matrix life corresponds to a human life stashed in a pod somewhere just above the earth's scorched face, and that this life ends when the matrix life eats a bullet or two (or forty). One thus has to ask: are these killings justified? When you next watch the film, take note of whatever reasons Morpheus provides for these killings. How convincing are his arguments? Once you come to a conclusion about your view, imagine how someone might object who held the other view, and then try to address that objection. For example, if you find Morpheus's position unconvincing, ask yourself whether killing is ever justified in revolutionary moments. Were colonial soldiers justified in killing loyalists who threatened the cause of the American Revolution? Or, if you think Morpheus is right in killing his matrix-deluded opponents, ask yourself whether it matters that these victims are completely ignorant of the state of affairs they're defending?

I hope these questions prove fruitful during your next viewing of *The Matrix*. It's a good deal of fun, and often rewarding, to watch films with philosophical questions on the brain. It often leads us to attend in new ways to what various characters do, say, and even allegorically represent. But when viewing films, we shouldn't limit ourselves to those resources, even if our concerns are explicitly philosophical. It is a philosophical mistake to treat film as a transparent medium of communication, as if all the other aspects of a film were mere ornamentation. Instead, we should pay attention to all the ways in which films address us, including the contexts in which they are produced, distributed, and shown. So, alongside the words and deeds of characters, and the multiple meanings those entail, one should also look at filmic elements like costuming, camera placement and movement, editing, music, lighting, and so forth. If you do, the rabbit hole will deepen beyond your wildest expectations.

Bonnie Harrison

SCHOOL OF ROCK

This formation mysteriously appeared not long ago in the Willamette River just west of the Autzen footbridge. For some years, the downstream shallows have often been decorated with stacks of rocks (cairns), though we've never seen an installation quite so elaborate or celebratory of the alma mater. Anybody know how far back this tradition goes?

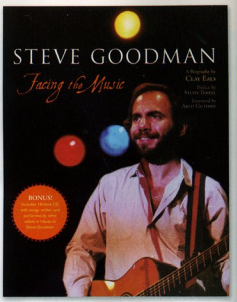
As long as we're on the subject, this from Wikipedia: "In some regions, piles of rocks used to mark hiking trails are called 'ducks' or 'duckies.' These are typically smaller cairns, so named because some would have a 'beak' pointing in the direction of the route. An expression, 'two rocks do not make a duck,' reminds hikers that just one rock resting upon another could be the result of accident or nature rather than intentional trail marking."

***Attention photographers**: we're interested in Duck-related photos—the more interesting or funny, the better. Also, consider sharing shots of you or your friends in Duck regalia (hats, T-shirts, etc.) in exotic or unusual locales. High-resolution digital images work best; low-resolution shots won't reproduce in print. E-mail to quarterly@uoregon.edu.*

Good Mornin' America, How Are You?

A bar, a beer, and a brief encounter are all part of what led to a recording that has been pouring from radios for decades. Clay Eals '74 has written an 800-page book, Steve Goodman: Facing the Music *(ECW Press, 2007) that traces the life of the gifted folksinger and songwriter, including the night he met Arlo Guthrie, who would go on to record Goodman's most famous song. Eals read from his work in June at the UO Bookstore. Below is a condensed excerpt from the book.*

The performer Steve went to see that night in Chicago was the son of American folk music's most revered icon. Then 23, just one year older than Steve, Arlo Guthrie had emblazoned his identity in the country's consciousness,



transcending his status as the eldest child of his famous dad, Woody Guthrie. He had released an LP that featured the 18-minute, anti-establishment, shaggy-dog story "Alice's Restaurant" and had starred in an offbeat feature film of the same name. His profile had risen further with a spacey bit in *Woodstock*, the 1970 documentary of the landmark 1969 rock festival.

A big-enough draw to play larger venues, Guthrie was working the Quiet Knight as a favor to club owner Richard Harding. After Guthrie had finished the last of three sets and the audience filed down the stairs into the sub-freezing night air, he ambled with his guitar to Harding's back-room office to say goodbye. Awaiting him was Steve.

Tipsy and tired, Guthrie wanted to return to his hotel. Harding, too, was inebriated, but he also had a mission. Hearing Steve perform "City of New Orleans" had reminded Harding of youthful railroading days in the late 1940s when he had ridden the Twentieth Century Limited and the Rock Island Line. "I wanted somebody to record it that would make it a hit because the word was out that Steve had leukemia," Harding says. "I wanted him, before he died, to have a major hit, whether he was singing it or not."

Guthrie had been primed for the meeting by Harding, who also had told him of Steve's [leukemia]. It was an instant parallel because Guthrie's father had suffered since his early 40s from the relentlessly debilitating Huntington's chorea (which became known by the plainer title of Woody Guthrie's disease) and died from it in 1967 at age 55. The genetic chance that his father's fatal nervous-system

disorder eventually would befall Guthrie was 50 percent. "I was under the same gun," Guthrie says, "even though nobody knew anything definitive."

After Guthrie ambled into Harding's office, Harding picked up Guthrie's guitar and handed it to Steve. As recalled by WFMT's Rich Warren, who was standing outside the office door, Harding bellowed at Steve, "Sing him the goddamn train song! Play the goddamn train song!"

Harding also backed Guthrie into a corner of the office, Steve said later, and told him, "Now, Arlo, you've gotta take this song down to Nashville and give it to John Cash because it's about trains." Cash had built much of his musical identity upon railroad tunes.

"Now, Arlo, you've gotta take this song down to Nashville and give it to John Cash because it's about trains."

Both Steve and Guthrie felt they were being thrown together unceremoniously. As Steve noted later, "Arlo was trying to get out of the room as politely as he could, and so was I."

Guthrie, in the comic version of the story that he has told from the stage for decades, has characterized himself as responding to Harding like a "butthead." For instance, he told a 1996 pub audience in Ireland that he shot back to Harding, "I don't want to hear no songs. I hate songs. I don't even like my songs. Why should I listen to other people's songs, man?"

In contrast, however, Steve observed that Guthrie acted graciously. "He just didn't tell everybody where to go and walk out of the room," Steve said.

And Guthrie allows that his stage story is an exaggeration. "I wasn't really in the mood to hear a song from anyone," Guthrie says, "but he (Steve) just looked like a little guy. There's a thousand little guys everywhere with songs, y'know? I didn't have a policy about it." The fact that Steve was a friend of Harding's made the prospect more palatable. "I probably didn't hesitate to say yes," Guthrie says, "even though in my story I make it seem like I really wasn't that interested."

Harding says Guthrie told him, "I'll listen to the song if you say so, but he's got to buy me a beer." In his more colorful stage yarn, Guthrie says that he told Steve, "OK, tell you what. Buy me a beer, I'll sit here and drink it, and as long as it lasts, you can do whatever you want."

So while Harding furnished the beer, Steve performed "City of New Orleans" for Guthrie, who afterward asked Steve for a lead sheet and a tape, both of which Steve supplied. "I put those in my suitcase and thought no more of them until I got home, it might have been days or weeks later," Guthrie says. "When I got home, I put the sheet music on the piano, and it stayed there for months. I didn't think anything of it. I was just busy doing other things."

Of course, Guthrie ends his stage story otherwise, playing off the beer reference. While Guthrie wouldn't realize or state it until two years later, his punch line was: "It turned out to be one of the finer beers of my life."