and Alison Krauss, The Raconteurs, The John Butler Trio, Irma Thomas, Elvis Costello, Kenny Wayne Sheppard and many more there literally should be something for all musical tastes.

The Festival will be held at the New Orleans Fair Grounds Race Course and musical performances are scheduled to run from 11:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. Eleven stages will be set up to run simultaneously, with acts being somewhat staggered to allow for some "stage hopping" to help out those who want to try to see it all.

With the official Festival set times ending well before most clubs even ice down the beer, Festival performers are known to show up at local venues throughout the city for unofficial "Night Shows" and seasoned Festival attendees start to look through local club schedules months ahead for such shows. Tiptinas, House of Blues, Contemporary Arts Center and Preservation Hall are all likely places to find such après-Festival entertainment.

And speaking of tastes, they don't call it The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival just to sound fancy. There is a Creole word, "lagniappe",

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 and 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 lineman from the Chattanooga Locomotion. Returning vets include quarterback Nancy Byrd, linemen Charlene Cyr, Lori Campbell, Kelly Hardy,

Jennifer Patton, and Dana Sanders, tight end Sandra Kerby and Sherry Pruett, running backs Dionne Eatman and Marty Alber, linebacker Amy Hardeman, and safety Sonya Massey.

Newcomers include Sarah Boon, Carson Wakefield, Tiffany Colbert, Link Green, Michelle Lott, Star Haun, and Kris Thomas

New stadium, new coaches and new teammates will help the Renegades, who will be playing their ninth season in Huntsville. The Alabama Renegades is one of the founding members of the National Women's Football Association. Presently, there are over 35 teams nationwide.

Home games for the 2008 season are as follows: May 3, May 17, May 24, and June 14.

Don't miss the action on Saturday nights! All games begin at 7pm at Alabama A&M's football stadium.

Please visit our website for more information on the Alabama Renegades. 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.

Billy Joe Cooley

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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

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 the 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

information or advance ticket orders visit www.dixiederbygirls.com

Join all the rollergirls at the after party for food, fun, spirits and live music at Benchwarmer on University Drive.

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

one point for each member of the opposing team that they pass. The lead jammer can call off the jam at any time.. \$10 admision 6 and under free. 256-489-7655. For more info or advance ticket orders visit www.dixiederbygirls.com



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