



Hey, It's the 20's

Riverwest Currents



Summer Solstice June 20

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News You Can Use • Riverwest, Harambee and The East Side

Vol 19 Issue 6 JUNE 2020



mkefilm/sofacinema Spaceship Earth is still available on the website to rent.
Support Milwaukee Film by renting from Sofa Cinema
Spaceship Earth, A true story released by NEON films, Promo photo

Spaceship Earth review

by Mitchell Horner

Ever wonder “What inspired 1996’s Bio-Dome, starring Pauly Shore?” If you answer “yes” to this question, congratulations! No one has thought about Bio-Dome since 1996. You are the first person to do that. Allow me to make a recommendation for you, Bio-Dome ponderer: *Spaceship Earth*, available now through Milwaukee Film’s **Sofa Cinema** program, answers that (very specific) question.

Spaceship Earth, directed by Matt Wolf, tells the fascinating true story of a group of counter-cultural eccentrics who resolved to seal themselves into an enclosed vivarium designed to replicate Earth’s ecological systems for two years, calling this endeavor the Biosphere 2 Program. *Spaceship Earth* tells the story of those eccentrics, isolated in their biosphere from 1991 to 1993.

In a certain sense, *Spaceship Earth* is more so a fascinating story than it is a fascinating documentary. It is a competently-made film, although mostly unintuitive, avoiding formal risks and innovation in

favor of storytelling. Even taking this into consideration, aspects of the storytelling are glossed over, or ignored entirely.

The scientific aspects of the project are pretty incredible; for example, it is calculated that the farms they used to source their food during their 2 year lockup were the most efficient on the planet. However, this is not a scientific film, at least not really. In practice, it is a story about human conflict, cooperation, and the psychology of isolation and small-group dynamics. This comes to be the real focus of the film, with the hierarchy of the group coming to define the project.

Ultimately, *Spaceship Earth*, despite adhering closely to the documentary formula, does tell a fascinating story of dreamers, innovators, and the goals which motivate them.

The Biosphere 2 story is one which I am surprised is not more widely known, and on that basis alone I recommend *Spaceship Earth*.

Spaceship Earth is available through Milwaukee Films “Sofa Cinema” program.
Runtime 115 min.

Spaceship Earth takes quarantine to a higher level. They called it Biosphere 2 because the earth is biosphere 1. Read an editorial on issues on biosphere 1 on page 5.

If you are wondering how Milwaukee Film is doing while we cannot view films in the beautiful Oriental Theatre, read Horner’s interview with Cara Ogburn, Milwaukee Film Festival Director on page 10. Ogburn is positive about putting on a show in October for the Milwaukee Film Festival, she is just not sure of all the specifics of how and where.

This issue is full of “deep thoughts” and sometimes humorous thoughts on the human condition in quarantine.

Despite the fact that so many locations are closed, where you may have picked up a copy of the Riverwest Currents, we are continuing to publish. We have begun to deliver door to door in the Riverwest Neighborhood. It is a daunting task and if anyone would like to help, drop me an email, Vince Bushell at vbushell@gmail.com.

Donations also would help us support young writers like Mitchel Horner and others as well as press costs and distribution costs. We are not a non-profit, so give like you mean it without a tax deduction. Vince Bushell, proudly putting out a monthly for 19 years.

Sunrise Foods Shines On Under New Ownership



Mike and Odeh bid farewell



Bharat Bansal now welcoming you to Sunrise

by Lee Gutowski

Well, it’s finally happened. Sunrise Foods, the beloved Riverwest bodega (or “corner store”, or even “institution” would be accurate) has been sold. The guys at Sunrise – 50/50 owners Mike Salem and Odeh Badad -- have sold the business after Mike and his cousin (not Odeh) bought the place in 1994.

The decision to sell came about NOT strictly because of COVID 19, but the pandemic may have been the last straw. Both guys were burned out by the workload and the hours required to run the store – to make Sunrise Foods what it is to the community. Odeh explained, “One of us owners would be (at the store) all the time. All these years, every day from 9am until 9pm, there was never a time when either me or Mike was not here.

“It’s not that we didn’t have good workers – but it’s different when it’s your business, when you are an owner of the business. It wouldn’t be Sunrise if we didn’t do it that way”

And Mike, almost apologetically, even said it would be “suicide” to try to keep up the pace. “I’m 60 – I’m tired! And I see all the people here more than I see my own family. But I love my customers. It was not about the money; my priority has been to be here for our Riverwest community for both good and bad times.”

And be here they have. Many Sunrise customer-friends can rattle off favorite stories of kindnesses they’ve received from Sunrise. Mike calling them personally to ask after their health and offer to have groceries and supplies delivered to them when they couldn’t make it into the store to shop. Driss dropping off an impaired customer at home after the store’s closing time, rather than see the impaired customer get in their car and drive home. Donating to the food pantry that the Riverwest Public House has been running twice a week during the hard

times brought by COVID-19. And remembering folks – usually by name – who’ve come back to the store after living outside of the area for years and eventually returned. Just recently two folks who moved back to Riverwest after ten years or more reported that to their delight, the guys at the store recognized and remembered them and welcomed them back.

A little history

Mike and Odeh knew each other in their former home of Palestine. They lived in the same town, and Mike hung out with Odeh’s older brother (Mike said, “I’ve known Odeh since he was a little kid, this high,” motioning toward his knee.) Their families knew each other.

Mike was a schoolteacher in Palestine. In 1989, when he was “29-ish,” he immigrated with other family members to the U.S. First, he lived in Chicago, where he worked at a small neighborhood store owned by his brother-in-law and located in the Englewood neighborhood. He worked there (“to get the working experience”) for about 6 months, then moved to Florida to help a friend run his store. In late 1993, he moved to Milwaukee, and in about June 1994, he and a cousin of his bought Sunrise Foods – the business and the building it’s housed in, which has residential apartments on the second floor. His cousin retired early, after which time Odeh came on the scene.

Odeh had been living in San Diego, California with his family. He and his uncle came to Milwaukee once and visited Mike. Odeh was offered the chance to buy Mike’s cousin’s share of the store, which he did. That was a good sixteen years ago; they’ve been the dynamic duo ever since.

Odeh plans to buy invest in property here in Milwaukee before he moves with his family (wife, 3 teenage daughters and a 21 year old son, but the son is staying here) to the Escondido/San Diego area that he misses. The weather here has been making

Sunrise continued on page 7



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Riverwest Currents

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Night: 8 hrs, 38 min.



Summer Solstice June 20

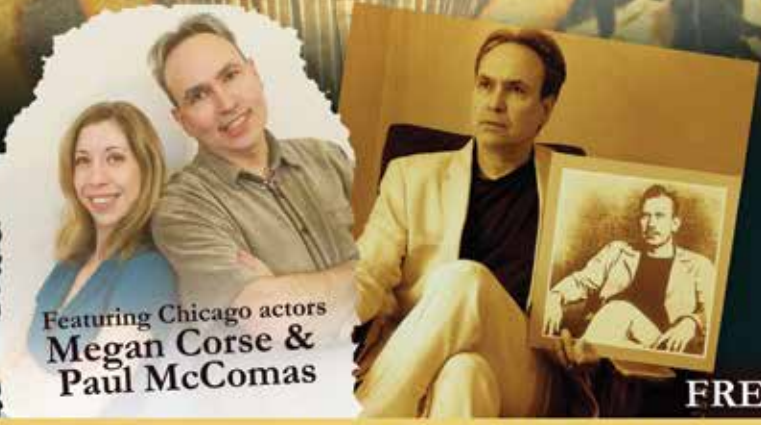
Friday, June 5, 2020 LIVE E-Theatre Event with Music!

7:00 PM
on Zoom & Facebook
bit.ly/steinonline



John Steinbeck:
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Hosted by 3 vital Milwaukee nonprofits:
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OWL

Older. Wiser. Local.



Amy Schmutte, OWL Program Manager

OWL (Older.Wiser.Local) is a program created to serve, enlighten and educate area seniors (50 and up). OWL is sponsored by the Jazz Gallery Center for the Arts, along with Bader Philanthropies.

Normally we'd be gathering in-person for these programs, but to respect the safety of everyone, we're temporarily broadcasting our material, interview-style on Riverwest Radio, WXRW, 104.1FM.

Our shows begin at 3pm and go until 3:30pm, every Weds. and Thurs., every week. Please tune in!

If you miss the live broadcast, you can catch it afterward at www.riverwestradio.com or

<https://www.riverwestradio.com/show/owl-older-wiser-local/>

Weds. June 3rd: Talent Spotlight on the amazing Artist, Producer, Entrepreneur, Filmmaker, Audio Engineer, and Author Darick Spears.

Thurs. June 4th: Artist Spotlight on Photographer and well-known Milwaukee neighbor, Howard Leu. A photo a day!

Weds. June 10th: Actress, Emily Vit-rano and friends discuss the devised theater project called "The Empathy Project".

Thurs. June 11th: Cyber Security & Etiquette expert, Nick Schmutte leads us in the right virtual direction.

Weds. June 17th: Home Inspector (and Rock-n-Roller) Tom Karwoski gives us advice (and some fun stories) on home maintenance and safety.

Thurs. June 18th: Jordan Klien speaks on first-time new-fatherhood, spiritual wellness in trying times, and the art of his expertise, the Soundbath.

Weds. June 24th: Part.1 of two: Mari Lynn Young shares her deep and constant wisdom on the concept of Soul Ages. How old is YOUR spirit?

Thurs. June 25th: Part.2 of two: Mari Lynn Young continues on Soul Ages.

Amy Schmutte
OWL Program Manager
Older, Wiser, Local (OWL)
The Jazz Gallery
414.429.2092



Abandoned Coast Guard Station, Photo Howard Leu, OWL Thursday June 4th.

Community Summer Event Update

by Ruth Weill:
Community engagement specialist,
Riverworks Development Corp.

Summer is almost here and normally we are organizing and planning a plethora of events for all to enjoy. Unfortunately, this year many of these events were canceled or postponed until further notice. A few are "going virtual" -- showcasing what the community has to offer in a safe manner, via social media.

Two street beloved Riverwest festivals -- Locust Street Festival and Center Street Daze -- have been canceled, as was the City of Milwaukee's 4th of July celebrations (including Gordon Park's). The Riverwest 24, Riverworks Week and Bronzeville Week have announced that they are reconfiguring what their events may look like. Stay tuned!

The Riverwest Farmer's Market has not been canceled and is planning for a full season (as farmer's markets are not only an essential business, but access to fresh produce is important.) Because of COVID-19, there are special health department regulations and our market will look and feel a little different this year.

The biggest change is the location. Garden Park on Locust and Bremen is too small an area to properly hold a market with the current guidelines. The market will be held on the 2700 block of North Pierce Street, one long line of vendors spaced minimally 6 feet apart. The street will be closed on Sundays from 8:30am to 3:30pm. More information will be available at riverwestmarket.com, as well as on Facebook and Instagram.

Other changes per guidelines:

- No live music
- No open food or samples
- No hanging out
- No pets
- No other activities such as making art, etc.
- One shopper per household whenever possible

We look forward to when we can celebrate the bounty of the season together!

Many of our local food and beverage establishments are doing carryout and delivery. Now, more than ever, supporting local vendors is a good thing. Enjoy!

Riverworks Development Corporation has been quietly working with residents assisting them with tax, stimulus, and other financial related issues. If you have questions or need assistance, please visit riverworksmke.org for more information. Throughout the Safer at Home order the laundromat, located at 3334 N Holton Street, has remained open, as it is an essential business that many in the community need. Please visit the following link for the most up to date information: riverworksmke.org/riverworks-coin-laundry

At press time, the message on the website was: Due to the recent COVID-19, Riverworks Coin Laundry will be taking preemptive measures to ensure social distancing and sanitized washers and dryers.

Strictly enforced:

- 1) Only 5 people allowed in laundromat at the same time
- 2) Wait in car during wash/dry

Thank you for understanding and for following the rules.

Current, reduced hours: Monday-Friday: 7am-8pm. Last wash: 6:40pm. Saturday and Sunday: 7am-3pm. Last wash: 1:45pm.

We know this has been a tough time for many of us. We look forward to spending time together again, on the street, in our bars and restaurants. Until then, be safe and healthy!



Riverwest's Neighborhood Farmers Market to move to 2700 block of Pierce Street in 2020

Riverwest Elders -June Calendar

Summer Plans for the Riverwest Elders?

No JUNE events are scheduled.

Quite honestly we are all missing each other very much.

But....

There continue to be questions without answers!

Such as....

Even if the East Library opened to patrons could they accommodate a group of 30 happy people, sitting 6 ft. apart, for potluck lunch?

Restaurants are still struggling to move beyond "carryout", and arrange tables with safe distance!

Each of us have COVID19 personal safe comfort levels which can't be challenged, ignored or excluded!

The RW Elders Planning Team consistently assesses possibilities.

We will make monthly decisions and announce them in the RW Currents.

Contact riverwestelders@gmail.com to be added to our googlegroup. Criteria will be sent to you.

The State of Wisconsin "Badger Bounce Back" plan is guided by science and public health professionals. There are specific, regularly monitored, target goals. The number of new cases or deaths in Milwaukee County increase with low significant or consistent reductions. This virus has not gone away.

The COVID19 virus effect may be mitigated due to "Safe at Home" protocol. Let's help each other stay safe and visit in ways that satisfy, safely. Anyone can carry the disease without knowing. Each of us qualify as members of the "vulnerable" group. Virtual hugs only!!

CRISIS HAS BEEN UPON US FOR DECADES, IT’S HIGH TIME WE STARTED ACTING LIKE IT

by Tulsi Shah

Shah is a student and Loyola Marymount in LA. She has connections to Miw-laukee and Riverwest and offered this editorial which we gladly accepted.

As I embark on my daily walk, I witness the LA skyline free of smog. Daringly, I remove my mask to take in a big breath of fresh air. How strange to consider this time to be the biggest calamity of our lifetimes when my walk remains peaceful and the air clean. Despite the lowered pollution and blue skies, I cannot help but ponder how this crisis is nothing compared to the one we’ve been facing for decades. COVID-19 is just part of a larger catastrophe, and may be only the beginning of massive disease outbreaks. Over 70 major medical groups in the U.S. have named climate change “a true public health emergency.”¹ This public health emergency will bring water and food shortages, pollution that lowers our resistance to disease, extreme temperatures, natural disasters, and more that we can’t even predict.² One thing we know for certain is that these factors will affect the poorest and those with the fewest resources most, much like COVID-19. The planet is sending us a message: if we neglect it, we place our own wellbeing at risk. As a college student planning for a full life, I implore all of us to demand that our long-term response to COVID-19 also combats climate change, the equally pressing and more destructive public health crisis. Luckily, there is a plan out there that does both, while also stimulating the economy.

Eleven climate and social policy experts have released a plan called the “Green Stimulus,” which addresses the long term challenge of jumpstarting economic recovery after COVID-19 while transitioning to a more sustainable way of life.³ The proposal

call on the federal government to engage in a just transition away from fossil fuels, and curb planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions across the economy.⁴ The plan also aims to create millions of family-sustained green jobs, lift standards of living, place the public more in control of private sector bailouts, and help make American society and its economy stronger as well as more resilient amidst a pandemic, recession, and long approaching climate emergency.⁵ This approach is in stark contrast to the Trump administration’s assault on environmental protections under the guise of a COVID-19 response.

Oil companies have successfully lobbied the administration for no-strings-attached corporate bailouts, and pressured the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to suspend enforcement of regulations during the pandemic, allowing any number of industries to skirt environmental laws indefinitely. The White House has rolled back fuel-economy standards for⁶ the car industry, three states have criminalized fossil fuel protesters, construction has resumed on the KXL pipeline, and the new stimulus bill includes a \$50 billion bailout for aviation companies.⁷ Industries responsible for polluting our environment are the ones receiving the most governmental support during this crisis, instead of agencies whose leadership and guidance we need for both future pandemics and the health impacts of climate change. For instance, the administration has downsized epidemic prevention preparations at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), shut down the global health security unit of the National Security Council, and terminated the government’s \$30 million complex crises fund.⁸ In the president’s latest budget, the CDC’s budget would be cut by 16%, the Department of Health and Human Services by 10%, and the EPA by 26%. In other words, proper

disease prevention and climate⁹ control is out the window.

Imagine instead a future under the Green Stimulus. A plan that focuses on farmers, rural communities, small businesses, workers, struggling families, and the nation’s most vulnerable.¹⁰ Food, housing, transportation, and manufacturing - essentials during the pandemic - are a big part of the plan, which lays out practical policy solutions that even state and local governments can implement that will put people back to work as we move into later stages of our COVID response. Additionally, the plan proposes to hold seats on corporate boards for labor representatives and set a \$15 minimum wage within one year. The Green Stimulus also¹¹ includes investment in public land as well as phasing out funding for fossil-fuels while transitioning to a green infrastructure in a way that doesn’t negatively impact workers and communities. The authors call for an automatic renewal of the stimulus until the economy is¹² fully decarbonized and the unemployment rate is below 3.5%.¹³

The climate has been changing for a while, but we did nothing. Now COVID-19 has forced us to live and think differently, redefining normalcy. Let’s be courageous and finally make the transition from endorsing the dirty industries of the last century and start building and supporting the clean industries that will lead us to safety in the coming century.¹⁴ Let’s invest in a national and global infrastructure that readies us for the unpredictable events coming at us rather than pretending they will bypass us. Like COVID, climate change will initially hit the most vulnerable the hardest, but you can bet it will quickly affect everyone. Wealth will not immunize any one of us from climate change’s devastating impacts on human health. Do we want to live in harsh economic times while the

climate swiftly degrades and takes us down with it, or do we want the greatest number of people to not only live, but thrive in the coming decades? The choice is truly ours.

1 Samantha Harrington, “How Climate Change Threatens Public Health,” Yale Climate Connections , Climate Explained, August 15, 2019, www.yaleclimate-connections.org/2019/08/how-climate-change-threatens-public-health/.

2 Jonathon Watts, “Nature Is Bouncing Back During the Coronavirus Crisis - but for How Long?,” Mother Jones , April 11, 2020, <https://www.motherjones.com/coronavirus-updates/2020/04/nature-is-bouncing-back-during-the-coronavirus-crisis-but-for-how-long/>.

3 Jessica Corbett, “A ‘Green Stimulus’ Could Battle Three Crises: Coronavirus, Economic Injustice and Climate Emergency,” EcoWatch , Common Dreams, March 24, 2020, www.ecowatch.com/green-stimulus-climate-coronavirus-2645575236.html?rebellitem=1#rebellitem1.

4 Lisa Friedman, “What Is the Green New Deal? A Climate Proposal, Explained,” The New York Times , February 21, 2019, www.nytimes.com/2019/02/21/climate/green-new-deal-questions-answers.html . 5 Corbett, “A ‘Green Stimulus.’”

6 Watts, “Nature is Bouncing.”

7 Watts, “Nature is Bouncing.”

8 Dawn, Stover, “6 Ways the Trump Administration Has Botched Responses to the Coronavirus and Climate Change,” Mother Jones , 16 Mar. 2020, www.motherjones.com/environment/2020/03/6-ways-the-trump-administration-has-botched-responses-to-the-coronavirus-and-climate-change/.

9 Stover, “6 Ways the Trump.”

10 Corbett, “A ‘Green Stimulus.’” 11 Corbett, “A ‘Green Stimulus.’”

12 Corbett, “A ‘Green Stimulus.’”

13 Corbett, “A ‘Green Stimulus.’”

14 Naomi Klein, “Coronavirus Capitalism - and How to Beat It,” The Intercept , March 16, 2020, theintercept.com/2020/03/16/coronavirus-capitalism/.

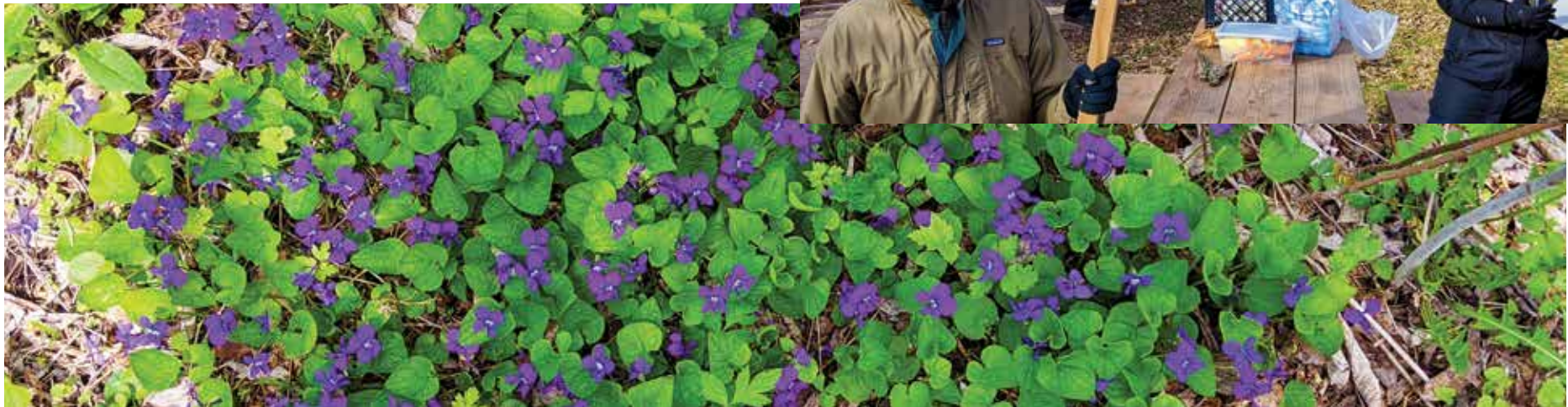
What is the Green New Deal?

by Lisa Friedman, excerpt from New York Times, Feb. 21, 2019

If you’ve heard a lot recently about the Green New Deal but still aren’t quite sure what it is, you are not alone. After all, it has been trumpeted by its supporters as the way to avoid planetary destruction, and vilified by opponents as a socialist plot to take away your ice cream. So it’s bound to be somewhat confusing. We’re here to help.

Currents Note: Why ice cream?- in the dairy state?, because of cows and methane gas they release. I don’t think we have to worry about losing our ice cream, but we do have to consider things in moderation and embrace earth friendly options for travel and electricity and probably eat less meat. As Shah refers to it “Green Stimulus”.

Violets in Gordon Park



O.J. Merrell – A Life Well Lived

By Suzanne Zipperer

*The people I love the best
jump into work head first
without dallying in the shallows
and swim off with sure strokes almost
out of sight.*

Taken from To Be of Use by Marge Percy

Poet Marge Percy would have loved O.J. “Jay” Merrell. He was a doer; a Renaissance man whose theatrical voice grabbed your attention as he recounted adventures in work and play. He was full of ideas with the skills to execute them, and held a pace that would make young people beg for a break.

O.J. passed away unexpectedly on May 5th, a few weeks before his 75th birthday.

The Riverwest community best knew O.J. as the organizer of the Secret Garden Tour. O.J. jumped into leading the tour its second year. Together with his wife, Chris Renstrom who designed the posters and map, the garden tour was the only one in the city limits at the time. It has since spawned tours in Bay View and the East Side. The annual event was attended by people coming from as far away as Madison and Kewaskum, peaking at 434 in 2018. This year, Mike Trokan and Rita Tenorio’s Riverwest Secret Garden would have been featured in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel’s annual review of garden tours.

This was due to O.J.’s boundless energy, even when recovering from back surgery and facing increasing health issues.

To locate these “secret” backyard gardens, O.J. would explore the alleys up and down Riverwest and contact those whose back yards looked inviting. At times he’d have to convince homeowners that opening their yard wouldn’t risk the security of their home. While most garden tours are of



suburban mansions, the Riverwest tour was meant to show people what could be done in a small space. O.J.’s garden is a prime example. Avid gardeners, O.J. and Chris not only planted their small yard but learned to harvest it as well. Surrounded by greenery, it was a private room welcoming friends to share a salad, home-made salsa, or fresh pears.

In 2015, O.J. and Chris had their work recognized as winners of the Grand Champion Beautification Award from Blumel’s Garden Center and a landscaping award from the mayor’s office.

A second difference in the Secret Garden Tour was that it was financially assessable to all. While most garden tours cost up to \$20 to attend, the \$3 price set the first year was meant to ensure families in the neighborhood and seniors could afford to go. Generous folks, O.J. and Chris donated the fees to garden projects in the neighborhood rather than use it to pay the printing and other costs of the event, which they covered with their own funds.

Those people who dive right in to life are not afraid to reinvent themselves. That’s

because they know who they are and trust their core. O.J. was one of those. His first career was as a Communications and Theater Arts instructor. He worked in several colleges, including Blackburn College in Carlinville, Illinois, where he grew the department and launched professional careers. Chris and O.J. moved to Waukesha in 1982 where he taught at Carroll College. Participating in Art Walk gave them a glimpse of Riverwest where they bought a house on Pierce Street in 1989. O.J. didn’t know then that he would launch a second tradition that introduces Riverwest residents to other communities.

When the demands of college theater led O.J. to wanting his evenings and weekends back, he joined the staff at the Milwaukee County Zoo. Starting as an attendant, O.J. was soon using his set building and theater production skills to create displays and became Exhibit and Events Coordinator. His took his creativity to events such as Halloween, bringing families in for a unique experience.

A doer doesn’t stop. O.J. retired after 25 years with the zoo.

Retirement activities included rock climbing, crafting wooden guitars and furniture, stained glass work, and of course, gardening.

With the pandemic, there was no memorial service for O.J. Chris said he would have been OK with that. He didn’t like the idea of being laid out for people to look at. But lives well lived need to be commemorated as examples for the sake of the rest of us. When “this” is all over, maybe next year at the garden tour which participants have already volunteered to continue, we will remember O.J. “Jay” Merrell.



Design for Tour in 2009



**Dog
of
the
Month!**

Fluffy: A tough and loving little guy. What he lacks in size he makes up for in personality.



“For the time being, Woodland Pattern’s physical location is remaining closed to the public. We are continuing to provide virtual programming with full details available on our website at www.woodlandpattern.org. We are also offering contactless curbside pickup between Wednesday and Saturday 2-6 p.m. Books are placed on a sanitized table. Please call (414) 263-5001 or email peterb@woodlandpattern.org to place an order.»

Sunshine continued from page 1

him miserable for years now, and luckily, he's got lots of extended family in a place that has "perfect" weather.

"Riverwest is one of the best places I've worked or lived in the past 30 years," Odeh said. "We have the best people here. And the younger generation is beautiful. The people are not racists and they don't look at color. Our customers ... they love us and we love them."

The crew

The latest crew working at Sunrise under Mike and Odeh's management include Driss (sometimes called "Chris" by customers, which has always been fine by him) Elabdallaoui, who's worked there for thirteen years, and Mahmoud Amireh, who's been there about four and a half years.

Driss smiled mischievously and said, "I'll find something to do, get another job ... but first I want to have a vacation," when asked what he's going to do next. Though he was kind of mysterious about his plans, he said we should see him around the store for at least a few weeks more, helping the new crew get trained.

Mahmoud, who lives on the south side and has cousins and a nephew living



Driss & Odeh take a smoke break



Mahmoud

nearby, will also be around the neighborhood in the future. "Jim Linneman just called me and said he wants me to play there (at Linneman's music venue) when things open back up," he said. Sunrise customers know Mahmoud as a musician he is since he often could be found behind the checkout counter playing his oud and singing beautiful songs. "I want people to know I've really enjoyed my time working in Riverwest. I respect and love the people there and I made a lot of friends. I've been in Milwaukee for twenty years, and I never knew people could be like they are here. They love music, and to talk and sing and dance. You know, that's why Mike and Odeh stayed here in Riverwest for so long."

Meet the new boss:

Bharat (pronounce like "Barack" but with a "t" at the end) Bansal has worked for many years at his father's store in Milwaukee. "I've done this a few times, where I've taken over or started a new business. But I've never seen such a good reaction from the community." He posted recently on the Riverwest Neighborhood Facebook page, in response to the outpouring of support Sunrise is getting during the changeover.

Here's what he had to say:

"Wow all these comments and emotions are so heartwarming! Makes me both happy and nervous. I am the new owner for Sunrise. I know I have huge shoes to fill (and) trust me when I say I have amazing people working with me. You will see that as we get to know each other. We are here to stay and I have promised myself to find & give the same love and affection in the community as Mike and Odeh. Chat with me when you see me at the store."

"Last day" celebration planned

At press time, the latest word is that in about a month (mid-to-late June), Mahmoud will be playing his oud outside on the store as part of a farewell celebration for the "old guard" at Sunrise. Keep your eyes and ears open for that!



River Trail Commons
CoHousing Development Proposal
North Avenue and Walworth Avenue Adjacent to Beerline Trail

Preliminary drawings for 41 homes, including bungalows on Walworth Avenue in Riverwest and bridging the Beerline, Eastside, and Riverwest Communities. Plan is for River Trail Café & Bike Depot (light repairs & accessories) focused on hikers, bikers, walkers, with a few retail parking spots. As always with cohousing, cars are deemphasized.

Contact Milwaukee Area Cohousing for more information on this exciting proposal.

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MCTS to Resume Fare
Collection on June 1

Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) announced today that it will resume fare collection and front door boarding on all buses and on paratransit vehicles providing Transit Plus rides starting at 4:00 a.m. on June 1

MCTS is recommending that riders who are medically able wear a face mask or face covering over their nose and mouth while on board. To help maintain social distancing, MCTS will continue to limit riders to 10 per bus.

Please be respectful to bus drivers and other passengers by remembering the following:

Health officials say wearing masks or other types of face coverings while in public settings helps prevent the spread of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).

Riders should enter through the front door, pay the fare and then move away from the fare-box and the driver. The use of contactless fare forms, like the M-CARD and Ride MCTS app, is strongly encouraged. Please limit conversation and interaction with the driver.

Follow Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for social distancing, washing hands often, covering coughs and sneezes, and avoiding public transportation when sick.

Allow for extra travel time. If a bus has 10 people on board, the driver will not pick up additional riders. To reduce wait times, MCTS will monitor bus loads and add extra buses when possible.

All buses undergo a daily disinfection process using EPA-approved and CDC-recommended cleaning products. That's in addition to the standard cleaning vehicles receive on a regular basis.

Buses that operate Mondays-Fridays are running on a weekday schedule, with the exception of Freeway Flyers, which are still suspended. Saturday and Sunday schedules remain unchanged.

Anyone with questions about fares or bus passes can contact the MCTS Customer Service Center by phone at 414-937-3218 (Voice), 711 (TRS), or email "customerservice@mcts.org."

The MCTS Administration Building, 1942 N. 17th Street, remains closed to visitors, but accommodations are being made to serve customers remotely.

A Community that is Continuing to Give



"In this COVID crisis we're all rallying together to make sure that no family has to worry about skipping meals or has to worry about not being able to keeping their diets healthy, especially at a time when we all need to be watching our health," says the Executive Director of the Riverwest Food Pantry Vincent Noth.

During these challenging times, many of us are forced to look at our finances and strategize how to best stretch the dollar. Certain bills and payments that may have been easier to pay for before, now seem unmanageable. You even may find yourself in a position that you never thought you would be in, a place where it is hard to figure out how to put food on the table.

It is at times like these when we come to discover the importance of community. At the Riverwest Food Pantry, this could not be truer. Twice a week, loving neighbors come together to distribute food to their community by operating a safe pickup food service to everyone who comes.

"You don't need to worry about proving your income," says Noth. "You don't need to worry about 'if I am in need enough' to come to the Riverwest Food Pantry."

Currently, the Riverwest Food Pantry is distributing food on Tuesdays from 4:00-6:00PM and Saturdays from 8:30-10:30AM at their St. Casimir Location at 924 East Clarke Street in Milwaukee. They are operating a safe

food distribution service where people can pick up pre-bagged food of fresh produce and non-perishable items. Each of its core volunteers and staff members who is working on-site follows the CDC protocol for protection, such as continuously sanitizing workstations and wearing masks and gloves.

"We are here for moments like this – so that we can be here for anybody in need," concludes Noth. Now more than ever we need to depend on one another. Food pantries that are open in Milwaukee are a resource for everyone. Together we can get through this, as one community.

The Riverwest Food Pantry is a community food center that is committed to improving lives and grow community well-being in the city of Milwaukee. Recognizing that everyone has gifts to share, the Riverwest Food Pantry engages volunteers and community residents to end hunger, isolation and poverty. On average, the Riverwest Food Pantry serves 300,000 pounds of food to 13,000 people every year. The Riverwest Food Pantry primarily serves the 53212, 53211, 53217, 53202, 53203 zip.



My Mind in the Attic

By Vince Bushell

It is a comfortable place. Semi-finished, with dry wall and collar beams visible, it follows the gabled roof to its peak. I can see a crab apple flowering in the west facing windows. I am close to 30 feet above Bremen Street. The leaves are now bursting out on the Norway Maple out the window. It is warm in the attic. Heat rises. When I go down a flight to the kitchen and my apartment, it feels cool, too cool. I return to my warm isolation in the attic.

It is part function and part storage. The clutter of life's decades surrounds me. Racks of clothes, most of which I will never wear again, are behind me. As I write I find that I want to skip verbs. Now they seem superfluous. Is it ok to write "behind me" versus "are behind me".

In front of me is the computer screen, a radio, several printers, several mass storage chunks to save these symbols known as words in a more abstract form as binary bits. On the far wall is an old 1980's stereo and big speakers. I should turn it on again and blast the dust from the attic of my mind.

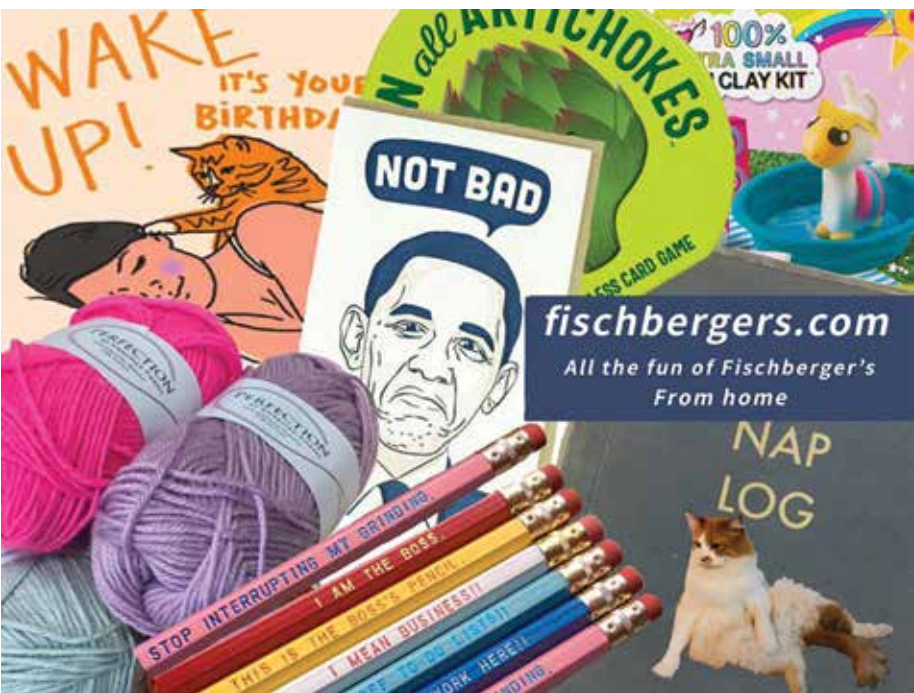
Above the window is a shelf with an

early 20th century radio, a SLR 35mm camera, my father's Rollicord twin lens medium format camera, an owl, or a shadow puppet of an owl, a Christmas tree candelabra topped by a bird holding the candle holder. A 1950's era stereo camera, a Realist made by the David White company in Milwaukee. The Realist sits atop a group of precious photos and a card from Jackie Detlaflf, who wrote for the Riverwest Currents for years. Her card speaks highly of the river lands.

Years ago she wrote the story about the Lazenby's, that last house on the river on River Boat Road. I ran into her on a river hike on a warm winter day, and it was Christmas Day. She was with her husband. Sending love to Jackie as I write this..

It is the end of May as I finish this. I am six dozen years old. A goodly sum and surely more behind then in front. I am an emotional person. I cry, I try not to lie, at least to myself. I see, hear, touch, and taste the world. I laugh and long to be in company. Now in the depths of forced contemplation in my attic, I ask what is real.

Love is real.



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Flooding on Milwaukee River, Gordon Park, May 19, 2020



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Quarantine Chronicles Volume One

by Adam Krueger

Day 54. Or is 62? Maybe it is only 38. But 54 feels right. I think it is a Monday. Then again, yesterday was also Monday. Time is one of the first things to go in quarantine, right after pants. Not just the time of day either. I am not talking about the breakfast, lunch, dinner thing. No, the whole concept of linear time seems to unravel. Nothing is new. Nothing is old either. Everything with any meaning just becomes timeless, fusing into a greater sense of history.

Tonight's feature films are the silent ones that are free on YouTube since I just finished Netflix last week. And the music you play as you work? Well I don't know about elsewhere, but here in my house the Charleston is all the rage. Apparently, it is the twenties again I hear. After all, the bars are shut down. But who knows? Because I just finished the new Shakespeare play. Well, I hear the bard is dead. With all the fake news though, can you ever really be sure? *Coriolanus* was new to me at least. Now there is a sense that the objective world has washed away. We have all become so isolated from the world that its cycles of progression no longer feel real. Time just goes right down the drain like the cold cup of coffee I forgot to finish this morning because I decided to go back to bed. Working at home can wait a few minutes, I figure. Minutes turn to hours. No matter. After all, it's not going anywhere. Neither am I.

My only regular visits outside are walking my dogs. Here I do my best to social distance and as such my life outside has turned into a giant game of Ms. Pac-man avoiding anything that might want to devour me. But hey, games are fun, right? That is what I tell my dogs anyways. Yes, I talk to my dogs. And during quarantine those conversations have gotten longer, however one-sided. My wife tells me I should also talk to the plants. She says it is good for them. So, I do—and sure, maybe performing all the parts of *A Streetcar Named Desire* for the plants is a bit excessive. But during a pandemic, who's to say?

After all, everyone needs a routine in these times, and I would like to believe that getting a bit crazy here and there is part

of that. Anybody that works from home will tell you, routines are key. Still, like everyone, I learn it the hard way because without structure the work never seems to end. To cope with it, I do everything I can to stay motivated. In the past sports have always done that. So naturally during lockdown, I learn to make compromises with myself. But it is not all bad. You know that underdog team full of misfits and has-been veterans? They were the ones that went on a giant losing streak before that wacky montage of new and unusual training techniques. Well that team just won their big game. Who would have thought? And just yesterday, Rocky Balboa knocked out Apollo Creed right as I needed the inspiration to finish up my TPS reports. Either that or I am confusing reality with bad movies from the last century again. It happens in quarantine.

If there is a lesson in all this madness, it is this. Never take who or what you love for granted. Going to local concerts was something I never did enough in the recent past. I always knew there would be another one in a few days. I told myself I could go to that one. Now no one can. It was a notion that never hit harder than the other day when a trailer full of musicians drove around on the self-proclaimed Funk Wagon. Chicken Wire Empire, usually a blue grass band, was playing funk along with rhythm and blues. They drove all around the neighborhood and stopped outside of my neighborhood bar, The Gig. And they played. People gathered. Some were not being as safe as they should. But there was music. And sunshine. And people. Now, I have seen some of the greatest bands and performers who ever lived from Janelle Monae to Bruce Springsteen. But in a world without live music, it was maybe the best concert I have seen. Because like the prophet once said, as soon as it hits, there is no pain. These are the moments I try to savor as best I can. Because especially now tomorrow cannot be taken for granted. But I still need to face it head on the best I can. After all, there is always a lot of work to do on Mondays.



PANTS



pick a month. 6,7,8,9,10,11,12, 1,2,3,4,6

Monday	Monday	Sunday	Yesterday	Tomorrow	friday	someday
Take a nap		ch u r i s h i e d a y f e s	Brewers game		Order out, from whoever will sell me food, leave a tip	
				put your pants on, go to store		
				football game, maybe		
			Calling Dr. Who?			
Have your nose tested.						

Numbers if needed: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

extra days, Tue. Wed. Thur Sat?



as it is, was, and ever shall be

I am god or a god
or
If I am god -for the skeptics

Grammarians chill, Just CHILL
it's all the same to me
the eternal present
so I cannot use was, were or will be

Just , dammit, I am AND (CAPS BY GOD)
I am not in charge of damning anything

I KNOW WHAT I DO
I KNOW WHAT I DO NOT DO
I do not drown anything
I am not in charge of plagues
pestilence
war
poverty
or the orbits of the earth, moon, and sun
and yes the sun orbits around the center of the galaxy
your Milky Way, nice name you came up with
Love that Milky Way

It is a shame
you burnt Bruno at the stake
and forced Galileo to recant
they were only telling you the truth
the earth goes around the sun
Even if they had a few technical errors.
If you think about it
the sun never rises or sets
You guys are spinning

You noticed I use the past tense
Somehow I know the past present and future
all at once
cool
but I don't know how or why
sorry

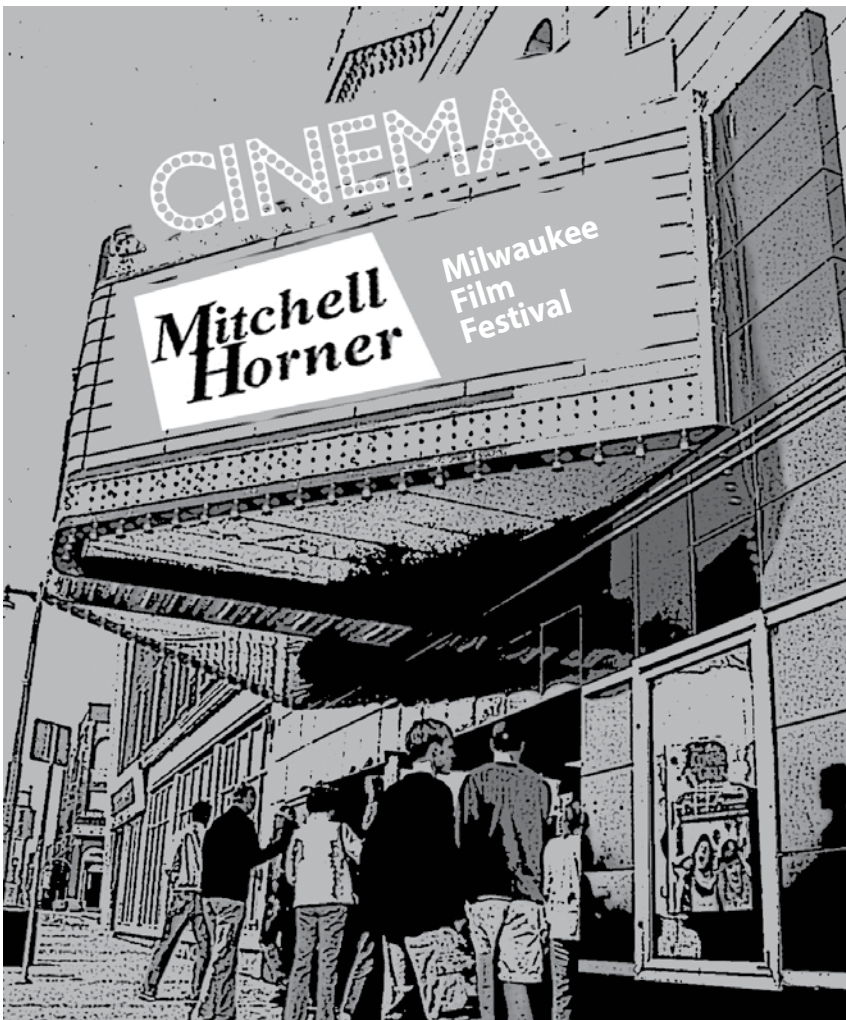
I am not sure if I am
But I do think-
soooooo-
I am
I am pure light
No mass - just energy
But forget about the other plane of existence stuff

There is just the stuff that composes
all things and places
and time, if there is such a thing
You always talk about it
Time, time, time, always on your mind

If I am God I help
but it is up to you
do the best you can
Jesus said to love one another
Nice idea
But I am not playing favorites
You seem to end up killing one another
when you fight about me

as it is, was, and ever shall be
Hello
and
Goodbye

eudemon



On the 18th of May, *Riverwest Currents* film columnist **Mitchell Horner** spoke with **Cara Ogburn**, Milwaukee Film Festival Director and Director of Education with Milwaukee Film to inquire about the state of the Film Festival, Milwaukee Film, and the future of film production and exhibition in a post-pandemic world.

I guess we'll just get right into it, I don't want to waste too much of your time here today or anything... first off, how has the pandemic and the subsequent shutdown of non-essential businesses affected theater operations, if that is something you can speak towards?

As of March 14th, the Oriental Theater has been closed, which means we are not bringing folks in to watch theatrical releases. We have since been able to take advantage of what is being called "virtual theatrical"; we opened Sofa Cinema, which is our virtual theater, we joke that we've built a 4th screen that lives on the internet. There, we're able to offer films for audiences to access the kinds of films that we would be showing on screen typically. There's benefits, for example we can keep films open longer, we don't have only 3 screens available at one time. But, as we all understand, it's not the same, right? Gathering folks in a cinema, with that popcorn smell, and that energy, it's not the same to watch films on your sofa, but right now, that's the best we all can hope for.

Is Milwaukee Film, as a local non-profit arts organization, better suited to deal with the current situation than, say, a theater chain, and what financial strengths does non-profit status offer Milwaukee Film at a time like this?

I think I might differentiate rather than being a nonprofit versus a for profit. I think there's a lot of different factors, we were in a strong place, financially, at the start of the year, and that's enabled us to weather at least the initial impact of the shutdown, we were also able to secure a CARES act PPP loan, which has allowed us to keep our staff employed, and cover our rent through the

end of Q2. That loan was open to businesses of non- and for-profit status, so I wouldn't make the distinction between being a non and for profit necessarily, just as much as we were at a place business-wise that was fortunate, although it's not so much luck as it is good planning and good timing. That said, we are looking to our peers around the country and seeing folks who were in that position to make some of those moves, and this is impacting, even beyond cinemas, it's a really big impact on everyone, everywhere, so we're just weathering the storm as best we can.

It's interesting that the distinction is not necessarily between non-profit and for-profit status, but rather just the financial situation a business was in before all... this really got started.

Yea, I mean, I think it's different benefit, as a nonprofit, sure, we can fundraise, but there's a lot of nonprofit competing for that funding, if we were a for-profit we would have different kinds of margins that we would be beholden to, so I think that is really just an individual financial differentiator at this point.

That's interesting, thank you. Obviously, a big draw for Milwaukee Film is the festival, in October, which is a big deal around here. I know there was a press release put out just this morning, no news out yet, do you have anything to add to that press release?

I think I would just underline that we are really committed to doing something that is film festival-like in the fall, as much as we are committed to doing something that is Oriental Theater-like through our Sofa Cinema program right now. Really, just trying to assess all the options, and do what is best from a financial perspective, we've seen some of our peers in the spring be all the way up to a week before opening night, or a month before opening night, and to need to cancel after having put a lot of financial investment into presenting an in-person event, and we obviously want to avoid that, because it would be challenging.

But we want to give access to the kinds of films we would show in the festival, and some communal feeling, even if that has to be virtually, or socially distanced. We are trying to determine what is possible and what is best to reflect that essential piece of our DNA as an organization. We are not cancelling. People might say, you know, "maybe they have to cancel" but I want to say that we are trying to do everything we can to not cancel, to still offer something that feels a little like a festival. Lots and lots of films, available in one space, engagement with filmmakers, all of those things that make the festival what it is, even if it has to happen in a different kind of a space, we want to find a way to make sure that we still do that in October.

Okay, well, that is good news, something to keep an eye on for sure.

Absolutely, and we're watching our peers, as those around the country who have needed to cancel, and it has been really sad and hard and we have learned from that, and we've also seen festivals be able to kind of move into a virtual space, with varying degrees of success, and engagement. It's really about keeping our mission alive, and enlivening our audience as best we can. Given the circumstances.

From where you are now, what do you perceive to be some of the lasting side effects of the shutdown in the film and film exhibition industries?

That actually ties really nicely into thinking about what we can best do to fulfill our mission. Obviously, this is having an impact on the larger industry, on productions that were in the middle of production that had to shut down, on films that had been slated to be produced in the last 2 months and now they're looking ahead and trying to decide how production could resume in a way that is safe and smart. In our industry, we're going to see effects of this for 2 years at least. Financing is challenging right now. There are films that were set to premiere, and had to hold their premieres. We're all kind of watching and waiting, as there's no clear path. Whether that's in big theatrical releases, right now we're waiting to see what happens with Christopher Nolan's *Tenet* which is sort of the first big title which is still on the calendar in July. But, we're also just sort of watching as big festivals like Cannes had to cancel their in person functions and figure out what else might be possible, and a catalytic effect of that has on the larger industry. Luckily, there has always been a lot of content. There have always been incredible films that because of the number of screens that were available didn't ever make it to the screen. Our festival aimed to fill some gaps... I think that this will be an opportunity to discover some of these voices that otherwise might not have had the same kind of platform, as well as to rediscover older titles which we may have forgotten about otherwise. It will be interesting to watch.

That is a very unique, almost optimistic outlook on the situation at hand.

I'm Hopeful! Or, I try to be hopeful. Reasoned, cautious, but hopeful. I think it's an opportunity to really think about some of the things that are done the way they are because that's how they've always been done. Everyone from filmmakers, to festivals, to theaters or exhibitors, to distributors, or various already existing On Demand and streaming platforms are

really having to re-examine some of those assumptions. I'm also hopeful that we'll come out of this and say "some of what we thought was true, might not be true". Maybe we will rethink how best to get audiences to access films, and how we make space for a breadth of voices within that space. I choose to be hopeful about that.

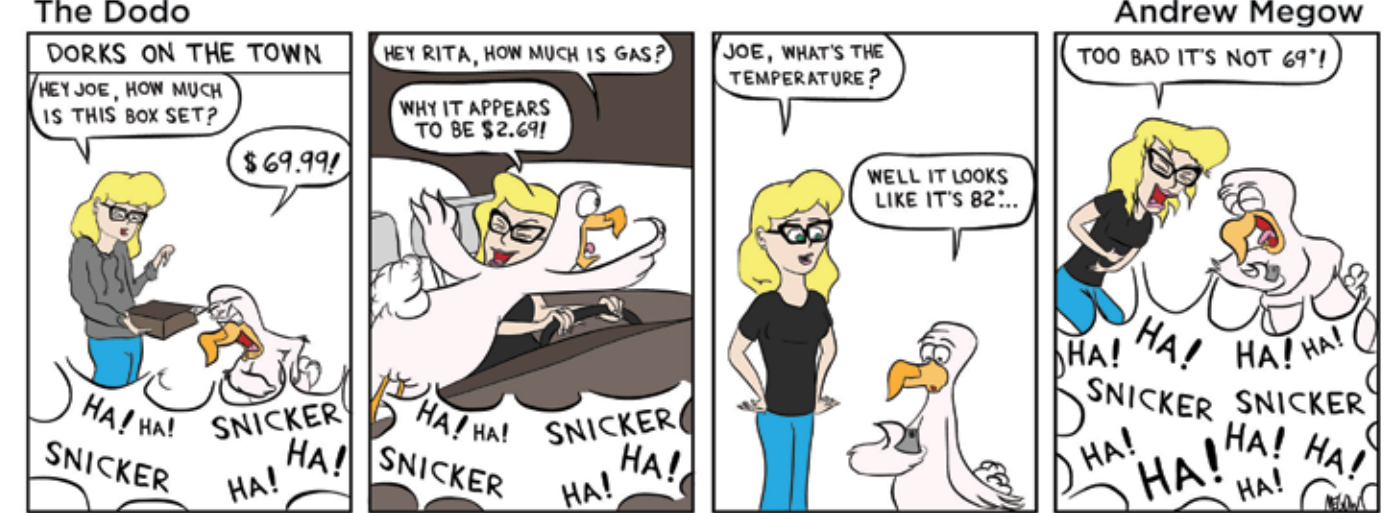
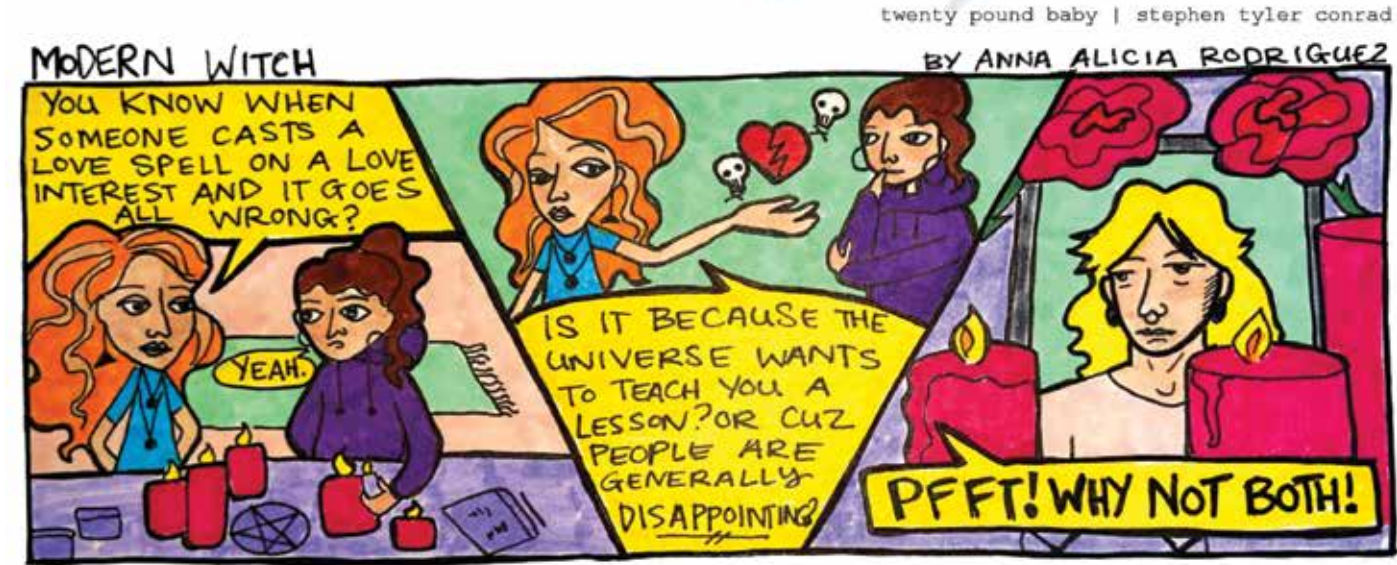
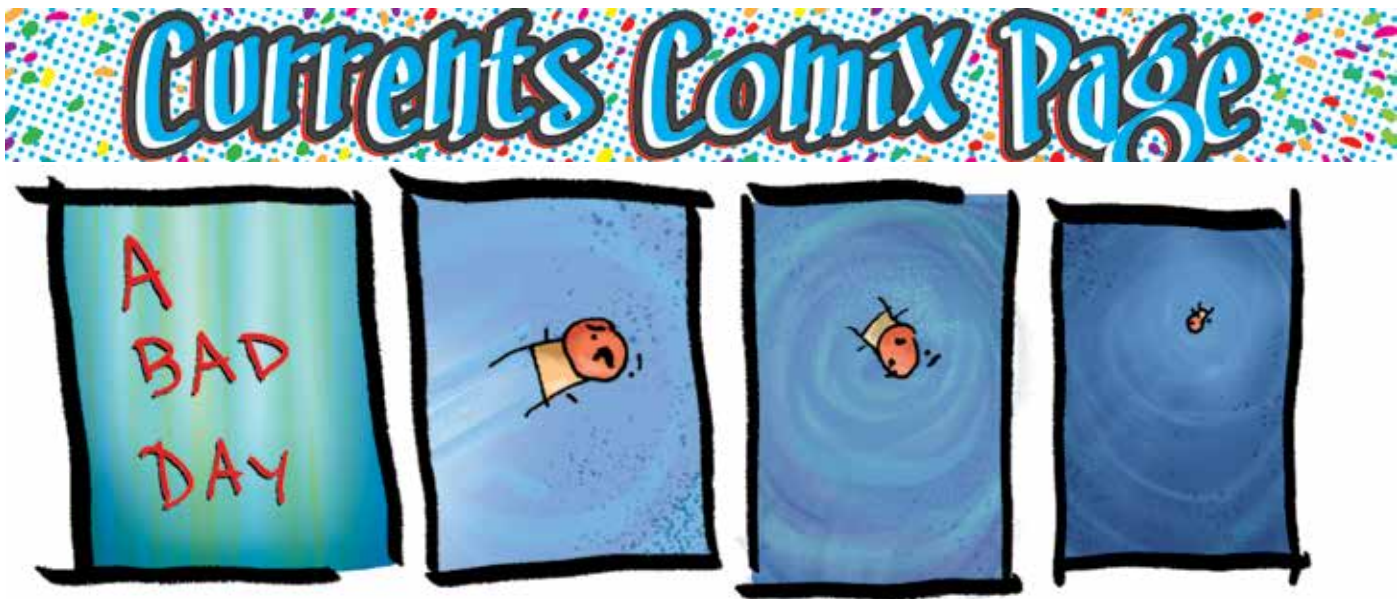
That's a fantastic point, and it leads me to my last question here. What do you personally make of this new this new method of distribution that we have seen rise in the past couple months, with films that would otherwise have played in theaters now being distributed directly to consumers, skipping the theatrical run entirely? Do you see that becoming the new normal for wide release films, or do you think things will sort of go back to the way that they once were?

I think all bets are off, and it's hard to predict. The big studios are saying "no, this is not the new normal, we're going to go back to the cinemas." Some smaller distributors are really examining what it looks like to have something available through virtual theatrical, as well as in person theatrical, at the same time. Maybe giving access all at once, instead of in this tapered out release window. I think it'll be interesting to see how release windows may change. Maybe recognizing that it doesn't increase your audience necessarily to have something open in New York and LA, and then in this city, and then in that city, and then much later putting it on demand. It's really hard to predict. I think we'll have some interesting data from this, to really re-examine some of those "rules". It's really hard to say. As a nonprofit distributor/exhibitor, in a market like Milwaukee, we've wanted to challenge some of those rules for a while now. We show films in a festival that might be available, but they might also need a sort of curatorial light shined on them for an audience to discover them. At a festival, you can have an in-person conversation with a director, you don't get that on of a platform typically so I think all bets are off is my short answer to your question

I have to apologize, that's a loaded question, it really does entail every aspect of production and distribution. I didn't mean to open that Pandora's Box, but that is a very well-informed take on that, so thank you.

And to your point, it is a Pandora's Box, and it has been needing to be opened for a while. At least now, because it's opened, we're able to ask those questions. We're all in the same business, we all want audiences to see great films, to support the making of it and to realize that through entertainment and education. How we get that to happen is something that's not clearly defined, and hasn't been for a while. Hopefully now, we can come closer to answering those questions.

Review of Milwaukee Film
Sofa Cinema
Spaceship Earth
story on the cover



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