

A story in pictures



"Kou Vang has given Hmong women a voice to speak to the world."

BAO THAO, 21, a member of the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh's Hmong Student Union

Exhibit
tells the
story of
Hmong
women,
bridging
the gap
between
Laos,
America

By Sarah Owen

Gannett Wisconsin Newspapers

For so many years, Pa Moua felt anger.

She had been flung into a black hole of cruel rumors and half-truths, condemned as "leftover garbage" by a prejudice that existed openly in her Hmong community against "people like her."

She was a divorcee.

But one decade later, a run-in with old friend Kou Vang finally freed her to speak her truth, her story:

"Everywhere I went people looked at me out of the corners of their eyes and whispered. ... I was considered a slut, a whore, a bitch, a witch and every degrading word that existed in the Hmong language," Moua's story reads.

"Parents looked down on me ... as someone who would corrupt their daughter's minds and teach them to rebel against their future husbands."

Now 28 and five years remarried, Moua divides her time between family in Appleton and her job in Milwaukee. She is also one of 15 women being featured in an exhibit.

"Portraits of Hmong Women" displays the stories and photographs of first-generation, mostly Wisconsin Hmong women age 22 to 82.



KOU VANG developed "Portraits of Hmong Women" as a way to celebrate the diverse lives of these women.

If you go

WHAT: "Portraits of Hmong Women," a photographic documentary exhibit of stories told mostly by Wisconsin Hmong women in an effort to preserve history, create awareness and break down stereotypes.

WHEN: On display now through May 6. Gallery open noon to 4 p.m. Sunday through Friday.

WHERE: Cardinal Stritch University's Northwestern Mutual Art Gallery, 6801 N. Yates Road, Milwaukee

COST: Admission is free.

INFO: 414-410-4100 or visit www.stitch.edu

A project two years in the making, the exhibit is free to the public now through May 6 in the Northwestern Mutual Art Gallery at Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee.

Project in the works

A couple years ago, reality hit Vang, now 31, a graphic designer at Cardinal Stritch.

Her own mother's recollection of painful past experiences affirmed a notion she already had observed. "I saw within my generation, even my sisters and brothers, the loss of language and knowledge of traditions — things we're supposed to know," she said.

To bridge these gaps and preserve Hmong history, Vang met and collaborated with Christa Xiong, former head of Milwaukee's Hmong American Women's Association.

Two years and 20-some interviews later, "Portraits" was born. The stories not only explore the important identities of Hmong women, they capture often painful experiences in Laos and Thailand and the adjustments of life here while still abiding by Hmong tradition.

A voice for awareness

"Kou Vang has given

See **HMONG**, B-6

Actor Gets Chatty About Role in Upcoming Universal Film

*By Sarah Owen
of The Northwestern*

It was day one of filming Hollywood picture "Public Enemies" in Oshkosh. Rain pelted Wittman Regional Airport, and Mr. Alan Wilder was lamenting how hair and makeup had gussied him up too early.

Bored in his trailer, the Chicago theater professor, and TV and film actor, came in for some cheese and sausage. Sporting a topcoat and hat, even the keenest eye and informed film cat could've mistaken the clean-shaven actor as background, one of the hundreds of actors getting \$10 an hour to blend in.

"I'm not an extra. I'm a principal," he informed this reporter, chewing a piece of cheddar from a half-empty

tray laid out in the "Public Enemies" hair and makeup area at Wittman Regional Airport. In fact, he was Robert Estill, Indiana prosecutor in the John Dillinger case.

Playing the lawyer photographed with the notorious gangster's arm resting on his shoulder, Mr. Wilder got chatty about being in the thick of the action. It's a whole other gig than being an extra.

"That's a lot like being a prop, a can or a cookie ... It's so thankless because you're wallpaper, like cattle," he said. Though he fancies theater work over film, Mr. Wilder revealed it's the money that keeps him coming back to the silver screen.

*Sarah Owen: (920) 426-6671 or
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> Shinedown shrugs off Soundgarden comparisons

BY SARAH OWEN

Twenty-three months, 400 shows, and Shinedown is still out there, proving critics wrong and giving fans more of the contemporary rock they crave.

With the debut album "Leave a Whisper" selling more than 1 million copies, no doubt wide-eyed nay-sayers in America's peanut gallery can't wait to see what Shinedown's second record, "Us and Them," will do.

Drummer Barry Kerch lays in all on the table, talking to Weekend about the "band of brothers," what they're listening to and how they get amped up for a big gig.

Weekend: This will be the first time Shinedown comes to Oshkosh, right?

Barry Kerch: We're definitely excited. Expect a big rock show. A lot of people from my family will be going, "I know the drummer, I know the drummer!"

Weekend: Wait. You know people around Oshkosh?

BK: My family grew up in Fond du Lac, so I'm a Wisconsin boy! And, absolutely, all our families are big supporters. My mom might even have summer vacation to come to Oshkosh for the tour and the show — kills two birds with one stone.

Weekend: How's the Equinox Tour going? You and Trapt getting along?

BK: It's working out just fine ... we're having a good

time on this tour so, so far so good. We're still getting to know each other.

Weekend: What do you guys do to get psyched before going on stage?

BK: We warm up, myself and the guitar player. Then we slam a cold beer shot and shot of vodka, have a little huddle and we're ready to go.

Weekend: I'm not going to ask who you sound like; you guys get enough of that from critics ... Does that bother you, by the way?

BK: We really just don't care. We don't worry about it. It's an honor to be compared to some great bands, but we want to make our own mark, leave our own stamp. It is what it is; you have to be compared to something — that's what (people) do. We just roll with it.

Weekend: What are you most sick of hearing from people?

BK: That we're a poster grunge ripoff of Soundgarden. We just happen to have a powerful vocalist like Chris Cornell, but we're doing our own thing, not reinventing the wheel.

Weekend: How did you break through all the negativity?

BK: I think there are two things that work for us. One, we're a family out here on the road, we still get along. If we get in a fight, in five minutes it's over. We're a band of brothers. And two, the music is honest, it's what we feel. That's why when we play it, it's believable.

Weekend: The new CD, what does that mean to you?

BK: Brent (lead singer) came up with the title, because a



lot of the songs were inspired by fans. "Us" is us and the fans, and "them" is those who haven't heard of us yet. Afterward we found out that Pink Floyd had the same title on one of their albums, but it wasn't intentional.

Weekend: Any bands out there catching your attention on the rock music scene?

BK: There's a lot of older bands — Tool, Nine Inch Nails, Rob Zombie, as far as rock. The (Red Hot) Chili Peppers. Probably the most impressive is Chili Peppers. Those bands have been around forever, they have a history. There haven't been any new bands that are really good. Maybe Black Stone Cherry, who's just coming out. Their album hasn't dropped yet.

Weekend: Well, we know the fans are coming out to see you, but what do you think about music industry today — are they giving any props, attention to rock lately?

BK: They suck. The higher-ups believe rock music is dead. But then we go and do sold-out shows of 20,000 or more and see that it's not dead; they're just ignoring us. (Rock) might be changing forms — it's in a weird point right now — but it's not dead. The music industry needs to wake up; I can't stand them.

SARAH OWEN of Appleton writes for the Oshkosh Northwestern. She can be reached at 920-426-6671 or at sowen2@thenorthwestern.com.

If you go

WHAT: Equinox tour, with Trapt and Shinedown

WHEN: 6:30 p.m.

Monday

WHERE: Leach Amphitheater, Riverside Park, Oshkosh

COST: \$25

INFO: 800-895-0071, www.ticketstaronline.com

Modern message



JOE SHENKIEWICZ/OF THE NORTHWESTERN
JOHN PROCTOR, played by Alex Gelhar, meets Abigail Williams, played by Brittany Magrady, in the woods in "The Crucible."

Oshkosh West puts on classic play with a lesson for today

BY SARAH OWEN
of The Northwestern

The little girls became sick. Shivering with cold, fever, suffering from hallucinations.

Witches, they accused, pointing fingers and planting the seed in ears like a swift plague running rampant around the quaint Puritan village.

Except, the girls aren't sick; they're faking it. "The Crucible" is a story of betrayal, intolerance and redemption — a historical drama about ridding a community of witchcraft in old Salem.

This weekend Oshkosh West

High School students tell it with intensity.

Part of West juniors' curriculum, Arthur Miller's original drama really is a parable of contemporary society, director Lisa Hutchinson said.

"Even though it's a historical play, it can be applied to much of the intolerance we see today," she said.

The girls are able to get away with accusing many women in the town of being witches without evidence.

The play unfolds as John Proctor, a farmer who's married with children, has an affair with Abi-

If you go

■ **What:** Oshkosh West High School presents Arthur Miller's play "The Crucible."

■ **Where:** Albert Kimball Auditorium, 375 N. Eagle St.

■ **When:** Tonight and Saturday

at 7 p.m., Sunday at 2 p.m.

■ **Admission:** \$3.50 adults, \$2 seniors, at the door.

■ **For more information:** Call 424-4090, or:



gail Williams, the "ringleader" of the witch trials.

She leads a seance and convinces other girls to go along with her plot to get rid of "witches."

Junior Alex Gelhar, who plays Proctor, said the man must try to

right his wrongs, and he gives a chilling speech in the climactic final scene that shows townsmen how wrong they were to hastily convict these women.

Sarah Owen: 426-6671 or sowen2@thenorthwestern.com.

jack's are wild

> Jack's singer happy to be in tune with Ben Folds

BY SARAH OWEN

You can just picture him. Milling about his So-Cal kitchen or running afternoon errands, oblivious to things like the dog barking or traffic as he throws his head back to laugh in mock-rebellion, declaring that "they" — producers, managers, anyone — don't have him at all today.

"I got me," said Jack's Mannequin lead singer Andrew McMahon.

A day off from non-stop studio work on "The Glass

Passenger," the followup to 2005's debut "Everything in Transit," his voice is eager and brimming with energy. Just ask him whether he's looking forward to opening for Ben Folds when the two perform April 17 in Oshkosh.

"I'm freaking out!" McMahon blurts. "I am such a fan! ... I was the googly eyed fan at Ben Folds concerts for years."

With a tour and album release slated for summer and a personal film project, "Dear Jack," in its final stages, McMahon, also known as the frontman for pop-punkers

Something Corporate, feels a bit freer these days, ready to close the door on a tumultuous last few years. From videotaping his 2005 battle with leukemia to the dawn of new music, the singer/songwriter opens up to Weekend.

Q: Your trip to Oshkosh is coming up fast, and you're sharing the lineup with Ben Folds.

A: Ahh, yes! I'm freaking out!

If you go

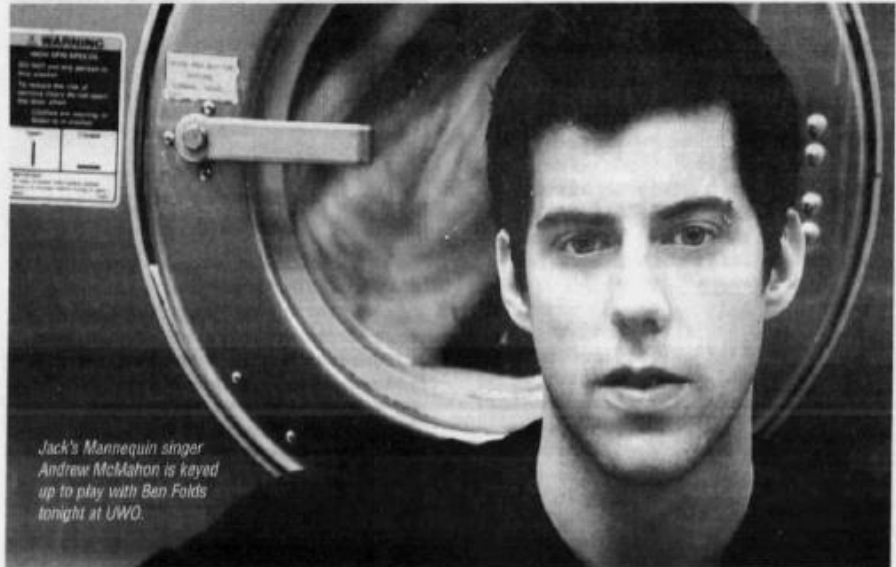
WHO: Ben Folds, with opening act Jack's Mannequin

WHERE: Kolf Sports Center, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh

WHEN: 7 p.m. April 17

COST: \$25 for students, \$35 for the public (plus fees)

INFO: 920-426-2346, reeve.uwosh.edu



Jack's Mannequin singer Andrew McMahon is keyed up to play with Ben Folds tonight at UW.

Q: Big fan, huh?

A: I am such a fan! It's funny. There weren't many piano-playing icons for piano players when I was a young kid into rock music, so seeing him come out ... I was hanging out as a freshman in high school after a show when I got a copy of his first record. I've got pictures of me and him with my buddies when we were kids, meeting him outside club gigs. It was pretty cool.

Q: And this is the only show on the tour you get a chance to share a lineup with him?

A: Yeah, just this one. I'm really excited but also kind of terrified, because he's eight million times the piano player I am.

Q: What's the experience like for you, in general, when you're sort of looking out into a crowd of your peers in a college atmosphere?

A: It's great. I mean, for me. We obviously started in Something Corporate ... coming up in the punk-rock scene it

was much more typically a high-school fan base. Then toward the later years with Something Corporate and the transition to Jack (in 2004), it became a hybrid of high school and college kids. It's nice playing a gig where they're there to listen to the band and dig the musicianship and want to wrap their head around what we're trying to do on stage.

Q: And did we hear something about "The Glass Passenger" being released this month, or was that just rumor?

A: (laughs) We put that date out there when we thought I would make a record quickly, and I did anything but that. It's taken a lot of time for me to pin down completely what I want it to be. We are pretty much in the final stages, wrapping it up, so sometime mid-summer. We'll be out on tour, so hopefully it'll be out by late July.

SARAH OWEN writes for the Oshkosh Northwestern. She can be reached at 920-426-6571 or sowen2@thenorthwestern.com.

Oshkosh author pounds away on typewriter

By Sarah Owen

Gannett Wisconsin Newspapers

Dan Paulick sits in a little room he built himself in the corner of his basement, with heat streaming in and classical music softly filling the silence.

Click-click. Click-click-click.

He attempts to input the words he just feverishly poured out by pencil in barely legible scribbles on a lined legal pad.

"I just transcribe," said Paulick, 76, of Oshkosh, who doesn't own a computer and works on an electronic typewriter. "I do very little writing that is consciously written."

If you go

Dan Paulick will be signing copies of "Random Pieces of a Writer's Quilt" from 6 to 9 p.m. Dec. 15 at Conkey's Book Store, 226 E. College Ave., Appleton. Copies of the book are available at the store. The book signing is being held in conjunction with ADI's Art on the Town.

Paulick recently published "Random Pieces of a Writer's Quilt," which includes 14 short stories. He also has written "Triad Affair," a self-published murder-mystery, and "Beyond the Reaches of Man," a collec-

tion of poems and epigrams.

A former Oshkosh Northwestern reporter in the mid-1960s, Paulick has held a variety of jobs since graduating from what was then the Wisconsin State College in 1956.

From farm hand, factory worker and carpenter to teacher, photographer and public-relations manager, Paulick said he was trying to find himself.

"Only when I started writing did I feel I had found my home," he said.

Looking back, being a writer was there from almost the beginning. One of his teachers

at Oshkosh High School taught Paulick journalism and he worked for the school newspaper.

"She told me when I left high school I'd be a writer someday," he said.

But after high school, he was off to Germany to serve in the war during the Berlin Airlift. Four years later, his GI Bill got him through college and another step closer to where he is now, five decades later.

Sarah Owen writes for the Oshkosh Northwestern. The Post-Crescent contributed to this report.

weekend
live music }

catch the drift

> Dierks Bentley finds his true calling in country music

BY SARAH OWEN

Dierks Bentley is more than another Nashville baby who grew up country and got lucky one night at an open mic.

As a teen, born and bred in Arizona, he was any other kid growing up in the '70s, trying to be like Van Halen and mastering riffs on an electric guitar.

By 17, he was sick of big-hair bands and searching for a cause. Then he heard Hank Williams Jr.'s soulful "Man to Man" and instantly found his calling.

"I really fell in love, and that's what got me into country music," the 30-year-old said in his warm baritone voice.

Ten-plus years after plugging away in Nashville bars and scoring a quick hit when debut single "What Was I Thinkin'" hit the charts at No. 1, Bentley proved he's a force to be reckoned with. In the last three years, he's been racking up the accolades with 2003's "Dierks Bentley" and 2005's "Modern Day Drifter."

On tour with Kenny Chesney this summer and a new album due out in October, Bentley talked to Weekend in advance of his concert Friday at the Leach Amphitheater in Oshkosh.

Weekend: What are we in for Friday night at the Leach?

DB: Well, you know, we have a couple records that had some hits (laughs). We do those and also dig back to do songs by heroes we love — Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings.

Weekend: You came a long way before getting signed to Capitol Records. When you hit No. 1 with "What Was I Thinkin'," did it seem like overnight success?

DB: No, not really. I spent so much time in Nashville

watching people get record deals; it felt like forever to get to that place. I did all my homework in town, so when the opportunity came up and I did get a record deal, I was ready to go. I'm really grateful for it, blessed, but I don't think it's been fast.

Weekend: They say maintaining creative control is the hardest part after you get signed. Did that ever occupy your mind?

DB: I kind of came into the record deal with that plan. I made it independently and knew what I wanted to do musically. I write most of my songs, have a hand in producing them and (Capitol) knew that going in. They were very supportive, and I've had success since day one, so fortunately they stayed out of the record-making process. It's good — I make the records and they promote them (laughs).

Weekend: What's going on aside from touring?

DB: We've been in the studio, almost got all the recording finished (for the new album). The new single, "Every Mile a Memory," is out. The new album will be out in October or November. And we did a live DVD that'll come out the beginning of next year.

SARAH OWEN of Appleton writes for the Oshkosh Northwestern. She can be reached at 920-429-6671 or sowen2@thenorthwestern.com.

If you go

WHO: Dierks Bentley
Where: Leach Amphitheater, in Riverside

Park, Oshkosh
WHEN: 8 p.m. Friday
COST: \$15-\$40
INFO: 800-895-0071 or ticketstaronline.com



Arlo Guthrie gets the family in tune

By Sarah Owen

Gannett Wisconsin Newspapers

Coming off a two-month tour in Europe with his son and grandson, the world-famous American folk singer and master storyteller barely had a moment's pause to recoup.

In June, 59-year-old Arlo Guthrie gathered three generations of family for the Guthrie Family Legacy Tour.

"We've never done this before," Guthrie said of the tour that'll end in May. The Guthrie family, with legendary Woody in spirit, come to the intimate stage at the Grand Opera House in Oshkosh on Wednesday.

Arlo talks about a new generation, keeping music real and singing other people's stuff.

Question: You were over in Europe this summer; how did the first part of the Family Legacy Tour go?

Arlo Guthrie: Ugh, yeah, we still haven't recovered (laughs). We were there for two months. It was terrific. We had a great time. I took my son and his son, my grandson, and a guy



More Arlo

For an extended version of this conversation with Arlo Guthrie, see www.postcrescent.com.

that plays with us, Gordon Titcomb.

Q: And is this the first time you've gotten the family together for a tour?

AG: We've never done this before. ... For a brief two months in Europe, my daughter Sarah Lee and her husband Johnny couldn't make it, so we had a little break, but now

we're back.

Q: A year traveling with family; any stories to tell yet?

AG: The best part, even though it wasn't really part of the Family Tour, the best part was taking my grandson to Europe. He's a young guy, 15 years old, and he's into death speed metal (laughs), and all of a sudden he's hanging around a bunch of folkies. It really didn't look like he was going to have any fun. But after a couple weeks of playing with wild Irish fiddlers, his eyes just opened. We had a

If you go

What: The Guthrie Family Legacy Tour

Featuring: Folk singer-songwriter Arlo Guthrie with his son, Abe Guthrie, daughter Sarah Lee, son-in-law Johnny Irion and Gordon Titcomb

Where: Grand Opera House, 100 High Ave., Oshkosh

When: 7:30 p.m. Wednesday

Tickets: \$39. 866-964-7263

Info: For more on Arlo Guthrie, visit risingsonrecords.com

great time together. I couldn't get him to stop. He'd come in at 6 a.m. after jamming with these crazy characters.

Q: You got your start pretty young, too, playing at 13. Do you remember what it was like?

AG: I was a kid, and I was scared out of my wits. I couldn't hardly breathe, walk, I didn't have any knees and couldn't play. I vowed never to do it again. (laughs) but that didn't work out real well.

Sarah Owen writes for the Oshkosh Northwestern.

WHAT'S ON AT LU

ON CAMPUS

live music }

he's no dummy

> Jeff Daniels doesn't try to run from his 'Dumb and Dumber' past

BY SARAH OWEN

Jeff Daniels still can't escape the elephant in the room.

It would be ridiculous to walk onstage, his signature hat tilted down purposefully over crystal blue eyes, and pretend the actor/singer/songwriter isn't a celebrity, and that people staring up at him weren't largely there because of his iconic role in Hollywood's "Dumb and Dumber."

"It's better to embrace it, deal with it and move on," notes Daniels, whose live shows and albums have raised \$35,000 so far for his native Michigan's Purple Rose Theater.

But after six years peddling his one-man music show on the road, people are less apt to wonder whether "Harry" is still in there somewhere, he says.

Those who manage to get beyond the initial excitement over his celebrity may inevitably realize Daniels' chops and melodic insight are

the real deal. Very quickly, it's the songwriter in him leading the way for interested folks, he says.

"Then there's also the guy that has been on Broadway, or has been in front of the camera;

I can ... engage the audience, where it's not just singing into the mic," said Daniels, 52. "It makes me different than a run-of-the-mill songwriter."

The singer, actor, humanitarian (he takes home no personal profit from his shows) talked about old theaters, making music and his return to Oshkosh's Grand Opera House stage at 4 and 8 p.m. Saturday.

Q: Do you have some new tricks up your sleeve this time around?

A: It's a weird dynamic for a film actor. I mean,

usually we're going off to do the next movie, and it's completely different from what we did before unless it's a sequel. People want to hear that song they've already heard, that they already know; that's creeping up more as I do this.

If you go

WHAT: Jeff Daniels Week

WHERE: Grand Opera House, 100 High Ave., Oshkosh

"ESCANABA IN DA

MOONLIGHT:" Local cast and production of a Jeff Daniels' original play today and Friday; both shows begin at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 to \$28.

"AN EVENING WITH JEFF

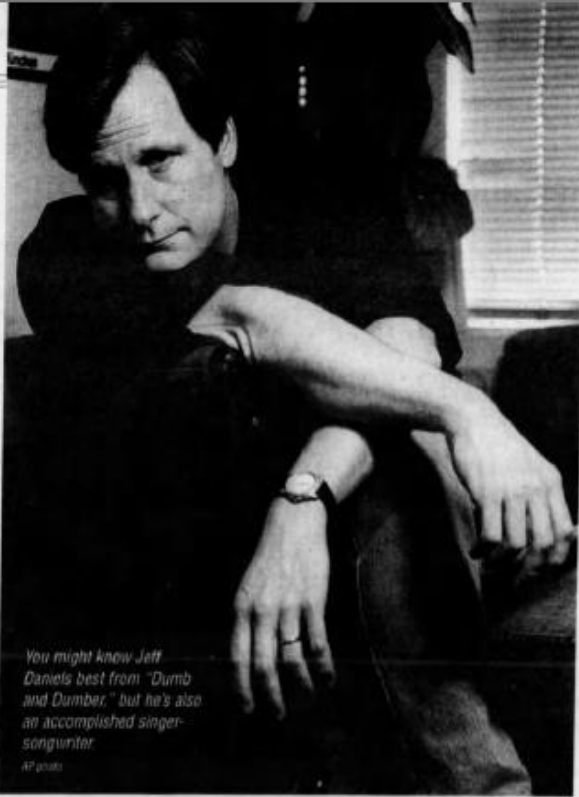
DANIELS: DANIELS

UNPLUGGED:" 4 and 8 p.m.

Saturday. Tickets are \$18 to \$38

INFO: 920-424-2350 or

www.grandoperahouse.org



You might know Jeff Daniels best from "Dumb and Dumber," but he's also an accomplished singer-songwriter.

AP photo

Q: You've been touring now, what, six years? Have you reached a point where you've created a separate identity on stage, that you're not just another actor turned singer-songwriter?

A: I don't even play the "William Shatner" song anymore.

A couple guys — they're really good musicians, too, that I really respect that work with me — they said, "You don't have to play that song, you don't have to tell people that (anymore)." I'll still play a couple, like "Dirty Harry Blues," where I get shot by Clint Eastwood, and "Are You As Excited About Me As I Am," talking about the fleeting aspect of fame. There are some behind the scenes songs.

The elephant in the room is the celebrity factor, and the movies; you

can't avoid it.

I've learned it's a mistake to pretend it doesn't exist. It's better to embrace it, deal with it and move on, or sometimes I'll use it to drop a song that's really serious. And they'll say, "Oh my God, I didn't know that'd come out of you."

Q: Some might wonder why a Hollywood actor is so supportive of these venues.

A: Anytime someone can get out, like me, and at least make people aware of the Purple Rose Theatre Company — "Here's somebody that supports the artists in the Midwest" — it's a good thing.

For me, I just enjoy doing it. It's the purest thing I do.

SARAH OWEN writes for the Oshkosh Northwestern.

Christian music festival kicks off today

BY SARAH OWEN
of The Northwestern

hheavy metal, rock and ska meshes with rap, hip-hop, punk and pop.

And the fans who come to head bang or stomp their feet are as diverse as the music acts rounding out Lifest 2006, which starts today and runs through Sunday, on Sunnyview Expo Center grounds.

"You'll see kids in Goth, grandpas and grandmas, cowboy hats and probably everything in between," said Greg Vandenberg, Lifest director.

"There's a spirit you'll see in common . . . you can look different and act different, but as a community of believers, we can come together and have a great time and enjoy life," he said.

This year has the makings of being the best yet. The usually four-day festival has

If you go


■ **When:** Today through Sunday. Camping registration and check-in begins at noon today. It shuts down at noon Sunday.

■ **Where:** Sunnyview

Expo Center grounds, County Y, Oshkosh.

■ **Cost:** \$50 at the gate for a single day, \$82 for the entire festival, \$25 for today only.

■ **Info:** (920) 738-5588 or

 lifest.com

added an extra day for people to experience workshops, music clinics and comedy acts.

This also includes more music by artists such as Jeremy Camp, Toby Mac, Jars of Clay, Superchick, Audio Adrenaline, Rebecca St. James, MxPx and more.

Lifest's youth Edge stage also has expanded to match the grandstand's size. That means two headliners each night.

"It's two full main stages with Jumbotrons, top quality sound and lights," Vandenberg said.

The grandstand will host performers geared more to the masses, the

top 40 songs geared toward everyone.

The Edge stage is exclusively youth-focused with edgier punk, screamo and rock bands, he said.

"We really want to be a place where we can overcome some of the negative stereotypes of Christianity, and to expose people to some of the great music," Vandenberg said.

The festival is expected to draw between 18,000 and 19,000 a day, maybe more for big headliners who've enjoyed mainstream success, such as Relient K, Jars of Clay and The Afters (who's "Beautiful



Love" is the theme song for MTV's "8th & Ocean").

Musicians are just psyched to hit the stage. "I really am quite excited about playing at Lifest," said first-timer Katie Nelson, whose vocals are reminiscent of Linda Ronstadt and Sheryl Crow.

"It'll be wonderful to connect with friends from all over Wisconsin, as well as meet some new (people)," she said.

Full-event tickets are \$82 at the gate. One-day tickets at the gate, which include Sunday, are \$50 for adults, \$25 for kids. Wednesday tickets, which also include Sunday, are \$25 for adults, \$12.50 kids.

Sarah Owen: 426-6671 or sowen2@thenorthwestern.com
Steven Hyden contributed to this report.

Evolving Sound

*Crossover bands change
Christian music's image*

BY SARAH OWEN
of The Northwestern

It's a heart-pumping, up-tempo rock set that rivals the best in all music genres, mainstream or Christian.

With her barely audible Australian accent, Grammy-winning vocalist Rebecca St. James belts out songs like "Alive" and "Lest I Forget" with an unabashed message of love and forgiveness.

Venues from Wisconsin to Rwanda and Russia explode with clapping, jumping, bordering-on-maniacal applause. It's a revival each time she sings.

And it's likely to happen again when she takes the main stage for the fourth time at Lifest, a five-day music festival in Oshkosh, Thursday at 8:30 p.m.

"Wisconsin's been really good to me as a state; I've felt really loved," said St. James. It's a sentiment she sees growing as the Christian music industry evolves.

Industry evolution

"We're in the midst of a change right now," said Greg Vandenberg, Lifest director. "It's starting to happen, the influence of (Christian music) getting into mainstream."

He points out bands like Lifehouse ("Hanging By a Moment"), The Afters ("Beautiful Love," the theme song on MTV's "8th & Ocean" series) and Switchfoot.

They're proof that defining music as "Christian" is nearly impossible. Because, like Lifest, it encompasses all tastes - rap, hip-hop, heavy metal, rock, pop, ska, worship.

Christian music is largely made a genre by its lyrical content, though, not its style like conventional genres, Vandenberg says.

That the budget for many Christian albums used to be peanuts didn't help catch any eyes in main-

If you go


■ **What:** Lifest 2006.

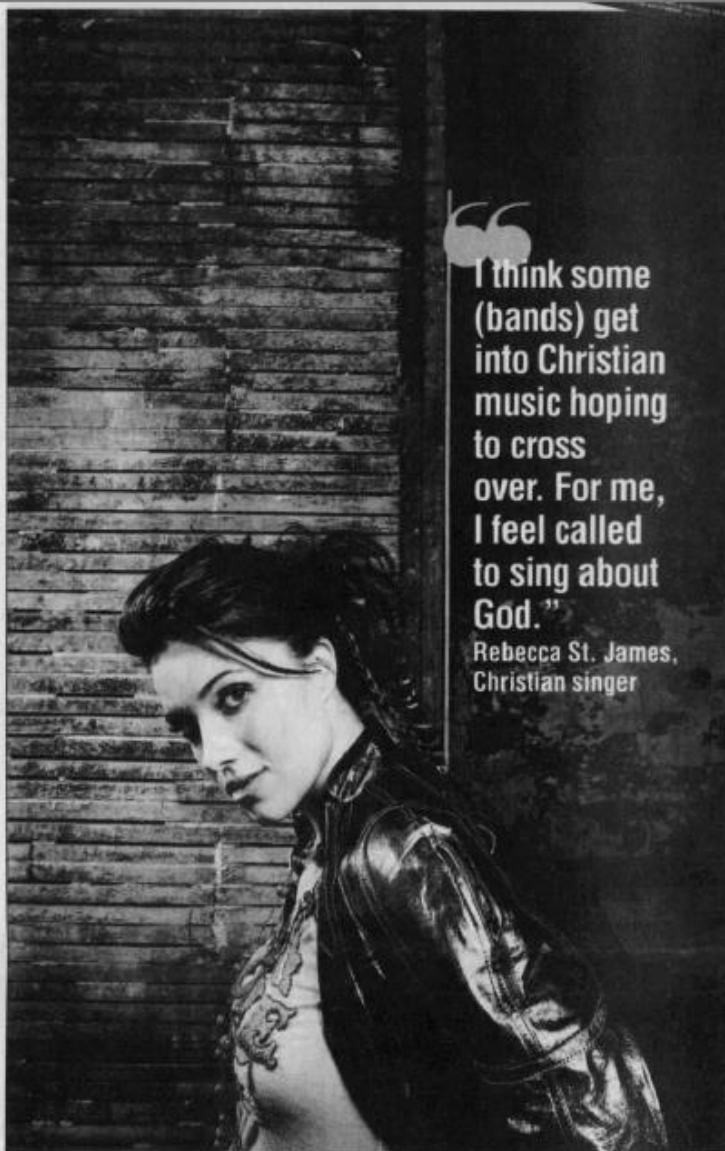
■ **Featuring:** Five days of workshops, workshops and more than 250 musical acts.

■ **Where:** Sunnyview Expo Center grounds, 500 E. County Trunk Y in Oshkosh.

■ **When:** Wednesday through Sunday.

■ **For more:** Call Life Promotions at (920) 738-5588, or:

 lifest.com



"I think some (bands) get into Christian music hoping to cross over. For me, I feel called to sing about God."

Rebecca St. James,
Christian singer



SUBMITTED PHOTO
REBECCA ST. JAMES says improving the quality of recording Christian music has helped artists cross over into mainstream music.

AT LEFT, Aaron Johnson, 21 of St. Croix Falls, sports a mohawk and a T-shirt that says "Total Jesus freak" while taking a break from skateboarding during Lifest last year. The changing culture of Christian music has evolved to include Christian rap, punk, rock - you name it.
NORTHWESTERN PHOTO

Rocking during lunch

Musicians see event as great opportunities

BY SARAH OWEN
of The Northwestern

LIVE AT LUNCH

Lunchtime gridlock and long lines in local fast food drive-throughs are about to be passe starting Wednesday.

The annual Live at Lunch series brings a new reason to get out of the office and enjoy that mid-day break weekly.

For five official years the Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce, with sponsorship from various local businesses, has brought area musicians into downtown for a little live music to accompany lunch in Opera House Square.

"Live at Lunch is important, because first of all, it targets the thousands of employees in the downtown area that can come out on their lunch hour that might not necessarily be downtown after hours," said Melissa Hunt, event coordinator.

Each summer anywhere from 150 to 400 flock to the square between noon and 1 p.m. each Wednesday from the end of May to first week in September. This year, at least seven local restaurants will have food areas set up for visitors to purchase lunch — including Pilora's, New Moon, Club Element and Planet Perk.

For its 2007 series, the chamber works

▶The 14-week series is a free event (there is a cost for food) and runs every Wednesday from noon to 1 p.m. in Opera House Square along Main Street in Oshkosh, starting May 30.

closely with local groups to bring a mix of local bands and up-and-coming acts to the Live at Lunch stage.

Danny and Michelle Jerabek (from the band Copper Box) are thrilled to be back at the outdoor event, playing live July 11 to promote their album "Backyard Party."

"It's something that we can kind of put back into the community, to give an all-ages show. It's a chance to just enjoy a small show," said Michelle Jerabek, vocalist for the Oshkosh "accordion swamp rock" outfit.

"I think having music in the downtown area is a great idea," she added.

Live at Lunch goes will see other familiar faces grace the stage this season, as well, such as Pandora's Groove and Cookee, along with some newcomers that make the lineup for 2007 diverse.

"We're excited to be in Opera House



LAURA MAY/OF THE NORTHWESTERN

MICHELLE JERABEK of Copper Box says Live at Lunch is a great way to give back to the community. Copper Box played Saturday at Frank's Place in Omro.

Square again, and we encourage and hope anyone within walking distance will come," Hunt said. "Whether they come down and have lunch or just catch the music."

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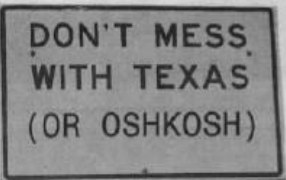
A 'Long, Tall Texan' will rock the Leach

>Lyle Lovett brings his southern roots to our city, thanks to PMI

BY SARAH OWEN OF WEEKEND



>>>> Lyle Lovett, a Texas native, will bring his award-winning sounds to Oshkosh Saturday.



Longing for some finger-licking, home-cooked goodness? The south rises up at Leach Amphitheater for the Big Texas Barbecue Party — and could its headline possibly be a more perfect side dish to Ribco-94-9-Stock? We think not.

Alternative country crooner Lyle Lovett and his Large Band hit the Leach stage Saturday at 8 p.m., coinciding with EAA AirVenture events, which PMI reps said wasn't intentional. "We're hoping it works well for both events," said Kratie Honey, PMI vice president of Event Services.

Those looking for something to do after AirVenture winds down might want to check out the BBQ event. "Lovett has such a broad audience — country, rock, swing and gospel — so Oshkosh and surrounding areas will be interested," Honey said.

LoneStar State native Lovett isn't just the former Mr. Julia Roberts (though, the 10 minutes of publicity it got might be what we 20-somethings remember most about him).

That's because Lovett shrouds himself in mystery and only occasionally pops up in obscure news briefs. For that reason (OK, and because he wasn't available for interviews by deadline) *Weekend* had to compete to shed some light on the Man of Many Talents.

Man of mystery
"Mr. Roberts": The news made jaws drop around the world. Fans of Julia Roberts (myself included) were never more curious, and a little weirded out, than when MTV, CNN, E! and other television networks reported "America's Sweethearts" married singer-songwriter Lovett in '93. Of course, we weren't surprised when they divorced two years later (I mean, she lived in New York, he in Houston. But that was tricky...). What drew them together still remains an unsolved mystery.



Bull-rider extraordinaire?
Lovett, the actor-singer-bull rider? The man wears many hats, apparently. Again in the news, Lovett was rammed into a fence by an angry bull on his Uncle Calvin's Texas farm, in spring 2002. But he wasn't attempting to ride it, pet it or play matador. He attempted to rescue his uncle, who'd been trampled by the animal while doing farm work. It took six minutes to recover, but give Lovett some credit — he was back on tour the next summer.

Man behind the hair
Large crowd, big band and that signature 'do (seriously, how does he do it — check it out above) made Lovett a classic on the



alternative country scene. But he's proven hard to pigeonhole. With a knack for storytelling and illustrative songwriting, he can't seem to pick a favorite genre. Country, rock, pop and gospel, jazz and blues. We're a little confused, but take a listen at lylelovet.com and see what you think.

German journalist?
Before landing a showcase at the highways, donning that famous brown look, Lovett attended Texas A&M University in the late '70s, studying journalism and German. As a grad student, he traveled to Germany, studied and attempted to woo crowds abroad, but his musical career didn't take flight till the early '80s in the United States.

Singer turned actor
Lovett launched an (almost) career acting career 20-some years ago with *Diner* or so movie like '80's "Bill: On His Own" (he was a singer on the back). 1992's "The Player," as *Director DeLorge* (Roberts also made a cameo in this flick); 1999's "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas," as a "road person"; and, also in 1998, "The Opposite of Sex," as Sheriff Carl Tippet.

Why he's worth seeing
OK, the man can sing; he's got four Grammy Awards to prove it. (Granted, none since 1996, but we're waiting to see if he's just out a winning job—up to 2003's "My Baby Don't Care.") According to *grammy.com*, the awards went for Best Country Vocal Performance, 1982 ("Lyle Lovett and His Large Band"); Best Country Performance by a Duo or Group, 1994 ("Blues for Erik"); Best Pop Vocal Collaboration, 1994 ("Funny How Time Slips Away"); and Best Country Album, 1996 ("The Road to Ensenada," pictured below).

Good ol' country boy
Down-to-earth, good-natured and a nice soul, Lovett, however mysterious and tabloid-rumored, is just a country boy bred from southern hospitality — who breeds to feed him to an entertaining show that let's crossed genres and is still opposing the most fanatic blues-jazz-country-jap fest on tour in an added bonus.

Check out more about Lyle Lovett and preview his latest album at lighthouserecords.com/lylelovet.

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>If you go
• **What:** Lyle Lovett Big Texas Barbecue Party.
• **Where:** Leach Amphitheater, Riverside Park in Oshkosh.
• **When:** Saturday, gate opens at 5 p.m., bands start at 5:30 p.m.
• **Music:** Larger than life alternative-country crooner Lyle Lovett and His Large Band take the stage at 8 p.m.
• **BBQ Party:** Linking up to its Big Texas Barbecue theme, the event

also boasts a second stage with entertainment, plenty of other events so people can party the day away.
• **Tickets:** \$65 for limited VIP (seats in first 5 to 7 rows) + VIP menu; \$45 reserved seating on brick; \$5 admission. Available at: Fresh Foods, at ticketsatfresh.com (800) 855-0071.



weekend cheap date } BY SARAH OWEN

>Fairies, Loverboy and Lovett: If that doesn't scream 'romance' ...

Maybe fluttering fairies and dancing to the **ex-Mr. Julia Roberts** at a Big Texas bash doesn't strike you as somewhere you'd be caught dead. But, au contraire, it's more magically fantastic than it sounds.

► Ohhhh, **Loverboy**! Yes, you remember them (though, maybe the classic Canadian rock band was a tad before your time), and hits like "Working for the Weekend" (at least former "**Saturday Night Live**" star **Chris Farley**'s Chippendale dance to it).

Mike Reno and the guys are still touring, headlining week 10 of **Waterfest**, in **Leach Amphitheater**. Opening acts are Milwaukee cover band **Mt. Olive** and rock band **Mighty Short Bus**. Music tonight from 6 to 11 p.m.

Tickets: \$6 before 7 p.m., \$15 after. For more: **waterfest.org**.

Check out my interview with Loverboy front man Reno on page 6.

► Good grief, the thought of watching people prance around in tights and fairy wings must sound awful.

And, ugh, that icky love stuff.

But, surprisingly, you can earn some brownie points by taking your sweetheart to this free (I repeat, free!) **Rebel Alliance Theatre** production of **William Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream."**

Bring a picnic blanket and get ready to cuddle; this performance promises to ooze romantic comedy, set in Oshkosh's own **South Park**, starting Friday at 7:30 p.m.

The play also was made into a motion picture production starring **Calista Flockhart, Rupert Everett, Michelle Pfeiffer** and **Kevin Kline** circa 1999. Rent it at your local video store.

Read **The Northwestern** Friday for more details.



► Admit it: When you heard **Loverboy** was coming, you immediately thought of the **Chris Farley** Chippendale routine from "**Saturday Night Live**."

Ave (**dejavumartini.com**).

Treat yourselves to a cool martini (OK, they're a tad pricey at \$8.50, but I said "treat") while Meade takes you away with songs like "She's a Mystery" and "God Only Knows." Visit **buzzmeade.com** or **myspace.com/buzzmeade** to preview his tunes and learn more.

► Here's a chance for you and the family, friends or special someone to get some southern hospitality, **Ribs-on-a-Stick** and hear what alternative country boy **Lyle Lovett** says "**My Baby Won't Tolerate**," his 2003 album that combines jazz, pop, country, swing and folk influences.

Gates open Saturday at Leach Amphitheater at 5 p.m., with the **Big Texas Barbecue Party** show starting 6 p.m. Lovett takes the stage at 8 p.m.

General admission: \$25 (go Dutch?).

Read our cover story in **Weekend** today (page 8) to find out more about the Grammy-winner.

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