May 1997

A'n'E

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Recommended Citation

Murphy, Stephanie; Christy, Scott; Siverson, Amy; Sand, Katie; Lehmann, J J.; Seifert, Matthew T.; and Carlson, Kathleen (1997) "A'n'E," Ethos: Vol. 1997 , Article 5.  
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos/vol1997/iss2/5

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Books are good. Money is good, too. But what's really good is a lot of books for a little bit of money. For students who aren't satisfied with the used book section at Big Table Books, Ames now has another low-priced, literary option.

Train of Thought, which opened in February, is Ames' only used bookstore. Located in downtown Ames at 405 Kellogg Avenue (next to the Salvation Army), Train of Thought boasts a large collection of used books to delight almost any thrifty or eclectic book lover.

Bonnie Knapp, Train of Thought owner, said she noticed a market for a new bookstore in Ames and took a chance.

"It struck me that this was a college town without a used bookstore," Knapp said. "College towns always have a need for a good used bookstore, and I've been really pleased with the response we've gotten so far."

Train of Thought sells used, rare and out-of-print books with prices ranging from 50 cents to $125. It also offers a book search service, which can track down that elusive literary wonder, should you be unable to find it in the store.

Train of Thought is open on Monday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Tuesday through Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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Balance: A Guide to Life's Forgotten Pleasures
by Bob Kerstetter & Steve Stone
illustrated by David Hartz

When I was 11, eating supper, taking a bath and going to bed were the worst things to happen in my day. My biggest priorities were to have fun and eat sugar.

Well, I don't have enough time for lotta sugar now, and sleeping is the highlight of my day.

With growing up comes a costume change; we leave our play clothes and sometimes our simplistic curiosities and the art of being easily pleased behind. Our priorities become more directed; it becomes more and more important to set goals for the future and find the answers to life's tough questions.

Yeah, we get stressed out. But what about the smaller, often ignored and free joys in life? It's important to have Balance amongst a person's aging sensibility, isn't it?

Fortunately, Balance: A Guide to Life's Forgotten Pleasures, will remind readers about 44 old tricks they can try to achieve this prescribed balance. Learn "how to skinny dip," "give a noogie," "make a noise with a blade of grass," "take a different way home" or "how to call in well?" (instead of calling in sick).

But most of all, the point of this 5.5" x 5.5" white on black book with line drawings is to make you smile at the funny and simple little step-by-step illustrations that accompany each "how to" trick.

You'll probably say "Oh! That's neat!" and do a log roll down a big grassy hill. Because chances are, if it was fun when you were a kid, it probably still is.

To learn how to do all this neat stuff, pick up your copy of Balance at Eddie Bauer. It will cost you 12 quarters.

by Stephanie Murphy

The Monkey Wrench Gang
by Edward Abbey

Have you ever been saddened by a clear cut or a strip mine? Do you see billboards as an eyesore? Have you ever thought about taking action against the pillaging and raping of nature? Are you feeling a bit revolutionary as of late? If so, then this is the book for you.

The Monkey Wrench Gang, by Edward Abbey, is a landmark novel in the environmental movement. First published in 1975, it was the book to express the idea of eco-terrorism, otherwise known today as monkey wrenching. Abbey takes on the corporate establishments that profit from the destruction of our natural wonders. He suggests that it may be quite acceptable for us to move directly and immediately to stop them from doing so. Even today, this novel divides and defines two parts of the environmental movement: those who work with the system for change and those who work outside of the system.

For a cast, Abbey provides us with a beer guzzling rogue Vietnam veteran, a libertarian doctor with a penchant for destroying billboards, a charismatic Bronx girl, and a polygamist Mormon wilderness guide. How much more interesting can it get, you ask? Just throw in a band of good old gun-wielding Mormon boys, lots of construction equipment, a Lone Ranger wanna-be, and a whole lot of dynamite. All of this takes place along the Colorado River from Glen Canyon to the Navajo National Monument. This concoction would surely bring any novel to life.

The Monkey Wrench Gang is an exciting adventure filled with chase scenes, a love story and MacGyver antics. It might even make you want to get out of your chair and go destroy some bulldozers. So, if you're tired of your engineering homework, or want to feel as if there are people out there who fight the good fight no matter what the odds, pick up this book. You certainly won't hear about it on Oprah's Book List, or by watching "Reading Rainbow."

by Scott Christy
Looking for a little rock n' roll this VEISHEA weekend? Don't have KISS tickets? Well, Stars Over VEISHEA (SOV) has just the thing.

SOV, in collaboration with ISU's Theatre Department, will present "Bye Bye Birdie," a musical written by Charles Strouse and Lee Adam.

"Bye Bye Birdie" is about a rock star, Conrad Birdie, who gets drafted into the army. Birdie's long-engaged manager and secretary decide to have one more publicity stunt to make some money. They sponsor a contest, and teenage fan Kim MacAfee wins the last kiss from Birdie before he goes off to "be all he can be." Of course, nothing goes quite as planned.

The publicity stunt "turns into a huge disaster, but everything turns out happy in the end, like it always does in musicals," Brynne Kriegermeier, who plays Mrs. Macafee, Kim's mother, said.

"Bye Bye Birdie" Director Marguerite Bennet-Folger feels people will be able to relate to the musical because it takes place in Sweet Apple, Ohio, a Midwestern town she feels is similar to Ames.

With upbeat music and plenty of comedy, "Bye Bye Birdie" can entertain any crowd. "Bye Bye Birdie" will be performed at C.Y. Stephens Auditorium April 18 and 19 at 7:30 p.m. and April 20 at 2 p.m. Tickets are $8.50 and can be purchased at C.Y. Stephens Auditorium and the Memorial Union.
Ani DiFranco
More Joy, Less Shame

Ani DiFranco is probably the most phenomenal musician you've never heard—or heard of, for that matter. Nevertheless, she's already had nine records released on her own label, Righteous Babe. Never mind that she continually sells out shows wherever she plays. But you don't have to fear the shame of never experiencing her anymore—you get the chance to make it up now.

DiFranco's 10th and latest release is an EP titled More Joy, Less Shame. On it, we're treated to four remixes of "Joyful Girl!" from her latest full-length solo album, Dilate. Punchier and more rhythmically driven than the original, each version has its own unique elements that define the song in new ways. "Shameless," another Dilate tune, is also re-done in what has to be one of the best remixes of a song ever recorded. At times even having Beastie Boys-esque qualities, DiFranco shows off not only her incredible guitar and bass talents, but also her affinity for sampling and loops. A powerful version of "Both Hands" from the album Ani DiFranco finishes it off.

This EP may be more appealing for current DiFranco fans. Not that first-timers won't dig it, but a whole new appreciation for this woman will be reached by people who know what she's been capable of in the past. Snatch this up if you get the chance.

by Katie Sand

Firewater
Get Off the Cross...

This is by far one of the most interesting records released in quite a while. Firewater is a combination of old-world, Eastern beats and folk-songs with a stinging, exasperated wit. Lead vocalist Todd A., formerly of $hop $hop $hop, wrenches your gut with croons about societal malcontents, drunken depressions and serial killings. Duane Dennison (The Jesus Lizard), Jim Kimball (Mule), Charles Quimet (Motherhead Bug) and Yuval Gabay (Soul Coughing) round out this supergroup. Jennifer Charles (Elyesian Fields) sings opposite Todd A. on one song, as well as singing lead vocal for "Mr. Cardiac," a tale of urban overload.

A's lyrics play upon altered cliches and folk-song melodies, as in the chorus for "Snake-eyes and Boxcars": "What do we do with a drunken failure/Shanghai the bastard to Australia... Everybody knows that the odds aren't/Show me a god that's worth believing!" A's lyrics are reminiscent of $hop $hop $hop at its gloomiest, but overall the lyrics are toned down in comparison to his noise band days.

The music on the album is traditional, yet creative and interesting in a way that anyone could appreciate. However, most will not make it past the lyrics. But those who enjoy the lyrics will reap a product of some incredible musicians, as Firewater's technical competence shines throughout the album.

by Matthew T. Seifert

blur
(self-titled)

"Girls and Boys" typified the old "we-want-to-be-popular" blur. Their new album, simply called blur, is the blur we all knew was there. This blur, while freezing their asses off in an Iceland recording studio, is pissed off that they lost to a shite frat rock band like Oasis in the Brit-pop war.

This album is different from anything they've ever done before. You won't find much of Damon's voice on this album, but who needs it with this great music? The first track, "Beetlebum," starts the album out right. It gives you everything you could ask for in a slow blur song. Following that kick in my favorite tune, "Song 2."

Typical blur songs like "Country Sad Ballad Man" and "M.O.R." are included throughout the album, along with "On Your Own," which is another favorite of mine because it contains unusual blur material.

"Death of a Party" is a song that sounds like it's about suicide or perhaps the end of communism. Also, "Look Inside America" is a satirical look at America, and "Chinese Bombs" is a remake of blur's "Jubilee."

The last three songs are all right, but I never seem to get past the first 11 songs. If you don't know who blur is, this is the best way to be introduced. Go buy the album; you won't be disappointed. (Also, if you get a chance to see them live, go. They are awesome live—much better than Oasis.)

by J.J. Lehmann

Lennon & Ono
Double Fantasy

Yoko Ono may have been John Lennon's one true love, but he should have separated love from work.

Ono and Lennon sing together on the Double Fantasy album, released in 1980. The first song of the record, "(Just Like) Starting Over," takes the listener back to the 50s with its Grease-like tunes. The "do do ahhs" get your head bopping to this appylicial Lennon song.

"Give Me Something," performed by Ono, displays the many ways she can distort her voice to sound like screeching cars, fingernails scraping down a chalkboard and two cats in a brawl. Ono just doesn't do it for me. Her lyrics make her sound like a wanna-be poet, always looking to express something deep and profound.

"Woman," sung by Lennon, has a blatant early 80s ring to it. Its a song that makes you want to run through fields of uncut grass where weeds are as beautiful as flowers, chasing butterflies but never catching them. It's all about love as he sings, "accept me as I am because I love you as you are."

Although Yoko's music wasn't too inspiring, her love must have been because this album is all about love. A pleasant theme, especially since Lennon was assassinated in the same year as this album was released.

by Kathleen Carlson