

# Live 2 3

Your weekly guide to local arts and entertainment.

A publication of the **Chronicle Tribune** \* Section C \* SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 2017

**Voices**  
Straight from  
the mouths of  
local arts leaders

## My first job. It really was great.

It was 3:30 a.m. I had overslept. I heard the wind outside as it blew dry, swirling snow against the window. In 1972, there was no such thing as an iPhone that I could see what the temperature outside was, so I called the local Time

**Jim Garringer**  
Optically Oriented



and Temperature number. I had to be careful as I dialed the number. A few days earlier, and much to my dismay, I had awakened someone who didn't particularly appreciate the early phone call.

Honestly, I wasn't too worried about it because there was no such thing as caller ID in those days. A call could be traced, I reasoned, but that was an operation involving the police and the telephone company. All I had done was misdialled the telephone once.

The always-cheerful voice of the Time and Temperature lady pitched a Christmas Club savings plan for next winter and then informed me that it was now 3:35 a.m. and that the temperature was a balmy two degrees below zero. I reminded myself that these dark winter mornings through which I pedaled my bicycle more than six miles every day to deliver those newspapers always gave way to spring and eventually summer.

I had gotten dressed by now and the coolness of the air inside our house was chasing the grogginess away. I opened the door into our garage and was struck square in the face by the harsh cold. A moment later as the garage door began to rise, the wind, coming nearly straight out of the north, stung my arms.

A few feet from the door, I could see two large bundles of newspapers, tightly wrapped in twine, resting in the snow. I tiptoed out into the driveway and picked the bundles up – a bundle for each hand – and hastily retreated into the garage. As the door started down, it rumbled back up because snow that had piled against the door had fallen into its path. I quickly shoveled away the snow and tried the door again, my hands were starting to feel numbed and stung by the cold.

In our family room, I sat down in my favorite chair and used a knife to slice the twine off the bundles of newspapers. I turned on the radio – not loud enough to wake my parents and sister, who were sleeping in the other end of the house – and dumped the contents of a large box of rubber bands into my lap. The radio was playing the Carly Simon song, "Anticipation." I sang lightly along as I folded the nearly 160 newspapers.

As I wrestled into my full-body suit, ski mask, boots, and finally gloves I heard a light knock at my door. It was my mother, wondering if I wanted her to

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PHOTOS BY JEFF MOREHEAD / jmorehead@chronicle-tribune.com

**PRE-PRODUCTION:** Taylor University film professor John Bruner, left, talks about his film, "Grounded: A Short Story," with producer Natalie Francis on Thursday. Shooting is scheduled to take place in late June.

# Taylor professor working on film

**BY NAVAR WATSON**  
NWatson@chronicle-tribune.com

**UPLAND** — A local man's interactions with his elderly mother have inspired a film he's shooting in Upland later this month.

The film, upon completion, will help Taylor University film professor John Bruner graduate from a Master of Fine Arts program at the Vermont College of Fine Arts. He also happens to be making it at the same time his wife, Kathy, a fellow Taylor film professor, is working on her own project.

"Here we are at the point where we've got to make these movies for our thesis," Bruner said. "She's doing a documentary right now, and I'm doing a narrative, and we're doing it at the same time, and our house is in chaos."

Bruner's 15-minute narrative, "Grounded: A Short Film," will shoot in five days in Upland at the end of this month, using an almost exclusively Hoosier cast and crew and starring local actor/screenwriter Mark Fauser in the lead role.

The story follows a road trip between James, a career-focused man inspired by Bruner himself, and his mother Ruby, played by Joann King White.

The message, Bruner said, is for people like him to remember important moments and relationships in life amid career pursuits – a message Ruby tries to communicate with her son during the drive.



**FLASHBACK:** Taylor University film professor John Bruner's film, "Grounded," was inspired by events from his life.

"Sometimes we let time go by a little too quickly and we're worried about things that are really pretty temporal and not so much worried about the relationships (we have)," Bruner said. "We somehow imagine everything will be just as it was when we get back from our mission."

An Upland resident, Bruner said all filming will take place locally, and several Upland community members have helped provide set locations and props.

Natalie Francis, an upcoming senior at Taylor, joined as the film's producer.

Having spent a semester studying in Los Angeles, Francis had previously produced a promotional film for the Grant County Economic Growth Council. "Ground-

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John Bruner

ed" will be her first time producing a narrative piece.

"We are so lucky as students to get to be a part of this," she said about working on Bruner's project with other students. "Any kind of professional experience with this much support ... is just a gift."

needs for actors and crew involved. If he raises enough money, Bruner said he hopes to maybe compensate the actors too.

Video post-production and editing will take place at Taylor, Bruner said, and the finished product must be submitted for graduation by early October.

Bruner plans to premiere the film and submit it to festivals at a later date.

Though the story focuses on an adult man's relationship with his elderly mother, Francis said the film will also speak to college-age students not quite at that point in their lives.

"All those slightly annoying things about the people you're close to ... when they're gone, those are the things you miss," she said. "You just wish you could have those stupid, silly moments back. And I think that message is relevant for everybody."

Bruner's own mother, who inspired the character of Ruby, died of bone cancer about five years ago, he said. The film's themes are still fresh, he said, as his older sister died last fall.

"I don't know if I'll change people's lives with this (film)," Bruner said, "but maybe they'll be a little more attentive of the people around them. And if that happens, that's a win."

Anyone can donate to the production of Grounded at <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/grounded-a-short-film-drama#/>.

With casting finally completed, Francis said she, Bruner and the crew are working on costuming and other needs prior to the first day of shooting, currently set for June 26.

The crew started a campaign through Indiegogo, a crowdfunding website, to cover meals, traveling expenses and other

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