

Insider

THING TANK

A REVIEW OF THE WEEK IN THINGS



BEST BETTE

Last week, Justin Bieber's consistently weird dad joined the national conversation about his son's non-financial endowment by tweeting how proud he was of . . . it. Most of us just made that face you make when you accidentally chew a piece of tin foil and left it at that. But that's the difference between most of us and **Bette Midler**, who seized the opportunity to tweet a sick (and slightly NSFW) burn against the elder Bieber's parenting skills. So many fans. So many retweets. This woman is 69. Where's your granny's Twitter game at?



SELFIE INCRIMINATION

This past week in Florida (never a good way to start an item), 23-year-old **Whitney Marie Beall** used the live-streaming app Periscope to broadcast video of herself as she drove drunk around the town of Lakeland. Cops used clues from the video to track down the car and arrest Beall, but not before she explained to police what Periscope is. (It's Perrier and Scope.)



MONSTER: CREATED

There's something unnatural in New Jersey air, and for once it's not the New Jersey air. An Atlantic City security guard driving home after his shift spotted what he initially believed was a llama straddling between the trees, until it "spread out leathery wings and flew off over the golf course." A blurry photo he managed to snap depicts some sort of gross, icky, airborne beast-thing. Some locals think it's a rare shot of the storied **New Jersey Devil**; however, it's more likely that it's high time to reevaluate everything we think we know about llamas.



BLUE SWAYED

Things we learned from the **Democratic debate**. Everyone ever is sick of Hillary's e-mails; Jim Webb once killed a guy; Bernie and Hillary are total besties; Lincoln Chafee either looks like a Men's Wearhouse employee, Hotmail incarnate, or that guy from "Whose Line Is It Anyway?"; Martin O'Malley is a tall person who is running for president; and seriously, do not short Jim Webb on response time. The dude killed a guy.

MICHAEL ANDOR BRODEUR

Photos from Globe wire services



CORY DEWALD

HIGH FIVE

WHAT COUNTS IN MUSIC TODAY

Dan Tedesco may be known as a folksy singer-songwriter, but now he's also his own producer. Tedesco recorded his recently released, self-titled fourth album in his Iowa home, using his iPad's on-board condenser mike to capture his songs live quickly. The result is an album stripped of studio-recording atmosphere, and focused on a raw sound that reflects Tedesco's live performances. "I wanted it to be very direct, and I wanted it to be a very transparent performance," he said, speaking by phone. "I wanted it to be as if I was almost next to you on a couch playing those songs, because they're very intimate." Minimalist rhythmic guitar, melodies that swoop, soar, and linger, and brics saturated with metaphor render a complex product despite Tedesco's simple recording techniques. Prior to his show at Berkeley's Cafe 939 on Friday, Tedesco talked with us about five songs from his new record, in which he delved into concepts he's eager to explore.

Mad Cow

"The idea behind that song is really trying to make an attempt to silence the white noise of social influence, and to really take some time to look inside of yourself and think about the things that really matter

to you, and the things that really make you happy — because I've come to this conclusion lately that happiness is a state of mind that you can choose."

Ain't Meant to Be Alone

"It's a story . . . basically pulled from my life on the road, and my relationship with my wife. . . . You're trying to share these experiences and share your life, when [your partner's] not really present and not really there. It's about being in that space where you're connected but disconnected at the same time. The disconnect with technology, and sort of the falsity of it — real human connection with somebody, I don't know what's more important than that."

Waitin' at the Gate

"It's this idea of open-mindedness — it's more within yourself, just being open to ideas, and not discounting anything. Taking time to think things through, and not rushing to conclusions, and falling in line with what you hear other people saying."

Life Ever After

"This is . . . the age of technology, the digital age vs.

the analog age. This is like the straddling of the two different worlds almost, asking the question: How far do you go with [technology]? It's a song that's looking at technology and asking the question, or making the suggestion that it's something that is to be used as a tool or instrument in life and in daily life, but that it shouldn't become life itself. . . . And yet I've made [the album] in a digital way; the working title I had for it was 'Low-Fi in a High-Tech World.'"

I Didn't Come Here to Get Mellow

"It's a song of resilience and not getting weighed down or jaded, and working through it. It's just for the living, for the experience, for the pain, for the sorrow, for everything in between. This song is about going in and experiencing it all, being tired when you get to the end. You're supposed to have lived. And all of it is darkness and beauty."

MALLORY ABREU

Dan Tedesco plays with Lindi Ortega and Smooth Hound Smith at Berkeley's Red Room at Cafe 939 on Friday at 8 p.m. Tickets \$15-\$17. 617-266-1400, www.berklee.edu/events.



SIMON & SCHUSTER

TV CONFESSIONS

M.T. ANDERSON

The Cambridge resident, 46, is National Book Award-winning author of books for children and young adults. His latest is "Symphony for the City of the Dead: Dmitri Shostakovich and the Siege of Leningrad." He responded by e-mail.

Favorite show of all time, and why?

David Lynch's "Twin Peaks." It wasn't just a tale of weird supernatural hijinks, dream horses, and retrograde dwarfs. Its bizarre, deadpan style offered my generation a whole new way of looking at America: fascinated by the eccentricities, suspicious of the dark secrets, but still deeply loving and affectionate.

Favorite show right now, and why?

"Mad Men" had novelistic scope and (usually) control, right up to the brilliant final moments. The British game show "Would I Lie to You?," in which comedians have to lie convincingly, is always good for a laugh and to help you brush up on your tells. But the TV that really moved me when I watched it recently (though it came out a few years ago) was Ken Burns's . . . "The Dust Bowl." It's at once a powerful testament to the stubborn strength of the human spirit — and a warning that nature won't always be coerced by our obstinacy. There are times when we demand too much, extract too much, and tragedy follows.

Favorite bad TV, and why?

I always find bad reality TV instructive. I like ghost shows and UFO shows, despite the fact that I'm not a believer, because I love the idea that surrounding our dull reality there could be this weird, inexplicable world full of improbable beings. I watch the pageant circuit in "Kim of Queens" for the same reason.

The only reality TV I find hard to take is reality TV — all those shows in which people buy perfectly good houses and knock out the walls in their mania for "open concept" living. Who are these people so desperate to see more of their families? Do they realize that those kids will soon be teenagers? More walls, I say!

"I just discovered while writing this that "Kim of Queens" has been cancelled, while "Dance Moms" staggers on. O tempora! O mores!

What's at the top of your Have-to-Watch list?

"The Americans," because, well, Soviets, spies, and the '80s. 'Nuff said.

Which show's world would you want to live inside?

I would say something like "Longmire" — great scenery, and true justice is always done — except they seem to have a lot of crime in that town. At least a murder a week.

MATTHEW GILBERT

LAUGH LINES

GARY GULMAN

"I was exercising and there was a man on the machine next to me listening to a Discman. It is one thing to read about poverty, it's another thing to see it sweating next to you on the elliptical. That's when it gets real, my friends. I didn't recognize it at first. It had been so long since I'd seen a Discman in the wild. I thought he was listening to a pizza. It was enormous."

Gulman, a Peabody native, plays the Wilbur Friday

NICK A. ZAINO III



STEPHEN LOVकिन/GETTY IMAGES