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SPOKE(a)N(e)

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E

I'm against most traditions. It's just how I'm wired. Any time I'm told to participate in or enjoy something simply because "that's what we do," I will react negatively and try to undermine it.

D

However, there is one exception to this. High school graduation. The only reason why this is spared from my wrath against tradition is because I almost didn't graduate. I hated school. It took a lot of hours, a lot of work, and a lot of patience from my teachers to get a diploma in my hand. I went to an alternative high school in Beaverton, OR. It was designed for kids like me. Kids who didn't fit in, couldn't concentrate, and needed more personal attention. Even in that environment, though, you still had to muscle your way through the BS that is associated with the hallways of any high school.

I

The day I graduated is a blur. I remember speaking at it, but that's about all I remember. What is clear in my mind is the next morning. When I woke up and could finally say that I was done. The feeling of not having to answer another test question was a great relief to me. To know that I had accomplished 12 years of schooling is something that I am still proud of. To have my graduation to look back on is validation of that accomplishment. I still have my diploma (the only thing besides my computer I took with me when I moved out of the house) on my dresser as a reminder that sometimes it's hard, but it's always possible.

T

I'll be honest in saying that the ten years following my graduation were even harder. Problems get more complex and my youthful idealism was challenged. Yet, I can hold on to idealism when reality is fractured. A complex problem is not an unsolvable one. In fact, I personally can't wait to see what the next generation creates with their fresh perspectives.

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To the class of 2010, you have come a long way. Yes, there is a lot more journeying to do, but the first step is the most important. Congratulations!

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You can't tell, but I just threw my hat in the air.

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Tucked away in West Central sits a coffee shop. It could be like any other coffee shop in Spokane. It has many of the same features. You can sit and listen to the music play as you sip your cappuccino while reading the newspaper. You can eat food from local bakeries.

Look behind the scenes, and you will see a coffee shop that deeply cares about the community they are in, and works hard to support it. From their baked goods made down the street to the seeds for the local gardeners, INDABA represents the change a lot of people want to see in local businesses.

MICHAEL MCMULLEN: Let's start with the basics: name, where did ya' come from, where did ya' go?

BEN DOORNINK: Born in Yakima, WA. Moved to Spokane for grad school at Gonzaga via Pullman (WSU). Loved it so much that I decided to stay and open a coffee shop/café. Just bought a house here and I'm getting married on June 19th.

MICHAEL: What does INDABA mean and why did you choose it for the name?

BEN: INDABA is a South African Zulu word that refers to a gathering of tribal leaders in order to discuss important matters, share resources, and collaborate ideas. This word is at the heart of our mission: "To unite different people groups (i.e. tribes) across West Central, Spokane, and the World...one cup at a time."

My business partner had a chance to travel to South Africa with an organization called Two Tunics where he assisted in the development of small business through micro-financing. This experience made an impact on his life, and when INDABA needed a name, we chose "INDABA", tying his past experiences into his dreams for the coffee shop.

MICHAEL: What makes INDABA unique?

BEN: INDABA was built on the dream that people from all tribes could come together to enjoy the different elements of the human experience. As we share our passion for coffee, we hope that other artisans will join us in providing other experiences (i.e. art, music, drama, poetry). Our goal is to provide a place where local residents, the homeless, working professionals, and artisans can rub shoulders and experience the things we all share as people. What makes INDABA unique is that we are in a neighborhood that has been largely ignored by businesses focused solely on financial gain. We hope to provide a place that helps to develop a sense of community and act as an economic and social catalyst for the neighborhood. We are working with other local businesses to start a neighborhood business association to enhance the business environment in West Central.

MICHAEL: How has the community responded to having INDABA in their neighborhood?

BEN: We never dreamed we would receive such a reception! Local businesses have been very excited to partner with us to provide high-quality products. We are excited too, as it provides us with an opportunity to source our coffee to a local roaster, get our bread and pastries from two local bakeries, to name a few. The local residents have welcomed us with open arms, thanking us for doing something like this in the neighborhood. We've had people thanking us, saying "the community has needed this for 20 years". We've received lots of support from the local cycling community, having nearly 100 cyclists stop by for Bike-to-Work-Week and different cycling groups stopping on by during the week. In short, the community has just completely overwhelmed us.

MICHAEL: What are your long term goals with INDABA?

BEN: Our long-term goals are to continue to grow and expand into more product offerings and services. We'd love to expand our hours into the evening to provide a evening venue for artists, musicians, poets, authors, artisans, etc., to exhibit their works. We would love to expand the number of community initiatives and outreaches that we support. We would love to expand into a full-size coffee house and possibly roast our own coffee.

MICHAEL: Is there anything you'd like to say to the Spokane creative community?

BEN: Keep up the good work. Your creativity makes Spokane a great place to live. Thanks!



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Better Than Yesterday



(above Vampire Campfire; below Kayla Rinaldi)



Full disclosure: I personally know two of the people who played this year. Destiny Blauer and Christian Blauer, from Nothing to Gain, are my friends' kids. As such, I will not be reviewing the bands. This is merely a review of my experience at B.O.B Fest and why I think it should be supported.

First of all, what is B.O.B. Fest? B.O.B. Fest is a Battle of the Bands (I see what they did there) for high school musicians. It is a competition and some great prizes are on the line, up to and including an actual, honest-to-goodness recording session.

Now, since it is an all-teenage set list, and mostly all-teenage audience, you get a lot of energy both on and off the stage. There were crazy hairstyles, a lot of creativity, and one band with their drummer in a prison uniform. Because... why not? That's just what you expect anytime you get a bunch of teens together.

So what? Why bother seeing a bunch of high school kids perform? Because these kids are crazy talented, and you'll be hearing a lot more of them soon. You also get a wide variety of sounds and styles, everything from acoustic, to metal, to punk, to techno. And all that energy we talked about earlier? It translates into their music. This is the pure stuff, music played right from the heart. They play because they love to play. If you aren't enjoying yourself, it's because you're dead.

B.O.B. Fest is sponsored and put on by the YMCA, CHASE Youth Commission, Hoffman Music, and College Road Recording. A lot of hard work goes into

giving these kids an opportunity to express their musical talent outside of school cafeterias and their garages. The kids themselves practice hard. In the case of the kids that I personally know, they do all of this while maintaining good grades in school. A lot of well-deserved pride and recognition should be awarded these kids. I encourage you to check it out next year. You may just be surprised at what you hear.

One last thing before I go. From the perspective of 'the press' and 'proud friend of the family who knows how hard these kids worked at it', I would have liked to see the winners brought up on stage when they were announced. It didn't ruin the experience by any means, but that one extra step would have served in providing the kids who worked so hard the recognition they deserved. IMHO, as the kids say.



(above) Olaf Olaf Olaf



Top:
Lazurwulf

Far left:
Olaf Olaf Olaf

Left:
The
Sassmatrons





Far Left:
Destiny Blauer



Left: Better Than
Yesterday

Below: Act One
Scene One





Top: Nothing to Gain; Below: Festival Winners, Lazurwuulf



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La Cha Cha

Friday morning I woke up to a text from my friend Amanda, “COME TO ELKFEST NOW!” This somewhat baffled me, seeing as how I am aware of just how far away Elk is, and Amanda knows of my lack of gas at the moment.

So I texted her back, “Can’t. Too far away.”

To which she replied, “It’s in Browne’s Addition.”

Oh, my mind exclaimed, *ARTfest! Not ELKfest!* Aloud, I continued, “Wait. But isn’t that ArtFest?”

Her reply? “Yeah, that.”

Now, I have a difficult admission to make here. Although I am a Spokane native through and through, and although I have *heard* of ArtFest, I have never before *been* to ArtFest. That, and the fact that my daughter—an artist just now budding from pencil drawings to oil paintings—is with me now, made up my mind. I went, daughter in tow, and I must say I’m glad I did.

Among the myriad of booths we visited, there are a few that I feel deserve special mention. For starters, Natalie Warrens Ceramic Design was absolutely stunning. Featured here were ceramics such as plates, bowls, and teapots in unique, interesting shapes and bright, vibrant colors and styles. I badly wanted to buy a teapot and some mugs, so I grabbed a business card. I could use a new set of dishes, and unique is my favorite style!

Another booth I enjoyed was John Ashley Fine Art Photography. Although not usually a fan of nature photos, I was stunned by the artist’s unique style of time-lapse photography on canvas. My favorite was his rendition of an eagle catching a fish, wherein the eagle is seen in four different stages of diving, grabbing, hoisting and flying away with its catch. John Ashley himself was also quite nice and informative, gently explaining his style to my fascinated young daughter.

Fused Glass House was another stop where we spent extra time. My daughter, not usually a fan of jewelry, loved the warm colors and nature-themed designs of Rachel Foss’ hand-worked glass charms. We got a small ring, and I grabbed her card for future reference. Among so many others, we also enjoyed Fox’s Art Gallery and John Clement Photography, as well as Kyoko Nijjuni’s Washi Art.

We strolled along the worn footpaths between brightly colored booths to the sound of live music emanating from the nearby stage and smiled. Although artists from all over are represented at ArtFest, it truly reflects the spirit of Spokane and the soul of its arts community. I will be returning next year and highly recommend it to anyone who is a lover and supporter of art and music.

*Write up by Jessica Crichton
Picture by Michael McMullen*

F

This month, I did something a little different with my First Friday coverage. While I did hit a couple of choice showings, I spent most of the night covering the first Art Night at a local business, INDABA Coffee House. My hope is that this coverage would encourage more participation in further Art Nights at INDABA Coffee House. I also hope that other businesses or business minded people would be encouraged to step up and open their doors for local artists. Maybe I'll even go so far as to say I hope to see new galleries and venues open up for that purpose? Yep, sounds good to me.

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R

My first stop was to Kolva Sullivan Gallery to see Moleskine sketchbooks on display by artist Joseph R. Tomlinson. While displaying obvious technical skill, I was also impressed that they often had a message to convey. My favorite was his sketchbook filled with images and statistics about homeless Americans. It wasn't preachy, but it wasn't distant. Factual but not a cold analysis. It came from the perspective, of someone who sees a situation that is often misunderstood. Over all, each piece was beautiful and skillfully made.



S

T

Next, I hopped next door to the Trackside Studio Ceramic Gallery. Seeing where the art is made is often just as exciting for me as seeing the finished work. I was able to view the finished works up front, but also step into the back of the studio to see wonderfully crafted works of pottery, fresh from the kiln (or about to go into it). I love sculpture, and Trackside has created some truly creative works.



F

It was hard to pick a favorite because every time I turned around I saw a well crafted item.

R

The next stop was Second Space to see the oil pastel work of Peter Presnail. What stood out to me with Mr. Presnail's work was not the quality, but the variety. His work shows skill from abstract to very detailed studies.. The fact that this wide range of styles was accomplished with a single medium is refreshing in a sense. Instead of being a "jack of all trades", Mr. Presnail took the route of generations of master artists before us in honing his skill and not scattering it across the artistic landscape like an ADD riddled hipster with a sketchbook and a bag full of several different materials (like myself).



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Finally, I end my night at the inaugural Art Night for INDABA Coffee House. The art currently on the walls are from various artists. One of the goals of INDABA Coffee House is to have enough artists to provide a constant rotation of art on display. Currently, there is a small, but diverse, selection of art on the walls. Photography, oil paintings, and surreal cartoons grace every wall. You are surrounded by art as soon as you walk in the door. That willingness to showcase different styles is what initially drew me to INDABA, and why I think any artist should consider them as a potential venue. We also heard the musical styling of INDABA Coffee House co-owner Ben Doornik and employee Matt (who makes a great cappuccino by the way). It was a fun, laid back evening. I look forward to further offerings from INDABA Coffee House.

Y



(This page; Pottery from Trackside Studio Ceramic Gallery)



(Oil pastels by Peter Presnail)

(Right: Detail of work by Peter Presnail)





(Art and live music at INDABA Art Night)



T

I was inspired.

It was like the re-kindling of an old relationship which had gone cold out of neglect. It was my fault, I know, but the gap of time and personal change that had occurred almost made this schism inevitable. However, it was not until very recently that I realized exactly what had been missing. A man named Al.

H

Of course, I'm talking about the musician 'Weird' Al Yankovic. He is mostly known for being the echo of trends in American culture by lyrically satirizing the music we listen to, the movies we watch, the food we eat, and the things we do. The work he has done and continues to do is nothing less than genius. I know this may seem crazy, but let me explain why.

E

Like so many kids growing up in America, I had the privilege of owning a few cassette tapes containing the recordings of Weird Al. It was exciting to hear the funny things that he would do to with songs that were popular at the time. With song parodies covering every genre of music that was playing on the radio, he did not seem to have any bias towards one genre or another.

His first EP was released in 1981. His most recent releases were a compilation 'best of' album released in 2009 and an EP of new parodies. That is a span of almost 30 years!

M

There are very few who can capture the voices of our American culture and put it to music and lyrics the way Al does. At face value this might seem like a lazy way to make a career in music:

1. Listen to popular song
2. Using original music write new lyrics to song that make fun of the artist or content of the song
3. Record parody (maybe polka-it-up a bit)
4. Make ridiculous music video to go along with parody
5. Sell lots of albums

V

Weird Al's execution of this art and track record of success is more than just a formula for lampooning everything popular. I feel that what he does is something that every musician--actually, everyone--should embrace: Find your passion and do what you love to do. Whether this is playing music, painting, teaching, or building. . . go for it. It is not by default that Weird Al has been doing what he does for so long as some sort of 'fall back' job since that office job didn't pan out for him.

S

Never in my life did I think that I would be finding an important life lesson from Weird Al but sometimes it's ok to think outside the box, right?

Maybe I'm a kid at heart who just likes to hear funny songs playing at the nuances of our culture and music. I might just be trying to justify this desire by making up reasons why Weird Al is more than a funny song writer and actually a lyrical genius. I would like to think that someone who spans 3 decades and many songs is more than a 'funny guy'. Call me crazy, call me. . . weird but there is something we can learn from Alfred Yankovic and that is to try and find what we love to do and do it.

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Thanks for the inspiration Al.

Keep on listenin'

TJ List

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Ea

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Ne

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