BEST BAND
Yogoman Burning Band plays a set during a Band Fight Night at Rumors

PEOPLE

BEST LOCAL ARTIST: RUTHIE V.

Ruthie V. believes in giving back to the place she lives, whether it's by donating a percentage of her profits from her "Farms and Farmers" exhibit to Sustainable Connections' Farm and Farming Program or by painting engrossing tableaus that draw attention to immigration issues. "My work is successful when people involve themselves in it," Ruthie says. "I don't limit the subject matter, and I don't limit my techniques. I use my artwork to connect and contribute to the community." To see what the talented artist has been up to, drop by Gary's Fine Clothing Oct. 10 to see her work as part of the downtown Art Walk.

Info: RUTHIEV.COM

BEST BAND: YOGOMAN BURNING BAND

Being a musical town, it's no surprise that bands all across the sonic spectrum were named in this category. However, Yogoman Burning Band, a veritable supergroup of some of Bellingham's most skilled musicians, garnered the most votes. Their infectious sound has earned this band a legion of dancing, downright-good-time-having followers in Bellingham and beyond. Looks like Bellingham's notoriously fickle fans have found themselves a musical mainstay.

Info: MYSPACE.COM/YOGOMANBURNINGBAND

BEST WRITER: CLYDE FORD

"Marvin... needed to finish pulling in the anchor so they didn't drift into the rocks. He walked to the bow, looking over and down at the muddy anchor emerging from the dark green waters... Beneath the seaweed, the sharp point of an anchor fluke stuck into the pallid flesh of a young woman's lifeless body." Thus launches the newest nautical thriller, *Precious Cargo*, from Clyde Ford. Eclectic, wayward yet rooted, Ford is alight with this special place, its mists and mysteries, and that ripples through all he writes like sunlight breaking on water.

Info: CLYDEFORD.COM

BEST BARTENDER: CHET HOLSTEIN, HARBORSIDE BISTRO

Competition in this category was as stiff as the drinks poured by Bellingham's most beloved bartenders, but the most love poured in for the Harborside Bistro's Chet Holstein. Among the contenders: pretty much everyone at Cap's, "The old dude at the Beaver," "That guy at Uisce's," "The blond at Archer," "My wife," "State patrol," and many, many others.

BEST BARISTA, BEST COFFEEHOUSE: JONATHAN LAWSON/THE BLACK DROP

Jonathan Lawson—or J. Law as he's known to some—is a perfect example of what makes the Black Drop the top vote getter when it comes to satisfying your caffeine craving. He's unfailingly friendly, has an uncanny knack for remembering faces and favorite drinks, and displays the knowledge of beans, roasts and brews that makes the Black Drop unique in this coffee-soaked town. From their own carefully chosen and hand-roasted beans to the folks behind the counter who are grinding, tamping and pulling shots, the Black Drop strives for perfection in every cup.

Where: 300 W. CHAMPION ST. **Info:** 738-3767

BEST RADIO STATION: KUGS

Once upon a time, I was KUGS' most loyal listener. In fact, I won Casa Que Pasa burritos so many consecutive mornings that two things happened: 1. I formed a still-existent friendship with the morning DJ, and 2. he promptly told me, as a friend, to stop calling in and let someone else win. Whether you favor heavy rotation or innovative specialty shows, KUGS is your favorite destination on the dial. Long live college radio.

Where: 89.3 ON YOUR FM DIAL. **Info:** KUGS.ORG.

BEST ESTHETICIAN: ARIAN HENDERS, SUGAR SHACK

Sugar Shack owner Arian Henders has the drive to succeed. More specifi-