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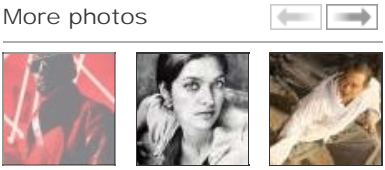
GENTLE SNARK

Happening this week: Jhumpa! Jet! Kanye! Puyallup!

By Geoff Carter
April 14, 2008
NWsource staff



ISLAND DEF JAM MUSIC GROUP
Kanye is ready to rock the house!



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Monday: [Jhumpa Lahiri](#), author of "An Interpreter of Maladies" and "The Namesake," reads from her new short-story collection, "Unaccustomed Earth," tonight at Seattle Central Library. She's certain to read to a packed house: "Unaccustomed Earth" reached the top of the New York Times bestseller list within two weeks of publication. Be sure to arrive at the SCL well in advance of the scheduled 7 p.m. reading -- a half-hour to be sure, an hour to be absolutely positive. Jhumpa is in da house! Wave your hands in the air like you just don't ... want to read any other Pulitzer Prize-winning authors!

Tuesday: Today is the last day you can submit your annual tithe to the federal gub'mint. If you miss the deadline at midnight tonight, you can look forward to weeks of threatening letters, dirty looks, caning -- trust me, you need to get your stuff in the mail *now*.

Having done that, you can head out to happy hour with a clean conscience. Our city boasts some fairly exceptional [happy-hour specials](#), ideal for someone who's just had their finances decimated and their every dream crushed. You can even begin racking up deductible expenses for next year by inviting several co-workers along, talking about how lousy business has been lately and consequently writing off that happy hour as a business meeting. Save the receipt.

Wednesday: Tonight at KeyArena, [Kanye West](#) heads a bill that also includes Rihanna, N.E.R.D. and Lupe Fiasco. I swear I'm not exaggerating when I tell you that every hip-hop artist that has risen to prominence over the course of the last 700 years is taking that stage tonight. As of this writing there are still tickets available ... and you shouldn't wait another minute to get them, for truly Kanye West is the Jhumpa Lahiri

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of the hip-hop world.

Thursday: The [Puyallup Spring Fair](#) has everything you could want from a country exposition: corrals full of cows and pigs, acres of carnival rides and attractions, a traditional Mexican fiesta, live entertainment, a demolition derby, a garden show and more.

Not that you need any of that stuff to motivate you. Hell, the fried foods purveyed by the fairground vendors are worth the trip all on their own. Beef stew on a stick *and* demolition derby? *Are you kidding me?* That's some serious renaissance stuff, right there. You can just keep Paris when it sizzled.

Also: Like many Texan pioneers, [Daniel Johnston](#) wears several hats: He's a singer-songwriter, an outsider artist, an inspiration to like talents (both Kurt Cobain and Eddie Vedder have literally sung his praises), an Austin icon and a mad genius. Tonight at Neumos, however, he's all about the music -- though he may get a teeny bit eccentric on us. That is to say, one *hopes* he will.

Friday: Bend, Ore., poet and author [Suzanne Burns](#) reads from her chapbook "Double Header" tonight at Neptune Coffee in Greenwood. If you're wondering why you should give over your Friday night to an author whose work you don't yet know, I ask you to read this preview of coming attractions drawn from [the author's own MySpace page](#):

Come on, who can resist a two story flipbook that features the world's smallest man, a woman who eats dirt and the magician who loves her?

Who indeed? A small army of talented writers and poets from Portland's small press Future Tense Books -- including Travis Nichols, Matthew Simmons and Kevin Sampsell -- will also read from their works, and a [Trespassers William](#) spin-off band, Tunnel-Tunnel, will play music to eat dirt by.

Saturday: To borrow a metaphor from the Talking Heads' "(Nothing But) Flowers," the Olympic Sculpture Park is the very definition of factory land that's now covered with daisies. If there's a better venue for a family-friendly [Earth Day celebration](#), with plain-speak climate education and hands-on art activities, I surely can't think of it.

Also: The [Rat City Rollergirls](#) are playing the second match of their 2008 season this evening in Magnuson Park's Building 30. The wholesome Dairyland Dolls from Madison, Wis., are fodder for the killer zombies of Grave Danger, while the Derby Liberation Front and the Sockit Wenches see ancient grudges break to new mutiny.

Sunday: Rob Minkoff's kung-fu epic "[The Forbidden Kingdom](#)" is the first collaboration between Jet Li and Jackie Chan. The movie's fights were choreographed by Yuen Woo-ping, the genius of "The Matrix," "Kung Fu Hustle" and many others, and it was written by John Fusco, whose underrated script for Michael Apted's "Thunderheart" is a favorite of mine.

Truthfully, they had me at "the first collaboration between Jet Li and Jackie Chan." Each actor is playing the character that suits him best (angry, taciturn monk; lethal drunken clown), and to see these two spar together is equivalent to watching



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Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire [hoofing it up](#) in "Ziegfeld Follies."
Now *that* was a kung-fu epic.

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