

Cosplay? Costumes? What's the Difference?



The third annual Rhode Island Comic Con has come and gone. The topic flooding social media and word of mouth surrounds the overcapacity incident that left many out in the rain on the first day. However, while putting that to the side, what stood out was the 20,000 in attendance, many wearing attire ranging from generic Halloween costumes to the most elaborate character likenesses one could find. There were contests, group photos, and some handing out their own business cards, such as Iron Bat, a gentleman in a steam-punk Batman suit with retractable wings.

When talking with a few around the Comic Con, one might hear the term “cosplay” used quite often. To those new to the convention scene, this might be something new, but in fact it’s a community that goes back decades. So what actually separates the cosplayers from the regular costumed fans?

“The only difference between costumes and cosplay attire is that I think there might be a bit more attention to detail for the latter,” said Crysta Mendes, a huge Marvel fan sporting her Black Widow attire with matching red wig. “Other than that, I don’t think there’s much of a reason to differentiate between the two.”

Cosplay.com’s forum opened up the question and one user, Jeyel04, responded, “Cosplaying is like giving homage to the character you are doing. Wearing the character’s costume means you have to bring the character into life.”

Some costumes were very, very detailed, including weapons, LED lights, contact lenses and the right shade of fabric. That kind of attention to detail does take up quite a bit of time and requires a lot of passion.

“The longest devotion so far is Anubis from Zone of the Enders,” said Julia Coelho, a popular local cosplayer who has been part of the community since 2006. “I haven’t even made ample progress. I have it blue printed, but can’t figure out how to execute it.”

But to those who devote their free time and energy, it's absolutely worth it. "Cosplay is important to me because it gives me a chance to feel good and inspire others. I have a plethora of medical issues, but I use them to my advantage," said Coelho.

Even with the overcrowding negativity that occurred at this year's Comic Con, rest assure that with all future cons in the area, you'll still see the community thriving.

"Cosplaying and conventions gives me a chance to be unabashed about my hobbies and interests," said Mendes. "While I'm not ashamed about the sort of things I enjoy, I know I'm walking with a similar crowd when I enter a convention."

Mobile DIY Antifolk Rockers Celebrate 10 Years

Durham, North Carolina based folk rockers Beloved Binge will be stopping in RI on their country wide tour. The couple, who describe their music as, "rubble pop in a punk pot," have been compared to Olympia, WA indie record label k-records, placing them somewhere in the ranks of indie folkies and shoegaze rockers. Beloved Binge is celebrating 10 years of making music, their 10 year "bandiversary". Their music spans the rolling sounds of folk, and extends out to the feedback filled backbone of garage rock. The constant that winds through their recent album *Pockets* is the way the duo's voices come together, part folk chorus, part rock anthem.

Eleni Vlachos is the self-identified drummer of the multi-instrumentalist duo, which will be gracing the stage at AS220 this Wednesday. She and husband Rob Beloved, quit their jobs and got in an '82 camper van with their dog, to tour the United States in celebration of making it 10 years.

Beloved Binge does more than just make music. Both members are vegan and work to raise awareness of the suffering of animals, especially as part of the high production food system. On a trip while touring they were traveling from LA to San Francisco and passed a feedlot for dairy cows, the conditions in which the animals were being kept convinced them to take the step from vegetarianism to veganism.

"One of our interests is reducing suffering in the world," Vlachos explained. Animals make up a lot of life on the planet, and the members of Beloved Binge believe that with increased awareness of plant-based food options, people can make the switch.

"It's hard to change," she acknowledged, "Every meal is choice."

Vlachos is also interested in film work. She has made two films, one called *Seeing through the Fence* which focusses on the reasons for switching to vegetarian and vegan diets, and why people are reluctant to do so. She will be giving out free copies at the show. While they are on tour this fall she is working on a new project called *Big Talk*. She is asking the artists they meet while touring questions off her "big questions" list, such as "What is the hardest part of being alive?"

Vlachos grew up in Seattle, working the cash register at her father's pizza place. Her mother's family had many classical musicians. She started playing the drums at age 21.

In 1998, Vlachos traveled to Crete, as part of a trip around Greece to get to know the country and visit her father's family, there she bought a *bouzouki* (μπουζούκι, pronounced: boo-ZOO-kee), a Greek instrument resembling a lute.

"My father was embarrassed," she joked, the instrument is usually played by men.

Vlachos met Rob while they were both still living in Seattle. She was looking to get involved with a new band. After the third member of their group left, they re-located to Durham, North Carolina.

"We were kind of broken-hearted," Vlachos said. They decided to move somewhere new. They had heard nice things about the weather in North Carolina, so they packed up their stuff and moved.

"When we got there it was like a ghost town," she remembered. But the town opened itself up and revealed a welcoming arts community that has helped them feel at home.

When planning their tour to celebrate 10 years of music making slotting Rhode Island in was an easy choice. Rob's father lives in the city.

They have played AS220 before and are fond of its DIY ethos. The DIY movement is a large component of what they do. Their tour is self-organized and they are traveling by camper van with their dog.

Looking back on ten years of writing and performing Vlachos finds that the biggest changes are those of perspective.

"You look for ways to entertain yourself," she said. Tired of playing gigs the same exact way every time they incorporated a theatrical element. Once, they put on a show of Three's Company inside their performance.

But touring is a major draw when for Vlachos when it comes to going around the country.

"Playing shows is a way to connect with a community that you don't get when you're just traveling."

Beloved Binge will be playing AS220 Thursday August 14. Check out their music at belovedbinge.bandcamp.com.

The Best Roast? Yours! Coffee Roasting 101

Picture entering a coffee shop that roasts its own coffee. The first thing that appeals to your senses is the rich aroma of freshly roasted coffee. Two steps in the door and you are hooked — you've got to have that coffee. The barista pours you a cup of this freshly roasted just ground coffee, and if like me, you have it black. Nothing should impair its taste. The coffee looks, smells and tastes heavenly. This coffee

will never taste this good if shelved for a week, let alone a month or more as many whole bean coffees are sold. This is why I home roast.

I began roasting coffee on a whim, purchasing a Cafe Roasto, a hot air roaster, from Mal, the barista and owner of Cafe Bon Ami. From there it was off to the internet to learn the art of roasting and to purchase green beans (green beans are unroasted coffee beans that can be purchased online or from local vendors). The internet has been a great help in providing background information, but the site that is far and away the best is Sweet Maria's. It has many resources, emailed questions are answered and their forums are useful. Local people in the business also have been a great help — they love discussing their trade.

One big surprise I encountered was that there are many different roasts. In my mind there were only three: light, dark, and espresso, but there are many more. Not all beans should be roasted dark because they lose their individual character and taste burnt, which is a common complaint about Starbucks Coffee. On the opposite side of the spectrum is under roasting, which makes coffee bitter — a complaint about Dunkin Donuts. When purchasing beans, ask which roast is recommended. The most common roasts range from a city roast (light) through a French roast (dark). It all depends on where in the cracking phase the roasting ended.

Cracking is the sound the beans make as they roast. Green beans are a lot like popcorn. Both coffee beans and kernels contain water, and under intense heat the water boils within the bean. When the green bean makes a popping sound, the water is released and the chaff, an outer layer of skin on the bean, comes free. When this step is complete, it is a city roast. If a darker roast is desired, keep roasting into the second crack. The sound of a second crack is a lot like the sound of the crackling of burning wood. Some roasts are stopped in the very beginning of the second crack, and darker roasts, later in the crack, but no beans should be roasted till the end of the second crack or they'll end up burnt.

Choosing the coffee beans to roast, though a personal preference, is also important. There are two types of coffee beans: Arabica and Robusta. Arabica beans are a better quality bean and most commonly used by all roasters. Robusta are a cheaper, lower quality bean that has twice as much caffeine as an Arabica bean. These beans are used in almost all canned coffee. Did you know that a can of decaf coffee could have more caffeine than a caffeinated Arabica bean?

I choose beans I roast by asking questions about the quality of the bean when I purchase locally through Mills Coffee. But if I purchase online, I read the descriptions and coffee ratings. Once roasting on a regular basis (at least monthly) you will have a good handle on which beans you want to roast. The hardest beans to roast are decaf, because it is very difficult to hear when the first crack ends and the second crack begins, because the process that turns the beans into decaf affects the amount of water in the bean. Regardless of the bean I use, I have to sit by the roaster and listen for the cracking. My first roaster was the Cafe Roasto, a hot air roaster, but after a year I switched to a Behmor 1600, primarily because it is quiet, which allows you to hear the cracking more clearly. It also roasts a larger quantity, up to a pound depending on how dark you want it.

There are several types of roasters available, but none in the \$300 to \$1,000 range roast much more than a pound. Roasters that can do 3 pounds or more are commercial roasters cost a significant amount of money. Start small in price and size, then move up to meet your needs.

Once you've roasted your first batch, you'll need a way to grind the beans and brew a cup of the fruits of your labor. Beans are best ground in a burr style grinder, which are found just about anywhere that

sells coffee makers. A burr grinder will do anything from a coarse grind to a fine powder. Selections are made by simply turning a dial. The coffee is at its best when ground just before use, but because that is not convenient during the morning rush, I usually grind a batch for several days, then store it in an airtight container.

There are countless ways to make a cup of coffee and which you choose is a matter of preference. Pure coffee enthusiasts usually prefer a French Press, because you get full flavor of the bean. Pod style coffee makers are not the choice of coffee purists. The water passes through the coffee much too fast to absorb the flavors, the ground coffee is sitting in the pods for an extended time, and you have little control over the brew. They sell strictly because they're convenient.

Home roasting is not difficult. With practice you will recognize the different cracking sounds and know the time between cracks, the characteristics of the bean, and the little idiosyncrasies of your roaster. Expect some rookie problems in the beginning. I often missed the stages of the cracking because I was preoccupied with something else and the hot air roaster was so noisy that it obscured the cracking sound. I either ended up with coffee under roasted and too bitter to drink or a barely drinkable dark roast. And smoke detectors were always going off in my house and still do despite my practice — medium and dark roasts produce smoke.

As a home roaster, you can be creative. Blend two or three different kinds of beans or roast the same bean as a dark roast and again as a light roast then blend them. If decaf is your desired roast, home roasting gives you more choices than the two or three offerings in most cafes. There are more decaf green beans available, and through blending, you extend your options. Above all, have fun and enjoy the process from shopping for beans to drinking the freshest, tastiest cup of coffee you will ever drink.

Fluxus Cock Fight



It's hard to describe just what's going on when a Fluxus event takes place. We explored it in more depth with Shey Rivera, the organizer and instigator of this series of surreal experiences.

At the Cock Fight edition, for example, there was the meditative, "What am I doing here," experience of watching a woman in a bird mask cannibalistically baste chicken parts. Lots of chicken parts. But there was also the part where the audience participated in a pool-noodle-light-sabre battle royale, offsetting the energy of the evening in the polar opposite direction. Other highlights included amusing short films starring tiny, stop motion mice, and a woman trapped inside an endless sweater (that's the best I can do to describe this fascinating, faceless, garment-transformation dance).

Fluxus will be off for the summer, but who knows when it might be back, or in what form. Here's a picture from the cock fight. Can you spot the chicken?



Glamping: Eat Your S'Mores in Your Stiletto

Vintage Style Camping



In 2008, during our annual trip to the Finger Lake Grassroots Festival of Music and Dance, we stumbled upon a Marilyn Monroe-style camper. This tiny trailer, not even 10 feet long, was decorated perfectly in vintage glory: tiny little curtains, a kitchenette that became a twin bed and a couch that folded into a double bed. From that moment on, I was smitten and insisted that I would find one and we would never sleep in a tent again.

It didn't take me long. Just a year later, after looking into people's backyards as we drove by, my husband discovered a vintage trailer, with a bush growing into it, in Warren. The owner sold it to us for \$250. By July 2009, we had completely refurbished a 1970 Shasta Compact into the Cherry Shasta. And we'd gotten a good friend of ours hooked as well. He has purchased, refurbished and sold at least six vintage campers and convinced us to take his 1965 Scotty Sportsman as our next project.

The new craze of vintage trailer refurbishing and camping is what many refer to as glamping, or glamorous camping. Further evidence of the craze includes 2,300 members on the Facebook "Vintage Shasta Trailer Campers" group and another 900 on the "Serro Scotty Camper Enthusiasts" group. Prior to glamping, most people were classified in two groups: outdoorsy or not. You either camped or would rather be strangled to death. Glamping provides a connection to nature for those hotel vacation types who want to dip their toes into the world of camping. And glamping is often ecologically friendly. According to the website, glampinghub.com, "With glamping, less is more. Whereas energy and materials used in the construction and management of a small hotel are quite high, in many cases glamping accommodations take advantage of surrounding elements of nature. Composting toilets, solar power and working gardens are just a few examples. Or, if you're lucky, you can find yourself sleeping in a repurposed carousel or caravan."

I interviewed Ruben Martinez, co-founder of the website glampinghub.com, which lists over 7,000 glamping rooms ranging in price from \$30 to \$3,000 a night all over the world. His company, much like Airbnb.com, connects people with teepees, vintage trailers (called caravans in Europe), treehouses, safari tents, yurts and cabins all over the world. In Vermont, you can rent a yurt, a treehouse or a converted barn. Maine offers cabins, yurts, and vintage Airstreams on Mt. Desert Island. Some folks even deliver their vintage airstreams anywhere you want to camp. For families who don't want to lug all the supplies with them for the week, glamping offers amenities and upgrades at your door. Glamping.com, described as "a discerning guide to experiential travel" offers upscale and adventurous accommodations from eco pods to nature resorts. [El Cosmico \(elcosmico.com\)](http://ElCosmico.com), in west Texas, offers vintage trailers, teepees and 120-square-foot safari tents. While they don't call their experience glamping, their site expresses all that is glamping: comfortable accommodations, outdoor showers under the night sky and land, far as the eye can see.

So this summer, when you want to drag your non-outdoorsy friends out in nature with you, offer them the alternative, glamping experience. With plenty of places to glamp, in New England alone, a campfire, some s'mores, and a warm and DRY comfy bed, is right at your fingertips. Or kick it old school, and hook up your 1965 Teardrop and hit a state park. Everyone will stop and ask if they can look inside and tell you a story about a trailer from their youth. Happy Trails!

Puzzling Pieces



This weekend saw the opening of a very puzzling art exhibit at the Machines with Magnets studio in Pawtucket. Part bar, part performance space, part gallery and part recording studio, Machines with Magnets could be called a puzzling environment on its own. In the gallery section of the space, you can now view recent work by Umberto Crenca. Crenca, the founder of Providence-based arts organization AS220, is known in the community as a champion of the arts and an advocate for unjuried art exhibitions. In his own work, he's known for his use of art as social commentary. This show displays a recent part of his puzzle piece series, a decades-long endeavor that encompasses about 135 pieces created by Crenca. Not literally puzzle pieces – although those make some appearances – this series is really an exploration, in two dimensions, of social and political topics that intrigue, frustrate, or simply puzzle the artist.

“Some of them are saying something pretty clear,” says Crenca, “and if others seem ambiguous, well, they might be. Some of them certainly approach issues I’m a little confused about, and that probably comes across – I hope it does.”

The show is titled “Puzzled: Ode (Owed) to Channing?” and includes a large blow-up of Crenca’s first review, decades ago, by Providence Journal critic Channing Gray. Crenca credits the sometimes scathing review with inciting the creation of AS220 and a deeper dedication by Crenca to his own work. (see a TED talk on the subject here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=tD-T4LiddtE)

Compositionally, some of the work is striking, some deliberately off-balance or disturbing. All of it is visually and mentally intense – the sort of work you want to get up close to, to examine the details and numerous levels of meta-reference.

“That’s Gaddafi’s severed head. The Black liquid is oil, the red is blood. I think that one’s pretty straightforward,” says Crenca, contrasting two of the pieces. “This one, though, takes a lot of explaining. I’m sure there are things in here that only mean something to me,” he says, rattling off a list of authors whose thoughts are represented in various abstract ways. Oh, and the numbers of the Fibonacci sequence are carefully scattered about that canvas as well.

Some pieces feature tiny thought bubbles, on others you'll find referential figures tucked in the corners. One piece includes a lot of glitter. Figuring out each theme can feel like assembling a puzzle in your mind.

While the puzzle analogy has numerous applications to this collection of work - from pun to metaphor - it also seems like the artist may be hoping that someday, the collection as a whole will fit together like the pieces of a puzzle, granting insight into the conceptual and emotional makeup of the artist, complete with contradiction, confusion and clarity.

A series of pieces and one very large work are on display from now until April 27th at Machines with Magnets, 400 Main St. Pawtucket, RI - www.machineswithmagnets.com

Theater Company of Rhode Island Celebrates 30 Year Anniversary



Giving the people what they want for 30 years and counting

We are fortunate to have theater enthusiasts throughout the state of Rhode Island. In fact, the demand for the arts has grown larger over the years. And within the past 10 years, residents finally have given in to travelling outside of their own neighborhoods to places other than Providence for theatrical entertainment.

Second Story Theater in Warren, the Contemporary Theater Company in Wakefield, and the Courthouse Center for the Arts in South Kingstown have enjoyed a growing body of patrons. But there are also

theater enthusiasts North of Providence. In fact, The Theater Company of Rhode Island in Harrisville (Burrillville) has been running full seasons non-stop for 30 years. March 23, 2014, marks the 30th anniversary of the founding of The Theater Company of Rhode Island by life-long resident Michael Thurber, who also serves as artistic director and actor.

For Thurber, the work has always been a labor of love. In a recent interview he said, “There aren’t many theaters that can say their company has continued in the same location, with the same artistic director, the whole time.” And the initial mission of the incorporated entity is the same now as 30 years ago: to provide quality theatrical entertainment and an outlet for community members who wish to pursue the art. We all know plenty of talented folks in Rhode Island who still wish to do a little theater, knowing Broadway is not for them.

The many generous patrons of the theater company are listed in the program. “And I listen to them,” reveals Thurber. While the company has produced some newer and unusual works, “We give the people what they want,” says Thurber, quoting his collegiate mentor, Oral Roberts.

Thurber, also known to the Rhode Island film community for his urbane and witty presence in film, is thankful for their wonderful venue. The Assembly Theater was designed and built by Austin T. Levy and is now owned by the town of Harrisville. It’s a gem left by the generous Levy, a forward-thinking town businessman and philanthropist. The June Rockwell Levy Foundation, created by Levy’s wife in his memory, still works to grant funds to 501(3)c organizations. Austin T. Levy played the cello in weekly Sunday afternoon concerts at the theater he built. He was also the highly successful owner of several mills. Austin and June Levy were devoted to the people they worked with. Thurber follows much the same path, crediting his volunteer collaborators and patrons with the continued success of the company.

The next production for the Theater Company of Rhode Island is *The Lion in Winter*, for one weekend only in April. The final production of the season will be *Camelot*. A talented musician himself, Thurber brings in a pianist and a musical director for those kinds of large cast musicals.

Scene and Heard: Jordan Pacheco’s Provoked



Don't lose faith in the Paranormal!

Hey folks! In my last column I wrote about *Villanelle*, one of the three films chosen to premier on Full Moon Streaming's newest extension, called Wizard Studios. It sort of provoked me to write my new column rather soon, because a new film has been picked up from RI, and marks another coup for the film making community here. This film will also be on the roster at Full Moon Streaming, and the film is called, you guessed it, *Provoked*.

Provoked is the brain child of writer/director Jordan Pacheco (no relation). The story follows a group of amateur paranormal investigators who, despite working for months on a case, have never found any proof of anything like this happening. During the group's most recent jaunt they come up empty, causing Matt, one of the investigators, to lose faith in the whole existence of the paranormal. Matt attempts to provoke the spirits through some very risky behavior, which at first seems to produce nothing. However, while on his way home, the investigating equipment starts to register at its highest level. Matt has indeed been answered, and things go from bad to worse for him and his girlfriend as they attempt to defend his home against these ghastly intruders.

It's interesting to note here that Pacheco is an actual paranormal investigator, and after the first day of filming, cast member Jami Tennille, along with director Pacheco, producer David Langill, and crew member AJ went back the following day and performed an actual paranormal investigation at the Lizzie Borden House. You know the place, the one where it is alleged that dear Lizzie took an axe and gave her parents a number of whacks ... yes, that one. It just happened to serve as a main location for the film. Great idea for a flick with bad energy running through it, wouldn't you say?

In addition, Pacheco wrote the film with horror icon Tony Moran (he plays Doug) in mind, and Tony signed onto the project in 2012. Many RI and MA actors also appear in *Provoked* - Jeanne Lohnes, our own NE Kids Actors Group kid (the group I founded with Natasha Colonero) Charlie Tacker, Camille Farnan, Jamie Tennille, Kati Salowsky and more. See the full cast and crew at the IMDb page here: imdb.com/title/tt2360586/?ref_=ttpl_pl_tt

This was no easy road for Pacheco, though. He spent 10 years doing other things that had nothing to do with film, and finally refused to settle for a life that did not suit or excite him. When he first started out, he looked for a way to break into film, and did so by learning some basic FX /makeup effects. Not long after, Jordan met Eric Rodrigues, who just happens to be a distant cousin of Lizzie Borden. Eric learned his craft from the Tom Savini Special Make-Up Effects Program. The two then worked for RI directors Richard Marr-Griffin and Rick LaPrade (the writer and director of *Villanelle*. Pacheco built a network of talented film professionals while working on seven features, and felt it was time to create his own film.

Remember, he's a paranormal investigator too, so he had this fear that someday a not-so-friendly entity might decide to follow him home, a perfect inspiration for his first film. Pacheco then teamed up with Langill and Griffin as cinematographer/editor, and *Provoked* was born. His dream was now a reality. Pacheco and Langill have teamed up again for *Dead Bounty*, a zombie flick, and are in pre-production on their third feature.

Provoked will premier online at Full Moon Streaming on March 7 and you can see it here: fullmoonstreaming.com/wizard-movies/provoked . I am pretty confident that *Provoked* will get the full distro deal and be available on all platforms, but you can certainly help by going to that aforementioned URL for Full Moon, and sign up for 3 months. In the meantime, you can follow Jordan Pacheco on

Twitter @HauntedDirector or you can visit the website for the film here: provokedfilm.com/

Oh, and it might be wise to heed Pacheco's words when it comes to the dead — DON'T anger them.

Bob Dilworth's Reframed, Revisited, and Reconstructed

By Jaclyn Wing



Dilworth exhibits such depth as he portrays real world occurrences within his artwork

The University of Rhode Island Department of Art and Art History and Africana Studies present Bob Dilworth's Reframed, Revisited, and Reconstructed- Mixed Media Paintings exhibit through the end of February. Dilworth's pieces are nationally recognized and exhibited and have won multiple awards, grants and fellowships. Since leaving Virginia, he completed his undergraduate work at the Rhode Island School of Design and has come full circle and is now a full time professor at the University of Rhode Island.

Dilworth's work is a figurative approach to the everyday issues of race, culture, ethnicity and family.

His pieces fully reflect his journey as an artist in which he creates multiple layers to stimulate a psychological response.

While he started with a paintbrush and canvas, he has developed his own non-traditional artistic process. His pieces reflect his experimentation with colors, textured surfaces, and cluttered and structured spatial planes. Built up using wood, cloth, string, metal, epoxy, oil sticks and other various textural fragments, his pieces create visual scenarios that explore the human condition. While he has created abstract works, Dilworth is best known for his scenes that explore occurrences in the world. The multiple physical layers of the pieces reflect the emotional depth within it.

Dilworth effectively captures moments in time connecting elements of society with memories that have shaped him as an artist.

This exhibit is made possible in part by a grant from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, through an appropriation by the Rhode Island General Assembly and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information please contact:

Main Gallery
URI Fine Arts Center Building
105 Upper College Road
Kingston, RI
401-874-5821

DareMe: Singing My Heart Out



Letting go of the fear and muscling through the pain was all part of being able to deliver Rice Krispie Treats with love.

What is Valentine's Day all about? Is it just a silly lovers' holiday that revolves around chocolates, flowers and obnoxious displays of affection? That's all good and fun, but it all had to start somewhere. There are many legends that describe a Saint Valentine who, when marriage was outlawed for young men, continued to perform ceremonies for young lovers in secret. Lovers continue to celebrate in his name, which is a sweet story, but let's get back to chocolates, flowers and all that fun sappy stuff.

This month's mission? To deliver singing Valentine telegrams to people in their workplaces, completely embarrassing them and me in a couple of musical notes. I have always enjoyed singing and my voice isn't too bad if I do say so myself; however, when it comes to performing in front of other people I get so nervous I want to puke. To do this dare, I was going to have to just let go of those fears.

Where was I going to go? Who to visit? What to sing? I'm not one to jump in head first until I do some research, so I looked up videos of singing telegrams to see what people sang and wore. Hoping for some inspiration, I was let down to find there are really no videos or tips accessible. I put posts on Facebook telling my friends what I was doing and looking for people to sing to. I didn't strike much luck there, either.

I could tell this dare was going to be precious, and it had to be caught on film. I got in contact with Jonathon Schermerhorn, *Motif's* own movie man, and together we narrowed down our destination list to two towns: Warwick and Providence.

I decided that if I was going to burst into people's work in song and dance, the least I could do was come bearing sweet treats, so I was off to the store to find ingredients for Rice Krispie Treats and a costume.

It was the night before Jon and I planned to meet, and all that was left to do was make the Rice Krispie Treats. That night I went out to dinner, when I got out of the car, I felt a searing pain in my lower abdomen. I went into the restaurant hoping it would go away, but it got worse until I was squirming in my seat and crying uncontrollably. I kept telling myself that I could muscle through dinner, but halfway through I was singing a different tune. My insides were burning. It felt like I swallowed a dozen razor blades that were slowly making their way through my intestinal tract. I was feeling sharp pains in my kidneys, and it was almost too painful to take a breath.

My mother told me to go to urgent care, but I explained that I couldn't because I had to make Rice

Krispie Treats. Obviously, she did not understand because she kept urging me to go. It was nearly 10 pm, and no urgent care was going to be open. I was going on two horrible hours of pain when I decided I couldn't take it anymore, got in my car and went to the emergency room. I saw the doctor, I did some tests, he prescribed antibiotics and I was out of there.

When I got home I ate something, took the antibiotic and felt better in just minutes. So I made the Rice Krispie Treats. But while melting the marshmallows I put my plastic spatula down a little too close to the flame and as luck would have it, when I picked it up, the melted plastic adhered to my wrist. Luckily, the hospital bracelet I still wore protected me from too much damage.

I finished the Rice Krispie Treats and hit the pillow at nearly 4 am. I woke up at 7 am to deliver my telegrams, but because of my exhaustion and the nausea from the antibiotic, Jon and I decided to keep it short.

At our first location, Bald Hill Pediatrics, we delivered a singing telegram to Penny. She's my mom, but it still counts. I sang "At Last," while she wore a princess crown, just so she would feel extra special, handed out my sweets, and we were outta there. Next on the list was Save the Bay where we were going to sing "Somebody to Love" to Isaac. I seriously underestimated how many people work at Save the Bay. It seemed like there were 30 people watching me stumble through the lyrics! I was fading, and since we had to go back to the *Motif* studios anyway, Jon and I figured we would sing to anyone in the office. We sang "Can't Help Falling In Love" for Erin, our sales director, and Caitlin, our associate editor. Erin's reaction was my favorite of the day because when she heard me sing, her jaw dropped, which definitely boosted my confidence.

This dare was a lot of fun, minus the whole hospital thing. I was proud of myself for singing in front of people and it made my week when people actually enjoyed it. I almost turned down this dare due to nerves, but I'm glad I went through with it. Providence, don't be afraid to push your limits! Go ahead and stick your neck out for that thing or that person you love. You may just get your heart's desire.