

# Roots Report: Take Me Out of the Ballgame

Okee dokee folks ... I am going to preface my column by stating that much to my father's disappointment, I do not like baseball at all. Last week I received a mass e-mail that must have been sent to every musician in the state (they didn't blind cc the e-mail) from the Pawtucket Red Sox. They asked performers to play before each one of their home games. Sounds like a good gig, doesn't it? Well, it's not. It pays peanuts. Actually, it doesn't pay at all. They only offer a hot dog and general admission to the game that you perform for. You provide your own sound system and play for almost two hours. So, in essence, with set-up, you work about four hours for free, err ... for a hot dog. In *Motif's* Oct '14 issue, I wrote a bit about musicians performing for free. I guess the PawSox didn't see that column. Before I go on, I have to admit that last year I agreed to go play this gig. Why, you may ask? As I mentioned before, my father is a HUGE baseball fan. He actually tried out for the Red Sox after he got out of the Air Force, but was told that he was too old. He ended up playing softball on Sundays for most of his life — until the artificial hip benched him!

I wasn't crazy about doing the gig. It was kind of sketchy, but they agreed to let me sing the National Anthem before the game. I thought that it would be worth doing for Dad. After confirming the gig, I never heard back from the person who booked me. The day before the game, I still had heard nothing. I fired off an e-mail to the PawSox that said if I didn't hear from them that day I would not be able to do the gig. I had no idea where I was going to set up, what time I had to be there, and how many of those general admission tix I was going to get. I don't work like that. I PLAN gigs. I ALWAYS get the info up front, but in this case I was told that it would be sent to me. I received a response to my e-mail on the day of the gig. They wrote that they told me I wouldn't get info until the day of show and that I WAS NOT going to be performing the National Anthem. I replied that I never would have agreed to that arrangement and the only reason I was going to play the gig was so I could sing the National Anthem. It was already too late to make arrangements to have my father attend and I would have had to rush to get there in time to perform. The PawSox were not happy, and they told me I was blacklisted from ever playing there because I left them without music that day. I figured that I would never hear from them ever again. Wrong. In addition to the recent mass e-mail about this year's PawSox offer, I received a phone call asking me to perform. Had they forgiven me? I didn't call them back; I didn't want to play for them. I was just going to blow the whole thing off until the other folks who received the e-mail began sharing their disdain for the gig offer via "reply all" and by posting on Facebook. I love a good controversy. I chimed in. I told folks about my experience with the offer. Others voiced their concern about setting a poor example for musicians by playing for free. It sparked a firestorm of back and forth e-mails and Facebook posts.

The controversy still burns. Some folks agreed to play for free while others continue to protest. Some musicians don't understand their own worth. I know that I should have never agreed to play last year. It was wrong of me, but I was going to do it for Dad. In a way I am glad that the gig didn't happen, but where else am I ever going to sing the National Anthem before a baseball game? Fenway Park? Yeah, right. If the PawSox WANT music before a game they should PAY the performers a proper amount for the gig, put them in a decent place to play (not a parking lot for people to hear them only as they walk by), and treat them with AT LEAST the SAME amount of respect that they show the ball players. They should save their money, keep the stadium that they already have and pay people what they are worth! Enough said, for now... Read on...

If you want to learn about navigating your way through the murky waters of the music business, mark Sun, May 3 on your calendar when the first annual Southern New England Music Expo premieres at The Crowne Plaza in Warwick. The event includes anything having to do with music and is geared toward the average to adept music creator. The expo will feature celebrity meet and greet/book signings and guest speakers, including Ken Caillat, who produced and engineered several Fleetwood Mac albums. A keynote panel featuring Joe Belliotti, who was on Billboard's "Power 100" list of the most powerful players in the music business; Josh Burke, VP Strategy & Major Accounts for Music Dealers — a music agency that works with brands, agencies, TV networks, and film & game studios; and Jeff Rabhan, Chair of The Clive Davis Institute for Recorded Music at NYU and artist manager. Also expect hit songwriter moderated workshops/seminars, song critiques, and a songwriter, performance and pitch session. Equipment, recording, instruction, used vinyl and other music memorabilia will be for for sale, as well as any kind of musical service of interest to music lovers. This event was founded by local musician Greg Lato in partnership with Rob Marin. Lato says, "I wanted to create the type of event I always wished existed while growing up as a music fan and musician in Rhode Island." For more, treble over to [snemusicexpo.com](http://snemusicexpo.com)

On April 28, you can enjoy an evening of solo, acoustic music from Richard Thompson. The award-winning guitar master, songwriter, performer, former member of Fairport Convention and member of the Order of the British Empire (this is not a band, it's a title bestowed upon him by Queen Elizabeth II) will be swinging by The Met in Pawtucket. Named by *Rolling Stone Magazine* as one of the Top 20 Guitarists of All Time, Richard Thompson is also one of the world's most critically acclaimed and prolific songwriters. Probably his most famous and most covered song is the moving "1952 Vincent Black Lightning." Having co-founded the groundbreaking group Fairport Convention as a teenager in the '60s, Richard Thompson and his mates were one of the innovators of British Folk Rock. At age 21, he left the band to pursue his own career, followed by a decade-long musical partnership with his then-wife Linda and then 30 years as a highly successful solo artist. Thompson's massive body of work includes over 40 albums and numerous film soundtracks. Don't miss this opportunity to witness a musical genius live on stage.

I am out of room so I will just mention a couple of other shows worthy of your time and the ticket price. Stone Soup has two shows up their season's sleeve. On April 25, catch Mustard's Retreat, with Lori Diamond and Fred Abatelli opening. On May 9, it's Martyn Joseph. Spread over to [StoneSoupCoffeehouse.org](http://StoneSoupCoffeehouse.org) for more. *Motif's* Best Americana Act nominees Longshot Voodoo and guests Crocodile River Music will be at the Blackstone River Theatre on May 9. As a part of this show, there will be a Drum Workshop led by the Crocodile River Music drummers at 4pm. The last time these two bands played together it resulted in a sold-out, standing-room-only show, so get your tickets early. Paddle over to [riverfolk.org](http://riverfolk.org). Get your Contra Dancin' shoes on! The Greater Providence Contra Dance gives you a chance to dance on Fri, April 17, at St Paul's Episcopal Church in Pawtucket. David Eisenstadter will do the calling with Jon Cannon on fiddle and Max Newman on guitar. Sashay over to [providencecontra.com](http://providencecontra.com).

That's it for now. Thanks for reading. [JohnFuzek.com](http://JohnFuzek.com)

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# UCOH Is Open for Interpretation

Festival Ballet Providence closes its 37<sup>th</sup> season with their popular *Up Close On Hope* dance series and the best way to describe this program, which leans a bit more toward contemporary dance than past programs, is “open for interpretation.”

With classical ballet, even when presented in excerpts, which is generally the case for UCOH, audiences know the story, whereas with many contemporary pieces the story is not always clear, and in many cases, it is very personal for the choreographer.

Yet the lack of an identifiable theme does not detract from the program’s aesthetic appeal, which also features many of the company’s younger dancers sharing the stage with some of the more familiar faces; Jaime DeRocker and Eugenia Zinovieva continue to impress.

The performance opens with Joseph Morrissey’s “Mein Weg.” Five dancers, three females and two males dressed in black depict a somewhat frantic scene. Dancers walk quickly across the stage while others perform vogue-like movements framing their faces or bodies with their arms. The male dancers share partnering duties as the music builds and the pace quickens. Ilya Burov continues to show he is one of the company’s most versatile and reliable dancers.

Next is Sydney Skybetter’s “Near Abroad.” Originally created for a man and a woman, FBP chose to present it with two male dancers, adding to its intrigue. The piece seems an exploration of relationships where at times we can feel so near, but so distant. Alex Lantz and Ty Parmenter are gentle and tender, keeping constant contact with one another. Other times, there is a sense of desperation with clutching and clinging, the dancers tumbling to the floor. Yet they have an inherent trust in one another until the final moment when Parmenter leans backward, but Lantz is not there to catch him.

The mood lightens with Parmenter’s “Slip Flap.” Four female dancers wander about wearing long-sleeve thermal tops and men’s underwear. The choreography starts out very lively with the dancers copying each other. Then the music softens and the dancers’ movements are slower and more deliberate with each seeming to complete another’s phrase, a continuous chain of movements.

FBP artistic director Mihailo Djuric’s light and lyrical “For Susan” follows, a charming Romeo and Juliet type pas de deux. Ruth Whitney and Alan Alberto give the piece great depth and emotion. At one point, he gently lifts her and she reaches back to caress his neck. Whitney is light and airy; Alberto the perfect counterpoint with long, muscular lines. “Susan” flows nicely and finishes in a sweeping promenade with Whitney opening her arms and leaning back, giving herself completely to Alberto.

Just before intermission, company dancer Vilia Putrius premieres the deeply personal “All the Birds Become Silent to the Moon’s Complaints,” a tribute to a friend who took her own life. It begins with an endearing pas de deux with Putrius and Mindaugus Bauzys playfully interacting with a child. Later the child grows up and is surrounded by dancers dressed in black robes carrying heavy sacks, representing the weighty burdens we all carry. Yet sometimes these burdens can be overwhelming as the once happy child leaps into darkness.

Jaime Diaz’s “Embers” opens the second half. And, as the title suggests, this is a “hot” pas de deux featuring Brenna DiFrancesco and Parmenter. With him shirtless, it is a fluid and passionate piece. On

several occasions, Parmenter's legs buckle when DiFrancesco lightly touches his chest yet he sparks back to life. But alas his passion burns itself out and he collapses to the floor.

Next, 19-year-old company member Jorge Rullan presents "3:23." Set to a clanging piano, the piece seems to suggest a sense of losing control. Dancers leap and crash to the floor, the music swells and the desperation grows. Yet, DeRocker and Alberto meet and their movements become softer and more controlled with each seeming to have fulfilled the other's needs. They dance and find peace, but their encounter abruptly ends with a simple handshake.

Putrius and Bauzys return for "Romantic Pas de Deux," a breathless exercise in stamina and technique that both dancers make look near perfect and effortless. From the opening, with his completing multiple double tours en l'air and dropping to one knee just in time to support her, the audience is treated to a series of demi-solos. Putrius amazes hopping en pointe in a diagonal across the stage while executing a series of pirouettes. The audience claps loudly when Bauzys spins on one leg, calmly finishing in a triple pirouette. The piece ends with her balanced precariously on his shoulder.

Resident choreographer Vikotr Plotnikov's "Urban Shadows" completes the program. With four dancers, two men and two women wearing all grey, this number features Plotnikov's trademark choreography where even the dancer's bodies become props as one leans, sits or climbs over another. One movement sets off another when one dancer gently touches another with a foot or a hand to initiate a response.

FBP's *Up Close On Hope* runs through April 25 in the company's Black Box Theatre. For tickets or more information, visit [festivalballet.com](http://festivalballet.com).

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## SENE Celebrates its Seventh Year

Want a film screening, live music and art every night of the week? The SENE Film Music and Arts Festival seeks to provide just that. During the week of April 20th through the 25th, filmmakers and film enthusiasts will gather at the seventh annual festival.

Co-founders Phil Capobres and Don Farias are the nice guys of the film festival circuit; that might be why Cherry Arnold chose to have the world premiere of her new film *Bluebirds Fly, Love and Hope on the Autism Spectrum* at SENE. Cherry, who had a hit on her hands a few years ago with the doc *Buddy*, turned her lens from corrupt ex-mayors toward autism and how it affects the lives of several families.

"The hardest part of running a festival is saying no to filmmakers. We wish we could show them all," said Capobres, co-founder and artistic director of the festival. Receiving thousands of submissions, the selections are brought down to 120 films, ranging from comedy, horror, sci-fi, animation and documentary. The nice guys of the festival circuit reach out across the world for films. They come from Kazakstan, Spain and Iran, as well as all across the country, but the festival has not turned its back on local film. There are 27 films from local filmmakers that include a zombie musical short featuring music

by Providence musicians The Denver Boot, as well as horror of the most relatable kind. In *The Creed*, a woman finds herself unable to get rid of tickets to a concert from the titular band. Terrifying.

The festival also celebrates local artists who left home and made good, like the Giovanis brothers, who have brought their film *Bereave* back home to their native Rhode Island. The brothers, originally from Coventry, have been working in Hollywood for years and their new feature has received excellent reviews and accolades. The film stars Malcolm McDowell, Jane Seymour and Keith Carradine. McDowell is a suicidal husband who gets a new lease on life when his wife disappears.

What sets this festival apart is its focus on not just film, but all art and how it interacts with film. "We get a lot of films submitted about art and music," said Capobres. Further highlighting the deep connection between film and music, there will be a film scoring panel on Saturday at noon at The Columbus Theatre. Mauro Colangelo, who has scored everything from Ferrari and Reebok commercials to feature films, will be there explaining the process along with Eric Barao, Dean Cascione and Rich Kelly.

The festival starts Monday at The Columbus Theatre with a program of feature films (*see review of the festival opening film: Wildlike*), horror shorts and a series of films commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Horror buffs should be sure to check out the film *Tuck Me In*, which delivers a potent shock in its incredibly tight one-minute running time. "I showed it to a co-worker who said after watching it she would not sleep that night," said Capobres.

Tuesday kicks off the music with a performance by the Whiskey Treaty Roadshow and a screening of a film about the band followed by a program of music videos. The live performance will take place at the Brooklyn Coffee & Tea House, a favorite venue of local filmmakers. The owner of the Brooklyn, Tony Demmings, will receive an award at the Limelight party on Thursday night. Other award winners include *Motif* Publisher Mike Ryan and Jon & Betty Jane Berberian of the Columbus Theatre. The Limelight party held at the Warwick Art Museum features music and art by URI seniors as well as live music, food, beer and more.

Friday the SENE fest travels around the world and back again with a series of international films followed by a screening of local shorts. The international feature *Hunting the Phantom* features Kristanna Lokken (of *Bloodrayne* fame) and Armand Assante in a science-fiction conspiracy thriller.

Saturday brings a day full of films including documentaries, short films, an LGBTQ short series, animation and more. The animation screening includes films ranging from family-friendly to not-so-family-friendly fare. "We give families a warning before the R-rated animation starts," assures Capobres.

The week culminates in a party with a live performance by New Jersey-based indie songwriter Zak Smith, 2013 Jersey Acoustic Music Award Winner for Best Vocalist.

The mission of SENE is bringing people together through film, music and art, and the festival has always succeeded in doing just that. You may come for the films, but you stay for the music, art or the community. SENE continues to grow every year with more and more submissions; however, the festival's founders seek to grow while keeping their mission intact. According to Capobres, "We don't want to get too big. We want the festival to feel intimate."

*The SENE Film Music and Arts Festival runs from Apr 20 - 25. For information on schedule and venues*

or to purchase all-access passes, go to [senefest.com](http://senefest.com).

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## Alt-Nation: A Celebration, A Film, and Shows You Don't Want to Miss

Before we begin the roundup, I have to congratulate the National Champion Providence College Men's Hockey team! I had the thrill of seeing the championship game last Saturday and the atmosphere was electric. Congrats boys, you've earned it! On another note, to hear some tasty cuts from some of these upcoming shows, the best in local rock 'n' roll, old school, rock, R&B, soul and punk come down to the E&O Tap in Providence on Thurs, April 16 where I'll stage my monthly coup d'état of the tunes from 9pm to midnight.

From The Living Room to The Parlour: 40 years of Local Music!

In April 1975, on Westminster St in downtown PVD, brothers Randy and Brian Hien opened the first of what would be three locations of The Living Room. The Living Room became a place where, thanks to the vision and spirit of the late great Randy Hien, every aspiring musician had a chance to realize their dreams. Longtime Living Room employees (and now owners of The Parlour) Aaron Jaehing and Gregory Rourke along with Brian Hien will host a two-day celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Living Room opening. The Parlour will host this celebration of The Living Rooms over two days packed with great local music. Sat, April 18 will feature performances by Pistol Shot Gypsy, Hope Anchor, Viking Jesus, That'll Learn 'Ya, Joe Silva (The Threats), Brian McKenzie (Kilgore), James "Boney" Beaupre (The Probers) and Hillbilly Graham Crackers. On Sun, April 19, Extinction Machine, Sasquatch and The Sick-A-Billys, The Worried, Neutral Nations, Two Guys and Another Guy, Bill Keough, and more to be announced will rock the house. The shows start early with the doors set to open at 4pm, and the music runs all night.

Ex Hex

I've been stoked to see Ex Hex from the minute this show was announced. Ex Hex is an all-female punk power trio that released one of last year's best albums, appropriately called *Rips*. Ex Hex is led by singer/guitarist Mary Timony who is best known for fronting indie rock bands like Autoclave, the Boston-based Helium, and most recently, the super group Wild Flag. Ex Hex are like a mix of the power pop of Cheap Trick with the punk rock of Johnny Thunders and The Heartbreakers boiled up and dished out with a heavy dosage of sass. This will be a show for the ages.

*Ex Hex, Kuroma and Littlefoot rock The Parlour on Apr 25.*

Roddy Radiation (from The Specials)

The only time I got to see The Specials was in the late '90s in the basement of the Middle East nightclub. I was staking out a spot near the stage when I got shoved out of the way by a bodyguard who was escorting Robert Smith from The Cure through the crowd up a ramp to the backstage area. If the

king of goth new wave loves The Specials, how could anyone not? The Specials, for those unfamiliar, were the leading band behind the late '70s ska revival that mixed a rocksteady beat with a punk attitude. Roddy Radiation was the lead guitarist and songwriter for The Specials. In addition to having perhaps the coolest stage name in rock 'n' roll, Radiation will be playing a mix of tunes he wrote for The Specials and tunes from his other projects while backed by The Scotch Bonnets.

*Roddy Radiation of The Specials, The Scotch Bonnets, and The Copacetics will rock it rock steady at The Parlour on Apr 26.*

The Final Obsession

*The Final Obsession* is a new short film that delves into the world of a made-for-TV actress and the dramas that surround her life. The Final Obsession has a lot of connections to the local music community. The film features Miss Wensday Greenbaum (Miss Wensday & The Cotillions) and Dan White (The Cobra-matics) as actors. The movie was also written and directed by Adam Theroux (Hank Sinatra Jr., Bi Anal Ham Sandwich, and Girl Haggard). In addition to the screening of *The Final Obsession* there will be screening of some other shorts and live performances from Dan White, Eric and the Nothing, and Denver Boot.

*The Final Obsession Premiere is at AS220 on May 1. The fun starts at 8pm.*

*Email music news to [mclarkin33@gmail.com](mailto:mclarkin33@gmail.com)*

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## **National Ceramics Conference Lands in Providence**

The Cate Charles Gallery on South Main Street — the combo efforts of mother-daughter duo Kim Charles and Catherine Schrage — offers up something unique this week in its “Porcelain in Three” ceramics exhibition. The gallery usually features paintings or sculptures, but opted for a porcelain ceramics display including works from Susan Schulz, Seth Rainville and John Oles. This no doubt makes the gallery a prominent stop in this week’s The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) conference hitting Providence from March 25 - 28.



NCECA (pronounced *en-see-kuh*) works to cultivate new generations of ceramics artists by inspiring people at all levels of the artistic process, whether in working with the artists themselves or by fostering the greater art collecting community. Providence plays host to the NCECA's 49th annual conference with the theme "Lively Experiments." In addition to conference programming at the RI Convention Center, dozens of galleries across the state — just like the Cate Charles Gallery — will be included on guided bus and shuttle tours.

"Artists that we've talked to said to expect people in the thousands coming in for the conference," said Catherine Schrage, the Cate Charles Gallery Press & Marketing Manager. "It's a big deal on the national level. We're very excited!" According to Schrage, NCECA draws massive crowds not only of enthusiasts, but collectors as well. At Cate Charles and many other galleries, all the work will be on sale at a 50/50 split between artist and gallery.

The Cate Charles Gallery's exhibition "Porcelain in Three" featured three artists with distinct styles. Susan Schulz recreates objects both natural and manmade down to the intricate detail to produce assortments of objects so lifelike in some cases that you think you're looking at shells or coral covered in dust.



One woman's trash is another woman's artistic inspiration.

Seth Rainville's pieces are intricately detailed yet 100% usable bowls and teapots, one of which included a few tiny porcelain chairs he encourages exhibition attendees to move around.



A perfect landing place for your keys, wallet, and spare change? Or a work of art? How about both?

John Oles' work included a whole section of porcelain meets stone, featuring small structures of contrast and balance in assorted positions. Among the most compelling was a piece aptly titled "Balance."



The aptly titled "Balance".

The NCECA conference runs through March 28. Take a look at the following links for more information:

- [Over 100 galleries just like Cate Charles are featured on Exhibitions, Tours & Shuttle Routes](#)
- [Download an Exhibition Guide](#)
- [View the Detailed Programming Schedule for all that is offered at the RI Convention Center](#)

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## **Paint, Drink, and Be Merry at Paint Drops Paint Bar**



The last time I sat facing an easel with a paintbrush in hand was 10 years before I was legally able to hold a glass of wine in the other. Thanks to Paint Drops paint bar in Pawtucket, however, I was able to fill my hands with one of each and still walk away with a surprisingly decent piece of artwork. I think I may have found my new favorite pastime.

Paint bars have been sweeping the nation in recent years, first as designated “Wine and Paint Nights” held once a month inside bars and wineries, and progressing into independent studios where every day is devoted to painting for the imbibed and ambitious. Even little Rhode Island has its share of establishments rising to meet the occasion. One of the newest is located on Mineral Spring Ave, nestled inside an old mill-looking building with green trim, across from a “Save” supermarket (this is an important detail, particularly if one decides half-way through paint night that one would like to buy saltine crackers). Added bonus: There’s plenty of free parking.

I asked my friend Jen to accompany me, thinking it’d be fun to say “The Jens are painting Rhode Island red! (and pink and purple and blue!)” I did not realize she was a pro, with five paintings under her belt from various bars around New England. I felt incredibly underqualified to be sitting next to her— but, as I learned from my evening, no prior experience is necessary in order to produce a painting worthy of display.

There was a small crowd that evening, four women, and I was still “hanging over” (in the words of my friend’s grandfather) from an unexpected Sunday night outing. This was particularly upsetting because

Paint Drops is a B.Y.O.B.(ottle) studio, and I could have really reveled in the fact that most paint bars offer only *one* included glass of wine, and I had the potential to drink four. I instead spent the night sipping a chardonnay while nursing a bottle of Aquafina, but the possibility to have an inexpensive boozy night is there.

I was surprised by the intimacy of the venue. Ana Maria, the owner and our instructor that night, was so relaxed and welcoming, we felt we could make ourselves at home. We were given aprons to protect our clothing, and prior to our arrival, she set up stations with easels, brushes, and paint-drop dotted plates filled with vibrant colors. And for those of you who don't carry a corkscrew in your purse, you need not have a moment of panic at the liquor store like I did, frantically swapping out a corked bottle for a screw-top, because cups, wine keys, bottle openers, and straws are available for use. The other two women painting with us even brought crackers and dip, and seeing their supply ignited within me a strong desire for my own crackers. (Ana was kind enough to direct me to the shopping center and encouraged me to run out while we waited for our first layer of paint to dry. "Honestly, it's no problem! We can't paint until the background dries anyway.")

Our goal that night was to paint a flamingo. Before we began, Ana gave us an encouraging introduction that assured us we need not be Picasso in order to produce a wonderful piece of art. "There is no such thing as a mistake," she said. "People are sometimes too timid to paint because they're afraid of making mistakes, but there is no right or wrong here. The goal is not to make a piece of artwork that looks identical to mine — that'd be impossible. It's to create your own interpretation, something that is you." She offered recommendations as she painted, primarily in regard to layering and the progression from painting the background to plumage to the neck to eyes to highlights, but the instruction was not as rigid as I expected. She didn't paint one stroke and wait for us to copy it before moving on. As a perfectionist, I like to know exactly what the teacher is doing and how, so this lack of detailed guidance made me anxious. But by the end of the evening, I learned I could create my own path and still arrive at something that looked like a flamingo. And that did, in fact, make me feel proud.

In my moments of pause, I admired artwork around the room from previous nights' events, and I wanted to paint them ALL. I felt inspired. I felt *artistic*. Similar to a runner's high, there must be a painter's high that comes from seeing the work of one's hands on the canvas, because I left feeling very happy and accomplished. The wine, which might be the draw for some, was simply an added bonus.

Paint Drops: 560 Mineral Spring Ave, Pawtucket, RI

Visit [paintdropsri.com](http://paintdropsri.com) to reserve a spot and view the calendar of scheduled paintings.

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## Dial M for Murder Provides Gripping Good Fun

On Halloween, while goblins and ghouls and a wide variety of superheroes were out roaming the streets, Ocean State Theatre Company was doling out some tricks and treats of their own with the gripping thriller *Dial M for Murder*.

Originally written for the stage by Frederick Knott, this murder mystery was later made famous on the big screen by master of suspense Alfred Hitchcock. And, as the show's program rightly notes, the key to any thriller is believability, a feat much easier achieved in film. Whereas on stage, believability resides in the performers' ability to make what the audience is seeing look plausible. The cast of six in OSTC's production, directed by Aimee Turner, succeed admirably in this regard.

The entire play takes place in the living room of a London apartment. And, once again, OSTC set designers have outdone themselves. With the help of "Partner and Design" Ethan Allen, this posh pad features some beautiful furnishings: a large wooden desk off to one side with a very luxurious looking couch center stage, French doors opening to a courtyard, a fireplace, lamps and light fixtures complete the décor. During her opening remarks, Turner turns and admires, asking, "Wouldn't you kill for this apartment?"

The play's plot revolves around the familiar theme of greed and murder. Tony Wendice plans to have his wealthy wife, Margot, murdered for her money. To do so, he blackmails an old college acquaintance, with a very shady past, into committing the "perfect" murder. But things go terribly awry when the murderer becomes the murdered! All these details give very little away as they all occur early in the play. From that point forward, the suspense resides in one's wondering if the police will figure out the truth in this twisted tale of murder and deceit.

Under Turner's direction, this two act play, with each act running close to an hour in length, breezes right along. Though a few of the lines were fumbled, that did not detract from the overall production, which was highlighted by some wonderful performances. And, in a bit of a theatrical twist, during intermission the police inspect the crime scene and remove the dead body. So, audience members may want to remain seated between acts.

Brandon Whitehead, as Inspector Hubbard, delivers the evening's best performance. From the moment he enters, with Mr. Wendice opening the door to observe his hulking and disheveled appearance, Whitehead dominates the stage. With a Columbo-like clumsiness, he draws laughs just as easily with a gesture or facial expression as he does with his calculated and silly open-ended questions, which he delivers with a skillful, deadpan timing.

Drew Anthony Allen, as the scheming Tony Wendice, has his hands full playing the loving husband while planning his wife's murder. Yet he is quite convincing, projecting a chilling confidence and calmness. He matter-of-factly wipes away his accomplices fingerprints from some drinking glasses while getting him to leave his prints on a letter he will use later to frame his old college chum.

As the would be murderer, Captain Lesgate, Rudy Sanda comes across as both likeable and pathetic, making him the perfect mark for Mr. Wendice. Sanda's charm and smile easily convey how this lifelong scammer has made it this far. Yet, one does sort of feel bad for him upon his untimely demise.

Aimee Doherty nicely portrays the naïve and unsuspecting wife, Margot. Believing so deeply in her husband's love, she rejects the constant advances of her former lover Max Halliday. Doherty's flippant and all-too-trusting demeanor makes her even more sympathetic. One wants to shout out, "Don't answer the phone!" when her husband's scheme begins to unfold.

As murder mystery TV writer Max Halliday, Bill Mootos' indifference proves to be prophetic. Nicely timed lines like, "In stories things turn out the way the author wants, in life they don't," have a chilling, foreshadowing effect. Yet, Mootos comes across as too gullible, willing to just tag along, whether it be

with Margot or Tony. One can easily see why Margot chose Tony over Max.

OSTC's production of *Dial M for Murder* will enjoy a limited run until November 16 in the company's new state-of-the-art theater in Warwick. For more details, visit [oceanstatetheatre.org](http://oceanstatetheatre.org)

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## A Game to Define A Season: The Mob Squad Take the 2014 Trophy



Ten points! That's all that separated the Mob from the Old Money Honeys in their Championship rubber match. In a season where the Mob dominated, the Honeys, who lost earlier in the season to the Mob, defeated their nemeses in the last bout before the Championships earlier in September. Then on October 11 at the RI Convention Center, this year's home season trophy was put center track against the two teams.

Calls on track-cut (skating out of bounds) were very frequent this year, but not in this bout as we saw more "direction of gameplay" (blocking while at standstill or skating clockwise) and "out-of-play" (actions outside the pack or illegally separating the pack). And that intense blocking was felt into the first half with a score of 39-66, Mob leading.

For the remainder of the bout, the Mob held the Honeys at bay by roughly 30 points until a 17 vs. 12 point jam caught the Honeys up. However, the Mob held out with a 138-148 win. Top scores for the Honeys were #424 Jigsaw with 48 points and #75 Smoke N Mirrors with 33 points. The Mobs lead point ladies were #32 Shotz of Petrone with 62 and #12 Varla Gunz with 44. Some of the standout blockers that balanced good offense and defense were #F34R Scared Stiffany, #729 Roxy Elbow Ya, and #138 Skate Middleton for the Honeys and #08CT Beat-Trix LeStrangle, #3 Ruca Salt, and #1000 Baby Fighterfly for the Mob.

It's been a truly amazing season all year round in Providence Roller Derby from the Mob, the Honeys, and the Sakonnet River Roller Rats. With bouts ending in a single point to going into overtime, all of the skaters gave some of the most exhilarating moments in the Providence's roller derby history. After the upcoming winter break, the new travel season, featuring teams from around the country and the world, will start up around early spring (dates to be announced). Check regularly for upcoming season schedule and special public events at [providencerollerderby.com](http://providencerollerderby.com) or follow Providence Roller Derby on Facebook!

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# Don't Get Trampled — Shop Local

The shopping days countdown till Christmas has started, and if you're anything like me, you've been scoping out gifts for your friends and family for months. (Haha, yeah right!) Most people I know wait until after Thanksgiving to start shopping. Or the day after. The formidable Black Friday.

If you're living under a rock, Black Friday is the Friday following Thanksgiving Day, often regarded as the beginning of the Christmas shopping season. Most major retailers open exceedingly early and offer promotional sales. It has customarily been the busiest shopping day of the year since 2005.

Now, I've never gone shopping on this day, never mind left the house. I'm usually still tryppin' on L-Tryptophan and passed out on my aunt's couch with a glass of wine balanced precariously on my lap. Who in their right mind wants to think about Christmas shopping in the glorious post-Thanksgiving afterglow? Shoppers wait in line from as early as midnight to dash into department stores for what? Discounted microwaves? BOGO socks? I'd much rather sleep 'til noon and pay the regular retail price.

Oh, and get this! There's a website that keeps track of Black Friday trappings/deaths — *blackfridaydeathcount.com*. You might think, "Oh, seven deaths isn't that big a deal." But remember: those seven deaths occurred from people crawling over each other to get a cheap Furby or memory card. Now that's alarming.

Only in America do we trample each other for more stuff the day after we give thanks for what we already have.

For those looking for deals without the madness, Small Business Saturday (the Saturday after Thanksgiving) is a friendlier alternative to the ominous Black Friday. This is a day to support the local shops that create jobs, boost the economy, and sustain neighborhoods. Instead of being trampled by hundreds of greedy shoppers in Walmart, why not support your own neighborhood? As a former salesperson who has exclusively worked for small and family-owned businesses, I can tell you that A LOT of work goes into running these places — more than one would think. Employees typically have the responsibility of running the entire store. I've opened, received, priced and displayed hundreds of boxes of merchandise in just a few short hours. I've also stayed after hours to put up fake trees, string lights, wrap boxes and paint windows. Small businesses are a work of love and passion and owners genuinely appreciate their customers.

If you're convinced enough to give local shopping a try this year, check out these amazing shops.

**Beauty and the Bath:** A whimsical gift shop established in 1986 within a quaint village seaport. This is the perfect shop to stock up for girls' (or guys') night in! Bubbles, bath salts, perfume, oils, lotions, candle, powders, PJs and robes. They also host birthday parties! 11 West Main St., Wickford.  
[beautyandthebath.com](http://beautyandthebath.com)

**The Crabby Lion** is an unconventional, eco-centric shop featuring repurposed and completely one-of-a-kind furniture, bamboo bedding and clothing, local art, and organic makeup. It's a colorful and curious space bursting with whimsy and joy. Have an idea for a piece of furniture? The store also takes

commissions and will work with you to create an original masterpiece. 800 W Shore Rd., Warwick.  
thecrabbylion.com

**Simple Pleasures** is a beautifully rustic shop tucked away on the East Side of Providence. Handpainted pottery, cashmere scarves, quirky greeting cards, hand-carved shell bangles and handwoven throws are just a few of the many goods you will find here. 6 Richmond Square, Providence.  
simplepleasuresprovidence.com

**The Fantastic Umbrella Factory** is more of a small village than a store. Established in 1968, FUF is a collection of eclectic shops. Step into *Small Axe Productions* for gifts, clothing, jewelry and musical instruments. *Factory Gardens* houses fancy plants, tropicals, perennials and more. The quaint *General Store* carries an assortment of treasures, candy, toys and gifts for the young and young at heart. Other stores on the property include *Frills*, *Axiom*, *Block Print Graphics*, *Henna Body Art* and *SoCo Artisans Loft*. Take a break from shopping and feed the goats, emus and ducks you'll see wandering about. 4820 Old Post Rd. Charlestown. fantasticumbrellafactory.com

**Farmacy Herbs:** This is an undoubtedly unique spot with an overabundance of bulk dried herbs, tea blends, herbal products, local honey and books. Knowledgeable and experienced herbalists offer nutritional healing, consultations and herbal education classes. All herbs are organic and grown in RI. 28 Cemetery St., Providence. farmacyherbs.com

**Frog & Toad:** This unusual little neighborhood shop has an ever-changing selection of items from around the world with tons of locally made goodies as well! You'll find jewelry, handbags, throw rugs, table linens and textiles, locally-printed and designed graphic T's, Fair Trade handicrafts from around the globe and much more. Browsers are always welcome. 795 Hope St., Providence.  
frogandtoadstore.com

Employees of small businesses recognize regulars and maintain relationships with them to keep them happy and satisfied. And who wouldn't want that?

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## The Yankee Beer Swap – 'Tis (Almost) the Season

So you're done trick or treating, you've eaten more Sugar Babies than should be physically possible and now you're curled up on the couch cursing your over-indulgence and trying to ignore the sharp pain in your stomach by reading this article. It's ok, we've all been there. When the Pepto takes hold and the pain subsides it's time to turn your attention from raising the dead and inhaling pixie sticks to the long winter ahead and the season of giving. I may be biased, but I can't think of a better gift than beer.

This year, I'm not going to tell you what beer to get, but instead I will share with you a tradition I started a few years ago. The Yankee Beer Swap. For those of you who are already familiar with a Yankee Swap, you can skip ahead to the mix-a-six section secure in the knowledge that it is a standard

swap but with beer instead. Real creative, huh?

For the rest of you, a Yankee Swap is a wonderful holiday party game where the spirit of giving is carefully balanced with the art of taking. At a Yankee Swap, each participant brings a wrapped gift for nobody in particular and under a previously decided cost limit. The host then puts a number for each guest in a hat, leftover pumpkin pail, or whatever is the most handy container. Each guest will then draw a number out of the hat, which will decide the order in which they get the beers. [PSA: Don't forget to have plenty of liquid cheer on hand while all this is happening.]

In rounds, starting with number 1, guests can take one present of their choice and open it. It is usually expected that the guest will show their loot to the other guests. The next guest to take a turn can decide to take [forced trade] someone else's already opened present or keep their own. There's only a few rules. 1. The first guest to pick gets to make the last swap after everyone else has opened their gifts and made their choice. So the first guest is usually the best number to get. 2. A single gift can only be taken two or three times. That's it! Oh, and no whining.

This whole scheme works great with regular presents and even better with rare and desirable beers. For example, a 6-pack of Heady Topper from Alchemist would probably be the most traded gift and may even start a fight. Conversely, a really terrible beer or Smirnoff ice could start a riot, but it makes an excellent gag. Just make sure you have the real gift close by. I used a gag gift before — a Heineken Light bottle that had a rusty cap and had been sitting in my fridge for an unknown amount of time — and unknowingly crushed my friend's spirits. The whole room was outraged someone would give such a gift.

If you're going to do this type of event make sure your guests love beer, or at least appreciate it. You could always do wine or liquor if you're not in the beer loving crowd. But then why are you reading this article?

Mix-A-Six:

1. Doherty's Ale House in Warwick will host a Sam Adams Utopias dinner on January 27 at 6:30pm (this is a rescheduled date). They will have a sample of every Utopia ever made as well as a mystery beer. One of the head brewers from Sam Adams will be on hand to talk about the beers. Call the Ale House to purchase tickets.
2. Bucket Brewery Released 9 Men's Misery, their new Imperial IPA, on November 1. The beer weighs in at a hefty 7.6% and is commemorative of battle in King Phillip's war 1676. It also has 10 hop additions to commemorate the colonists involved in the conflict.
3. Crooked Current had a successful soft opening just before Halloween. Grand opening will be coming soon.
4. Revival is getting their beers into bottles and onto store shelves around the state. Keep your eye out for Burnsider Pale Ale and in the coming weeks, Zeppelin.
5. Narragansett and Revival just announced a collaboration on a new Lovecraft Honey Ale.
6. RI Brewing Society will host a statewide homebrewers meeting on November 13 with representation from RIFT, JBREW and East Bay Homebrewer's clubs. All home brewers are

welcome. [ribrewingsociety.com](http://ribrewingsociety.com)