



Gilbert's cultural pioneer

Storied bank becomes depository for new creative treasures

By John Busbee

Just up the road from Ames is Gilbert, population just south of a thousand. A few years ago, an established artist took a leap of faith and bought the vacant bank building on Main Street, turning it into a studio/gallery/cultural gathering place. Jo Myers-Walker has slowly carved a creative oasis unlike any other, luring parched souls thirsting for a creative dousing. She possesses an infectious enthusiasm, making her encouragements irresistible to an ever-growing band of supporters. To visit the Left Bank Studio is to truly gain an uncensored

glimpse into the life of a new breed of Iowa artist.

The Left Bank Studio is Myers-Walker's personal world of creative wonderment. It's her home, gallery, boutique, classroom, kitchen and so much more. After serving as Gilbert's local bank until 1998, the building sat empty until 2002, when Myers-Walker purchased it and began the transformation. The two vaults became kitchen/pantry and storage. The teller's window remains, paying tribute to a bank whose history includes a well-publicized robbery decades earlier. Now, the bank's interior is filled with her artwork, designs, reincarnated clothing and furniture items ("I've become quite adept at Dumpster-diving," she quips), providing a cornucopia of stimulation for the cultural traveler.

"I like to see all artwork tell a story. That's what makes a work of art come so very alive to the viewer and patron." — JO MYERS-WALKER

Now, its essence lies in its guiding creator. Her approach is simple: Left Bank Studio is "for artists... and for those who dream of being one." She holds two ongoing, eight-week class sessions, one in watercolor and the other titled "Wine and Watercolor," in which she partners with a local winery, Prairie Moon. The Left Bank Studio draws students from professional ranks yearning for creative outlets. Myers-Walker delivers, providing a safe, nurturing environment for uninhibited exploration of the creative process. She confidently guides them through projects and activities that awaken dormant talents.

"My reward comes when these students — most of them CEOs and professionals — achieve that 'aha' moment," Myers-Walker delightedly tells. "Our sessions have the same innocent and wonder-filled experiences of kindergarten classes."

She helps each student develop personal journals, wakening their self-discovery. As a retired Iowa State University professor, she explains how she is always ready to educate.



Her real income stability is her commission work. She currently is designing 10-foot-tall figures to draw more attention to the exterior of the Ames community theatre, ACTORS.

"I like to see all artwork tell a story," Myers-Walker says. "That's what makes a work of art come so very alive to the viewer and patron."

Her passion is contagious. Last year, two creative kinfolk opened J. B. Knacker next door, offering converted found objects, as well as collectibles and antiques. The two businesses often collaborate, making an even more compelling reason to visit.

Myers-Walker's future vision includes a building a two-story cultural center next to her bank. The Gilbert City Council has approved her plans. This would include expanded retail, studio and gallery space on the lower level for additional artists, and living space on the second level. The second level might even be developed as an elderhostel, tapping into a strong market. She continues to make progress despite the usual small town resistance towards innovative and non-traditional ideas.

Myers-Walker is making believers of long-time Gilbert residents as she forges new opportunities for herself as an Iowa artist desiring to thrive in Iowa. She is blazing a new kind of pioneer trail, one of a cultural pioneer. When confronted with challenges or nay-sayers, she relies on her unwavering positive attitude.

"After all," she says, with a delightful twinkle in her eyes, "it's hard to get mad at a puppy!" ☘

The Left Bank Studio, www.theleftbankstudio.com, (515) 233-1405.

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"There are still conservative Christians, particularly in Baptist, Pentecostal and independent Bible-church traditions, who don't dance, but they are growing scarce." *The New York Times* 01/28/07

ANOTHER SHADE OF DANCE

"Ballet may be the last frontier for black dancers, long prominent in jazz, tap and even modern dance, with its early connections to socially progressive ideals. Is the scarcity of African Americans in ballet due to economic barriers or a bias toward white European ideals? And what should be done about it? The answers depend on the particular dancer's experience." *San Francisco Chronicle* 01/28/07

DEFINING MODERN PHILANTHROPY

"The bottom line is that American public policy basically permits individual donors and foundations substantial freedom to define their own purposes and to further them. At the same time, the sector has developed few internal mechanisms to ensure accountability — or even to define common standards of conduct. Yet on the whole, philanthropy resides below public notice." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 02/02/07

IS TOO MUCH INFORMATION MAKING US INCOHERENT?

"A September 2005 study by Basex Inc. estimated that interruptions from e-mail, Web browsing, instant messaging and other electronic communications cost U.S. companies \$588 billion a year.

It estimated that interruptions constituted 28 percent of the average knowledge worker's day." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 01/23/07

SONY MUST PAY...

For damaging computers with its draconian anti-piracy software scheme last year. "The FTC said the software 'exposed consumers to significant security risks and was unreasonably difficult to uninstall'. Under the settlement, Sony BMG must allow consumers to exchange affected CDs bought before 31 December 2006, and reimburse them up to \$150 (Â£76) to repair damage to their computers." *BBC* 01/30/07

ITUNES - BANNED IN NORWAY?

"In a bold move against iTunes' Digital Rights Management, called Fairplay, the Norwegian

Consumer Council has deemed it illegal in Norway, with France and Germany possibly following suit." *BuzzBums* 01/25/07

BUT WHAT IF SMOKING IS ESSENTIAL TO THE PLOT?

More and more cities and states are banning smoking - evn onstage as part of a performance. "In Colorado three theater companies — the Curious Theater Company and Paragon Theater, both in Denver, and Theater13 in Boulder— have gone so far as to sue the state, arguing that smoking in the course of a play is a form of free expression." *The New York Times* 01/28/07

WORKING FOR SCALE

Chicago is a great theatre town; no one ques-



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dead

Dead Larry, a four-piece outfit whose members range in age from 18-20, enjoys a reputation as one of Iowa City's best live acts. Although they are underage, most of their gigs have been at bars. They draw a diverse audience.

"Our youngest fan is five years old," bassist and vocalist Joe Scarpellino says, "and the oldest I know of are in their seventies." I recently spoke to Joe and lead guitarist Ned Barclay at a local Iowa City coffee house about their music and the connections between their art and the times (lead vocalist and rhythm guitarist Mark McGuiness and drummer Josh Felling were unable to meet).

Joe and Ned have long hair, dress casually, and look like they would fit right in at any college town USA back in 1969. Joe smiles broadly when he speaks, and his enthusiasm for his music comes across loud and clear. Ned is more laid back, but no less serious or passionate about his art. Joe says he is the Paul McCartney of the group and Ned is George Harrison. The Beatles and rock of the sixties have had a strong influence, but this is no retro band. Dead Larry's hard rocking grooves definitely belong to today.

Why should anyone pay to see you play live?

Joe: To hear something with meaning and power and emotion; our music has something behind it. It's all about our generation. We have to work for a living. We don't expect our parents to pay for everything. I work five to six days a week and I go to school. Our music is all about just being in the world. We're not the kind of people that are going to grow up and become managers and things. It's just about how we are not really our jobs. We're artists. We are just dreamers and us working at our jobs is not us. All we want to do is play music. Everything else before and after that doesn't mean anything.



Larry

By Steven Horowitz

Rock 'n' Roll is evolving

Isn't rock 'n' roll dead, and you guys are just a bunch of vampires feeding on its corpse?

Ned: I think that maybe rock and roll in its classical sense of actual rock and roll is dead, just like punk is dead and jam bands are dead. It was of a time period. I think what we do is make something new. What we make may be rock or may not be and maybe we should call it something else, but it has the same energy — and rock came from blues — and whatever we're doing is just another byproduct in its evolution.

What's the relationship between you, your music and the times in which we live?

Joe: We want to write and play music that means something to us and displays very real emo-

tions. We want to say something. We want to talk about our lives and not talk about how our girlfriend dumped us and we feel really, really sad. We want to make statements. Music is a reflection of the times. Someone needs to talk about it and no one is talking about it right now.

Ned: Everyone complains about the war and nobody does anything about it. Everyone complains about money. It's very strange to grow up in America. This whole collection of everything called society — it's kind of hard to decide which path to take. I think that comes across in our music.

Joe: We don't complain. We hope for change and want our music to be part of something positive happening in the world. ♣

Visit Dead Larry's webpage at www.myspace.com/deadlarry.

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tions that. But to assume that the designation of "great theatre town" also indicates a surplus of well-paid actors would be a mistake. The fact is that, with very few exceptions, stage actors face a brutally tough existence, especially in major cities with a high cost of living. *Chicago Tribune* 01/28/07

OWNER DISPUTES "POLLOCK" ANALYSIS

The owner of three paintings he says are by Jackson Pollock is disputing a scientific analysis of the works that suggests they are not. "The authentication of works of art is still more art than science. The point is that the science of attribution is still in flux, and no scientific test is definitive in the absence of traditional, time-tested art historical research." *Los Angeles Times* (AP) 01/31/07

REMBRANDT SOLD IN NY FOR \$25.8 MILLION

It went to an anonymous bidder at Sotheby's New York. "The price approaches but does not surpass the artist's previous auction record of \$28.7 million, set at Christie's London in 2000. Only two parties vied for the work, painted in 1661. Proceeds will benefit the seller, the U.S.-based Shippy Foundation, a nonprofit charitable organization." *Bloomberg.com* 01/25/07

IS THIS A PARK OR A MUSEUM?

The Seattle Art Museum is chasing touchers. Many of the 40,000 who have come to the museum's new sculpture park have an inclination to touch the sculptures. The museum says no. "We want to be friendly and positive but we're encouraging people to think before they touch, as touching art has consequences." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 01/27/07

WHO SEES WHAT

"Contemporary art and art history is full of misunderstanding between creators and viewers about the meaning that work itself communicates. Both sides can be responsible for speaking past one another. True, many academics or critics exploit art's "messages" for self-interested methodological or political ends. But many excellent artists leave themselves defenseless against such hijacking because they cannot articulate persuasively why they do what they do." *The Guardian* (UK) 01/26/07

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It's official!

Elkader's Cultural and Entertainment District certified by the state of Iowa DCA

By Joleen Jansen

The tiny, northeast Iowa town of Elkader recently learned that its diligent bid to establish a certified Cultural and Entertainment District (CED) within its city limits was successful. The certified designation for establishing a CED is awarded by the State Department of Cultural Affairs. As defined by the State, a certified CED is a, "well-organized, walkable, mixed-use area, in which a high concentration of cultural facilities serves as the anchor. Cultural Districts can be found in both large and small communities."



"Elkader is the smallest community in the State of Iowa to boast a certified cultural district."

— OLLIE BURNS

Now in its third cycle of awarding certified CED status, the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs has established 26 separate CED's located in towns such as Dubuque, Davenport, Clinton, Cedar Falls, Charles City, Cherokee, Spencer, Marion, Muscatine, and Iowa City.

In addition to Elkader, the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs' CED Advisory Community approved five other CED applications for the following locations, Cedar Rapids, Perry, Pella, and West Des Moines.

The Elkader CED effort was spearheaded by Ollie Bruns, a retired program man-

ager for Main Street Elkader. Bruns, under the direction of the Main Street Elkader Board, provided staff support to the Cultural District Steering Committee. An eleven member steering committee was represented by officials from the Elkader Chamber of Commerce, Elkader Economic Development Corp, Elkader's Historical Society, Central Community School Music Department, City of Elkader, Elkader Opera House, the Elkader Cinema, concerned citizens, and local artists.

"Elkader is the smallest community in the State of Iowa to boast a certified cultural district," Bruns happily notes. "If that doesn't make us stop and think twice about what we have here, I don't know what will. Elkader has been a self-initiated, self-proclaimed cultural & entertainment district for awhile, and now we have the State certification behind our claim."

Elkader mayor Bob Garms is especially proud of the fact that Elkader, by a large margin, is the smallest town in Iowa to have a CED. "The town of Perry applied for a CED on the basis of being a small town, but I think they are a community of 7,000 people," he says. "Elkader, having just a population of 1,500, shows we've got something going for us. We have a beautiful community nestled here in the valley with a wholesome lifestyle free from the hustle and bustle of bigger cities. Having a CED will nicely add to the attraction and charm our city already has."

City officials are confident the CED will serve as yet another development tool for the town of Elkader. Projects such as the growing performing arts program showcased at the renown Elkader Opera House, the opening of the new Algerian Restaurant Schera's, and the Staw Fine Arts Center currently under construction



on Elkader's Bridge Street are excellent examples of this culturally-stemmed growth.

Developer of Elkader's Staw Fine Arts Center and local business owner Adam Pollock comments, "I am very excited at the opportunity for Elkader to be designated a Cultural Entertainment District by the State of Iowa. The very act of applying for this status brought many different volunteer organizations together that have been working side by side over the years together with common purpose. It has given everyone an opportunity to discuss what Elkader is and can become in the future. We have so many wonderful resources and assets in our

community; I think this status will be a tremendous way to voice these to the world outside our valley."

For more information about Elkader's Cultural Entertainment District, contact Elkader's new Main Street and Elkader Development Corp. Director, Roger Thomas at (563) 245-2770. ☪



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For more information on the new museum and opening day events visit www.museums.iastate.edu or call 515.294.3342

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Guys on Ice

Riverside Theatre opened the new year with the hit musical "Guys on Ice," directed by Sean Paul Bryan. With books and Lyrics by Fred Alley and music by James Kaplan, this musical comedy has played to sold out houses from Madison, Wisconsin to Ashland, Oregon. Guys on Ice made its Iowa premiere January 26 and runs through February 18.

Set in northern Wisconsin, long time buddies Lloyd and Marvin brave the cold to find companionship and good fishing while scrambling to protect their "cold-ones" from fellow angler, Ernie the Moocher. This newly-expanded version of the play features the hit songs "Ode to a Snowmobile Suit," "Fish is de Miracle Food" and "De Wishing Hole." "This show has that sweet and simple

charm that makes it perfect entertainment for the entire family," says Rachele Saunders, Marketing/education director at Riverside. "While some of the musical numbers are just pure silly fun, there are also tender ballads — and quite a few nifty dance steps."

Appearing most recently in The Lonesome West, John Watkins hosts the half-time quiz show as Ernie the Moocher, challenging the audience with Wisconsin trivia and offering nightly prizes, courtesy of Fin and Feather of Iowa City. He is joined on stage by Riverside Artistic Director and Co-founder Ron Clark as Marvin and Chicago actor Christopher Merrill as Lloyd, last seen in The Drawer Boy at Riverside.

"This is more than just seeing a play. It's really a full

night of theatre," Director Sean Paul Bryan, adds. "We've never done anything like this before and I'm sure audience members are going to leave the theatre nothing short of satisfied."

Tickets to "Guys on Ice" can be purchased at the Riverside Theatre box office at 213 N. Gilbert Street, Iowa City or by phone at 319-338-7672. Tickets and additional information are also available on-line at www.riversidetheatre.org. Prices range from \$12-\$25. Group and student discounts are available.



Reflections on African American History

Falconer Gallery, Grinnell



Twenty-two linocuts and woodcuts that highlight African-American history will be on view at Grinnell College through February 28. Two current Grinnell trustees, Donald M. Stewart and Gregg Narber, along with his wife, Kathleen Narber, gave 10 of the works. The other 12 were purchased by the college using funds endowed by former trustee Samuel R. Rosenthal and his wife, Marie-Louise. (Samuel R. Rosenthal was a member of the Grinnell College Board of Trustees 1962-1976, and a life member from 1986 until his death in 1994.)

Antonio Frasconi's portfolio, "Los Infrahumanos" (The Sub-humans), created in 1945, portrays the racist perceptions that blind people to the humanity beneath the stereotypes. The Frasconi portfolio was purchased by Grinnell College through the Marie-Louise and Samuel R. Rosenthal Fund. Hale Woodruff's eight woodcuts in "Selections from the Atlanta Period, 1931-1946" captures the tensions between the races in a southern city in the 1930s and 40s. Donald Stewart gave the Woodruff portfolio to the college in 2005.

Alison Saar and Kara Walker, both younger African-American women artists, create striking images of black women. In Saar's work, the upside-down nude woman in "Sweeping Beauty" (1997) becomes a broom — a beauty as utilitarian object. Walker's figure, "African/American (1998)" lies ambiguously splayed across the paper. She may be asleep, she may be dead; she may be African, she may be American, but she is certainly unguarded and vulnerable. Both works came to Grinnell College in 2006, as part of a gift of art from Gregg and Kathleen Narber.

Reflections on African American History will be on view in the Print and Drawing Study Room and Burling Gallery in the lower level of Burling Library through February 28, 2007. Hours are Sunday through Friday, 1-5 p.m. and by appointment (closed Saturdays). For more information, visit their Web site at www.grinnell.edu/falconergallery.

Remnants of Memories

Ginsberg Jewelers, Downtown Cedar Rapids

Remnants of Memories: Interpretations of The Collage Exhibit and Sale of Works by Thomas Lee and Elizabeth Levi at Ginsberg Jewelers opened January 8 with grand attendance.

Thomas Lee is currently exhibited throughout Iowa, as well as Colorado, Alabama, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. And, has just completed a work commissioned by St. Luke's Hospital in Cedar Rapids.

Elizabeth Levi began "Blue Chair Studio" in 2002 to sell her collages and objects of art. She is represented in 25 retail locations throughout the United States, as well as, France, Mexico, and New Zealand.

Thomas Lee and Elizabeth Levi both live in Cedar Rapids.

An opening reception for this exhibit will occur on Friday, February 9, from 5-8 P.M. at Ginsberg Jewelers, 219 - 2nd Avenue, SE, Downtown Cedar Rapids. The public is welcome. The exhibit will run through the end of March.

For information call 319-363-3563 or email steve@ginsbergjewelers.com. Visit them online at www.ginsbergjewelers.com.



39th Annual National Clay, Fiber, Paper, Glass, Metal, Wood Exhibition

Octagon Center for the Arts, Ames



The Octagon's annual Clay, Fiber, Paper, Glass, Metal, Wood Exhibition has been attracting widespread attention for many years. This year continues the tradition with the commencement of the 39th annual exhibition.

The submissions were juried by Tom Christison, a Lecturer of Art teaching drawing and printmaking at the University of Iowa, Iowa City. This exhibit will showcase 70 works of art by 59 artists representing 10 states from across the United States. The public is

invited to attend a special gallery talk featuring local artists featured in the exhibit on Tuesday, March 6, at 7 pm in the Octagon galleries. This special event is free and open to the public.

The Octagon's Annual Exhibition first began in 1968 and focused mainly in the areas of ceramics that were created by Iowa artists. Eventually, the show expanded to include other craft areas, as well as works by regional artists. In 1985 it became a national exhibition and grew to include all fine craft

media, a trend that continues today.

The Octagon Center for the Arts is located at 427 Douglas Avenue in Ames. The Clay, Fiber, Paper, Glass, Metal, Wood Exhibition will be on display through April 1. Regular gallery hours are Tuesday - Friday from 10 am - 5 pm and Saturday and Sunday from 1 - 5 pm. There is no admission charge to visit the galleries, however donations are appreciated.

For group tours or other information contact Heather Straszheim at 515-232-5331.

Iowa's Cultural Alliances welcome you

February: Brought to you by the Keokuk Cultural and Entertainment District

State designation as a Cultural District has given new life to Keokuk's art organizations

By Tom Seabold, Keokuk Cultural and Entertainment District

During the fall of 2005, 10 members of Keokuk's cultural community began the application process requesting recognition by the State of Iowa as a Cultural District. At the outset it seemed as though it may be an unattainable goal, but an effort worth pursuing. In addition to listing the obvious requirements such as local arts groups and their activities, maps had to be drawn, area architecture had to be researched, and volumes of support letters had to be gathered. Now, a year and a half later, many of those original members admit that while receiving the State designation was a definite achievement, it was the "process" that made the arts community stronger and gave a boost to the local cultural groups and their activities.

The original committee of 10 has now grown to a Board of Directors comprised of 19 representatives from all of Keokuk's cultural entities. The schools, the art center, the library, the city, and the community theater are just a few of the groups involved. The board meets on a monthly basis to coordinate and support planned activities, and also to discuss programs that will be offered exclusively as Cultural District events. The first year resulted in the publication of a 24-page, quarterly newsletter known as "The Confluence," a name which not only describes Keokuk's location at the juncture of the Mississippi and Des Moines Rivers, but also represents the concourse of the groups that is included in each issue. The resurgence of an annual art fair, the design and construction of a centrally located calendar to promote cultural events, and the installation of large, descriptive signs around the perimeter of the district are a few of the other accomplishments of the newly established board.

Keokuk's Cultural District members are enthusiastically preparing for a second year of promoting what is now one of Iowa's 16, culturally significant locations. The District itself encompasses more than 30 square blocks within the heart of the community, and includes natural, historical and architectural landmarks that have been recognized by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs.

Fifty years ago, the term "river town" was a less than flattering description of many of the communities along Iowa's eastern border, but today it is what makes Keokuk unique. High bluffs overlooking the mile-wide Mississippi River, a varied assortment of architectural styles dating back to the mid-1800s, and a rich history including residents such as Samuel Clemens and Howard Hughes give Keokuk a personality all its own. A proximity to colleges and universities within a three state area, and a calendar of annual festivals and events keep the community vital and fresh.

The City of Keokuk applauds the State of Iowa's Department of Cultural Affairs for taking the initiative to start the Cultural District program within the state. It allows cities and towns of all sizes to take stock of their cultural attributes, and also to reflect on the features that improve the quality of life within their community.

Tom Seabold shares the title of Executive Director of Keokuk's Cultural and Entertainment District with Keokuk's Main Street Inc. Director, Joyce Glasscock. Together, they coordinate the programs and activities of the District's board of directors. For additional information or to receive a copy of "The Confluence" arts newsletter, email www.artworks@mchsi.com.

Looking for something interesting to do? Contact Iowa's cultural alliances for ideas.

Ames Community Arts Council
Kathy Stevens, (515) 232-5331
www.amesart.org

Burlington Area Arts Council
Bobby Wilson, (319) 754-8461
bwilson@thehawkeye.com

Cedar Valley Cultural Alliance
Jascenna Haislet-Carlson, (319) 273-6387
jascenna.haislet@uni.edu

Fairfield Cultural Alliance
David DuBois, (330) 612-2773
ddubois@lisco.com

Grinnell Area Arts Council
Lesley Wright, (641) 236-3203
www.grinnellarts.org

Iowa Cultural Corridor Alliance
Joe Jennison, (800) 650-ARTS
www.culturalcorridor.org

Keokuk Cultural and Entertainment District
Tom Seabold, (319) 524-7651
artworks@mchsi.com

Marshall County Arts and Culture Alliance
Beth Burkemper, (641) 754-5616
www.artsandculturealliance.org

Metro Arts Alliance
Tracy Levine, (515) 280-3222
www.metroarts.org

Perry Cultural Alliance
Justine Zimmer, (515) 465-2518
jjzimmer@hometownperryiowa.org

Quad City Arts
Glenda Huntsman, (309) 793-1213
www.quadcityarts.com

Winnebago County Convention & Visitors Bureau
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EnglerWells Fargo Arena, Des Moines

Rod Stewart LIVE!

Rod Stewart marks a triumphant return to rock & roll with a stop at Wells Fargo Arena on Saturday, April 14 at 8p.m.

The tour will celebrate Rod's recent return to his rock roots with his #1 chart-topping album Still the Same... Great Rock Classics of Our Time and feature all of the classic hits from a career that spans more than three decades. In addition, for the first time in over a decade, Rod's stage will be designed in the round, giving fans an intimate 360 degree view of the concert.

Stewart's 2007 North American tour will be a culmination of the legendary singer's nearly four decades of hits from the seminal Every Picture Tells A Story to his first #1 album Blonds Have More Fun spanning through Out Of Order, Downtown Train and culminating with his newest chart topping album Still The Same... Great Rock Classics of Our Time. Stewart's trademark voice has successfully commanded nearly every genre of music including folk, rock, soul, R&B, blues and more, even managing to breathe a unique modernity into the classics.

The tour will feature a rotating circular center stage designed to deliver fans unfettered viewing of the concert. Accompanying Rod on stage will be a nine piece band and his three stellar back up singers. Rod Stewart's North American tour is promoted by AEG Live.

Tickets, priced at \$96 and \$55 go on sale this Saturday at 10a.m. through www.dahlstickets.com, 866-55-DAHLS, or by stopping at the Wells Fargo Arena Ticket Office or any Dahl's Foods location.



Dubuque Symphony Orchestra, Dubuque

Classical music meets contemporary



William Intriligator, Music Director and Conductor of the Dubuque Symphony Orchestra, announces its Chamber concerts, Brave New Music, which will highlight music from contemporary composers, as well as a few chamber music classics. The Dubuque Symphony Orchestra Chamber Ensemble will be joined by Midwest composers whose music will be performed. Co-sponsored by an anonymous donor, Brave New Music, will take place on Saturday, February 24th at 8 pm and Sunday, February 25 at 2 p.m. in Jansen Music Hall on the Clarke College Campus.

These concerts will feature a variety of chamber-sized ensemble of DSO musicians from the string, woodwind, brass and percussion sections. They will be performing new music written by young composers visiting Dubuque as part of the 2007 Society of Composers, Region V Conference, hosted by Clarke College.

Intriligator said, "The concerts will include music that is being heard for the very first time and that is so new, the ink isn't even dry on the parts. Witness the composer and performers interact in the fascinating process of preparing a new piece of music. Hear from the composers themselves about why they wrote the music, and what it means to them. Hear the players' perspective on the music and on the challenges and opportunities of preparing a world premiere."

In addition to the new works, the program will include selections from more familiar chamber pieces by Schubert — specifically his magnificent Octet, scored for clarinet, bassoon, French horn, and string quartet, including contrabass, and a portion of his beloved Trout Quintet.

Tickets for adults are \$25 and \$10 for students with IDs, and may be purchased by calling the DSO office at 563-557-1677 or visit www.dubuquesymphony.org or at Clarke College.

blindcritic

The opinion of the Blind Critic is to be an electric conduit for honest and forthright feet-to-the-fire gallery experiences. As information flows, the critics' opinion generates interest or disinterest, validates or alters perceptions and glorifies or villifies artists' works and presenters' exhibitions.



BEMIS UNDERGROUND BEMIS CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS

"BART VARGAS: ONE MAN'S TRASH"

OPENING RECEPTION JANUARY 26, FROM 7-10 P.M.

12TH AND LEAVENWORTH STREETS, OMAHA, NE 68102

Gallery statement: The Bemis Underground is a basement level gallery space suited to present visual, audio, and performance art in an interactive environment dedicated to experimentation. Six curators, selected by jury, are allotted five weeks and a stipend to execute projects of their design. A new group of Project curators are selected every spring for the following year.

The show: "Bart Vargas: One Man's Trash," runs through Feb. 24. In some way the show is a survey of the work Vargas has done during the past few years. He focuses on a few key types of work — paintings, sculptural spheres, installations and his newest edition, dolls, all made of his own and other people's discarded junk. He threw a few wild card elements into the show — for this viewer, the unexpected elements were the highlight. "Nuclear Winter" is one of the newest works in the show and its one that Vargas struggled with. Originally his thesis project, he abandoned the piece after deciding he didn't like it, eventually creating "Nest" for his thesis. ("Nest" is a giant nest of coiled keyboards, cordless phones, cables, wires, and other old electronic junk that Vargas spent more than three years collecting. In the center sits a huge egg covered with discarded keyboard keys all in a muted shade of grayish white.) Nuclear Winter's 111 paintings are all the same shape — hexagons — but of different thickness and different sizes. Each is intricately layered with stenciled snowflakes; The paint in some cases is carefully applied, in others, it was clearly sloshed on, splattered on or sprayed on. Approached as a whole, the piece is like visual candy. Even singularly, the works are a feast for the eyes.

The welcome: The Bemis Underground shows aren't just an opening, they're a packed out party. More than 400 made a stop in this show; this amount of people has become the norm and is what makes the often artistically challenging shows such fun to check out.

The accessibility: Vargas made the rounds during the crowded opening; members of the Bemis Center staff were on hand to answer questions and welcome visitors.

The ambiance: The space is a bit awkward and challenging to fill. Vargas does an excellent job of using every bit and using it well. He even fills a small back room with heaps of discarded junk, further playing on the title of the show.

The nosh: Beer and wine, gallery staples, were here, as were cheese and crackers. The highlight for me were tiny, liquor filled candies in flavors like Courvossier.

The sale: The paintings didn't have wall tags or prices; all of the work is for sale and a price list was available.

The final thought: This space continues to bring challenging work to a fresh, young crowd. As the seasons continue, the work only gets better.

Lowbrow

Middlebrow

Highbrow

Definitions: Highbrow art is said to appeal to an informed (aristocratic) taste; Middlebrow to an inquisitive (upwardly mobile) taste; Lowbrow to an uninformed (poor) taste.



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PHOTOGRAPHS BY DRAKE HOKANSON

FEBRUARY - MARCH

CARNEGIE LIBRARY MUSEUM, 1123 WILLIS AVENUE, PERRY, IOWA

OPENING AND GALLERY TALK SATURDAY FEBRUARY 17, 1:00 P.M.

WWW.HOMETOWNPERRYIOWA.ORG 515.465.7713

On exhibit at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls

"Dr. Seuss Wants You!"
Political cartoons of WWII
January 16 - May 20, 2007
University Museum
3219 Hudson Rd., Cedar Falls

Opening Reception
Jan 18, 6 to 8 p.m.

Lecture with Dr. Raelle Wetman
Feb 15, 7 p.m., CEFE Aul.
Campus St. & Jennings Dr



ILLUMINATIONS OF THE HOLOCAUST

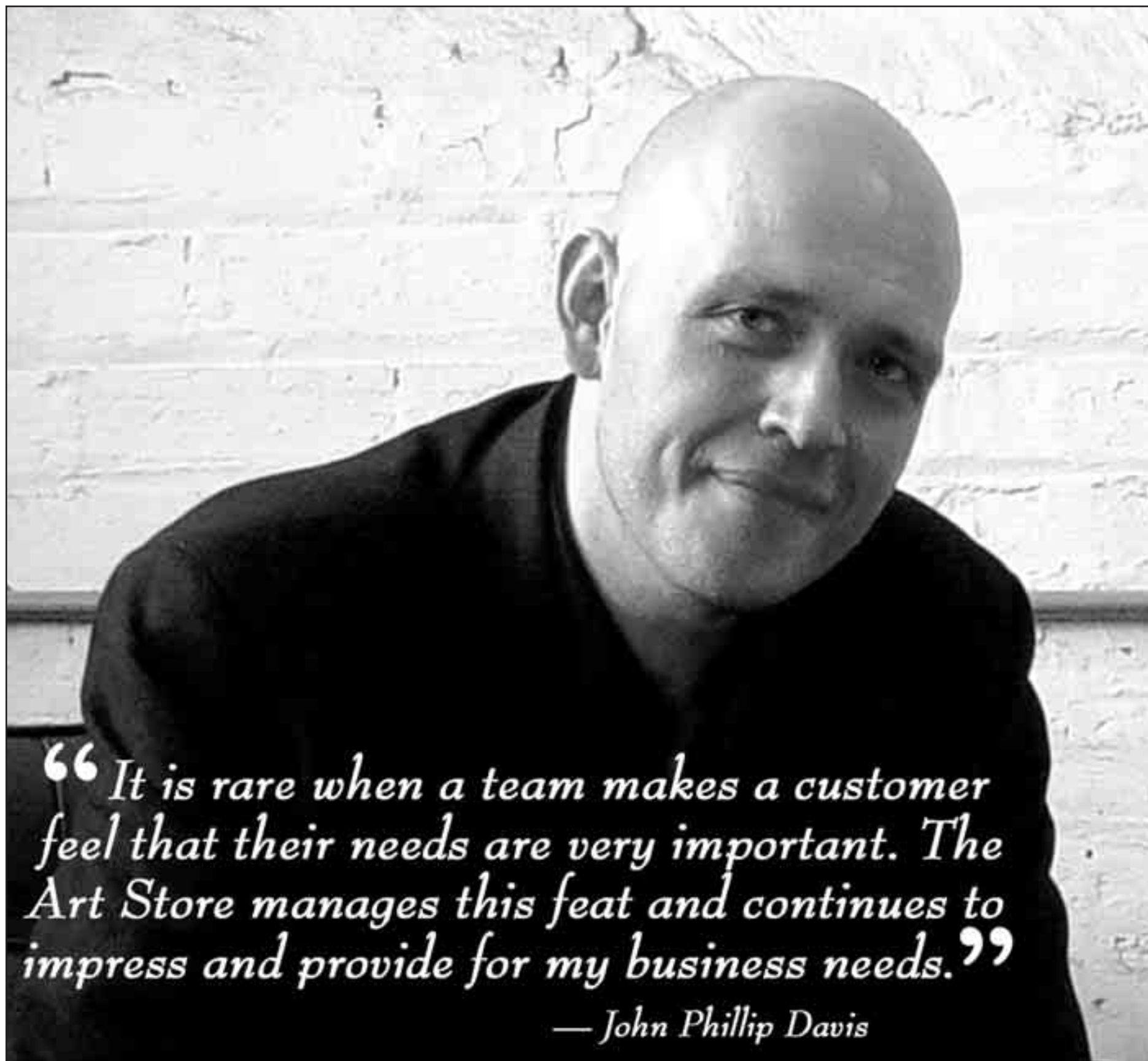


"Justice Illuminated:
The Art of Arthur Seyk"
January 8 - March 4, 2007
UNI Gallery of Art
NK corner of Hudson Rd.
& 27th St., Cedar Falls

Curator's Lecture with Iris Ungar
Jan 8, 7 p.m., Kamerick Art
Building, Room 111

In cooperation with the UNI Holocaust Remembrance & Education Program (www.uni.edu/hokanson)
and brought to you, in part, by generous grants from Humanities Iowa and Verdiana Ceruti Union

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