

ARTS★MUSIC★CULTURE

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## Letter from the editors:

Dear Reader,

Years ago, in a different life, I sang for my supper. It was an exciting time for me - sold out shows, nerdy fans who knew the lyrics better than I, 3 a.m. recording sessions, late night parties, faux fame and vanity. Then the record labels started getting involved and I felt as though I had finally achieved what I'd set out to do: reach stardom; a recording contract made me legit.

The labels offered copious amounts of money, and all I had to do was lose 30 lbs (I was 5'6 and weighed 125), change the spelling of my name to be more feminine, get a nose job, and fire the rhythm section of my band (who'd been with me for eight years) so that the A&R rep's friends could get on the payroll. There was never any mention of the music - so I got out before I lost myself.

Nearly 15 years later, it seems nothing has changed in the music industry; if anything, it's only gotten worse. I can't even remember the last time I saw a new female, big label artist who wasn't anorexic, extraordinarily young, artificially beautiful, scantily clad and void of any trace of vocal talent. Of course there are some. But are they "real"? And it seems up-and-coming bands are still naively seeking that illustrious record deal.

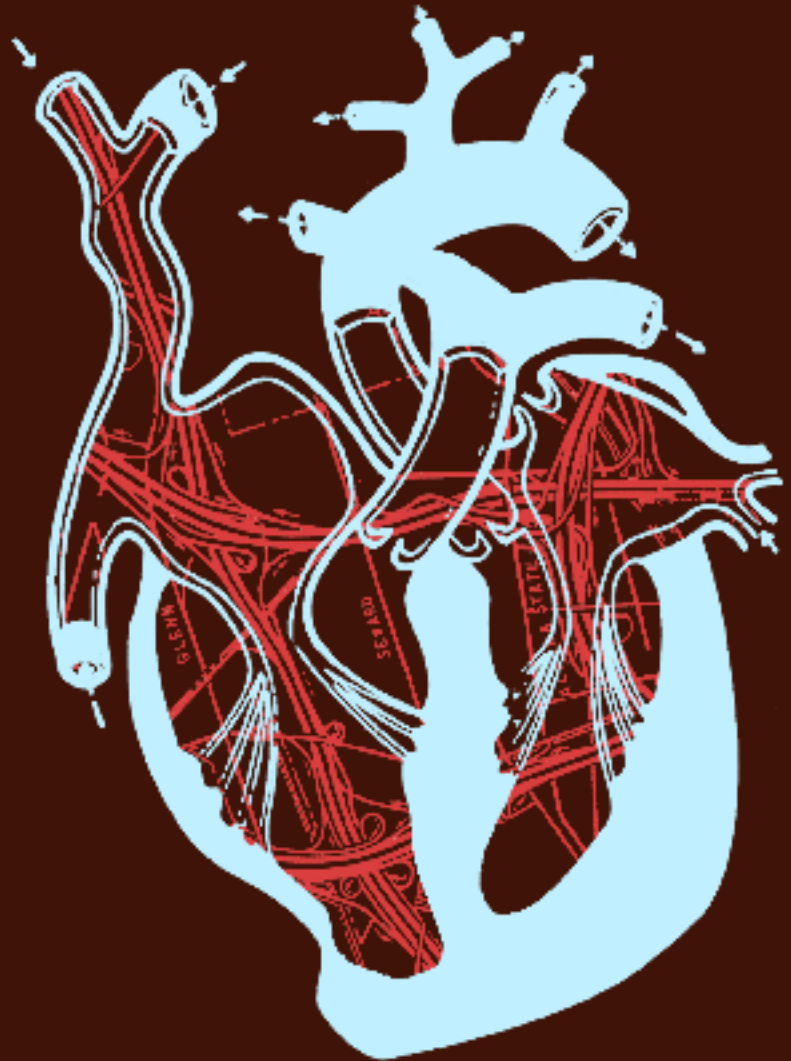
Last month, I had the golden opportunity to spend an entire afternoon with Jim Kloss and Esther Golton of Whole Wheat Radio in Talkeetna (see pg. 2). We discussed at great length our concern over independent art being disregarded by the masses. Jim called it, "acceptable mainstream artistic expression."

All hope is seemingly lost for those who cling to the belief that the only true art is free of corporate manipulation. A road trip around the state, however, has proven independence is alive and growing in Alaska. Hence, our theme for this issue: "Road Tripping for Art."

Along this theme, we have compiled art, literature, event listings and a couple of overviews of great destinations for this summer.

We are encouraging our readers to get out of town this summer and revel in all of the great independent art and events going on all over the state. Become an activist by supporting freedom of expression and thought. Take a break from the corporate art machine!

Viva Las Artes!  
-the editors



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## MUSIC ACTIVISM alive and airing in Talkeetna

By Teeka A. Ballas  
Photos by Serine Halverson

The directions are 7.5 miles – from Talkeetna, or are we supposed to be looking for the milepost? We hit Talkeetna without any sightings of E. Birch Creek Blvd., so we drive back from whence we came, and miss the sign again. Evidently I didn't look closely enough at the directions before we left Anchorage, and my chicken scratch scrawl makes medical scripts look like calligraphy. Thankfully we are full of caffeine and humor. Eventually we find it, and within moments we are pulling into the dirt lot of the Wheat Palace, a 48x36 log cabin on a 20-acre lot. Home of Whole Wheat Radio. Of the list of places we selected to preview for the Road Tripping for Art issue of F Magazine, it is by far at the top. Partially because it is a pirate radio station (and who doesn't love pirates – at least those of yore), but mostly because it imbues the qualities F Magazine represents: independence and arts-based community.

My friend and photographer, Serine Halverson and I are immediately greeted with a hug from Esther Golton and a sniff and a tail wag from her dog, Beta. With warm familial chatter she leads us into the infamous two-story palace. The high ceiling is covered in borderline disturbing paintings of heavens and hells, goddesses and demons – remnants from when it used to be a bar. Old computer keyboards hang from the rafters. Photographs of bands who've played house parties at the WP line the walls, along with art and introspective and reflective

quotes – nuggets of wisdom – like the Turkish maxim: “If you find you've been going down the wrong path, turn around.” A number of chairs and tables are spread about, and it's not clear as to whether the focus for patrons should be on the right side of the house where it appears live music is played, or to my left where a fort of soundboards and computer gadgetry reside beside the splendidly cozy kitchen where coffee, biscuits, cookies and home cooked meals are produced.

There is a minute moment of awkward silence, before Esther introduces us to her partner, the man behind the curtain, Jim Kloss – and this seemingly interrupts the flow of genius. There he sits, with a multi-colored woven hat perched atop his head, wisps of grey hair sticking out from beneath, hunkered over a computer keyboard and surrounded by all the accoutrements that make it possible to send WWR out to the ethers, to the thousands of listeners around the world. When he looks up he seems completely surprised to find us all standing there staring at him.

Without missing a beat though, he and Esther invite us to drink freshly brewed coffee. Once we've made ourselves comfortable around a small table, they make a shamefaced confession.

“Please don't let Beta outside without supervision,” explains Esther. “We're on poop patrol.” Evidently Beta ingested a ball of saran wrap two days prior. They are sincerely distressed that he might have digestive problems from his choice of edibles,

so they are on the lookout for plastic wrap remnants. We assure them there is nothing to be embarrassed about.

Within minutes, like-minds collide and a tremendous conversation is underway. We chatter on about the true definition of freedom of expression, how artists' independence is constantly being compromised by corporate manipulation, that history – its politics, religion and social mores – is defined by art, whether through theatre, music, murals or literature (think Michelangelo's "Last Judgment", Aristophanes' "Lysistrata", Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience," Pete Seeger's "If I had a Hammer.")

We fervently discuss what Esther refers to as the acceptable mainstream,

**“I’M NOT A PILOT, AN ARTIST OR A CLIMBER – I HAVE NO REASON TO BE IN TALLEETNA. SO I HAD TO FIND ONE.”**

**-JIM KLOSS**

the societal norm of demeaning an artist who remains independent, how the decision to remain independent affects how the masses will perceive them, or rather, how in turn the masses refuse to acknowledge them, if but to only demean them as inferior and lacking credibility.

“We grew up on commercial radio and a concept that the only music worth while was created by major labels,” says Esther. “There’s this whole world of creativity out there – little hidden gems.”

We sit sipping coffee, and without censorship engage in political discourse for over an hour before we really broach

the topic I am here to discuss: Jim Kloss, Esther Golton and Whole Wheat Radio.

Several months ago, by word of mouth, I heard of this pseudo pirate, on-line radio station out of Talkeetna that broadcasts indie music to the world. Once I started tuning in on a regular basis, I realized a road trip was in order. I wanted answers to a lot of questions.

Jim introduces us to the history of WWR by laying down a litany of caustic rants about KTNA, Talkeetna's public radio station. He used to volunteer there as a DJ and doing systems work for the station. One of his major gripes is the fallacy of free speech on public radio.

He got in trouble for reporting the weather with something like, ‘Break out the sandals and the suntan lotion, it’s another sunny day in Talkeetna’. It was in fact a wintry day with blowing snow and freezing temperatures, and the station manager was concerned someone might take Jim seriously and sue the station. (Esther says Jim just can’t think group-think.)

Jim says the freedom of saying what he wants on air, makes being a WWR DJ a very relaxed experience.

“If the FCC ever steps in and tries to control what I do here though, then no way.” Jim is adamant. “I’ll close this right down.”

Jim’s other complaint is the snobbery of the local Arts Council.

“It’s a hippie artistic community,” Jim waxes sarcastic. “Bullshit. It’s hippiness that only goes tie-dyed deep.” Overall, Jim is unhappy with the people of

Talkeetna’s inability to welcome in the new and different.

“It’s hard to make an alternative work here – and we’re an alternative.” A large majority of WWR’s listeners are outside Talkeetna.

Through the rants, I ascertain that it all really seems to boil down to a desire to create community. Not only does Jim broadcast independent music for free, he and Esther have opened the WP to a slew of local groups for meetings and gatherings. Among them are the local Quakers and the senior center - when the school burned down the seniors offered their meeting hall to the students and had to relocate for a period (though they had a bit of an issue with the ceiling mural of the cherubs flipping the middle finger to God – Jim had to get on a ladder to confirm that it was in fact the middle finger and not the index – but they had no issue with the bare-bosomed-child-birthing Goddesses.) They also have house parties where bands from near and far come to perform and be aired live.

“I could not have all this and live comfortably,” Jim says of their home and property. “So while I have this, it’s going to be a public place to share things.”

Esther emphatically nods her head in agreement.

“It’s been an experiment in sharing,” says Esther with a shrug of disappointment. “And the experiment has shown that people will take what’s free.”

I suggest that sometimes it takes people being taught the lesson in order to learn the lesson. Had they expressed to visitors that in order to keep WWR and the WP alive, they had to give back in some way or another?

“We’re going through a transition



Jim Kloss claims to not be a computer guy - he just gets “geeked out” by coding, programming and systems analysis. Whole Wheat Radio practically runs itself, yet Kloss still spends a good portion of every day fixing links, categorizing artists, DJing, and general tinkering to “make sure it’s all running like it’s supposed to.”

right now – a wrestling period,” says Jim. “After eight years, we’re at the point where we’re wondering what the hell we’re doing and why we’re doing it.”

It does in fact seem that running this community station is wearing the two down. Even though for them it’s not about making a profit, it seems many people utilize WWR and the WP for furthering their own careers without giving back in return. What they would like most is for those who have staged or aired on WWR to spread the word. The two Wheat Heads are taking a good look at where they want to go with their station, and how much longer they’re willing to wait for everyone to engage in appropriate sharing behavior. I inwardly beg them to not yet give up.

### So what is WWR, anyway?

It’s community building, interactive, Wiki Internet radio. The site’s content is built by listeners much like a Wikipedia page is. They can update lyrics, do music reviews, rate an artist, chat about music with other listeners and make requests. And like Facebook or Amazon, the site will recognize “like” preferences and suggest other music. It also has the ingenious Wheat Grams, where a listener can call in and record a message that will air between songs. Sometimes these messages are in the form of poems, shout outs to friends afar, comments about the music and random rants – almost like an audio Twitter. It’s the Internet, so anything goes.

“We don’t care what you say,” says Jim. “Well, I don’t think we care.” Though he hopes people will be respectful of other listeners and not just call up with a string of insults.

The station currently has 4,342 CDs in rotation. Esther says the station has done wonders for many musicians – it gives them an audience they wouldn’t otherwise have.

“I’ve gotten a lot out of Whole Wheat Radio too,” she says. Esther is a musician and stage performer. She sings

and plays the flute and the mountain dulcimer. Her two CDs are among those in rotation. “People show up to my gigs around the country because they heard my recordings on the air.”

WWR is also home to some pretty great house parties.

“I’m so glad house parties exist,” laughs Jim, “or else I’d have to invent them.”

Bands from all over the nation have come to the Wheat Palace to play for an audience, sell their CDs and bond with the heart of the station. To date, WWR has held 60 house concerts, and broadcasted more than 20 performance interviews and countless other musical events.

“When an artist does a house show here, they typically walk out with \$800 to \$2,000 – including tips and CD sales,” says Jim. Anchorage-based Marian Call holds the record, at \$3,600.

WWR pulls in some money from the house concerts, but they also rely upon on-line donations.

“Right now we have raised ...” Jim runs to the computer to double check the exact number. “Over the past eight years, \$59,924. That goes directly to the cost of running WWR – the propane, electricity, equipment – I don’t keep a dime of it for myself.” It might sound like a lot of money, but that’s only about \$7,500 a year. “You’d be hard pressed to find any company that can run on that little.”

### How did WWR come to be?

Jim and Esther met in 1991 after they both had finished solo treks of the Appalachian Trail, from Georgia to Maine.

“I did the whole thing, she didn’t. Did you hear that, Esther?” he yells out at her. She’s off in the woods on poop patrol. “I saw every white blaze. She’s a yellow blazer. She hitchhiked.”

Esther jumps back into the conversation. “I was there to see nature,” she says after confirming no plastic pieces have





yet been found in Beta's poop. "I wasn't going to do the road blocks. And that's probably the root of every conflict Jim and I have ever had."

It seems there's all kinds of symbolism wrapped around their lives. Thus, it's no surprise to learn, that on the Appalachian Trail, where it's imperative to downsize to the bare essentials, Jim had little speakers attached to the straps of his pack so he could listen to music while he hiked.

After a series of events and places, Jim and Esther ended up in Talkeetna. At first they lived in Esther's small cabin, where Jim began podcasting Radio Free Talkeetna.

"I'm not a pilot, I'm not a climber and I'm not an artist. So I had no business being here," says Jim. Prior to moving to Talkeetna, Jim was a very successful systems designer – though he claims he's not really into computers – so after a bit, he decided to put what he knew to use.

For his birthday, after a year of podcasting, Esther presented him with the gift of the Whole Wheat Radio URL.

After a while, the cabin proved to be too small, and the city was trying to force Esther onto the public water and sewage system – for a big chunk of change – so in 2006 they moved into the WP.

Before they moved, Jim played music he loved to listen to: The Who, The Rolling Stones, The Beatles ... but podcasting brought him a lot of attention from BMI. They wanted to bill WWR \$800 for not paying royalty fees, and \$300 annually for five subsequent years. Jim says he wouldn't have a problem paying the fee if it were a fair one, but as it stands, big money making stations get charged the same rate as little grassroots, profitless ventures like his. And it wasn't just going to be BMI, there's also ASCAP, SESAC (Society of European Authors and Composers), and the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America). And then Jim started reading on-line about how the latter was shutting down big radio stations for not paying royalty fees.

So initially, the change to independent music was inspired by a desire to keep a low profile.

"I didn't even know what independent music was," confesses Esther. "We played Talkeetna musicians because we knew them."

When WWR changed its music format, they had a very small rotation.

"We just kept playing the same shit over and over and over. I couldn't convince anyone to send me their CD," says Jim. "I was going to shut this down. So as a last resort I wrote Amy Ray of the Indigo Girls [and explained what WWR was all about] ... and a week later, a big ass box of CDs arrived."



Jim Kloss and Esther Golton met after they both finished solo treks of the Appalachian Trail. That kind of independence and spirit is still prevalent in their lives and is symbolically represented in how the two have trail blazed into the world of on-line pirate radio. Initially Jim had to plead for artists to submit their CDs, now he receives an average of 10 per week.

Since then, WWR has had no shortage of independent music to choose from.

"So part of our mission has been to discover these musicians who are otherwise never going to get heard," says Esther. "To help other people discover it and create this culture of discovery."

As it stands, WP has no official house concerts booked for the summer. Jim and Esther are taking some time off to reorganize and realign. Though one should stay tuned to WWR for updates and impromptu events.

"And if you're just tuning in and you don't like what you hear, just give it a moment. Give it a day or a week. It's constantly changing," says Jim. And sometimes listeners just need to train their ear to tolerate new music, new sounds.

Like the art that represents culture, WWR is ever evolving, and the playlist with a life of its own, adapts and morphs to the preferences of its listeners.

*Join the WWR community at [WholeWheatRadio.org](http://WholeWheatRadio.org) and spread the word! ✨*

# ACROSS the BAY

## Escape to the Simple Life

Photos & Story by Gretchen Weiss

Anchorage slipped away in the rearview mirror as the trusty Subaru sporting a kayak cap sailed along the inlet highway. This is the first road trip of the season and the rotation of the tires and the traveling odometer paved away the bumps, stress and bustle of everyday life. Cruise control set, shoes off and salty sweet road snacks taste of freedom.

It is the third weekend in May, the leaves in Anchorage have just blushed, and everyone is sniffing into a coat of birch pollen. Travelling though Girdwood, the mercury stretches to a balmy 55 degrees in the sun. Climbing the pass, the leaves shrink and disappear leaving sleeping sticks that as we continue, are still wrapped in snow. I fervently ask the powers-that-be for the nine feet of snow reported at Across the Bay Tent and Breakfast to have been obliterated by the sun before our arrival.

### The Cabbie Knows the Way

We follow the highway to its end on the Homer spit; the water taxi is located and the car is hastily abandoned. In the rush of being late, the kayak is gripped in one hand and the camera gear laden wagon pushed with the other for the descent to the dock. There are apologies muttered to the other passengers who were kind enough to wait and we're off. Through the screen of engine noise and wind, Mary Jane Lastufka, owner of Across the Bay Tent and Breakfast, exchanges small town niceties with Gart the Sea Cabbie Captain. Their conversation of children and local news is a comfortable soundtrack to the spitting waves glinting with light from the setting sun.

Marne Lastufka leads the kayak tours through the summer.







Mary Jane grew up visiting a cabin-based resort in Canada. She would spend her summers with the village children who lived across the river, enjoying nature and natural play. With Across the Bay Tent and Breakfast her wish is to share the experience of lolling about in nature with others.

The Lastufka's are easy going folks who naturally fit into the roles of caretakers and see to the needs of their guests with grace. The family has had a cabin on the property since the '70s - they briefly experimented with commercial fishing before finding a niche in sharing their love of Katsitsna bay with others.

The business started by the Lastufka's agreeing to share their beach with a friend running a kayak tour business. The family began to make lunches and sell them to the travelers. Successful with the lunches, the Lastufka's made the leap to leading kayaking tours of their own, which they have been doing happily for the past 18 years.

Arriving at Across the Bay Tent and Breakfast at high tide is a blessing. The catamaran taxi is able to cuddle the beach and, aside from the waterproof bag I carelessly let roll into the sea, everything and everyone is able to stay dry.

The welcoming committee of smiles assists in carrying baggage to a large wall tent set on a low platform of weathered gray stilts. Two brightly painted cots

resembling cheerful cartoons stand end to end on each side of the tent creating the effect of sleeping arrangements for giant beanpoles. A nursery rhyme my grandfather used to say slips into my head: "There was an old lady who was so tall, she slept in the kitchen with her feet in the hall."

## Eat and be Merry

Luggage and gear is quickly arranged in the tent and Marne Lastufka, kayak guide and hostess, embarks with us on a walking tour around the facilities. It is so early in the season that the Lastufka family is just in the process of getting the area ready for visitors. Thankfully there is not nine feet of snow on the lawn, but drifts are still settled in shady crannies and a chill wind makes its way from the beach.

Networks of footpaths connect secluded wall tents to the two main cabins. One cabin serves as the lodge with a dining area that looks out over Kasitsna Bay and a lounge area that offers a view of a waterfall and woods. Along the side of the second cabin is a row of brightly painted doors, each leading to a washroom with a sink and shower. Sinks are also located on the outside of each cabin enabling teeth brushing while gazing at the ebb and flow.

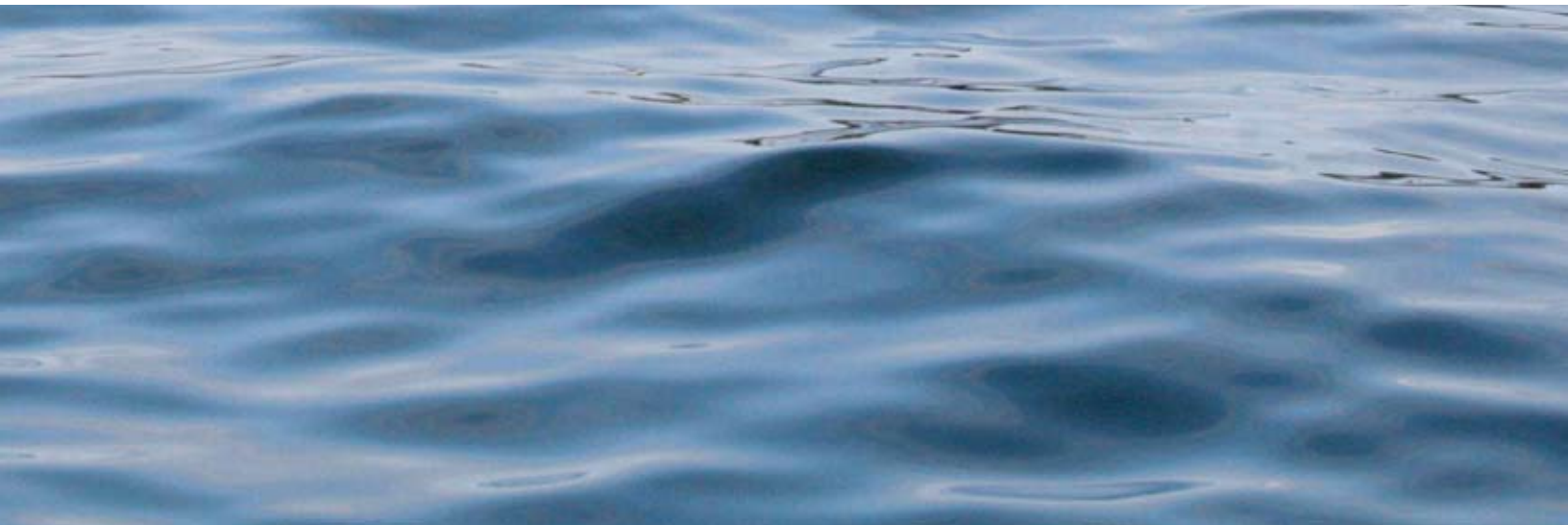
Garden spaces quilt the area and though

they are bare now, the anticipation of summer greenery is tangible. Decorative mosaics, shell arrangements and quaint objects add interest and artistic intent. Benches, planters, or rope covered logs give a sense of rambling beach order and create small destinations perfect for stopping to smell the natural open air.

At the main cabin, the warmth of a blazing woodstove chases away the chill of the late evening. The table is welcoming with all white dishes, faded cloth napkins and a floral tablecloth. The chairs surrounding the table are brightly colored echoing the doors to the second cabin. A carafe holding hot water rests on a long bookcase next to a hanging basket cradling tea selections and I eagerly pounce to help soothe away the last of the ocean chill.

As I select a bright purple chair with a view, the garden salad is delivered followed by steaming pesto pasta. Having dinner served to me followed by the opportunity to eat undisturbed by children or pressure to work on a side project is a relaxing treat. There is nothing for me to do except enjoy the food and the view and I partake heartily in both.

With a stomach full of warm food the beach beckons for a brief sunset walk. I take my time combing the beach, pausing where shells and rocks catch my attention. The water in the bay is surprisingly calm and I am a little disappointed that on





this trip there will be no pounding surf to sleep to.

Inside the wall tent a pile of wool blankets and pillows have been delivered and I extravagantly take up several of the blankets to build a cozy sleeping nest for my sleeping bag and me. There are no flushing toilets at Across The Bay, but they do boast having the nicest outhouses in Alaska and I agree that a person would be hard pressed to find a nicer outhouse. The facilities are clean, spacious, and serve as mini galleries of paintings, stained glass, mosaics and found objects. These outhouses go above and beyond most public restrooms.

## To-do List

Eagerly waking in the morning, my thoughts turned to the kayaking, biking and exploring planned for the day. I arrived at the breakfast table to eagerly consume a fresh made omelet, cereal, fruit, and coffee. Throughout the meal I gaze out at the bay, the changing patterns in the water, otters and birds provide a

Clockwise from top left: Marne Lastufka hauls bedding to two person wall tent perched on the hillside above Across the Bay Tent and Breakfast. | Arrangements of objects and shells can be found through out the campsite. | The Lastufka's believe in providing healthy, simple, yet tasty fare. | Mary Jane Lastufka, owner. | A boat resting on the beach is open for visitors to sit in while gazing at the sea. | A sink is conveniently placed to accomodate outside living. | Large windows grace the lodge offering non-stop views. | An old logging trail provides the perfect biking track.

natural hypnosis that settles the spirit.

Besides the outdoor adventure activities, such as biking and guided kayaking, Across the Bay hosts a variety of artisan classes throughout the summer. Classes include watercolor, gut creations, yoga, writing, photography, cooking and more.

"I'm selfish!" Mary Jane laughs out. "There are wonderful people doing all sorts of wonderful things and I wanted to be a part of it, I want to learn how to do all those things."

Her daughter, Marne went on to explain that while sitting around one night, the family began to "what if?" What if Across the Bay invited a watercolor painter to stay the weekend and teach a class? What if the tent sites could be filled with busy artistic folks and the cabin area cluttered

with workshop projects?

For the past nine years the workshops have been growing in popularity and variety and the Lastufka's eagerly await the eclectic company and knowledge that seek their shores.

Eighteen campers in total can stay comfortably at Across the Bay and the popular workshops fill up fast and people who did not register early are sadly turned away.

When not hosting artists, Across the Bay welcomes any and all who wish to enjoy the tranquility of the area.

"I had one guy who just sat in the chair and looked out over the ocean," Mary Jane stated. "He got up to eat and pee, but otherwise just sat and looked. I guess that is what he needed to do at the time." ❄️

## Across the Bay Art Workshops Calendar

### JUNE

June 11-13

#### Hand Sewn Books & Painted Papers - Susan Share

*\$390 | water taxi, meals & lodging*

Students use acrylic paint to make decorative paste papers and then incorporate the papers into creating books. Fold, pierce and sew papers to make a soft cover pamphlet, a long stitch binding, and a hard cover Coptic binding. These books may be used as journals, sketchbooks or albums. All levels welcome.

June 18-20, 2010

#### Yoga and Mindfulness - Margi Clifford LPC, RYT

*\$390 | water taxi, meals & lodging*

Explore mindfulness through yoga and meditation, on land and on the water, around the fire and in the dining room. Develop skills of self-awareness that will bring a greater sense of peace and vitality. The yoga practice will be accessible for all levels and instruction in meditation is available for those new to the practice.

June 25-27

#### Fish-Skin Basketry Workshop - Audrey Armstrong

*\$450 | water taxi, meals & lodging*

Audrey Armstrong will share her own contemporary fish skin basketry methods that she has developed using traditional Native cultural embellishments. Her art has been exhibited at the Alaska Native Arts Foundation in Anchorage and the Bunnell Street Arts Center in Homer. She presented the late Fran Reed's paper at the Textiles Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii, taught fish skin basket making at the Mendocino Arts Center in California, and will present at the Indigenous Weavers Symposium in New Zealand.

### JULY

July 9-11

#### Close Up & Nature Photography - Hal Gage

*\$385 | water taxi, meals & lodging, trips to Seldovia & Red Mountain*

Internationally exhibited fine art and commercial photographer Hal Gage will discuss the technical aspects of cameras, lenses, flash, exposure and lighting, as well as the aesthetic applications of photography. Participants will need their own camera, either digital or film, flash attachments and close-up lenses. (workshop@halgage.com, halgage.com)

July 23-25

#### Guest Chef Sarah Spudowski

*\$350 | water taxi, meals & lodging*

Chef Sara attended the New England Culinary Institute in Vermont, where she excelled in Pastry. These days, Spudowski is whipping up delightful and creative treats at Sugarspoon, a dessert café in Anchorage that she co-owns. Away from the kitchen, she teaches cooking classes, writes a column for Alaska's Best Kitchens and volunteers at the Ronald McDonald House in Seattle working to improve the meal program to deliver healthy meals to the families. (aksugarspoon.com)

July 30- August 1

#### Gut Creations

- Lucie Charbonneau

*\$390 | water taxi, meals & lodging | additional fees for materials*

Lucie Charbonneau is a fiber artist living in Quebec. She has exhibited her work at le Musee Beaulne in Coaticook, Quebec. Lucie was inspired and mentored by the late Fran Reed, the fish skin artist.

This workshop will introduce the artistic uses of hog casings (gut). Gut is a clean, natural fabric that is strong, lightweight and transparent with unusual texture. When dried it can be painted or dipped in fabric dye to make vibrant long lasting colored fabric that can be sewn into gift bags, items of clothing and more. Used wet it can be fashioned into baskets, journal covers, etc.

### AUGUST

August 5-8

#### Expressive Writing Retreat

- Melissa Mitchell & Michelle McAfee

*\$600 | water taxi, meals, lodging & guided kayak tour*

During the retreat, participants will be encouraged to dive deep into creative waters and write outside the box. Explore different mediums of writing including song, creative and poetry with the goal of opening a clear channel for creative energy to flow. Write solo, in pairs and as a group after participating in a hike and a four hour guided sea-kayak adventure (not all in the same day). There will be opportunities to share work in a supportive circle and to have fun around the campfire. (homegrownak.com)

August 13-15

#### Watercolor Workshop

- Annie Olson & Paula Dickey

*\$390 | water taxi, meals & lodging*

Annie Olson has taught watercolor in Alaska for 20 years and the past 8 years internationally in Japan, Korea, and Italy. Paula Dickey has taught watercolor workshops Across the Bay for 9 years and for 8 years at both APU and the Homer Branch of UA. This workshop is planned for all skill levels. (annieolson.com)

August 20-22, 2010

#### Guest Chef Clayton Jones

*\$390 | water taxi, meals & lodging*

Clayton Jones, the Executive Chef at the Bear Tooth Grill, focuses on fresh local sourcing of Alaska's best edibles. From Copper River Salmon, to fiddlehead ferns, Chef Jones is driven to find the flavors that make Alaska food everything it can be. Taking part in the Alaska Division of Agriculture forum with local farmers in the spring of 2009, Chef Jones is working to provide new sustainable options for the future. By bringing food directly from the field to the table, Clayton's mission of providing great food for Alaskans, by Alaskans, will continue in 2010.

The focus of the workshop will be on local food sourcing, basic techniques and foraging Alaskan wild edibles. There will also be a focus on locally available seafood, seasonally available vegetables, and locally produced meats. Techniques will include everything from knife and kitchen skills, dressings and sauces, to butchery and curing of fish.

August 27-29, 2010

#### Permaculture Design

- Matt Oster & Saskia Esslinger

*\$390 | water taxi, meals & lodging*

A hands-on weekend workshop on how to use permaculture design principles to live more sustainably, reduce monthly expenses, and grow and eat homegrown healthy, organic food.

Oster and Esslinger, co-owners of Red Edge Design LLC., will walk through a thorough site analysis and assessment and talk about possible design solutions. Specific topics include micro-energy projects, greenhouse location and design, chickens, water issues, building gardens, garden soil, windbreaks and perennial food plantings. (redgedesignllc@gmail.com)

Across the Bay Tent & Breakfast Adventure Co.  
907-235-3633 | TENTANDBREAKFASTALASKA.COM

# W.A.T.T. : BRING OUT YOUR HOMELESS

By Theodore Kincaid

*"Some people have great ideas maybe once or twice in their life, and then they discover electricity, or fire, or outer space or something. I mean the kind of ideas that change the whole world. Some people never have them at all. I get them two or three times a week." –Neil Gaiman, "The Day I swapped my Dad for Two Goldfish"*

So I had this idea: If the art world is about looking at the world through a different lens and challenging the conventional, then how can an artist who is part of the art world take a step back, assess through an alien perspective and truly challenge the norm? Only through an earnestly divorced perspective can someone learn that which cannot be learned from being too close to the subject. Otherwise the product is the same stale regurgitated cannon that has been echoed for decades.

Thus, a plan was hatched to find this proposed "Alien Lens" to view the all-too-familiar world of art at the epicenter of it all: First Friday! And who better to give me that perspective than the eyes of the homeless, who in theory have no need for art, and generally speaking, don't have any kind of formal art education.

I met Kenny and Alice at the corner of Northern Lights and Old Seward in front of the Chevron. Kenny was holding a sign that said something about being a Veteran and homeless. They were a really nice couple, and seemingly had their wits about them. Kenny used to be a fisherman and had all kinds of stories about getting drunk and the mishaps that go along with that lifestyle.

Kenny was the voice between the two. Alice was more of a supporting role. She had recently gone hypothermic and her skin was pretty marred. Later, I would find out she used to be a travel agent, a travel procurement officer for her Tribal Corp, a bank teller and various other professions. I did not ask why she was homeless in Anchorage since finding out their personal stories was not why I had dragged them off their corner. They were there so I could exploit their artistic naïveté!

Our first stop was the International Gallery, as I figured it would be the most artistically jarring. Immediately, Kenny moved to the south wall where Don Decker's pieces hung. Alice followed, after being sidetracked by a sculpture of some frogs on the floor. Kenny was mesmerized by Don's painting of flowers, and expressed how much he loved it.

They moved at a moderate pace through the exhibit until they came to Julie Decker's mice. Alice articulated her interest in the painting of a mouse on stilts through juvenile verbiage. When we got outside I tried to get their take on the art they'd just seen. They both claimed they loved the art work, but seemed as though they were more interested in the subject matter rather than the craftsmanship,

which for me is what makes up contemporary art. I was skeptical and feared they were just trying to win credibility with somebody who writes about art, so I asked them which pieces they liked and why. Alice said she loved the mouse in the trap and Kenny concurred and reminded her about the mouse on stilts. They both then agreed that was their favorite. I asked if they thought the art was socially important.

Kenny answered by telling me a story about being on a boat out of Homer and how he would often have to walk the whole length of the spit when he spent his night in one of the bars. He did not finish the story when I pulled them into Fiddlehead.

It was packed in the small gallery, which when you fill it with human meat products can test your patience. Kenny just about blew a gasket when he found a series of paintings of boats, harbors and fish. He must have spent 20 minutes digging through the bin of prints while Alice and I walked back and forth waiting for him to fill his fisherman's cup.

Stephan Fine Art Gallery in the Captain Cook was going to be a blast. I was certain they were used to seeing only ambassadors, CEOs, government officials and people who make no less than half a million a year buying overpriced Alaskana, and would become tightlipped and discourteous to my guests. They made a few passes at Kenny and Alice to make sure they were "being helped," but that was it. Kenny told more stories about getting trashed and having his cousin piss on a \$5,000 stereo speaker unit and Alice told me about her bead jewelry making days. I was immensely bored, so we broke for Carl's Junior (Kenny's choice), and then I gave them \$20 and a ride to the Loussac Library where they were squatting.

I was disappointed. They loved everything they saw, did not dislike any of it and Alice said she would bring a friend next month. What kind of enlightenment can one possibly gain from an experience like that? They were both beside themselves the whole time and thanked me endlessly for bringing them out and including them in my project. If the art world is doing its job so well that even the homeless are impressed with it, then what am I doing always trying to find new and better paths of thought for the art world? I spent that night and most of the next morning contemplating my failed experiment. My back-up column was a lot less exciting.



About

10am, I got a call from a friend whose life is art and the greater art world. As most conversations go when discussing art, it moved toward how Alaskans do not appreciate the art, are not supportive of it, and how the "base" is not broad enough to make being an artist a viable profession. DING!!! There it was, the moral of this whole fucking experiment right there in my face.

The moral of the story is this: The art world has support, we have a base, and we have a viable and sustainable source of income, but we do not appreciate them. This goes back to the first article I wrote for F: all we need to do is access it! Instead of wallowing in our inbred, elitist self-pity parties, we need to be getting out there, grabbing people and dragging them in by any means necessary (this could be in the form of an ad campaign, or gun point)! The only reason people do not go to galleries is that they are not accustomed to it; it is not in their routine. It should be our job to make them. If two arbitrary transients found First Friday to be the bee's knees, who else out there in the untapped world of Anchorage would be excited by what we have to offer? I generally sell three times more art at a café than a gallery, which tells me without doubt there is a market, but they are asleep and we have to wake them up.

*Send hate mail to HookHandMonkeyAss@yahoo.com Kincaid is a painter who just realized he has been writing W.A.T.T. on and off for various publications for 15 years! So mail him a fucking cupcake already.*

# NORTH OF SOUTHERN ROCK

## LAST TRAIN'S *TURNAGAIN* ISN'T JUST AN ARM

By Matt Sullivan

The title of Last Train's debut album is a reference familiar to Anchorageites, but *Turnagain's* function in this title might represent something broader than a stretch of water jutting out of Cook Inlet or the neighborhood to which it lends its name. The themes in *TurnAgain* often revolve around a familiar rock 'n roll trope: A fear of confinement. Bruce Springsteen was born to run. Tom Petty ran down a dream and didn't want to live like a refugee. Rock musicians are always blowing this Popsicle stand or another. Many of *TurnAgain's* characters are doing just that—turning and running to or from something else.

In "You've Grown Roots," primary vocalist and guitarist, Mark Ward observes that the song's subject has "grown roots in this crappy little town" and has to stay, and he's desperate to avoid that. The next track is "When I'm Gone," where the instruction is to take his picture off the wall after he's gone. He's either passed away or ditched "another dying town." Then there's the song "Fuse," which has a part that goes like this: "Who'd a thought then you'd be running today/From a fire you lit from so many yesterdays."

"When I'm Gone" pits an up-tempo 2-step against a lilting slide guitar that finds the band at its countryest, while the loping "One Opinion" and "Her Daddy" are their Lucero-est. Last Train are better when they stay away from the latter and stick with the catchier stomp of songs like "Chicken Soup" and "Fuse." "Don't Make Him That" makes a case that maybe finger-pointing songs aren't their strongest suit either. The line "If he gave us free will, why won't you let me use it," comes across too angsty, and spitting, "you're his hitman, and he's your Sarah Palin" sounds more like an excuse to drop a polarizing name than any sort of weighty accusation. Still, the guitars at the end of the song are pretty bitchin'.

In fact, the guitars are almost the stars of the show. While Southern Rock-inspired guitar solos have done plenty of evil (people yelling "Freebird," for instance), Last Train's Steve Padrick expertly straddles the line between self-indulgence and tasteful restraint.

Alaskana litters the background, with long winters and the ALCAN making cameos alongside Palin, but their root sound stems from somewhere quite a bit farther south. Last Train is part of a deeper and broader local country-rock scene, which might not be here if not for someone at some point feeling the need to leave some place behind.



# STATEWIDE MUSIC FESTIVALS

The ears are ringing, which means it's summer in Alaska. Music is to be found in abundance, and if you're sitting at home on the couch watching old MTV videos, shame on you! Get out and drive! Then get out of your car and dance, dance, dance!

## { JUNE }

### Chickenstock Music Festival

June 11-12

Bluegrass is alive in Chicken – again! Headlining is Last Frontier. Sharing the stage: Carl Hoffman & Northern River, Steve Brown & The Bailers, Steve Robb, Sean Tracey, The Grass-Fed String Band, Hurricane Dave, Lige Williamson, Chicken Dancers  
([web.mac.com/chicknite](http://web.mac.com/chicknite))

### Fairbanks Summer Folk Fest

June 12, 1pm-11pm

Two stages, lots of music, arts & crafts, square dancing and general merrymaking. Is there anyone not having fun this summer?  
([alaskasbest.com/fairbanksfolkfest/summerfolkfest.htm](http://alaskasbest.com/fairbanksfolkfest/summerfolkfest.htm))

### Sitka Summer Music Festival

June 4-25

There is no place like Sitka to experience chamber music. Not only does this festival last for three weeks, with some of the very finest chamber musicians to be found, but every year they commission a local artist to design and create their festival poster. This year's poster is a fantastic oil mosaic created by 50 middle school kids.  
([sitkamusicfestival.org](http://sitkamusicfestival.org))

### Fiddlehead Festival

June 19

Beer and music! What better way to celebrate the summer's approaching solstice! Outside the Alyeska Daylodge in Girdwood, this event includes all sorts of food and activities.

### Seldovia Summer Solstice Music Festival

June 18-19 (with Alaska State Ferry Jam, June 17)

Too cool to miss! Coming from far: Alex De Pue & Miguel De Hoyo, and Danny Schmidt & Carrie Elkin. Plus there are tons of AK performers, song circles, open mics, workshops and group jams. A heavenly way to celebrate the solstice.  
([seldoviamusicfestival.wordpress.com](http://seldoviamusicfestival.wordpress.com))

### Nome Midnight Sun Folk

June 17-24

Ok, it's a little impossible to drive to Nome, but their week of celebration of Summer Solstice is so worth the flight! Jazz, folk, barn dancing – oh my! There's all sorts of people performing, but the headlining act is the Stairwell Sisters.  
([nomealaska.org/folkfest](http://nomealaska.org/folkfest))



## { JULY }

### Sitka Fine Arts Camp

June, July

Get the kids wrnggled and send them to camp. The kind of camp where they can build their dancing, singing, acting skills.  
([fineartscamp.org](http://fineartscamp.org))

### Girdwood Forest Fair

July 2-4

It looks as though even The Law can't keep Girdwoodians from celebrating. Forest Fair is back for its 35th year of great music, food, arts & crafts. Certainly one of the best fairs of the summer. Just be careful where you park! The music lineup is lengthy, but includes: The Whipsaws, Melissa Mitchell, Rebel Blues, Pamyua, Lovelifemusic, and Shu Cube.  
([girdwoodforestfair.com](http://girdwoodforestfair.com))

### Chugiak/Eagle River Bear Paw Festival

July 7-11

This festival is full of all sorts of art, theatre and music. It's like the state fair, but with more local art and audience participation events.  
([bearpawfestival.org](http://bearpawfestival.org))

### Dawson City Music Festival

July 16-18

Although Dawson City is not in Alaska, it's worthy a road trip! This is probably the most talked about music festival in Alaska. And for good reason: Lots of sensational music and lots of different genres. This year's seriously diverse lineup is out of this world, with sweet ass acts like the Constantines, Matana Roberts, Good Lovelies, Coolooloosh and Shakura S'Aida...  
([dcmf.com](http://dcmf.com))

### Anderson Bluegrass Festival

July 30-Aug. 1

Perhaps there is no better way to view Denali than by sitting in Anderson looking up at its snow-covered peaks with the sweet strumming of bluegrass, mountain music and blues meddling with the sound waves. There's plenty of camping and lots of views.  
([acousticadventures.com/anderson.html](http://acousticadventures.com/anderson.html))

### Haines – Bald Eagle Music Festival

July 29-Aug. 1

In conjunction with the Southeastern State Fair, this is a great place to drink beer, dance to great AK music, and celebrate arts and living in good Southeastern Fashion! This year's lineup includes Yo Mamma's Big Fat Booty Band, Trampled by Turtles, Pamuya, Blue Scholars, Ratfish Wranglers, Sasquatch Prom Date, Nicole Fournier, Milo Matthews and the Negative Ions, Jennifer Matthews, John Statz, Behind Sapphire and more than we can fit to print... check out their site.  
([seakfair.org](http://seakfair.org))

### Deltana Fair Music Festival

July 30-Aug. 1

More than 20 bands are slated to play on two stages, 40 hours of music in three days. The music is always great, and the after jams are half the draw. To campout means music until the sun goes down... ha ha!  
([lastfrontiermusic.blogspot.com](http://lastfrontiermusic.blogspot.com))

## { AUGUST }

### Talkeetna Bluegrass and Music Festival

Aug. 6-8

Not only is Talkeetna one of the coolest places in the world, it also holds some damn good parties. The music festival is no exception. This year is the 25th anniversary – and to make its point, they've got a delirious 20 hours-a-day-music-lineup.

([eideticimage.com/bluegrass/03/indexold.html](http://eideticimage.com/bluegrass/03/indexold.html))

### Alyeska Blueberry & Mountain Music Festival

August 21-22

Explore the life of a smurf: Relax, listen to music, drink beer and pick blueberries! BBQ, music and craft vendors to be found in the Hotel Alyeska Pond Courtyard.

### Wasilla Acoustic Alaska Guitar Camp

Aug. 28-Sept. 4

In its 8th year, AAGC is featuring two Grammy winning instructors this summer. Not everyone can afford a week of music education, so AAGC has also organized an event at Snow Goose in Anchorage to let those folks get a good listen to "recording artists-turned-instructors" in early July. Check out their Website for more information.

([acousticalaska.com](http://acousticalaska.com))



Photo by Aaron Woroniuk

Spencer Krug from Sunset Rubdown plays the Dawson City Music Festival in 2009. This year the Dawson festival will be July 16-18 and includes the Constantines, Matana Roberts, Good Lovelies, Coolooloosh & Shakura S'Aida

## OTHER ARTS & EVENTS

### Homer Pier One Theatre.

They've got a great summer season of shows and entertainment, including Hedwig and the Angry Itch in June, the crazy musical shenanigans of Yellow Cabin in July (simply not to be missed!) and live jazz in August.

([pieronetheatre.org](http://pieronetheatre.org))

### Kachemak Bay Writers' Conference

June 11-15

With a number of renowned writers for lecturers and Michael Cunningham as the keynote speaker, this is the writers' retreat of the summer!

([writersconference.homer.alaska.edu](http://writersconference.homer.alaska.edu))

### Ketchikan First City Players

All summer!

Check out their Website before you go to town – there's bound to be a show worth seeing.

([firstcityplayers.org](http://firstcityplayers.org))

### Gigglefeet Dance Festival

Aug. 6,8

Put on by First City Players, Ketchikan Theatre Ballet and Ketchikan City Council, the annual dance festival celebrates the diversity dance. Featuring an array of styles, techniques, ages and cultures, the Gigglefeet puts a tickle in the toes.

([ketchikanarts.org/content/view/42/44](http://ketchikanarts.org/content/view/42/44))

### Fairbanks Shakespeare Theatre

All summer!

Shakespeare is great, but not the only thing you're bound to see at FSB. They also specialize in all types of classical theatre. Their productions are generally nothing short of "remarkable."

([fstalaska.org](http://fstalaska.org))

### The Reading Series

First Saturday of every month – 7pm

Listen to the depth of words – the worlds created by thought and pen at the Bear Gallery in Alaska Centennial Center for the Arts in Pioneer Park.

([fairbanksarts.org](http://fairbanksarts.org))

### T.I.P.S. (Totally Impromptu Performance Series)

8pm daily all summer

If you're in Fairbanks, casually stroll through Pioneer Park – you're bound to be pleasantly surprised.

### Talkeetna This I Believe Writers Workshop

June 1, 8, 15, 22<sup>nd</sup> – 6pm

Born of Edward R. Murrows' words, this workshop is all about a group effort to write the great Alaskan essay to submit to the international competition. Think: Group think!

([Talkeetnachamber.org](http://Talkeetnachamber.org))

### Second Saturday

A new artist is featured with an opening reception every month while other artists display their wares and mingle with like minds – and of course some not-so-like minds.

([talkeetnachamber.org](http://talkeetnachamber.org))

# stranger

By Trevor O'Hara

The day the stranger came into town was the day I lost my job. I was working at the Safeway and my manager said I just wasn't cutting it.

I did my work, but I didn't do it fast enough, and there was nothing my manager could do to make me work faster.

He might only have been firing me as some sort of motivation, expecting promises to reform so that he could give me one last chance. But I took him as sincere. I said okay, and I went home.

The first month the stranger was in town I only saw him once or twice, but I knew who was being talked about.

"I saw him outside the True Value today," my mom said. "He was just sitting against the building. Just sitting."

"Who's this?" my father said. He was a line worker in a factory.

"A man, daddy," my sister said. "He's new in town. He doesn't talk."

"Doesn't work either, I suppose." My father cut into his steak. "What are you doing about work, yourself?" This was to me.

"I don't know," I said.

"One of the ranches is usually looking for hands," he said. "I'll give John a call."

I nodded. The last thing I wanted was to do ranch work.

The first time I talked to the stranger he was sitting against the wall outside my old workplace.

"Hey," I said. He looked up. "Where're you from?"

He smiled and stood up. I took a step back. He waved as if I should follow him, then he walked toward the corner of the building.

When we reached the corner he stepped just past the shadow of the wall into the sunlight. He spread his arms and looked up at the sky.

I looked at him, then I looked up. The guy must have been nuts.

"You went into Safeway?" my father said. He drank from his glass of milk.

"A smile," my mother said. "That's more than anyone else has gotten out of him as I hear."

"Did he smell?" my sister asked.

"No," I said. I stirred my potatoes.

Eventually, I got a job at our town's only video store. The owner was a friend of my mom's. It was off First Street and out back there was an ally where on breaks I would smoke cigarettes with a female server from the Chinese restaurant next door.

I saw the stranger a lot more. Once he was sitting in our ally.

"You smoke?" I asked.

He came over and took my cigarette from my hand. He took two drags and handed it back. The restaurant server just watched and said nothing.

"Goddamn sons-of-bitches," my father said.

"I know, honey," my mom said.

"What's wrong, daddy?" my sister asked.

My father threw down the newspaper. Taxes were up. "Goddamn layabouts looking for a handout." He ripped at his piece of chicken.

The night the stranger really made an impression on me was the Fourth of July. Fireworks lit up the sky and the whole town was out. My father and his work friends were drunk.

I saw the stranger walking through the crowd. Looking up at the sky smiling. Then he bumped into one of my father's friends.

"You fuckin' mute!"

Things moved very fast.

The men from the factory fell on the stranger and beat him with their fists and feet. When the circle broke, the stranger was rolling slowly on the ground. I watched as he did his best to pick himself up and limp away.

I waited until he was out of sight, and then I followed him.

I caught up with him about a block away.

"Hey! Wait up!" I shouted.

He stopped and waited for me to come up to him.

His nose and mouth were bleeding. I pulled out my pack of cigarettes and he took one.

We sat down and smoked awhile before I asked, "Are you all right?"

He said nothing.

I dragged on my cigarette.

"New York," he said, surprisingly clear. I could have shit myself.

"What?" I asked.

"New York," he said.

We both took drags.

"New York," I said, and exhaled.

The stranger said nothing else after that. He just sat quietly while I talked.

I told him how I hated my town, and he said nothing. Nothing when I told him my father was a narrow-minded moron. I went on and on about how nothing in my life really meant anything to me and he said nothing.

When we smoked the last of my cigarettes, the stranger stood up. I stood too and he clapped me on the shoulder. He began to move away.

"Wait," I said.

He kept moving and I never saw him again.



# Love PLUM:

Saturated sun cast & reflected  
 exposed and bare  
 yr succulent love plum  
 the nectar of my need  
 the flesh cover'd seed  
 the merger of my unrest  
 2n intimate monument  
 of our mornings moments

Wine vine crimson caressing  
 yr neck line  
 my hand tight against the  
 strength of yr skin  
 I woke up this morning and felt you  
 even though you were not there

Josephine Taylor III

## Edge

By KB Imle

Driving in the dusk of 10 PM.  
Been awhile since I  
Felt sane (couldn't  
Get you off my mind)

Wanting to  
Ride  
Off the edge of the world  
In a crapped-out Chevy,

Forget my innocence  
Forget my calling  
Forget  
Even you...

I wish  
There was nothing  
Out there  
To break this fall



## Resurrection

By KB Imle

And now we are awakening.

Comes a sudden streak of daylight  
Across the stretch of desert at our doorstep  
Which, today, is Arizona.  
(Yesterday our doorstep was New Mexico  
And the day before that no longer matters)

We are awakening again to the slow spin of earth  
Under sky.  
It is an ancient ritual, this dance,  
Sensual. We know it, you and I; even last night  
We followed its steps while the moon watched,  
Laughing sideways at us in the dark.

But now--morning. We push back the darkness  
And step naked into cool desert dawn  
Made new.

## To the Stranger Passing By

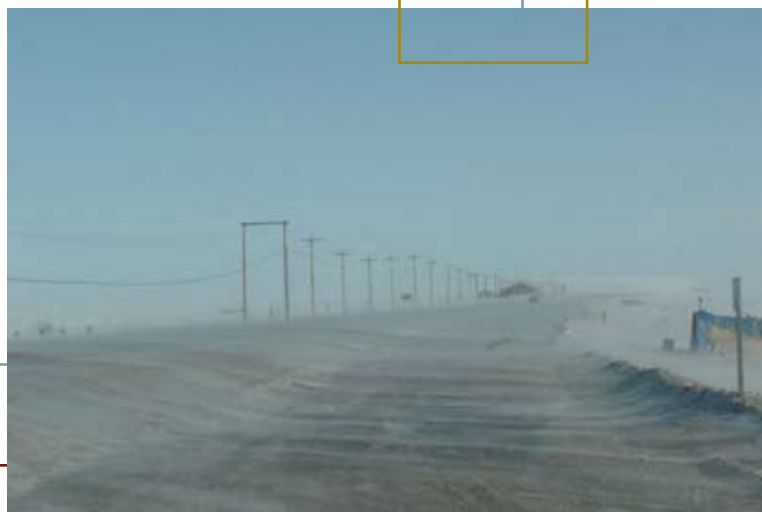
By Kellie Doherty

To the Stranger passing by,  
 You don't know me but  
 When you walked past just then  
 I saw a split second of who you were,  
 Or rather, who you were trying to be.  
 It seems that you have everything  
 Every want  
 Every need  
 Every whim is yours  
 The tailored black suit,  
 The sparkling blue eyes,  
 The winning cheerful grin,  
 Everything about you is flawless,  
 Even down to your highly polished shoes.  
 Your life is, quite simply, perfect.  
 Isn't it?

Even though I've never met you  
 I would highly doubt that fact.  
 I think your perfection is a mask,  
 Like an actor putting on a one-man show.  
 You're trying to hide the imperfections  
 That mark you life as just ordinary.  
 How do I know these things?  
 Our few seconds passing's  
 Told me all I needed to know.  
 That grin on your face is plastic.  
 That sparkle in your eyes, it's fake.  
 Your freshly ironed clothes are crisp  
 Just like your attitude towards others.

All of this just to make it seem like  
 You are better than everyone else.

I'll let you in on a secret though.  
 Honestly? You're just like everyone else.  
 We're similar in our attempts to be unique,  
 Each trying to be someone better,  
 Someone brighter,  
 And sometimes... someone else.  
 But at least, dear Stranger, you're trying  
 And in the end...  
 That's all that matters.  
 Right?



### Andi Powers

One is to Sleep and the Other is Travel  
 sun shining  
 road stretching  
 winds sound  
 something calls  
 driving the interstate  
 for my inner state



## 2009 Road Trip with 4 Bikers from Anchorage

June 25, 2009, Seattle, Washington to Lewiston, Idaho Kent to Lewiston was great! A wonderful day of riding, and only a small shower going through the Pass on Hwy 90. Once hooking up with 26 it was just two-lane highway, lots of farmland and crops. Highway 127 has some great twistys that put a big smile on my face. Found one establishment that serves a 2 lb hamburger. Looks like something off the Food Channel: 'Food vs. Humans.' I had one-quarter of it. Temps here in the 80s so a good opportunity to get used to the hotter weather. Will be heading south towards Boise on Friday.

The day in Salt Lake was busy trying to connect to the Internet, and much late night pondering over maps as to what road to take. Pondering over maps paid off because we rode some of the most beautiful curvaceous roads Utah has to offer. From Salt Lake south we got some interstate time then turned off at Paxon. After a couple parking lot tours we finally found the blue highway scenic route and rode over an 8,000 ft pass, Utah Lake an inland ocean off in the distance. Dropping down the eastern side to connect with Hwy 132 we encountered large tribes of Utah motorcycle riders, mainly pulled off in the scenic overlooks preening and posing for pictures. They appeared friendly as they waved at us, but we took no chances with them, and kept going. On 132 we passed through quaint Mormon villages, where we experienced unexpected acts of kindness, from citizens who probably sent their money to help defeat same-sex marriage in California. Go figure. Leaving the serene villages behind we turned towards the 1,413,111-acre Manti-La Sal, and Fish Lake National Forests, climbing passes over 9,000 feet. Beautiful forests and high alpine meadows.

At the highest pass the aspens just leafed out. We stopped several times to snack, chat, and just take in the scenery. On the next leg, Hwy 72, we encountered serious road snakes. Hot sticky tarry rode snakes that Judy did not know about. She handled them well and now has the knowledge.

July 30. Spent the night by Capitol Reef Park in a clean hotel. A delightful dining establishment, Cafe Diablo, just a block away. We had rattlesnake! Dark handcrafted beer and veggies right out of the garden.

July 5. The WOW rally had an event in Lukenback today. A mechanical bull to ride, and a real Texas longhorn cow you could sit on and have your photo taken. The event was over by the time I arrived. But the cow was very cool, and had enormous horns.

Cows are popular here in Amerika. Everyone has them. Even Judy's friends in New Mexico had one just walk in

and start eating their grass. They built a gate to keep it in until it moves to the freezer. Most roads here have cattle guards. Some cattle guards are just painted lines on the road. I bet their cattle end up in fields in New Mexico.

What they need here are deer guards. They have lots of deer in Texas. Some game farms have 20 ft fences to keep them in, but without deer guards some get out. The ones that get out miss their friends that are on the inside of the big fences, and since there is no deer antidepressant, they commit suicide on the roads around here. The javalinas do the same thing but are not as large as deer. No javalina, unlike the suicidal deer, have wanted to die by my bike.

July 8. We went to Eden, and east of Eden, Paint Rock - some town that claimed to be the Deer Capitol of Texas. Horse Hollow Wind Farm - we rode right through it. Horse Hollow is the largest wind farm on the planet. Over 400 windmills, 755 mw capacity, 47,000 acres. Riding through, it appeared to go on forever. When we stopped all we could hear was the wind swooshing through the blades of the turbines.

July 12. Today was one of the best days of riding of the entire trip. Not to diminish any other rides, but today was exceptional. We started the day off with REAL COFFEE! And real cream!

We stay in 1950's style motels. No two old motel rooms are the same, and we have had good ones and not-so-good ones. The diversity of buildings, materials, and layout of rooms harkens back to an independence that is lost in modern Amerika. We tested the lampshades to determine the quality of the establishment. Holes, burns, or tears result in a lower rating on the 1-10 scale. This room tonight here in Green River Utah has matching ornate ceramic lamps with shades trimmed with gold brick-a-brack. A 9.5 room!



July 16. Yay! Ride as One worked out real good this holiday. Special thanks to Pike Legal, for representing us on the road. Extra-special thanks to all animals that didn't commit suicide by bike, so far. Also thanks to Rouge Wireless Networks.

And thanks to Sara Palin for quitting. May you and Rush lead the Right far, far away.

What a ride. Peace to all.

- Steffie Coppock, AKA Jaz

Dear New Hampshire,

As times get harder here, we are considering selling the beachside house and moving to the country. I fret there will be no way for us to sustain an income, but George assures me that most things out there are nearly free. And what is not, we can grow and raise ourselves. Little Mary has been crying every day for a week since the idea first arose, but my toothless Tommy thinks it's a marvelous idea. I fancy he considers it an adventure - like finally getting to enact Huck Finn. I personally have no fears of moving to the country - except I know without doubt that I shall miss all those fabulous little crumpets at the Country Club - and of course Fitch. I shall most certainly miss him and our pleasant conversations. But I mustn't mention it to George.

Dear Sweet George. He can be such a prudish man at times. He's fearful of theatre people, he's fearful of other men. He's fearful of spiders and other crawly things. Come to think of it, it's hard to imagine a thing he's not afraid of. You. He's not afraid of you. In fact, I think you're the one thing George is not afraid of. If I were a jealous woman I would truly consider the notion that you two were having an affair. But lack of jealousy and a mountain of logic tell me otherwise. The distance alone would make the whole idea simply ludicrous.

Other than our potential move to the country, there has been little in my heart and mind to tarry with. Except for this preacher man who has been coming around quite often. He fills my head with the craziest impressions of repentance and redemption. Not that those are inane by any means, however, the way he represents such ideas always fills me - mind you, at the time that he's here speaking - with such a feeling of elation that it dizzies my feet and sends my legs shaking. It's silly, but I always fear my knickers will fail!

I suspect these intimate details would worry George, so as with most things, I keep it to myself - and you. And only to you must I make a clean breast: This nutty preacher man has got me confessing the most irrational things. I blush to consider them, but when he grabs onto my hand with one of his own (so large and soft, it's hard to imagine a man with such soft hands!) and raises the bible in the air, the words just spill out and seemingly expunge me of all my sins - though I know it to be just a sleight of hand. Burdens of proof tinge the truth. I know in my heart, you will nary till my naughty deeds, as we both recall what secrets of yours that I harness, but I fear nonetheless that someday my skeletons shall resume life and walk about making a nuisance of my simpleton accessories.

So to end where I began: I do believe I'm becoming fatigued with my life here. I know with certainty it is time for me to either levy my hidden predicaments or hold my head up and with dignity say goodbye to the comforts of my urban life. And the latter I must. I will tread the highway with my family and start anew, in a place with no clandestine haunts, no timeless gossips. No handsome, precocious Fitch, no peculiar soothsaying preacher man. Just wind, and trees, and fields and orchards and a big plot of land to bury what you and I both deem to be layers of skin thinner than shadows, but heavy enough to moor a ship.

Indubitably you are missed by yours truly,

Maryland

By Caroline Stellhorn

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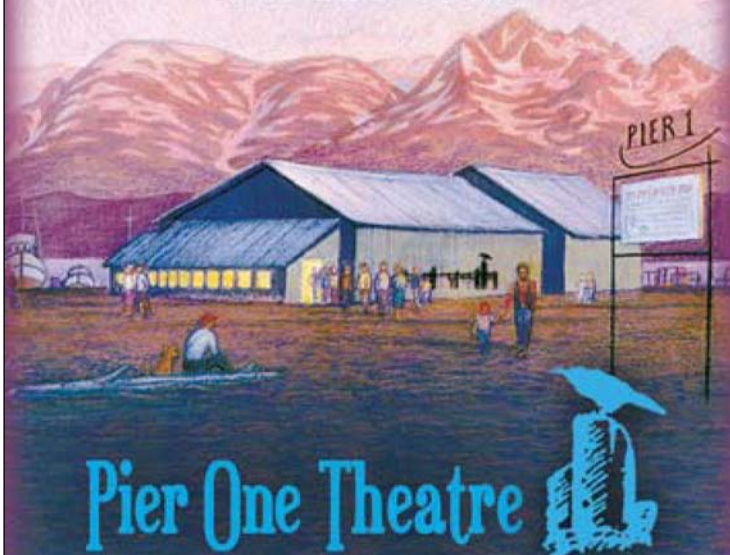
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