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*Issue 13
February 2010*

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SPOKE(a)N(e)

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*We do our best to make sure all items are accurate and complete, if you notice a mistake, let us know at
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Contributions, story ideas, letters to the editor, love, hate, baked beans and cookies to spokenspokane@gmail.com

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As I sit here staring out the window at the frost on the ground I think about the future. We have been producing SPOKE(a)N(e) Magazine for 14 months. That's 13 issues in that time talking about the art scene and all sorts of creative culture in Spokane. We've covered food and music and paint and sculpture and photography and writing. We've gone far beyond our comfort zone. I've learned more than I can explain, in the process of creating this magazine on a monthly basis. I've learned so much about art, about Spokane, and about my own feelings towards both.

This will be the second to last issue that Sara and I will edit. We've decided that it is time for us to pursue other opportunities in our home state, Montana, later this year. Much of what we've learned in Spokane --- chasing your dream in your home, making use of the resources you already have in your area, and creating something for the future of the creative community regardless of what people expect --- we will be putting to use in our once and future home. I'd like to thank Spokane for everything it's taught us.

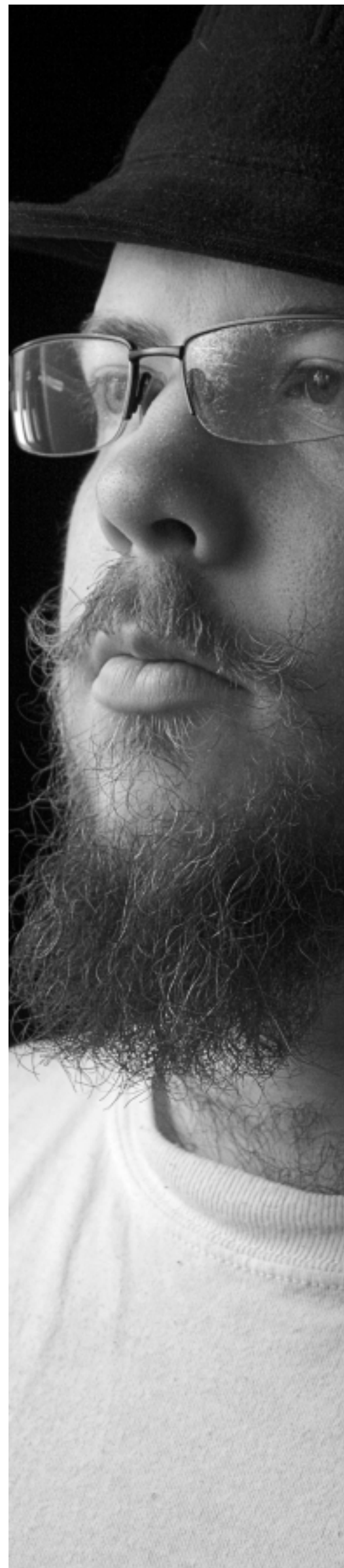
The thing I would like fans of the magazine and those who aren't fans to take away is the potential in Spokane's creative culture. Spokane is at a crossroads. It has grown so much in the way it views itself in the past several years. It is no longer "that other city in Washington" and is an entity unto itself, providing huge amounts of creativity and yes; even opportunity for artists of all sorts. Our magazine began because we wanted to talk about the exciting things going on here. We didn't have art history degrees (or degrees at all, for that matter) and we didn't have backgrounds as art reviewers. We vaguely knew how to put together a PDF. Sara's a writer and I'm a photographer and we thought, "Why not? What's stopping us?" It wasn't a knowledge of art that started SPOKE(a)N(e), it was a love for it. I've always believed that one of the most powerful facets of art in all its forms is that you don't need understanding to be moved by it. Without knowledge of technique or intent or history, an art viewer can still be moved and even transformed by a wonderful piece of art via a simple visceral gut reaction. Art is universal. Knowledge of art history, or an artist's history, technique, or intent can come later. It can add to the experience but isn't necessary. Art isn't about those things. Art is about us. Art is us.

I still get a chuckle every time one of my art reviews is quoted somewhere. Be it on an artist's website or a simple Facebook shoutout, I almost feel as if I've pulled one over on people. You mean, people are actually taking me seriously? They actually think I know what I'm talking about? Then I remember my constant mantra about art: You don't have to know art on any serious level. You only have to know how a particular piece of art makes you feel. That's where a truthful review comes from.

We are currently looking at having someone else take over the magazine when we leave, and indeed, before we leave town. Hopefully we will have some transition time where we can help out with whatever questions they have about the logistics of getting a magazine up. That said, we promise that we will only hand off the magazine to a person who's competencies and judgments about the Spokane creative community we trust implicitly.

Thanks again, Spokane, for everything you've taught us.

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When I announced on Facebook that I was going on a five-day karaoke tour of Downtown Spokane, one of my friends left this comment: "If I had a religion, the first commandment would be, 'thou shall not karaoke.'" A lot of people share that attitude. Then there's the other end of the spectrum: people who love karaoke so much that they want to do it five nights a week -- or more. Every karaoke singer has reasons for doing it, and my single reason is simple: I love to sing.

The karaoke landscape in downtown Spokane has changed quite a bit recently. Did you know Giblyano Brothers, the dueling piano bar, has karaoke on Tuesdays? That was a definite highlight of the 2010 Downtown Spokane Karaoke Tour. But more on that later. Let's start at the very best place to start:

Charley's Grill and Spirits
801 N. Monroe St.

It was Saturday night, and the karaoke lounge at Charley's Grill and Spirits was packed. So packed that my friends and I had to sit at a table in the overflow area, which felt more like a good place to eat dinner than a karaoke bar. However, we could hear the singers loud and clear, and boy were they having fun. Charley's isn't technically in what I consider downtown, but it's the closest place that holds karaoke on Fridays and Saturdays. (If that's incorrect, by all means, e-mail me at shadrab@gmail.com.)

Charley's is only about a 10-minute walk over the Monroe Street bridge. Walking to karaoke is highly recommended, as there is generally drinking involved with karaoke as well. And though there was plenty of drinking going on at Charley's, the mature crowd stayed pretty calm, though jovial. Charley's is a perfect place to go to get away from college students and the younger crowd. The youngest patrons at Charley's looked like they were in their 30s, and the oldest were probably in their 70s.

Irv's Bar
415 W. Sprague Ave.

Irv's Bar has gone through many incarnations in recent years. I used to go there multiple times a week for karaoke, back when Diana hosted karaoke five nights a week. Now, Irv's Bar holds karaoke Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Livewire Entertainment hosts Sundays and Thursdays, and when my friends and I went Sunday, Scott was running the show. You can probably find Scott or one of his minions from Livewire hosting karaoke somewhere every night, and anywhere they go, they carry a huge song selection.

The highlight at Irv's was definitely the bar tenders. I have probably done karaoke more than a thousand times, but Sunday at Irv's was the first time anyone has ever made me a drink and sang a song at the same time. Both bartenders were handsome, friendly and good singers, too. The crowd was pretty diverse, and my friend Faythe Saxton commented that the singers were either very good or very bad. The sound system sounded good, though, and it was easy to read the lyrics, on a giant flat screen, from pretty much anywhere in the bar.

Dempsey's Brass Rail
909 W. First Ave.

I have spent a whole lot of time singing karaoke at Dempsey's, but this was the first time I've gone since Livewire took over the show there. Andy did an excellent job hosting; he was friendly and enthusiastic. There were plenty of people there, but it wasn't too crowded. The crowd was mostly younger than 40, and most of the people present were there to sing.

Dempsey's has karaoke now on Mondays and Tuesdays, and if you like to go to places that have lots of regulars, Dempsey's is the place. I have made a lot of friends there, including John Herres and Wendy Gaskill, who joined me for every night of the 2010 Downtown Spokane karaoke tour. Be forewarned, the drinks at Dempsey's are the stiffest in town, so be careful.

Gibbiano Brothers
718 W. Riverside

Gibbiano Brothers is a very cool place; it has a lot of character. Also, the karaoke host, Max, is definitely one of the best singers I've heard around town. The crowd was pretty mature, but diverse, and the singers were surprisingly good. Clearly the people who go to Gibbiano Brothers for karaoke on Tuesdays love to sing. It also helps that the host very sincerely complimented the singers who deserved it.

My favorite experience during the 2010 Downtown Spokane Karaoke Tour was when a group of four guys at Gibbiano Brothers sang "I'm on a Boat." If you haven't heard that song, by Lonely Island and T-Pain, look it up on YouTube right now. The song was hilarious and enjoyable, but the best part was the karaoke host's reaction. He didn't stop laughing for quite a while afterward. He also interacted with the crowd during his songs, which is uncommon and fun.

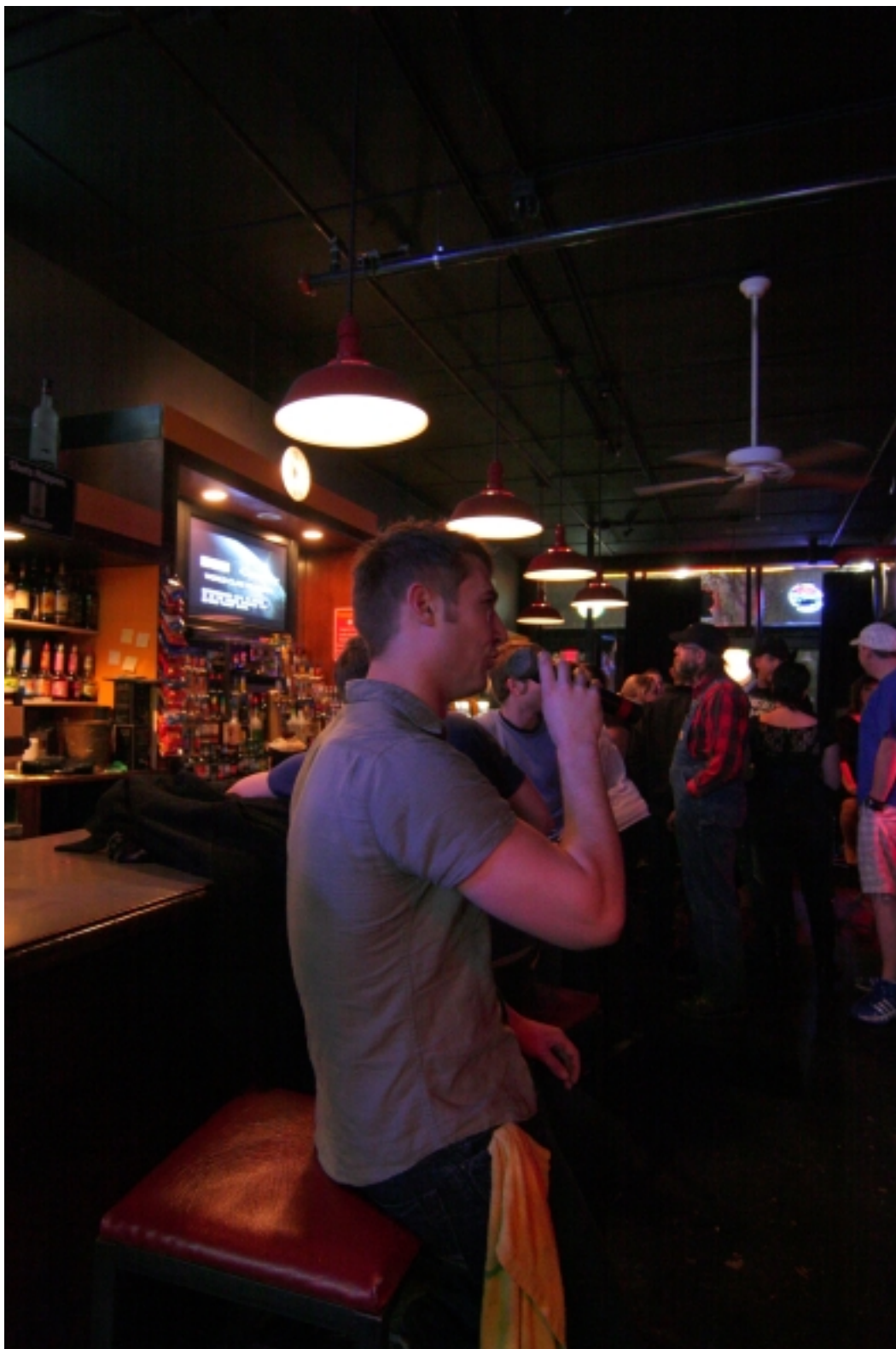




Photo by Wendy Gaskill

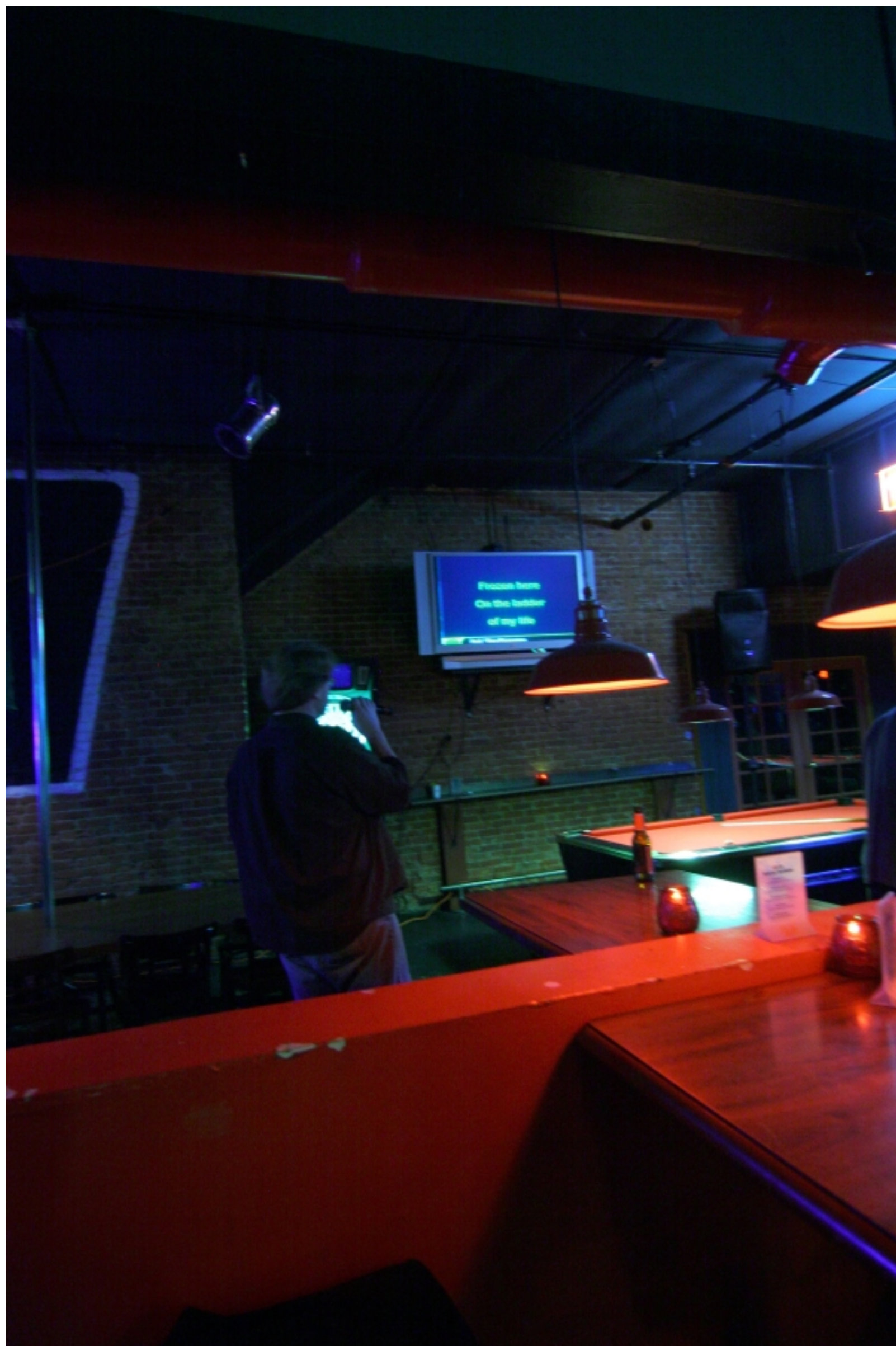
RAW Sushi & Island Grill
523 W. First Ave.

RAW holds karaoke every Thursday, and it's a great place to go if you want to sing multiple times. Though the place was filled up with mostly with young people, not everyone was singing, so the rotation went pretty quickly. Everyone mostly stuck to newer songs, which is different than any other karaoke I've ever heard. I've been to karaoke in four different states, and I always hear the same old classics, but at RAW I don't think I heard any songs that were more than five years old.

My friends all agreed that RAW would be a good place to go if you were looking to meet people, particularly members of the opposite sex. The service was really good; one of the servers even offered to put in our karaoke slips for us. That was a nice touch. My drink never stayed empty for long, and everyone who worked there was professional yet friendly and nice.

That was the last night of the 2010 Downtown Spokane Karaoke Tour, and what a fun week it was. Every stop had its own character. By the end of it, I think my boyfriend started to like karaoke as much as I do. Now that I've converted someone to loving karaoke, I'll leave you with the advice I give to people who tell me they hate karaoke: Don't knock it 'til you try it.

Text by Shadra Beesley
Photos by Sara Habein, except where otherwise noted



F

First Friday this month showed a Spokane with a bright artistic future. The range of works was wonderful, as was the quantity of things that excited me as we walked around downtown. Truthfully, we only hit a few shows, and I'm sure there was more top notch art to be seen elsewhere.

I

We started at the RiverSpeak show at the Empyrean. I'll save talking about that for the following piece specifically about them.

R

F

After leaving the Empyrean, we headed up the road, intending to hit Sante and various other gallery spaces in the area. On the way, we ran into a show put on by the River Ridge Association of Fine Arts at 15 S. Washington. Most of the work in this showing was of fine quality, with nothing standing out too terribly much over the others. One exception to this was the piece "**Dancers**" by **K. Leroy**. I was quite pleased with the use of lines and a confidence in the delivery.

S

E

After the River Ridge exhibit, we moved on to Sante. Filled with the work from a class of art students, the pieces, while fine, didn't provide anything that sticks in my mind. Still life paintings would have been at home in any restaurant on any day, art walk or not. They were more a part of the décor, rather than a feature draw of the place.

T

B

Brickwall Gallery has expanded their offerings consistently since they've been around and I've been pleased to say that the last several times we've visited they've always had something new to show us. As is usual, the prints by **Richard Heinzen** are amazing. If you haven't seen the work of this Spokane photographer up close, I highly recommend a visit. His delicate touch when framing an image and his ability to get a print to transport you to another place are amazing. Likewise, it's worth the visit to see "**Cormorant Fisherman**" by **Alice Garland**. The light in this image is astonishing. It's a moment in time that could have been captured last week or 500 years ago.

F

R

We then moved over to RiverPark Square to see what was happening in the Kress Gallery. While the paintings by **Neicy Frey** were impressive in their scale and were very well done, I believe we were all more drawn to the **Spokane Capoeira** group performing a cross of traditional dance, gymnastics, and martial arts. It's not my first time seeing Capoeira, but it always impresses and is fun to watch.

R

U

Immediately thereafter, we hit the highlight of the evening. RawSpace this year outshine all other years past. With almost double the artists, this showing was huge. There were so many artists with impressive work, I don't have space to talk about them all. That in mind, I'm going to be brief about each artist I talk about.

I

A

Joshua Gillen, "Scattering Flowers" Oil on canvas: He's doing great work, not groundbreaking, but something that should be supported in Spokane without a doubt.

D

R

Nikki Freeman, "Cerebral Paisley" and "Notebook" Mixed media: Wow. Freeman's work is absolutely one of the favorites of the night for both Sara and myself. The depth in these pieces is amazing and the heavy layering of text in the image had people getting up close to see how much of it they could read. When people who "don't normally look at art" are spending time getting their faces within inches of your piece to inspect it more closely, you're truly engaging your audience. Expect impressive things from her.

A

Y

Ethan Leitner, "Clown on the Cob" Colored pencil: Leitner's colored pencil pieces are at once funny and disturbing. A dark sense of humor is present, but there's a joy in what he's creating that comes through to the viewer. These, if nothing else, are a lot of fun.

Y

Bernadette Vielbig, "Mechanism for the Promotion of Child Labor" sculpture: More dark humor here. Vielbig takes a child's tricycle, and modifies it to work as a lawn mower. The craftsmanship may be missed here by some. An older, rusted tricycle is not going to be easy to work with and Vielbig showed some skill in her modifications.

Timothy Phillips, “Feather” “Cross My Heart” and “Herald in Route” Watercolors: Phillips is one of the better watercolor artists I’ve seen in Spokane. His angelic creatures seem human with an appropriate touch of the other worldly (outside of the inclusion of wings). There’s something of the old pre-Raphaelite masters in his painting of flesh tones that pleases me. However, his use of light brings him distinctly into the modern era.

Steve Knudson, “Stripes Series” Acrylic is a great example of taking the graphic, and inserting people into the vision. It’s the sort of thing that isn’t explored enough in our area for my liking.

John Whalen, “RiverTilt” Acrylic: Whalen, as well, is working in the very graphic, minus the people. His pieces are wonderful in their use of large blocks of color without slipping into the boring “I’m working so hard on a concept” mode that seems to stem from laziness in an artist. Quite the contrary, here. Whalen’s work is clean and focused and did nothing but please me with his subject matter, his color, and his use of shape.

Scott Thompson, “Mind In Chains” Book: Thompson’s book pieces were different from everything else at RawSpace. And that’s a good thing when competing for attention with so many other artists. His books were a hands on experience, prompting viewers to turn pages and explore them more in depth. I love the concept and wish I had more time to explore them on the night.

Amanda Burr, “Ink” Digital: Burr’s digital prints are interesting to no end. I wonder why I have not seen more of her work around



Capoera Spokane



Spokane. The images are simple and accessible, with a unique style. Best of all, they were \$35 for a decently-sized print. I hope someone snatched all of these up.

R.S. Yorke, “Les Jeunes Bohemien-Serial” Digital on Canvas: Yorke’s portrait did not feel terribly original. That said, there’s something that kept drawing me back to it. Maybe it was the uncertain expression on the subject’s face. Maybe it was the overriding sense of melancholy that the viewer absorbed from the piece. Whatever it was, I’ve decided I’m a fan. It took me a little bit, but it grew on me. And on a night as busy as this, the fact that a piece can make me continue to think about it is something in of itself.

With these “micro-reviews” we’re only touching the surface of what was out there this month. If you consider yourself an art lover in the least, you’d do yourself a disservice to miss the art walk next month, or heaven forbid, miss RawSpace next year.

As a late addition, we visited the Rocket Bakery on West Main Street the next day. The cafe is filled with the work of the artists from Rage Studios (their neighbors upstairs). By in large this work is very derivative of tattoo flash art and graffiti work. While there’s nothing new here, the work that’s represented is very well done and will undoubtedly please its target audience. That said, perhaps the next day was destined to be a downward slide after the events of the previous night.

Well done, Spokane.



(Opposing page) One of the paintings from the Rage Studios artists, Rocket Bakery on W. Main

(Above) "Cerebral Paisley" and "Notebook" by Nikki Freeman at RawSpace.

(Right) Impressive numbers of people flooded RawSpace, at times making it difficult to navigate.

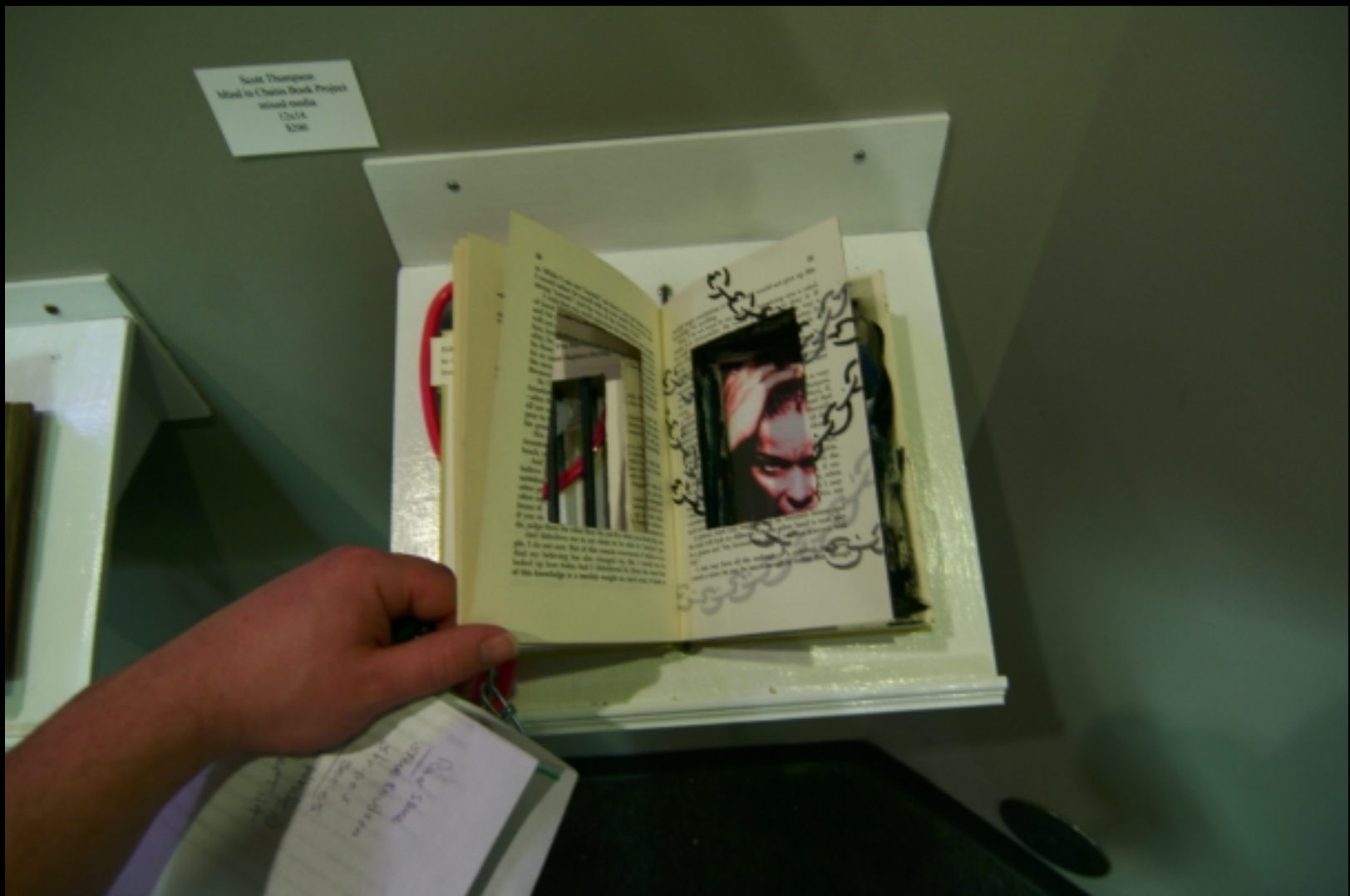




*"Feather," "Cross My Heart" and "Herald in Route" by
Timothy Phillips*



(Above) Steve Knudson's "Stripes Series" (Below) Scott Thompson's "Mind In Chains" book





(Above) Bernadette Vielbig's "Mechanism for the Promotion of Child Labor"

(Left) John Whalen's "RiverTilt"



R.S. Yorke
Les Jeunes Bohemien
Portrait
digital on canv
16x14
\$90

R.S. Yorke's "Les Jeunes Bohemien-Serial"

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We've spoken before about the importance of RiVerSpeAK to the Spokane creative community. I won't go over that again except to say that if you are a creative person, a lover of the arts, or a supporter in any way, you should go create your RiVerSpeAK profile on the collective's webpage. Become a part of Spokane's creative community and assist in its future. They're picking themselves up by the bootstraps and creating something bigger than each of them individually. They want to see Spokane's arts population succeed.

RiVerSpeAK held their official launch party over February 5th and 6th at the Empyrean. Several Spokane artists (myself included) provided work that would be on display at the venue for the entire month. All revenue from the art pieces sold were split 50/50 with the RiVerSpeAK folks in order to further their goals of creating a modern Renaissance in Spokane. Beyond the art pieces, the collective sold a limited edition zine featuring Spokane writers, including Jennifer McIntyre, Shanti Perez, RiVerSpeAK founder Brooke Matson, and this magazine's own Sara Habein. Artist Tiffany Patterson designed the layout and Chris Dryer printed the covers. With a CD of local musicians included, the zine sold for seven dollars apiece. All but four copies sold on the very first night, and the remainder flew out the door almost immediately the next day.

The party featured musical performances, spoken word artists, tribal-fusion belly dancers and more. It was a full 360 degree view of the Spokane community's range. If you didn't stop by, you missed out. Go check out riverspeak.net, and make sure you don't miss out on the future of Spokane creativity.

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*You and I used to shine like a jewel
Time's been nothing to us but cruel . . .
— "Sweet Illusions"*

Love songs may be easy, but heartbreakers have all the intrigue. During a month where everyone feels they should take a stand on open declarations of love, I want to talk about where it all goes wrong. Perhaps nothing reveals a person's constitution more than the aftermath of a relationship, and perhaps no one wallows in the aftermath better than Ryan Adams.

From his time in Whiskeytown to the Cardinals to his own solo efforts, Adams has made his career out of heartbreak, longing and loneliness. He builds monuments out of glass and chronicles all the ways that they fail — cracking, shattering, melting over time — all while he struggles to let go.

*Lover, why do you leave
on the day I want you to be
the world?
— "Why Do They Leave?"*

All good writing thrives on conflict, the internal affecting the external, and vice versa. What comes off as a strange, difficult or over-dramatic personality in real life works well within his songs. Despite great strides in sorting himself over the past few years — getting sober, married, and medical attention — Adams has never been a stable individual. He ‘quit’ music in early 2009, only to release internet demos later that year. The number of unreleased, bootlegged and ‘rare’ songs likely number in the hundreds. He gushes over his fans, unless they ask questions about the set choices. He promoted his last album, *Cardinology*, with cooperative interviews, but then flipped out online over any media criticism. Still, these extreme highs and lows make for excellent songs. Stepping beyond ‘how we did each other wrong,’ he examines the destructive side of human nature.

*How am I to know
how I'm going to hold onto you
when I'm spinnin' out of control?
— “Everything Changes”*

We’ve all had our heart broken, and we all know what it feels like to pick apart the rubble, to feel angry, sad and relieved all at the same time, but how to articulate those feelings is another matter altogether. If you write, the challenge is to move away from the saccharine and cliché, both widespread and personal. Any writer has certain go-to phrases that easily fill in the blanks, but they sometimes suffer from overuse. The trick is finding inspiration wherever you can get it.

I can’t tell you how helpful I’ve found it to put all of Ryan Adams’ songs into one playlist, hit shuffle, and let a bigger picture form. That’s not to imply that I directly pilfered content — not at all — but Adams is among the ones who make me want to be a better writer, and the intimacy of the songs is a brilliant springboard from which to begin. Some writers have their Strunk & White, their Hemingway and Salinger. I have records. Everything I have ever wanted to write has come directly from the people I know, and the music on my shelves. It’s the language I speak; I don’t know how, or necessarily want, to do it any other way.

*Gotta bottle and a rosary
God I wish that you were close to me
'Cause I owe you an apology . . .
— “16 Days”*

Adams is not a perfect writer, and he falls victim to easy phrases and metaphors like the rest of us. Whenever he makes one of his manic declarations about the state of the world, swears off whatever he is currently swearing off, it can be disappointing. And yet, I root for him, I really do. Artists aren’t the most sane bunch (and try dating a musician — it’s an adventure). Still, I hope that after a break from the public world and treatment for his Ménière’s disease (an inner ear disorder that affects hearing and balance), he will start officially releasing music again. Youtube videos are great for momentary amusement, but they are a ghost of what once was.



Sara Habein realizes she talks about Ryan Adams a lot, but if you like alt-country and its not-as-country cousins, and you aren’t listening to him, get on it already! The 2008 show in Seattle at which she took this column photo was one of the best she’s ever attended.

For more of Sara’s favorite songs of heartbreak from other artists, please visit glorifiedloveletters.blogspot.com



A Tribal Fusion Belly Dancer watches from backstage at the RiVerSpeAK launch at Empyrean