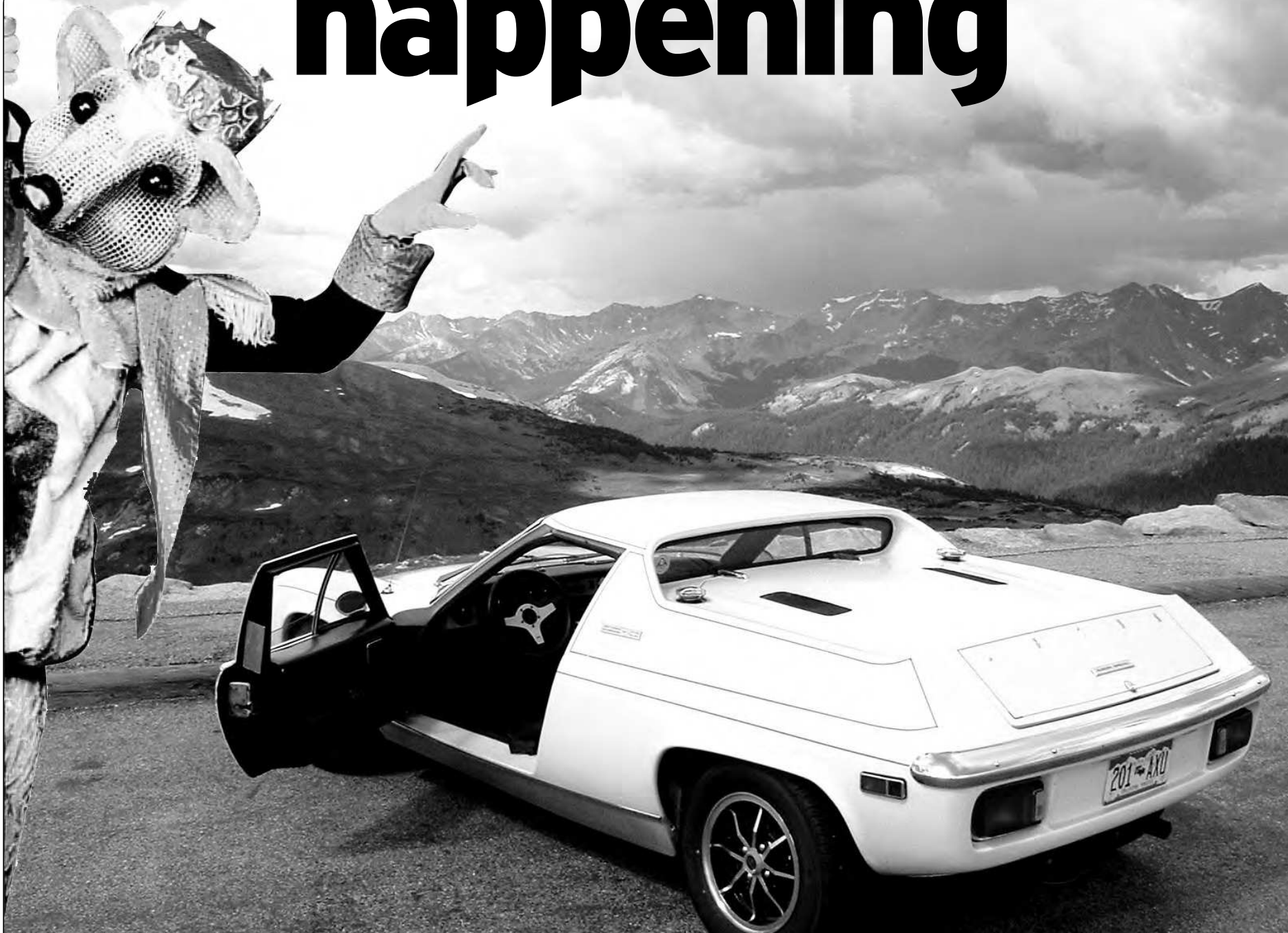


WHAT'S happening



Something about this time of year makes us get all jazzed about driving home from work at 5 pm, and no, it's not the blur of headlights making us candy-eyed epileptics on autopilot. It's the holiday lights display, dummy! Well, we're happy with those who at least *try*, let alone those who deck out their shrubbery. So, if you're like us, make reservations for the **9th Annual Miracle Lights Tour** of outdoor holiday decorations, a benefit for the Children's Miracle Network. You get to hop on a bus at either Eugene's ShopKo or Springfield's Jerry's Home Improvement, refrain from spitwadding the back of the seat and revel in a guided tour of the area's most *bedecked* holiday decorations. Before you get *too* excited, just remember the school bus safety refrain: "Backs to backs, seats to seats." See Thursday, Dec. 21 Calendar.

The **Eugene Ballet Company** has had one heckuva *Nutcracker* season, staging performances as far afield as Grand Junction, Colo., Billings, Mont., and little ol' Weed, Calif., the gateway to Mount Shasta. Finally, their tour comes to a grand finale with this weekend's hometown Hult Center extravaganza. Starting with recorded music today and continuing with accompaniment by the Oregon Festival Choirs Friday through Sunday, this annual balls-to-the-wall ballet makes for fun, fast and loose holiday fun. See Thursday, Dec. 21 Calendar.

What, you don't want to spend all of your carbon credits rushing around on the weekend looking at art? You'd rather bus, bike or walk down to the Gallery District, no? Well, **Opus6ix** has the show for you: **The Best of Oregon Crafted**. That's right, the incredibly cool economic development project (we know, you don't hear us say "incredibly cool economic development" often) to help local artists make more art comes to a place near *you*. There's also an exhibit of hand knotted Persian, Tibetan and Afghani rugs (talk about your intensive labor) at Opus6ix. And while you're in the Gallery District, check out shows at White Lotus, Karin Clarke, the Jacobs Gallery (including work by Oregon Crafted artist Amy Beller), DIVA, Fenario, New Zone, La Follette and even the Horsehead, where you can grab a pint and contemplate Rowan Watson's "Erotique" photography exhibit. The true meaning of the holidays is about art, humans' connections to each other, reaching across neurons to pluck at synapses ... or something like that. Anyway, we're for it. See Art in the Galleries.



NEBULA SERIES BY GREG KENNEDY