

### Kind Folk

Monsters of Folk's all-star cast pledged lots of love for the Twin Cities at their Orpheum Theatre show last week, with M. Ward saying, "That's why we all play here just about every year." Conor Oberst praised his tour manager, Bill Sullivan ("I assume he's gone by now"), and said he wrote the Bright Eyes song "We Are Nowhere and It's Now" at Sullivan's 400 Bar. Jim James also gushed, "Aw, Minneapolis, you sure know how to treat a lady," but the My Morning Jacket frontman apparently didn't like one of the city's newer hot spots, the Chambers Hotel. He talked about turning a corner and being "freaked out" by something, presumably the ultra-trendy vibe. "It's really [messed] up," he said with a shudder, to much laughter.

CHRIS RIEMENSCHNEIDER

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### P.O.S. has a fan in Kanye

If Minneapolis rapper P.O.S. ever wins a MTV Music Video Award, chances are Kanye West will not interrupt his acceptance speech. P.O.S. recently released a stunning video for his song "Never Better." Last Friday, West posted the video on his popular cool-finding blog ([kanyeuniversecity.com/blog](http://kanyeuniversecity.com/blog)) with a single sentence: "Please listen to this." Now that's cool.

TOM HORGEN

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### Can't beat it for Halloween

Tracy Morgan's character on "30 Rock" claimed it's "too soon" to reference Michael Jackson's song "Thriller," but Twin Cities musicians didn't follow his orders on Halloween. At Bunny Clogs' two packed kids-music shows at the Southern Theater on Saturday, bandleader Adam Levy called up guest Aby Wolf -- dressed in a red jacket and ghoulish makeup modeled after MJ's immortal video -- to raise the song. And wouldn't you know it, many of the preteens knew the words (and dance moves). Much later that night, members of E.L.nO and A Night in the Box slashed through the anthem at Lee's Liquor Lounge. The revelation in that case, as noted by E.L.nO's David Campbell: "It's actually a really tough song to play."

CHRIS RIEMENSCHNEIDER

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### Thoughts of Holm

A constellation of literary lights gathered Monday at Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis to pay homage to Minnesota writer Bill Holm, including Robert Bly, Holm's widow Marcella Brekken and poets Phebe Hanson, Freya Manfred, Jim Heynen and Jim Lenfestey. Holm, who died in February, wrote with wonderment, joy and wit about an expansive range of subjects, but he was not adept at everything, recalled Emilie Buchwald, his longtime editor and publisher. One time she asked him to change a piece of writing. He resisted. "He said, 'Emilie, you ponder [that].' I said, 'No, Bill, you just can't write sex scenes.'"

ROHAN PRESTON

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### Cruelty-free is the new black

Minnesotan Kelly Carlson may not be getting as much exposure on "Nip/Tuck" as she used to, but she's baring her soul for PETA. She's the face of the organization's new "Cruelty-Free Shopping Guide," giving her a chance to tell consumers that they shouldn't buy products tested on animals. "Cruelty-free is my favorite color," Carlson says in the booklet. To see it, go to [CaringConsumer.com](http://CaringConsumer.com).

NEAL JUSTIN

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### Armajani's protest

Inspired by the post-election protests in his homeland of Iran, Twin Cities artist Siah Armajani has created a large piece of political sculpture now on view in New York, at Max Protetch gallery in Chelsea. The menacing "Murder in Tehran" is dominated by a large steel-and-glass structure resembling a giant satanic voting booth, complete with black curtain, buried body parts and the crucified figure of Iranian teen Neda Agha-Soltan, who was killed during a demonstration. The 11-foot-tall structure has lines of poetry printed in bands across it -- quotes from contemporary Iranian poet Ahmad Shamlu. For this small but powerful exhibition, Armajani also created seven pencil drawings on Mylar, inspired by Goya's drawings on the disasters of war. The show runs through Dec. 23.

CLAUDE PECK

No respect

Comedy Central has given St. Paul-bred comic Nick Swardson the go-ahead for a weekly sketch series to air next year. Swardson is both the star and executive producer, with former "SNL" writer Tom Ganas and Swardson pal Adam Sandler's Happy Madison Productions. Of course, there are those who say Swardson is not terribly funny. One is the TV guy for The Wrap, a fledgling entertainment-news website that announced the news with this headline: "Seriously, Who Greenlit a Nick Swardson Show?" The item went on to describe Swardson as "The man behind a comedy album called 'Seriously, Who Farted?'" Aw, there's no accounting for taste.

TIM CAMPBELL

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Santino's setback

Guthrie Theater/University of Minnesota graduate Santino Fontana is suffering the slings and arrows of box-office misfortune. He was a cast-member of two ill-fated Broadway revivals of Neil Simon comedies, including the "Brighton Beach Memoirs" that just closed after a week. He did get strong reviews ("Fontana is a find as Stanley, immensely likable and thoroughly convincing," said the **Washington Post** ), so we trust it's only a setback for Fontana, who has also starred in a Broadway hit -- "Billy Elliot," which won 10 Tonys.

ROHAN PRESTON

Credit: CHRIS RIEMENSCHNEIDER; TOM HORGEN; ROHAN PRESTON; NEAL JUSTIN; CLAUDE PECK; TIM CAMPBELL; STAFF WRITERS