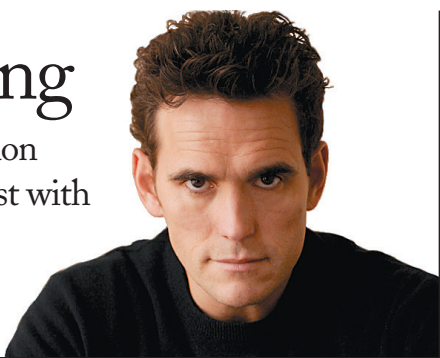


‘Crash’ landing

Former teen star Matt Dillon emerges from ensemble cast with his first Oscar nomination.

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A&E editor  
Tom Alesia  
(608) 252-6122  
talesia@madison.com

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“When you buy an Owl from Clarence, you don’t just pick it up on a shelf at Marshall Field’s. Part of that owl is the person who made it.”

— JOHN MICHAEL LINCK, Madison toymaker and longtime friend of Clarence “Owlman” Cameron



“Everybody sees an owl differently. That has made it very successful for me,” says Clarence Cameron, who has been creating owls for 41 years.

An interest in birds turns into a lucrative fixation for Madison artist known as “Owlman”

They call him Owlman. And little wonder. He likes to stay up late. He’s a keen observer of wildlife. His Madison home is a non-stop gallery of owl paintings, owl calendars, owl knick-knacks and owl throw pillows, mostly gifts from friends and fans. And as he fashions the intricate details of his artwork, those big glasses he wears — well, just picture it. For four decades, Owlman (aka Clarence Cameron) has made a living and a name for himself by developing his own artistic niche: the sculptured owl, which elegantly, geometrically, and mysteriously emerges from small blocks of soapstone. “It really is strange,” Cameron explains. “The stone says, ‘This is what I am.’” And when the image is complete, “The stone really says, ‘You’ve carved me enough. You don’t need to go any further.’” Cameron once sold his owls, which can nestle within two hands, at art shows across the country. Today he markets them from \$50 to more than \$5,000 on his web site, [www.owlman.com](http://www.owlman.com), and at two Madison events: the Winter Art Festival and summer’s Art Fair Off the Square, which he co-founded. “At shows,” says S.V. Medaris, a Madison-area painter known for her detailed portraits of

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Story by **Gayle Worland**  
Photos by **Craig Schreiner**  
Wisconsin State Journal



Left: Cameron uses files, his father’s old pocket knife and dental tools to gently carve the delicate soapstone, which is exceedingly soft — it can be scratched with a fingernail.

Below: Cameron dons large glasses and sits at a table in his basement workshop, carving owls in his lap. He starts with a jagged chunk of soapstone and whittles it down to its most basic shape.



Michael Imperioli, left, and James Gandolfini return for another season of “The Sopranos” on March 12.

March gives TV viewers a spring in their step

The thing about lulls is, eventually, after it seems the down and dreary days will never end, things start to look up. So here’s the situation, as I see it: February grinds to an end, those promising shows that were all the rage in January have all but disappeared, and the Winter Olympics — which succeeded only in keeping “The Office” and “My Name Is Earl” off the air for two weeks — finally puts out the torch. With “American Idol” on 18 times a week, what’s a girl who doesn’t worship “Idol” to do? Enter the March premieres. Call it the second coming of the midseason. Stay tuned for the return of “The Sopranos”(!), “The Apprentice,” “Everwood,” “Prison Break,”

“America’s Next Top Model” and “The Amazing Race.” And if that isn’t enough to lift you out of the endless winter doldrums, consider yet another batch of new shows bound to last longer than “Emily’s Reasons Why Not.” Finally. A reason to come home after work. In fact, here are a bunch of them (times and dates subject to change).

Long-awaited returns

- “The Apprentice” makes a move to Monday when it returns this week at 8 p.m. on NBC (Ch. 15).
- “The Amazing Race” returns to its two-person teams, Tuesday at 8 p.m. on CBS (Ch. 3); it moves to 9 p.m. March 7.

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**NICOLE E. ROGERS**