

» Cohesion and Conflict

One People, Many Paths is a trip through the "other" Jewish exodus, from Eastern European shtetls and ghettos to this Midwestern haven. From rabbis and klezmer music to Golda, Selig and Kohl, author John Gurda examines how the Jewish community has thrived despite internal divisions. It is most cohesive, he notes, when assisting others. Although the Milwaukee Jewish community has broken off into diverse and often conflicting segments, the branches remain connected. Gurda explores how the community's core tenet – improving the world around it – evolves from holding tight to family and religious traditions. As a minority and cornerstone of local society, the Jewish gift to Milwaukee has been to serve the whole community. Gurda's book is an example for each culture to hold up a historical mirror to discover and relish the depth of its own traditions. *Yashar Koah*, John. (Jeffrey N. Gingold)

» West Is Best



Pastoral traces of early Wilco meet the rustic crunch of Neil Young's Crazy Horse on Will Phalen and the Stereo Addicts' **Middle West**. It's a Milwaukee-flavored studio effort featuring Phalen's weepy songwriting alongside members of local mainstays Decibully and Freshwater Collins. The songwriter

spends time questioning ("I Don't Know Why") and gazing skyward ("Like Rain"). "Illinois Line" offers a perfect encapsulation of the record's feel: stark, gray Wisconsin sky seen from a beat-up car on a seemingly endless drive. In spots, the alt-country dreaminess approaches sleepiness, but it's not hard to see waves of the flannelled masses coming to soak up Phalen's lush Americana alongside Friday night's PBRs. (Todd Lazarski)

» Wild Words

Beyond Words, at Sheboygan's John Michael Kohler Arts Center through May 30, lets words run wild, giving what is normally abstract a new physicality. Shimmering, slinking, stitched, etched, sculptural, painterly words of all sorts represent the diverse interests of some 30 artists, but a certain psychological tendency of obsessiveness dominates. When Natasha Bowdoin deconstructs and handwrites the *Alice in Wonderland* story on cutout leafy tendrils that cascade 20 feet up the wall, this glorious feat feels like the conquering of a summit. Melissa Damasuskas' 30-foot embroidered to-do lists and Jennifer Dalton's plexi-framed documents that chronicle *everything* she owns both reveal a need to see more clearly the secret life of the sticky infrastructure of language which so rules our every move. (Debra Brehmer)



» Luv Flask, Baby

A bartender I know explains that **Jimmy Luv's Bloody Mary mix** is "the best mix I've had." One look inside the 32-ounce bottle (around \$5 at Pick 'n Save, Downer Sendik's and others) shows that lack of flavor isn't a problem. Myriad spice specks and bits of horseradish swim in thick red. Jimmy Luv's is dense enough to displace the vodka in the bottom of my glass. Stirring the drink does nothing, but the need for vigorous shaking is a sign of a good mix. The complex flavor is a bold blend that includes tomato, horseradish, Worcestershire and a hint of steak sauce (that's right), with a spicy bite that doesn't linger. Jim Roeglin spent 25 years of "research" creating this bad boy. When the Milwaukee native lost his accounting job, he went into mass Bloody production with the help of a few friends and a bottler in Illinois. Since its debut in November 2009, Luv's can be found in 400 area outlets. Good career move. (Dan Murphy)



R&R at D&B

I've just eaten chicken, bred a racehorse and considered adopting a monkey. Not bad for a few hours at **Dave & Buster's** (2201 N. Mayfair Rd., Wauwatosa), the new restaurant, bar, mega-arcade and, if you're not careful, money pit. The chicken with barbecue sauce won't win Michelin stars, but was tasty enough. The horse was born on a game called Derby Owners Club, one of some 200 high-tech amusements at the 32,000-square-foot facility. I also shot guns and hoops, whacked moles and racecars, and was rewarded with hundreds of coupons. I'll cash them in at the Winner's Circle for prizes ranging from candy to – surprise – video games. That's where I found the monkey (stuffed), but opted to save my coupons. Only 60,000 more and that Xbox is mine. After all, it's not like D&B is closing anytime soon, 'cause it's gonna be huge. And busy. Yep, a real zoo. (Howie Magner) ■