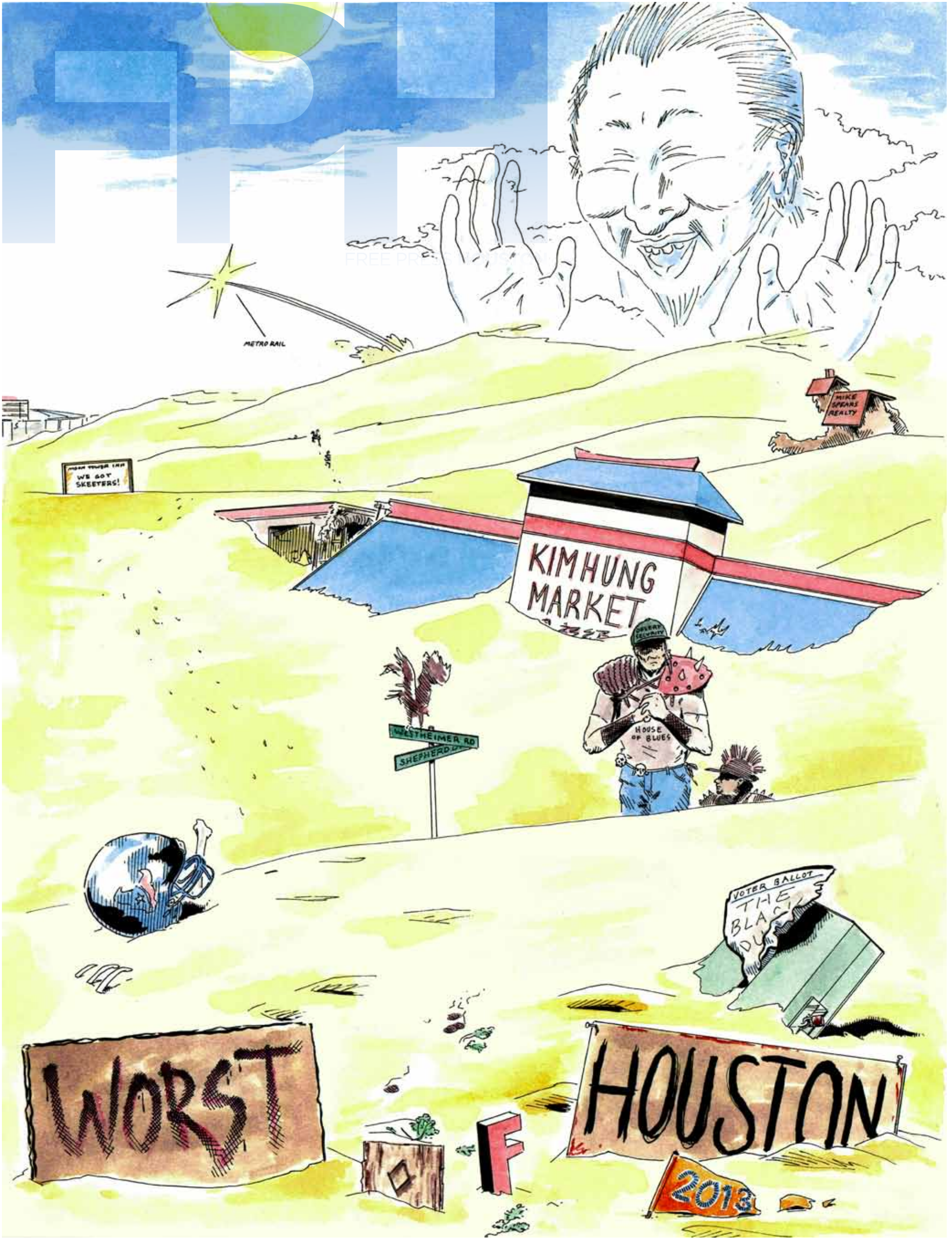
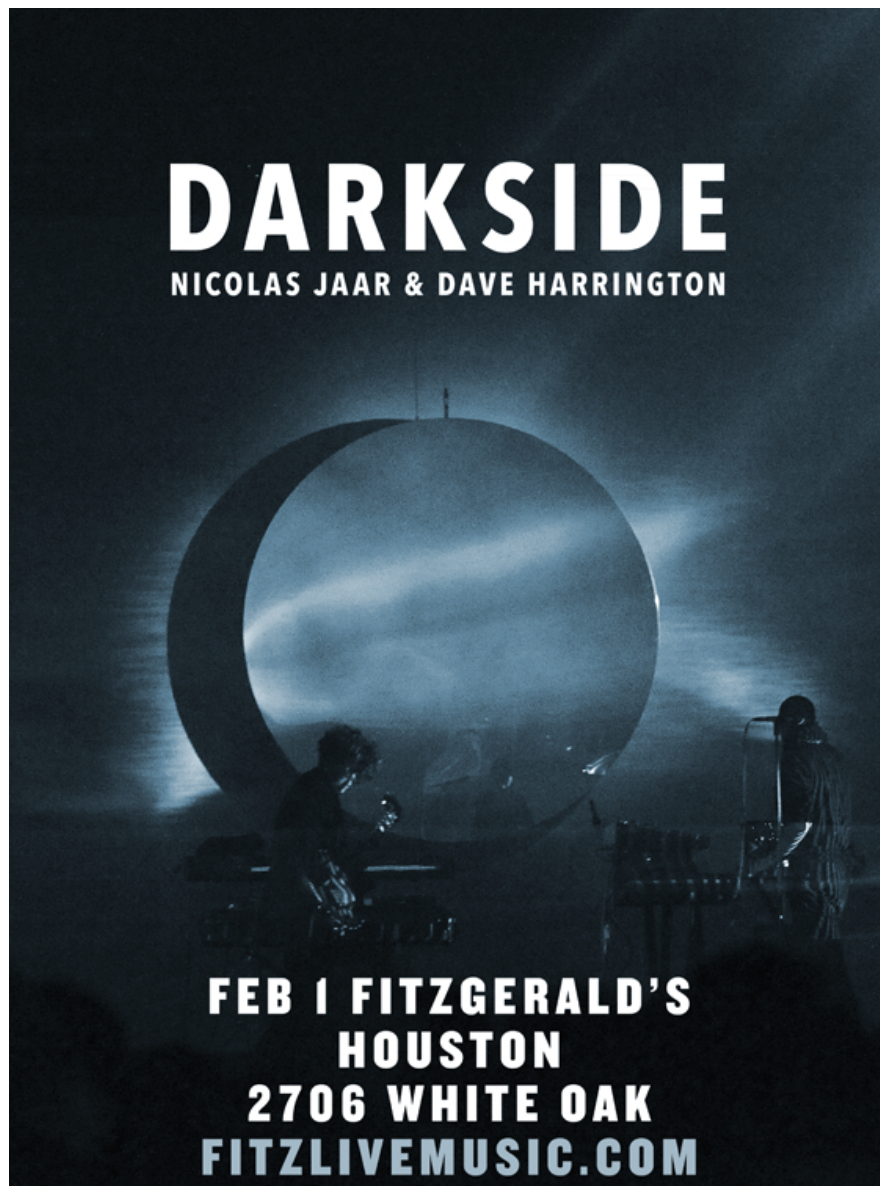






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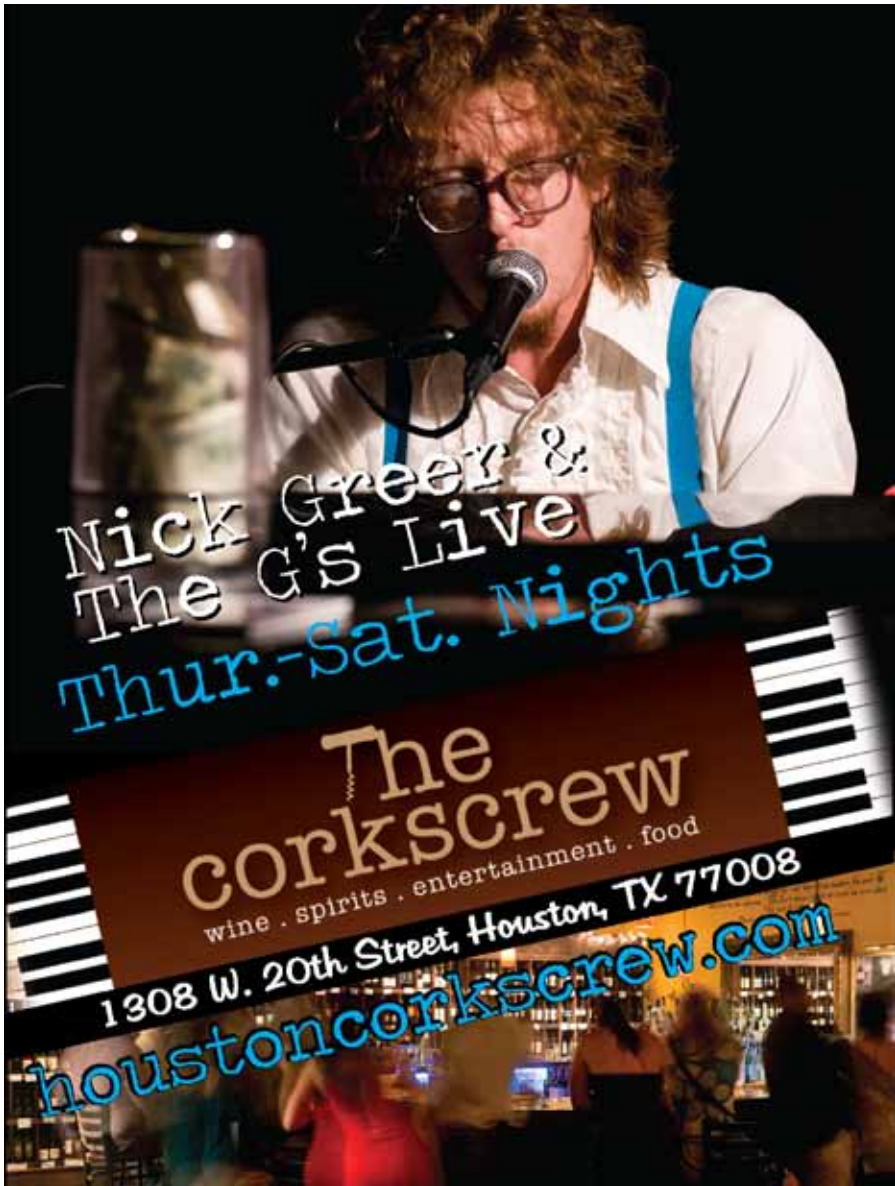
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THE SOUND OF SONICWORKS

By
Michael
Pennywark

SO YOU SURVIVED THE HOLIDAYS and your cousin's seven-layer, mayonnaise salad. Now you could probably use a distraction from the eggnog withdrawal you are dealing with since finishing that last gallon you had stashed at the back of the fridge. Luckily for you, we live in one of the world's most cultured cities—after all, where else can you find two Starbucks at a single intersection? Oh, and you can also find some great art shows to take your mind off that nutmeg hangover. Take for instance, *SonicWorks* at DiverseWorks, opening January 10th.

Curious about whether I might find the answer to those deep philosophical questions about falling trees or some really cool art inspired by everyone's favorite hedgehog, I caught up with Associate Curator Rachel Cook and found out that it is something much more remarkable. According to Cook, way back in the beginning of Diverseworks' short history, in those dark ages of the last century known as the 80s, an idea was born to produce a multimodal show featuring sound art. DiverseWorks went on to become the hub for the 1986 New Music America Festival, which featured some of the country's most avant-garde musicians, composers and artists. Over the years, DiverseWorks has continued to break the sound barrier with its ded-

ication to experimental sound art and returns to its roots in what should prove to be an exciting blend of discrete sonic art, sculptural intervention, multi-media installations and live performances.

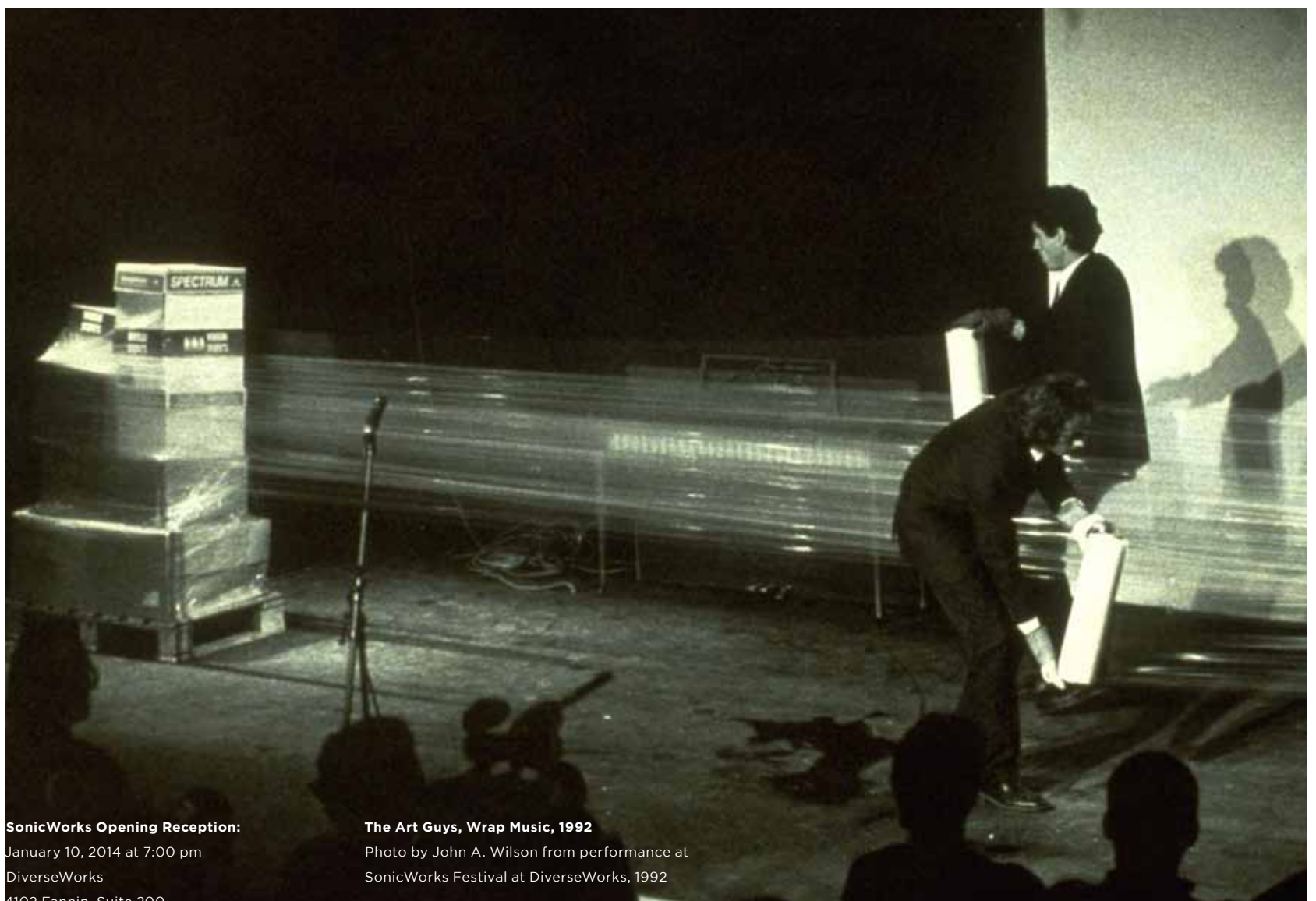
Continuing a long association with auditory art at DiverseWorks, the Art Guys are expected to kick things off with a performance at the opening and will be followed by performances by other national and international artists every Wednesday as part of the DiverseWorks on Wednesdays series. Remnants from the 1986 New Music America Festival will be on display, and as Cook puts it, "in some ways it's like it's me trying to understand and unpack this history, while simultaneously trying to present some other artists that are working sculpturally or visually, that are using sound and thinking about it as conceptual material." The show aims to question the differences between visual, performing and literary arts, challenging us to rethink their boundaries.

According to Cook, the exhibit will include sculptural art that can be experienced visually and aurally. She also notes that the space is divided so that the exhibit offers two different experiences, "in terms of a shift in movement and time, so that you have something that you can come back to, and look at

and experience over and over again, and then you have this other component that changes over every week." This will be in the form of the kind of "pop-up" shows on Wednesdays when performers will be encouraged to leave some ephemera to be viewed through the rest of the week.

One of the highlights, in addition to Mike and Jack's performance, will include a partnership with David Dove from Nameless Sound for a Saturday (February 15th), day-long show of Pauline Olivaros scores performed by about twenty musicians inside and outside of the space at DiverseWorks. Each performer selected by Dove will have a specific composition to interpret however they like. Another not-to-be-missed highlight will be the restaging of *Under Houston Humming*—a Bonnie Barnett project originally performed at the 1986 New Music America Festival—which will involve a collective hum in the tunnels under downtown and at Rice's Turell Skyspace. The show is expected to be at the end February.

As Cook conceptualized the exhibit, it's about looking back and forward simultaneously while still being present in the moment. You may not find the sound of one hand clapping, but *SonicWorks* is bound to satisfy that aural fixation in all of us. **FPH**





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RUGGED REASONING

EL ULTIMO GRITO BENDS & TWISTS THEIR WAY INTO THE NEW YEAR
AT RICE GALLERY



By Meghan Hendley-Lopez

RICE GALLERY, the only university art museum in the nation dedicated to original site-specific installation art, presents massive-scale environments that allow direct interaction through exploration. Promoting artists who use recycled and inexpensive materials, the gallery is dedicated to displaying and programming an innovative season, which includes lectures, films, concerts, classes and workshops.

Opening the New Year with an internationally known duo, Rice Gallery continues to push the boundaries of their space with a new site-specific wonderland of an exhibition. The husband and wife team of Roberto Feo and Rosario Hurtado, better known as El Ultimo Grito, are known for their savvy approach to design and intuitive construction relying on their hands, bodies, and readily available materials that are inex-

pensive but easy to manipulate. According to Grito, this work ethic they adhere to acknowledges “a return to a kind of primitivism,” before the introduction and help of tools and machines that dictated the path of architecture along with design.

One of their most recent exhibitions in Mexico City was included in the Abierto Mexicano de Diseño Festival, where their work was on display in a public plaza. Grito and a team of volunteers constructed a snake-like structure of plywood, covered in bubble wrap secured with packing tape, revealing a bulbous, organic mushroom-like structure. Over the course of a few days, this piece took shape, ordained with a decorative skin of vibrant black and orange stickers that were designed by Grito. Serving the space, this wild sculpture also served as public seating for the plaza,

merging together sculpture and functionality while holding true to Grito’s eye for graphic design.

This unpolished, rugged aesthetic that connects into El Ultimo Grito’s design is their artistic answer to problem solving in a contemporary language. Instead of relying on the philosophy of a ‘finished object’ and the look that creates, the duo focuses more on the imaginative yet functional aspect of construction. Although their completed pieces are professional in fabrication, they still reveal ambiguity and intrigue. “We always try to reflect on what design is,” Roberto Feo (husband half of the duo) explains. “For us, design is just the processes by which you materialize ideas. When you think about design in these terms, everything comes into design—philosophy, writing, everything— and the disciplines are just mediums within which you work. You no longer need to think about whether it’s art, design, a film or whatever.” Hurtado adds, “Leonardo Da Vinci did everything. Nobody ever told him, ‘Excuse me, you’re an artist, why are you doing that?’”

For the Rice Gallery installation, the husband and wife team plan to play with the space, using usual materials and constructing them in an innovative way, allowing room for exploration, interaction and functionality. Their bright colors combined with the organic yet whimsical shapes lead the eye around their unusual design. Drawing upon their background in craftsmanship, Rosario Hurtado and Roberto Feo of El Ultimo Grito have constructed a multitude of pieces now featured in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), London.

Hurtado has been a principal lecturer in the Design Department of Goldsmiths University, London since 1999. Roberto Feo studied Sociology and Social Anthropology at Complutense University, Madrid before moving to London in 1990. Feo studied Furniture Design at London College of Furniture and completed an MA in Furniture Design at the Royal College of Art. Since 1999, he has been a principal lecturer at the Design Products Department at the Royal College of Art. Feo co-directed Platform 10, and is currently a Senior Design Research Fellow at Kingston University. Feo and his wife have co-directed the Space and Communications program at Geneva University of Art and Design (HEAD) in Switzerland. Their love of perspective and innovation has allowed this talented couple to overhaul the contemporary design field. Houston art and design lovers have a reason to rejoice and become revitalized this year, as we look to new ideas in 2014. **FPH**

El Ultimo Grito, New Installation

January 23, 2014 – March 16, 2014

The opening celebration on Thursday, January 23 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm, will feature remarks by El Ultimo Grito at 6:00 pm. Complimentary snacks and beverages including ale courtesy of Saint Arnold Brewery will be served. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, visit ricegallery.org or call 713.348.6069.

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WILL FORTE TALKS NEBRASKA

By Michael Bergeron

FREE PRESS HOUSTON SPOKE TO WILL FORTE via phone, from San Francisco, in an exclusive interview for the film “Nebraska.” “I’m visiting my Mom, and it’s cold up here, it’s chilly,” says Forte about the Northern California climate.

“Nebraska” is the newest film from filmmaker Alexander Payne, director of such films as “Citizen Ruth,” “Election,” “Sideways,” “About Schmidt,” and “The Descendants.” “Nebraska” tells the story of a meeting of minds between an estranged son and father during a road trip. Purpose of the trip: The old man’s gone bat-shit crazy and thinks he’s going to collect a million-dollar prize from a magazine sweepstakes two states away. Forte stars as David Grant, with Bruce Dern as the cantankerous paterfamilias Woody Grant.

“I was fortunate enough to hear about the script from my agent,” says Forte, “I felt this connection to the character. I thought there was no way that I would ever get this part. It was just so different from anything I’d ever done. I didn’t think anyone would take me seriously for something like this.”

“I put myself on tape doing a couple of the scenes, sent it in and then just immediately forgot about it,” continued Forte, “About four-and-a-half months later, out of the blue, I got this call that Alexander had seen the tape and liked it enough to call me in to do the scenes in person.”

“For some comedy dipstick to have any kind of positive reaction from somebody like Alexander Payne was about as exciting as it gets. I still didn’t think I had a shot at the role. I just thought it was cool to get to this level. A rational person would not put Will Forte in their movie,” says Forte.

Forte made the original audition with a flip cam. His girlfriend held the camera and read Dern’s lines. “You had this woman doing the voice of a cranky man,” explains Forte.

In truth, Payne had never heard of Forte before the audition, which is to say he was not a regular viewer of “Saturday Night Live” and had never seen “MacGruber” (2010), the starring role Forte is best known for.

“He had never seen anything I was in but after I got the job he found out that I was Paul from ‘30 Rock.’ He had seen that but he didn’t know that it was me, because for that part I was always dressed as a woman,” says Forte.

As “Nebraska” progresses, Forte’s character interacts in one-on scenes with the following: a disinterested customer at the stereo store where he works; his ex-girlfriend; a woman at the newspaper of a small Nebraska town; and a woman at a magazine sales office.

“Payne’s script is such a great actor’s template: You know what you’re supposed to do at all points. There were definitely some memories of my own life that I took inspiration from. Like for the stereo salesman scene. I never want to bug people. I remember I had a job selling a Union 76 discount booklet door-to-door. I was just horrible at it. A really good stereo salesman wouldn’t let them leave that store,” says Forte.

When Forte is talking to the lady at the newspaper, a femme who dated Woody in her youth, it’s almost like we see in his eyes the life that could’ve been. The woman could’ve been his mom. “I’m so lucky because

in my real life I have the life that I could’ve had,” says Forte candidly. “I have the best mom in the world. I consider myself a super lucky person.”

“As an actor it’s hard to work yourself up,” Forte says about a scene where he punches Stacy Keach, who plays a kind of nemesis to Woody. Forte’s character has been doing a slow burn all the way through “Nebraska,” taking abuse from his cousins about how fast he drives, for instance. “I guess in ‘MacGruber’ I punch people and I get mad, but it’s a different thing. ‘Nebraska’ is a bigger, more absurd reality. So to do that action in a way that’s supposed to be real is new for me. That scene is a culmination of all the stuff building up in me. As my character starts to put together pieces of my Dad’s history, little by little, it’s all adding up in my head. Plus, when we shot that scene, I kept thinking that I was going to miss my mark and actually hit Keach,” laughs Forte.

“I just saw ‘Barry Lyndon’ for the first time, less than a year ago. What a beautiful movie,” says Forte. “Someone described it like walking through an art gallery and actors are doing scenes in front of paintings. Ryan O’Neal is so good in it. And then I just saw ‘Paper Moon,’ also with O’Neal, for the first time. What an amazing bunch of movies O’Neal was in in the ‘70s. ‘What’s Up Doc?’ too, I just saw. I recently worked with Peter Bogdanovich [“Squirrels to the Nuts,” due out in 2014] and I had never seen his films. The chase scene at the end of ‘What’s Up Doc?’ is so wonderfully choreographed, so funny. People need to see ‘What’s Up Doc?’ But they should see ‘Nebraska’ first.” **FPH**

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NOTHING CHANGES ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

By William Guess

JUST LIKE THAT, here we are at the beginning of another new year. 2013 went fast, and left with some big shoes to fill for 2014. There were a slew of shows this past year that set a standard for Houston. So many great acts came through our city when they used to pass it over, and we should be proud of that—but we aren’t stopping there. This month brings a young and hungry local Houston hardcore band, a Los Angeles duo that demands attention, and a future, Texas alternative-country legend. Let’s start the New Year off right.

SAT. JAN. 4_**THESE DAYS (EP RELEASE)**_WALTER’S
The band name These Days probably won’t sound familiar to the majority of people, probably because they’ve been a band for a mere 3 months. But if you’re a fan of heavy music, it won’t be long before it’s a common namedrop in the who’s who of Houston hardcore. Minute-and-a-half long songs that channel getting your face slammed into a brick wall, some serious riffs that you can’t help but lose yourself in the pit to, and breakdowns that hardcore fans truly miss —these are a few of my favorite things. And These Days combines all of them for a kick in the ass of anyone who says hardcore is dead in this city. They’re releasing their first EP at this show, and if the demos posted online are any indication, this thing is going to rip. The lineup for this show is stacked with young bucks and veterans of the genre too. Will To Live, Bowel, Black Coffee, Chipped Teeth and this band on the same bill? It’s a must.

THUR. JANUARY. 16_**YOUTH CODE**_MANGO'S
On a recent trip to Los Angeles, with nothing to do on a Saturday night, I asked around to some friends if there was anything going on. I was pointed in the direction of The Handbag Factory downtown to see local industrial duo Youth Code. Not the first place I’d think to go see a show, but I was intrigued, and after hearing one song, I had to go. Youth Code has a sound that combines screaming, distorted vocals over thrashy, hard-hitting electronic music ala old-school Nine Inch Nails and “Antichrist Superstar” era Marilyn Manson. The result is a blistering sound that will leave your ears ringing for hours after. Industrial hasn’t been a popular sound in recent years, but if there’s any group that can revive it, it’s this one. After seeing them at the venue mentioned above in L.A., Mango’s is the perfect spot to get your first taste. You don’t want to miss the female singer writhing around on stage screaming her fucking lungs out.

FRI. JAN. 31_**BOB SCHNEIDER**_HOUSE OF BLUES
On the opposite end of the spectrum, we’ve got pop/rock/alternative/country/you-name-it Texas staple Bob Schneider. Schneider is no stranger to ANY Texas venue. He’s played just about every single one—and at House of Blues—he’s like a King. Currently residing just outside of Austin, HOB has become his Houston home, playing there once every three months. Schneider combines what seems like ALL genres into his music—soul, funk, R&B, country, alternative, rock, and yeah, even some hip-hop. The guy is talented across the board. He’s a musical chameleon, having the ability to shape and mold himself into any kind of music and make it his own. Not only that, but his band is insanely impressive, and they all put on one hell of a show. We all know he’ll be back at some point, but see him once, and you’ll never want to miss him again. Make this time your first, and I promise it won’t be your last.

SAT. JAN. 11_**NEIL HAMBURGER**_WALTER’S
SAT. JAN. 18_**THE BEACH BOYS**_ARENA THEATER
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ALBUM TALK

with K.M. Anderson

BEYONCE_BEYONCE_COLUMBIA
Anyone who wonders what Beyonce is doing in that glamorous life, the answer is apparently A LOT of fucking. By this point, you will have heard all the schmaltz about the way this album was released, or some numbers, or some other shit, but I will be the 456th person to tell you that this album is damn good. There are the obvious songs like “Pretty Hurts” or “XO,” which are the big pop anthems you would expect, there is “Heaven” a song about someone who heaven couldn’t wait for, and there is “Blue” which is 150 times better than the song Jay Z did about their daughter. BUT THEN there is “Partition,” which begins “Driver roll up the partition please, you don’t need see Yonce’ on her knees” and also speaks of him Monica Lewiskying all on her blouse, which is drastically more than I would ever want to know about “him.” There is also “Rocket” which begins “Let me sit this ass on ya” which could be shocking, but considering dudes wrote that song, you could kind of hear them sayin’ what would you want to hear coming out of Beyonce’s mouth in bed, and the song writes itself. Spacey R&B and trapp-ish in places, it is more than the hype, and not the thing you would want your daughter singing in the living room. Oh baby, she’s on her knees looking for something. Daughter: “What, like she dropped something?”

STEPHEN MALKMUS & THE JICKS_WIG OUT JAG BAGS_MATADOR
Stephen Malkmus can be called many things (sort of tall, white, bookish), but none of those things take away or add to the value of his contribution to all things guitar and rock. Malkmus is great at making slightly pop, avant garde-y rock songs. Songs that are singable, but not simple. “Wig Out at Jagbags,” a title every writer loves to transcribe, is more in line with “Mirror Traffic” more direct, or as direct as a song called “Cinnnamon and Lesbians” could be. It is classic rock-y (more in the sense of guitar driven than say Zeppelin), and it is still informed by obscure rock (fill in your band here). You can never go wrong with Malkmus, and those who disagree with that have no taste in music and should be unfriended or unfollowed on social media webpages.

PONTIAK_INNOCENCE_THRILL JOCKEY
Pontiak music is that of a dragon’s roar, it is that thing that rose from the water and turned the sky dark. When people say words like “stoner rock,” or “psychedelic” if it is not derogatory, it means the kind of music you can out to (rock-out, jam-out, space-out) and in that way I would recommend Pontiak. These are the albums you buy on vinyl to hear the amp buzz. These are the albums that make you research tube amps and string gauges. This is the kind of music you listen to in your car and notice the hues of a sunrise or sunset. Pontiak are consistent in the creation of great rock albums, this album being no exception, but it is an experience that must be heard to be understood, for whatever words I may summon now, it may not accurately depict the aural power.

MARY BETH ZIMMERLE OF LOVE KNIFE

LOVE KNIFE IS A RELATIVELY NEW Houston band and they play a moody, spaced-out, almost Mission of Burma style of punk rock. FPH had a few questions for drummer Mary Beth Zimmerle.

What are some bands that influence Love Knife that you feel listeners should be able to pick up when you guys play live, and why?

The first ones that come to mind are pop punk bands such as Descendents and early Green Day. We get these comparisons a lot, and all three of us have definitely been influenced by their songwriting styles. Some other noticeable influences are Husker Du and Jawbreaker, if less for their specific playing style than the overall mood they're able to create. There's a similarly dark, brooding quality to most of Love Knife's songs underlying the more poppy song structure. Also, it wouldn't be a complete answer without mentioning J Mascis of Dinosaur Jr.'s influence on Phillip's guitar playing and tone.

Where is your favorite place to play outside Houston?
We haven't played outside of Houston...yet.

What are some local bands you enjoyed playing with?
We were very happy to be a part of The Phlegmatics' CD release show back in October. We've also

loved playing with The Snow Indian. (Side note: we'll be playing with both of these bands again on January 25th at Super Happy Fun Land!) Other awesome bands we've played with are The Witherees, Treehouse Project, and Alkari.

Not to condescend to you're like some freakish, deformed sideshow performer, but what is it like being a female drummer and do you think people tend to underestimate female musicians, or is that changing?

Haha! I definitely anticipated a question like this, and I could go on in response for a long time, but I'll try to keep it to the point. I guess the main thing would be the sheer amount of emphasis placed on my gender, though I would add that it has always been in a very positive and enthusiastic manner. A lot of people have never even heard of a woman playing the drums (which astounds me), but are generally excited and intrigued by the notion of it and like to talk to me about it. And I like talking about it, so this is fine. Sometimes people will approach my being in the band as though it's some kind of gimmick, which might make me roll my eyes but doesn't necessarily insult me. Anyway, if some people check us out just because they want to see a girl play the drums, I can't really complain if it's bringing more people to our shows and they're into the music. What tends

to really bother me is the lack of emphasis placed on actual musicianship among females, particularly those who aren't vocalists. It's as if just being up there on stage is supposed to be enough. I often hear variations on two basic remarks, "I didn't expect you to be able to play like THAT!" or "It's so cool that you can just get up there and DO it!" Well, of course I can get up there and do it. It's fun taking people by surprise, but being held to such a low standard starts to get really old. Hopefully this will change as A) more and more women are proving themselves to be excellent musicians, and B) people are noticing.

Please tell me that the name Love Knife came from the manga of the same name that popped up when I typed it into Google.

No, it didn't, but haha! We've actually gotten one or two accidental "likes" on Facebook by people who clearly thought we were the manga. It'd be funny if they thought we were some sort of punk-rock cosplay band or something.

Stepping aside from the band, and just focusing on Beth for a moment, do you have any personal "Worst Of's" for 2013 that you'd like to share with us (musical or non-musical)?

Lone Star Bock **FPH**



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SMALL MINDED

SIGNS THAT POINT TO A BLEAK FUTURE

By David H.

THIS YEAR WE WERE BOMBARDED with news pieces about the beauty of microliving, the benefits of a car share program, and the bargain behind something like Megabus. And while a small apartment with smaller bills, or a lack of the hassle incurred with car ownership, or even an inexpensive trip to Dallas sound great, it almost sounds like a prep course for lower expectations.

Prior to the problems incurred by the banking industry several years ago, the idea of living in a house no larger than about nine hundred feet, sounded a little silly. The cost of housing and homeownership come at a price, but one that most Americans one day hope to achieve. So, when I decided to start the arduous task of looking into a new home purchase, microliving was an option that I looked into. What I found, was an existence that was filled with all of the same issues as before, in a smaller environment. Property tax, costs of ownership, and general maintenance were all there—with a large amount of compromise attached. I thought that the idea behind a micro apartment was possible or at least probable, only in congested cities like New York. But, when faced with the task of helping someone look for an affordable apartment inside the loop, I found that it's not such an odd idea even in Houston. Of course, if you have to live close to downtown then you're used to the idea of \$1,800 a month for a rental. But, for those of us who think that's just a bit insane, or for those who make less than that a month, going micro has become the new thing. What I saw, were "studio" or "efficiency" apartments that had been retagged with the "micro" moniker. Sadly, these little spaces are still \$500 to \$1,000 a month, depending on where you want to live.

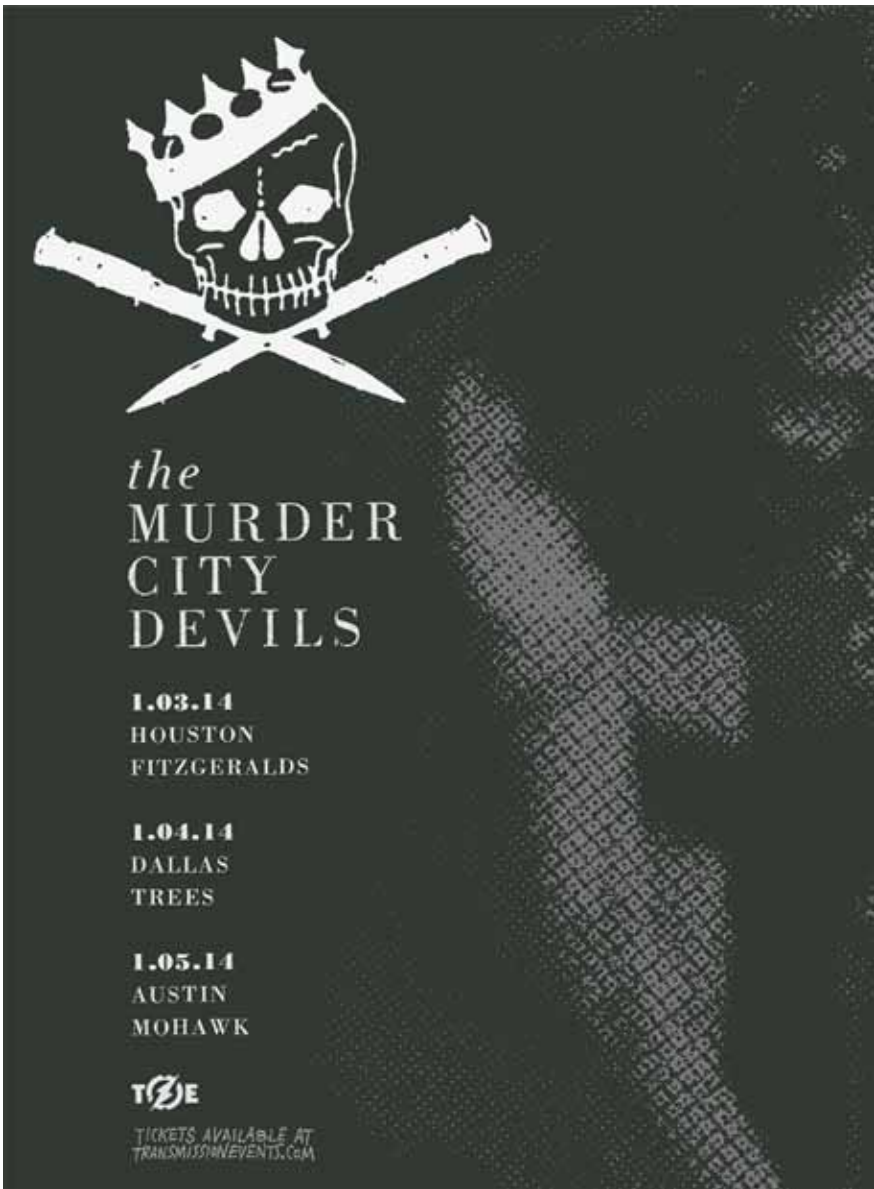
Recently, Enterprise Rent-A-Car has started advertising the "benefits" of using car share. Though this method makes perfect sense when it comes to a citywide fleet program, such as in Houston, does it really work for the individual? Obviously, this is a car rental program that is designed to charge by use. A twenty-five-dollar yearly membership fee, added to a nine-dollar-an-hour rental, sounds like gouging the disenfranchised more than a "great deal." Renting a similar vehicle from Enterprise comes at a cost of about thirty five dollars,

with less restrictions, but coupled with gas and proper insurance. But, the question I raise, is how difficult is it to own a car? I'm not asking this as some entitled person who doesn't understand the struggle to save on a small wage, but rather as someone in a city fueled with thousands of cars under one thousand dollars. The existence of such programs shows how low wages and a high cost of living are taking their toll on our society.

Which of course, leads us to Megabus. One dollar to ride from Houston to Austin sounds like the deal of the century. The bus also offers up the option of free wi-fi to sweeten the deal. But, what began as the option for an offer per ride, has now shrunk to an offer made during certain times of the year. Keep in mind, that when I searched for a trip to Austin, the entire trip was only twenty four dollars. However, the same route booked from Greyhound, was actually cheaper by about six dollars. While bus travel has never really been my thing, the option for cheap travel makes one wonder why the sudden push exists.

If you shudder to think that most modern dollar store chains now offer groceries that include dairy items and produce, it shouldn't come as a shock to you. It seems to me that all of these "great deals" lead up to more of a compromise than anything else. Most of us were raised to believe that a person gets a job, attends college, gets a better job and starts saving for the future. I'm hampered by the realities that face current and future generations below my own. That now, a college degree doesn't mean a great job, that a home loan is obtained with twenty percent down, and that something as small as a car payment can be difficult for many to qualify for. As we Houstonians usher in a new year, we should never give up hope for a better life. That possibly such an ideal is something more than a campaign slogan, but a way to forge a new future for you and yours. As it stands to me, these are all signs of a possibly bleak future, where people can't afford a home, qualify for an auto loan, and who have to travel by bus to visit relatives. But if these trends of compromise continue, the future looks more hopeless than hopeful. **FPH**







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SAT. 7TH
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GUST

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JOE ICET OF THE LAST ORGANIC OUTPOST

By Nick Cooper

LAST MONTH, JOE ICET retired from his day job of 29 years as a refrigeration mechanic to follow his heart, as a full-time urban-farmer. His pension, from pipefitters local 211 union, will provide for his expenses while he spends his days farming for the community. Located in the 5th Ward, the 2.5 acre Emile Street Farm is a functioning model for others interested in establishing communities based around local, sustainable, organic food. Through urban farming, education, experimentation, arts, and cultural events, The Last Organic Outpost offers solutions for dozens of problems facing people in cities. The farm is the only oasis in a food desert—there is little other healthy food available for folks in the neighborhood who lack the means to travel several miles.

In addition to growing food, the farm has become a food systems laboratory. A loading dock has been transformed into a hydroponic garden. Next to it is a 4,500-gallon rain collection system, and an 11,000-gallon fish tank in which a team is planning to harvest blue crab. Community members are researching the electrical and water systems, and creating the technology to provide solutions.

Recently, Joe gave an interview about his project.

How did you first get involved in urban farming?

In the late 80s, I met a guy doing permaculture in Blanco Texas. He introduced me to bunch of folks in the area. We started a permaculture group called Seed, which focused on sustaining the earth through environmental design. We also helped start a community garden called Stone's Throw.

What are some of the techniques you discovered that work well?

Making our own soil, vermaculture (worm composting), pond water harvesting, diluting seawater to remineralize the soil, repopulating micro communities, and planting lots of varieties.

Can you give some examples of how the community gets involved in the innovations?

During a very dry season several years back, we came up with ways to water we called drought technology. Cleveland Glenn came up with the name. He was raised in 5th Ward. We changed our soil menu by adding clay to hold moisture and took clay pots and glued them together to make ollas to help to water in the root zone of the plants. We set up drip line using 55-gallon drums tied to drip line using a wicking method. Mark Holt headed up a lot of those projects.

What do people have to know about farming all year round in Houston?

The cool weather is the easiest. It's a good time to start farming, especially for greens and root crops. There are lots of varieties to choose from—beets, spinach, loose leaf lettuces, potatoes... At present we are growing eight varieties of spinach. A favorite this season in the neighborhood is red giant, a mustard green.

How has farming impacted your life?

The relationship to the land and to community has changed the way I eat. The revolution at the Outpost is taste. We are building dinner for Houston by reintroducing farming back into communities. We're giving folks a chance to try varieties they'd never had before.

How have you partnered with community, arts and, activist groups?

For the last several years, Ja'nee Barton has headed up Farmfest. It is held the first Saturday in November. In the spring, we have a skillshare. As a shared space, many activist communities including Sedition Bookstore have come out to the farm. They had dinners, showed movies and sold books. The Occupy group came out and helped plant and weed in exchange for food. Vegan groups have participated with raw food demonstrations. Transient Antenna, a seven-person "mobile living experiment," did the murals of "Farmart" and the onion, back when the farm first opened. David Reed has been working on a cob oven. Folks built a stage, a yoga deck, a demonstration micro home, signs and many other art projects. Houston Free Thinkers and 5th Ward Church of Christ both have garden projects at the farm.

How can folks get in touch with you and what are your plans for the future?

The web site is lastorganicoutpost.com. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Over the next 10 years, we will be working on building a workforce of farmers, growing the food that Houston eats. The point is to provide access to food for nearby residents, education on how to grow, prepare, and eat the goods. We will be planting fruit trees as a community resource. We will be looking for 600 farms throughout Houston to build a food economy around local needs. Land is everywhere in the city—there are abandoned lots. We can help put folks to work that need work, growing food for their communities. We live in a fertile world. That is our blessing. We can farm a way to plenty. **FPH**



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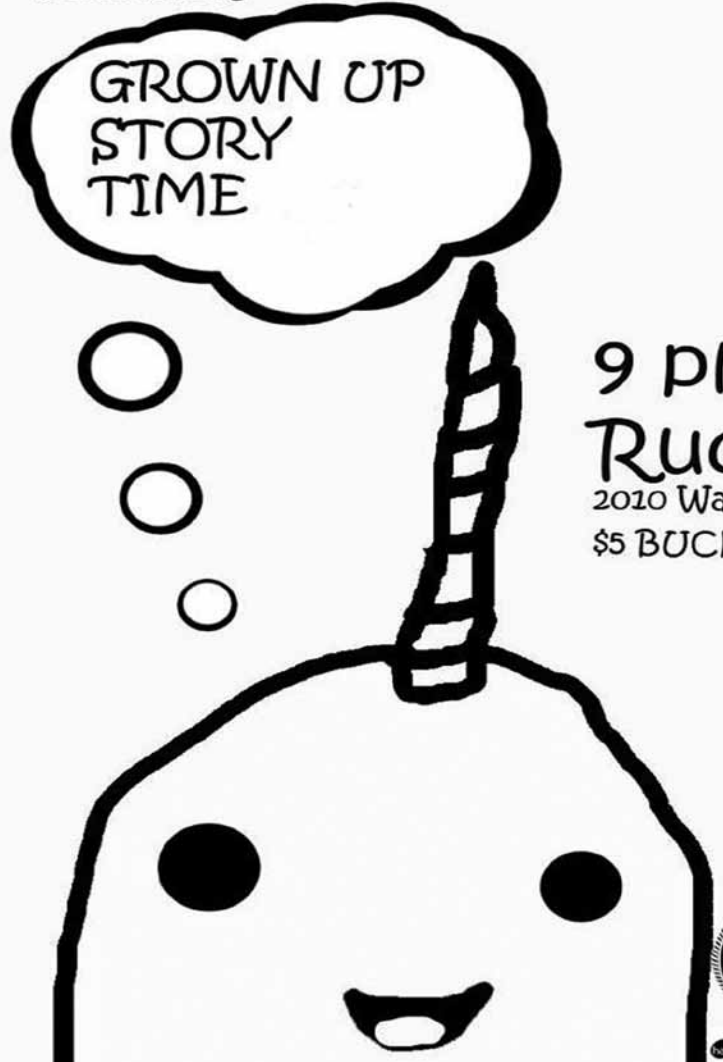
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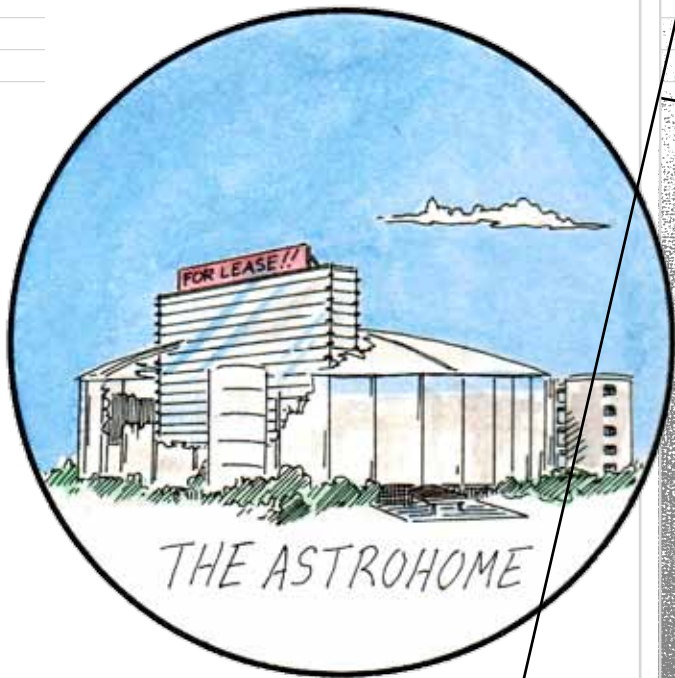
WORST OF HOUSTON

2013

WORST LOSS OF HISTORY _THE ASTRODOME

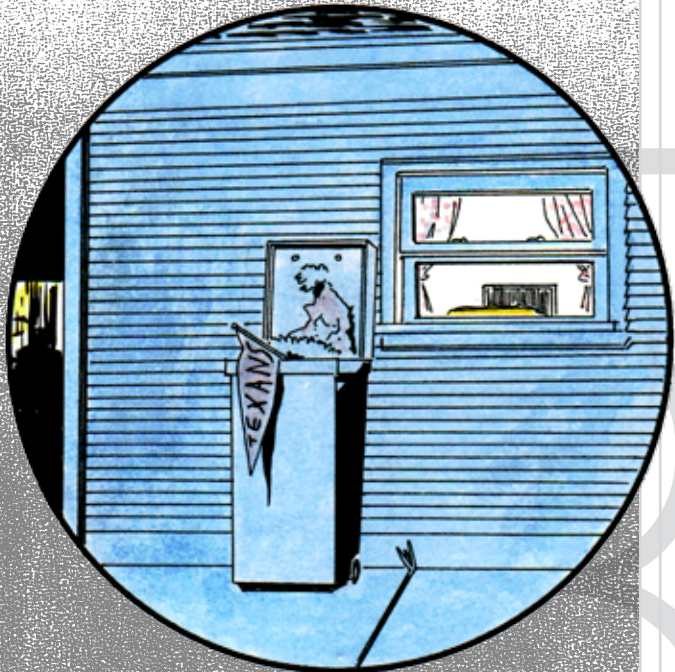
Houstonians do not have a sense of preservation. Instead, we just tear down and put up something else. The past fades into oblivion. This is what we have done in the past with places like the Sam Houston Coliseum, Music Hall, etc. This is sad because there is a lot of history buried within those walls of the Astrodome; from the “battle of the sexes” tennis match between Bobby Riggs and Billie Jean King, to when Madonna performed there during her “Who’s That Girl” tour in 1987.

The Astrodome has a rich history. For many kids, such as myself, going to or even seeing the Astrodome was akin to a rite of passage in ranking with going to Astroworld next door. Now, we will never be able to see a homerun hit one of the stadium lights above, or show the future where Nolan Ryan pitched a no-hitter. In a way, the Astrodome was a sort-of identity for those of us who don’t want to be thought of as “cow-boys” or “cowgirls.” But now, thanks to low voter turnout, that identity of “the eighth wonder of the world” will be no more. -CHRISTINA LYNN



WORST SPORTS TEAM _THE TEXANS

What happened to Houston? Last year the beloved Texans were cruising along the glorious, gold-studded road to the playoffs—no issues in sight. Fans were high off of the pure joy of not being “that team” for once. But two playoff runs seems to be enough for the bulls, as what was supposed to be “our year” has become a harsh contest to get into the Houston record books for a losing streak. I mean c’mon, you know there is a problem when the die-hard fans are treating the starting quarterback since ‘07 like the living embodiment of satan. Even the fans over in Washington at least like their own team enough to not heckle them to the point that they probably have learned to cherish their road games. Many teams face injuries and I understand, but the Texans have the tolerance of an angry TSA screener with 11 straight losses and counting. Ouch. I like to compare the Texans to that crush you had in high school: The most beautiful girl you had ever seen. The most flawless human being in the whole world, right? Wrong. You come back to see that after a grueling freshman year at college, she has returned with a hunched back, an extra 50 pounds, and the face of a bridge troll. All you can think is: “What...” As a casual football fan, I don’t expect too much, but I really am getting tired of bursting into tears every time I turn on CBS on a Sunday. -ARNAV KAK



WORST REOPENING _MOON TOWER INN

Since the reopening I have only been here twice, both times were a very lackluster experience. I mean really guys, you were closed for over a year, then when you finally open you basically changed two things, how many beers you serve, and your prices. What happened to all those pictures of indoor eating? I know a lot of people that still go eat there, but for me Houston is either too hot or too cold outside. That's why "indoors" was invented. Not to mention your eating area is more or less a mosquito-filled yard. For anybody reading, go to Sammy's Wild Game Grill: Same prices, same food, and they offer indoor seating and french fries—no foodie coleslaw bullshit. Oh, and they have a real website, in case you're not one of the cool kids who memorized the menu and hours. – BLAKE JONES

WORST WINDBAG WITH THE WORST GRASP OF BASIC SCIENCE _CONGRESSMAN JOE BARTON (R-TX)

Joe Barton is worried about climate change (a.k.a. "global warming"). He's so worried about it, that he wants to ban carbon-neutral wind power, saying, "Wind is God's way of balancing heat. Wind is the way you shift heat from areas where it's hotter to areas where it's cooler. That's what wind is. Wouldn't it be ironic if in the interest of global warming we mandated massive switches to energy, which is a finite resource, which slows the winds down, which causes the temperature to go up?"

Yes he did. He actually said that. This man is represents one of the largest and richest states in the legislature of the most powerful country in the history of the world. Yay Texas schools! –HARBEER SANDHU

WORST REASONING FOR BANNING ABORTION AT 20 WEEKS _HEY START JACKING OFF AT 15 WEEKS

While the overwhelming majority of abortions in the US take place during the first trimester (12 weeks after the woman's last period), there may be reasons requiring a later-term abortion. Most people agree that there must be some point at which an unborn fetus achieves what we call "consciousness," at which point a woman's healthcare choice starts tilting in the direction of murder, and people generally agree that they don't want the fetus to feel pain. But what about pleasure?

Congressman Michael Burgess (R-TX) says he has personally watched sonograms of 15-week-old male fetuses with their hands between their legs, which means that they are sentient enough to feel pleasure, which must mean they are sentient enough to feel

pain, which must also mean that Michael Burgess is a pervert watching unborn kiddie-porn. For shame! – HARBEER SANDHU

WORST BAND NAME _ZIMMERMAN'S GUN

Up tha punx, right guys? –BLAKE JONES

WORST HOUSTON ROAD TRIP EXPERIENCE _THREE TULSA DANCERS

Landry Thompson is a white, 13-year-old dancer from Tulsa, whose mom sent her on a trip to Houston to Planet Funk Dance Academy to study hip-hop with Chachi Gonzales. Landry was in the custody of her black instructor, Emmanuel Hurd, and another black dancer who joined them. At 3 a.m., on December 3rd, after dancing, they were at a gas station when they were surrounded by HPD. Despite having a notarized letter from Thompson's mother granting guardianship to Hurd and other official documents, they were handcuffed and Thompson was was turned over to Child Protective Services.

According to Thompson's mother Destiny, an HPD officer called and asked her, "Are you aware your daughter is in Houston, Texas with two black men?" Destiny Thompson informed the officer that she was, and that she had been long-time friends with Hurd and his wife.

Hurd was also convinced of discrimination, claiming that one of the cops told him, "Sir, you've got to understand, you two men are black and she's white." The men weren't charged with anything, but Landry was taken to a CPS facility.

HPD told Thompson's mother that she would have to come herself to Houston to get her daughter out of CPS custody, but after a whole morning of negotiations, they finally agreed to turn over the badly shaken up girl to her legal guardian, Emmanuel Hurd.

No recordings have been released of the cops saying the things that the dancers and Landry's mom agree they said, but it looks like some innocent dancers had their weekend ruined by HPD racial profiling. –NICK COOPER

WORST LOST MAKEOUT SPOT _MARFRELESS

I've always been a fan of the unmarked bar. There's something almost magical about walking into one. If it is your first time, you have no idea what to expect of a place you have likely stumbled across; if you are a return visitor, you are someone "in the know." Since 1976, tucked behind the River Oaks Theater, an unassuming blue door beneath a fire escape opened to a well-appointed den of iniquity. Marfreless, in busi-

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ness in two locations for more than 40 years, was an infamous spot for a secret rendezvous: A lounge of love. A finely stocked bar, dim lighting, quiet music and discreet staff made this bar comfortable and welcoming; but it was the upstairs sofas and small rooms that made it Houston's most notorious make out spot. Another great business pushed out by sky rocketing rents (the River Oaks Shopping Center is owned by Weingarten Reality), Houston woke up April Fool's Day, 2013 with no where cozy to meet its secret lover. —TISH STRINGER

WORST VOTER AWARENESS _HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM DISTRICT II VOTERS

What makes a worse voter, apathy or fraud? Trick question. The worst voter is the one who doesn't take two seconds to Google their chosen candidate. Take, for example, the 5,961 people in Houston who voted for a man because they thought he was black.

Dave Wilson, a candidate in the Houston Community College System District II Trustee race, basically trolled his voters. Wilson essentially won with an online ad and some mailbox flyers (showing black families probably from Google images) that said, "Please vote for our friend and neighbor Dave Wilson."

According to the news outlets, Wilson beat the 24-year incumbent candidate by only 26 votes. I love how local politics is the single confirmation to the "every vote counts" fodder they shoved down our throats in public school. Blame Wilson because he's a white Republican who campaigned for a seat in a district consisting of black Democrats. Blame Wilson because none of his promotional material showed his dastardly melanin-poor mug.

Blame the voters who couldn't give a damn to notice.

The reason this piece isn't titled "Worst politician tactics in Houston" is because politicians are evil by default. Voters should know better. Hell, Wilson told KHOU 11 News he didn't expect to win. He used old-school mailbox ads and put disclaimers under the endorsement from his cousin Ron, who, if it isn't obvious, is NOT the Democrat state representative Ron Wilson. Wilson taught everyone a lesson: This is what you get.

This is what you get when you treat politics like a popularity contest. This is what you get when you choose the presidential hopeful who you could have a beer with, even though his hobbies include defecating on the US Constitution. This is what you get when you want to make a difference, but do not do your homework. —DL HAYDON

WORST GENTRIFIED AREA _BELLAIRE

A lot of people I know would pick the untimely gentrification of Montrose as being one the worst things happening in Houston right now. Yeah it sucks, businesses are tearing down the cheap apartments and old houses and forcing a bunch of 20-something-year-olds to either move to the east side or get jobs that aren't at Agora or Buffalo Exchange to pay rent. However to me, Bellaire is a much sadder tale. For years, friends and I would go over to places like Fit and FuFu Cafe and be the only white kids. Not saying we were cool because we were the only white people there, but when I want really good Chinese food I want the full experience. I want the waitress to treat me like the dumb white kid I am. I want them to make fun of me in Chinese for ordering the "...General..So's (?) chicken.." I want them to turn their nose up at me for ordering water and still not really knowing all what's in Sake. I want to not understand the menu and have no fucking clue what's going on on the TV. I fear those days are lost. Now populating the once-sacred area is slues of early 30-year-old bankers and soccer moms looking for "Hello Kitty" bullshit for their nieces. I see it slowly turning into Clear Lake. Of course, like good businesses, these shops are attempting to accommodate all of us white gluttons and its depressing. Fuck, last time I was in there, there was a guy asking if the steamed pork dumplings were organic, after loudly talking about the last time he saw Judge Reinhold in a movie. —BLAKE JONES

WORST BEST PRESS _HOUSTON FTW AMONGST NATION'S TOP NEWS MEDIA

It all started last summer when Forbes, in an unprecedented move, named Houston number one on the list of "America's Coolest Cities." On the heels of that press came more nods our way, inclusion in CNN Money's "Best Places to Live" and the ultimate slap to our beloved capital, Houston as THE travel destination alternative to overrated Austin by Huffington Post. I know what you are thinking, how could there possibly be anything wrong with Houston finally getting the recognition it deserves?

It is known fact that we Houstonians love and appreciate our fair city in ways that visitors often cannot understand. In the past, I've analogized my hometown to that worse-for-ware recliner in your living room that you keep coming back to; guests will never opt to sit in it, though it is arguably the comfiest in the room. Indeed, the fourth-largest city in the USA has remained snubbed by outsiders until this past year. Despite the good press, we still get a bad rap, yet this Houstonian is more than okay with it.

Take this cautionary tale for example. A little city we all used to love: Austin, Texas. The small place we escaped to for Hill Country getaways and a dip in the cool waters of Barton Springs began getting a lot of positive attention from the rest of the country a couple years back. This changed our friend Austin: Its ego exploded tangential to its population. What once was an endearing destination of offbeat Texas spirit, changed face into a California outpost too big for its infrastructure and too self-absorbed to notice. Mopac and I-35 have been parking lots for sometime now. All-embracing hippies have been largely replaced by liberals as staunch in their close-mindedness of other viewpoints that they might as well be Republicans. Not to mention, for a city that has added a couple hundred thousand people over the last few years, it has not encouraged diversity. That guy in the denim vest with a full mustache does not think you are cool enough to be on South Congress, and he doesn't give a shit about concealing that attitude. Weirdness is a contradiction and Austinites' new mantra is, "Thanks for visiting, please don't move here."

If you ask me, I'd be alright not touting Houston's awesomeness quite that loud. I love that our freeways, even at their worst, aren't as bad as some, and that we are a city full of as many kinds of people as political ideologies, religions, food and opinions. I love that there are no two pockets of this city that are alike, and that we are a place that is unexpected. I love that Houston doesn't have to try to be anything other than itself, and that Houstonians on the whole do not have pretenses towards each other and visitors. It is a city that is welcoming and non-judgemental, and we are always eager to offer up the best seat in our home, the old Gallery Furniture recliner, even to our denim-clad friend from Austin.

I'm not saying I won't be the first to knowingly smile the next time Houston is appropriately recognized by the national media for any number of its wonderful attributes, but I might not rush to repost the article or tell everyone I know. -TISH STRINGER

WORST COMPLAINT _"THIS CITY SUCKS/I CAN'T WAIT TO MOVE"

GUESS FUCKING WHAT—We here who are pretty damn proud of the strides our city has made towards providing creative opportunities to ungrateful assholes like yourself, COULD NOT BE MORE EXCITED TO SEE YOU (MAYBE) LEAVE. Oh please, threaten us with something we want! I don't know how Houston will ever make it without your incessant complaining or phantom threats to leave. This city was nothing

before you and definitely will landslide once you, who has been an armchair observer to the progress of our community, actually fly away to whatever fairy tale land you seem to believe things are actually different in.

If you are doing nothing here, what makes you think that somehow the world is going to start rewarding you with the benefits of someone that has, just because you relocated. You're basically spreading the suck. You are a reflection of the environment and people you surround yourself with so, if you're life here is THAT terrible, maybe stop going to Boondocks every day at 5. -SHELBY HOHL

WORST RESIDENTIAL EYESORE WITHIN THE INNER LOOP _ANYTHING WITH REALTOR MIKE SPEAR'S NAME ON IT

Let me correct myself first and state that there is a possibility that this dude ISN'T solely responsible for the shit-stucco townhomes and high rises replacing historic homes within the inner loop but, I'll be damned if he didn't make sure to put his Professor-X-lookin' ass on 8-foot tall signs in front of everyone, advertising to "contact Mike Spear for information on the property".

Maybe it's just me but, I probably would NOT want to be the face of gentrification in any particular area. More than likely, neither he, nor any of the other realtors raping the history out of our downtown area, even live remotely close by. That's okay! The inner loop has never needed the silver spoon frat kids that currently fist pump the night away on the tops of african american slave burial grounds (Washington Ave.) more than we need them now. I'm curious what the selling points are for Montrose—like, when you sit down with the realtor and they explain to you all the perks of moving to the area. I'm guessing it goes something like this:

Realtor: "...yes ma'am, the Montrose area is growing both culturally and economically, and in the next 5 years, we're expecting it to be the new (___insert trendy community elsewhere___). Have you read the Forbes report on Houston?"

The irony is that the building you're looking at moving into was more than likely built to replace something "cultural" that already existed and/or defined the area. I'm not one to condone arson, but a quote from the book Lords of Chaos comes to mind—when Varg Vikernes (Burzum) was asked about the church burnings in Norway his response was, "They desecrated our graves, our burial mounds, so it's revenge." -SHELBY HOHL

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WORST LATTE FAUX PAS _STARBUCKS

One chilly December morning, I decided to indulge in a pricey holiday latte (yes I am that girl) from Starbucks. I give my slightly complex order for myself and my fellow office buddy, paid and waited at the designated drink dispensing area. Within a few minutes, I had both drinks, carrying tray and an excited smile on my face. I couldn't wait to sip on the deliciously hot beverage. That day, starbucks was out of their little drink toppers and so I drove cautiously to the office. As I am walking up the stairs to my desk, a little bit of my drink spills through the top. I notice, but don't think twice about how the liquid looks a bit pale. I hand my office mate her drink, place mine on my desk and proceed to set up for the day. After settling in, I take a huge, long-awaited gulp of my latte, only to discover that they sent me away with a venti cup of warm, sweet milk. Yes folks, there was no espresso in my drink! Thankfully, when I called to point out this little mishap, they kindly offered me a drink on them. My next drink was extra tasty!

The next day, one of our interns walks into the office and tells us her story of how the Starbucks she goes to forgot to put the espresso her drink. It must have been one of those weeks for the Starbucks of Houston. -MARIAM AFSHAR

WORST CASE OF JUMPING THE GUN _THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Someone in charge of the RNC's twitter account sent out a tweet on the 58th anniversary of Rosa Parks's arrest reading "Today we remember Rosa Parks' bold stand and her role in ending racism," and the internet erupted in irreverent laughter. -HARBEER SANDHU

WORST EXAMPLE OF OUTSOURCING TO INDIA _MISS AMERICA

I mean, did you see Miss Kansas? She's blonde, she hunts with a bow, she's got tattoos and she's an Army National Gaurdswoman who looks great in fatigues, who wouldn't want to tap that—I mean hold her up as a shining beacon of an example to American girls?! How did this dark-skinned nobody from New York even get on the ballot? She's like, so dark-skinned that she couldn't even win Miss India, how did she win Miss America?! I demand a recount! -HARBEER SANDHU

*WORST INTERSECTION _SHEPHERD AND WESTHEIMER

True, we haven't had this problem for all of 2013, but since mid-autumn, this intersection has been the bane of my existence every time I come back to Montrose from my home on the northwest side of town. As with most Houston construction projects, I still feel like I

have no idea what the hell they're trying to accomplish with said rigamarole, but no matter that is, I feel like they're doing a horrible job. There's nothing cute or funny about this one. It's no kneeslapper—but it needs to be said. It sucks. Bad. Hopefully it won't be on the 2014 list as well. -JACK BETZ

*WORST STREET _ALL OF THEM

In terms of potholes, bumps and other road imperfections, in Houston. All of them. Seriously. I have not driven on a road in this city that hasn't had me swerving and weaving to avoid potholes and deceptively huge bumps that bitch slap your tire into submission, in... say... 15 years! Heck! before I even started driving, I remember putting my hands up and yelling 'Weeeeeeeee' as my parents swerve and slowed to miss all the road imperfections this city chooses to ignore in lieu of... what are they spending their money on? Do something, Houston. I'm tired of the flat tires and side swipes. -MARIAM AFSHAR

WORST ELECTION _NOVEMBER 5TH (IN PROGRESS)

I couldn't decide between two colossal fuckups. One being the election of Dave Wilson, that asshole who used the voters' laziness against them by tricking them into thinking he was black. Well, I'm not sure which is worse, the fact that he did that or the fact that people fell for it and voted for someone they didn't know anything about. In some ways you have to respect this mans genius, he knows the weakness of the people. We are all sheep and tend to follow what others do and believe what we are told. "Ain't nobody got time to research. I'm just going to vote so I can say I voted." This makes Houston voters look like a bunch of idiots. Thanks, as there aren't enough reasons to look down on our city.

The second being the vote against the referendum to turn the Astrodome into a convention center. I will not go further on this, as someone has already expressed their disgust on this subject. -MARIAM AFSHAR

WORST BAG SEARCH: HUNTER TODD _WORLDVEST HOUSTON

During the closing weekend of the 46th annual WorldFest Houston (a Houston-based film festival), on Saturday, April 20th, a fire alarm went off at the Westchase Marriott where festival events were being held. After everyone reentered the room, Festival Director, Hunter Todd, demanded to search the bag of a person attending the "master class" in session. The person in question was a woman, a festival VIP gold pass holder and a U of H student. She was also wearing a hijab and niqab, and was singled out by Todd for searching while no other people in the room where

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searched. Another UH attendee, Mike Rudd, stood up for the woman asking Todd why only her bag was being searched, to which Todd replied, "Because she is a Muslim and a suspicious character, now sit down." When Rudd continued to object to this blatant incident of racial profiling, Todd, according to Rudd, said, "You're the kind of person I hate the most—an obnoxious little bastard. Now sit down or I'll have you thrown out." At this point, a scuffle unfolded, Todd trying to take Rudd's phone away, Rudd trying to keep it. Finally, Rudd left the conference room to make phone calls as the class got underway.

Did Todd racially profile the guest? He wrote his own response to media allegations over the incident—in his own words:

"As I returned to the meeting room, I noticed an individual sitting down in the front of the room, by themselves. Clad in a full Hijab, with only eye-slits. The individual was carrying a heavy, dark backpack. Frankly, with this—coupled with the false alarm, I called my contact with the police and was told to ask for her ID and search the backpack. In reviewing this situation afterwards with the FBI, Constables and the Police, I was told that I did exactly what they would have done in the total interest in the safety of our 200+ guests in the room. They said this was especially important due to the recent terror attacks in Boston. The officers also told me 'How did I know it was a female in the Hijab', as this is a typical terrorist ploy."

Um, yes. Todd makes it super clear, he singled out one attendee to search and only because she was wearing a "full Hijab"—and might not have even been a woman! Typical terrorist ploy!

I agree with Minister Robert Muhammad, who was quoted in the Houston Chronicle at the time as saying, "If he (Todd) is going to have the behavior where he doesn't treat all the citizens in this great, diverse city equally, then he needs to take his festival elsewhere." Minister Muhammad might not know however, that Todd brought his festival to Houston after financial disasters, scandals and accusations plagued his Atlanta and Miami Film Festivals. I'm not sure how many more bridges that guy has left to burn. —TISH STRINGER

WORST ACTIVIST BUDDY _TAYLOR BLOOM

As Occupy Houston started to wind down, people who had been involved began looking for ways to channel their energy. Protesting is important, but folks wanted to build. Occupying a public park is cool, but the idea of occupying houses that bailed-out banks might foreclose on, well, that seemed even cooler. Poor people across the country were getting evicted while the banks that are evicting them are not experiencing any such pressures.

Jamin Stocker and buddy Taylor Bloom were two of the activists who decided to put their occupying to

use, and they got involved in a squat in the Third Ward. The idea was not just to occupy a house, but also to fix it up and add value to it. All across the world, similar tactics have been used to defend the territories of the poor from absentee landlords who have done nothing whatsoever to contribute to the value of the house, but retain ownership, and eventually profit from whoever buys the place next. In the U.S., "Occupy Homes" and other movements have used such tactics. Sometimes, a dedicated group manages to hold onto a piece of property, or force banks to re-negotiate.

Fannie Mae wanted the activists out of the house. Jamin was accused of the crime of criminal trespass. Sadly, his former buddy Taylor Bloom turned state witness against him. Ostensibly, in an attempt to save his own butt, Bloom sold out his friend and all for nothing: Jamin was found not guilty.

Quick rule of thumb—if you start off doing a civil disobedience for the cause, and you end up testifying against your friend for that same act of civil disobedience, you will lose the respect of everyone: other activists, your friends, your local newspaper, and even the deputies and prosecutors you thought you were helping.

Side Note: On the subpoena against Stocker appear two candidates for the subcategory of Coolest Names of Harris County Deputies on a Subpoena Against an Alleged Trespasser: Andre McCall, Blythe Minneweather, and Willie Winfree. —NICK COOPER

WORST EXTRA CHARGE _CILANTRO AT CHILOSOS TACO HOUSE

You charged me over a dollar for less than a quarter's worth of cilantro that should have already been included in my taco. It's not about the money. It's about taco integrity. —ANDREA AFRA

WORST LEGAL ANALYSIS BY A LAWYER _BEN HALL

Early in the election season, 2013 mayoral candidate Ben Hall filled out a questionnaire indicating he would support a an ordinance in Houston against LGBT discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodation. Then a few days before the election, he went on the KUHF radio program "Houston Matters," and either forgot his previous statements or spontaneously changed his mind.

When an anti-gay-rights caller named Mark expressed concerns about transgender people in public bathrooms, Hall chimed in in agreement. He said he would he rescind Mayor Parker's executive order giving transgendered people the right to use the bathroom of their chosen gender. Hall explained that he isn't prejudiced, but he worried about police officers' ability to protect public bathrooms. He went further, expressing opposition to legal protections for LGBT individuals from discrimination in employment and housing. Hall also alienated listeners by referring to

homosexuality as a lifestyle choice.

When asked to explain his opposition to a non-discrimination ordinance, Hall said that under such a law, preachers would be considered to have acted discriminatorily if they read biblical passages against homosexuality. Also, Hall thought that under the law, individuals who spoke out publicly against homosexuality, “would not be able to be hired.” This analysis was particularly absurd, especially coming from a lawyer. Anti-racial-discrimination laws have existed for decades, and of course there is no such pattern of people being prosecuted or prevented from obtaining work for public racist speech. –NICK COOPER

WORST NEIGHBORHOOD NICKNAME _EADO

Stands for East Downtown, and chosen over names like the Warehouse District. It’s like calling Montrose MoRo. EaDo—the triangle sliced by the Gulf Freeway and a railroad—was once known for Houston’s first Chinatown and for the warehouses that still dot the area. However, it is now mostly known for white people calmly wandering back into the pricey new apartments and condos replacing Old Chinatown, due to its prime proximity to increasingly-trendy spots. The air is flavored with the heady smell from the Maxwell-turned-Maximus Coffee Plant, but new EaDo residents don’t work there or drink it.

Houston’s in the midst of a fairly revitalizing makeover, and it should extend to neighborhoods falling to the wayside like East Downtown. The BBVA Compass Stadium is badass, too. But EaDo is like an arm of Midtown’s elite, pushing between several of Houston’s homeless shelters and the just-now improving top of Houston’s East End. Instead of building with EaDo’s original warehouse and Chinatown history (as the city is doing just next door on Navigation) EaDo is simply jumping on current trends—Little Woodrow’s in EaDo, anyone?—and pushing out what’s left. Smacking a cutesy nickname on top of it is like adding insult to injury. –KATHRYN MCGRANAHAN

WORST WAY TO GET AROUND TOWN _CARS

I polled all the people on my Facebook (only about 10 responded), asking them what they thought was the worst thing about Houston. Several people said traffic, and I couldn’t agree more. At any given time of day, 610 is a clusterfuck. During rush hours, all the freeways and tollways and some streets, including, but not limited to Richmond, Westheimer, Memorial and Montrose, are backed up so badly that it takes about 5 minutes to move one block.

I know there is no one magical solution for this dilemma, but—and I have been saying this for years (since they started work on Westpark Tollway)—a good public transit system would greatly benefit this city. Especially now, since there are hundreds of peo-

ple a day, moving to our great city. Whether they live inside the loop or not, they most likely travel for work and would probably appreciate a stress-free commute, a commute where they can read a book or the newspaper or listen to the new Beyonce album that came out, or watch an episode of their favorite show. Imagine that!

Here is my solution: Get a train from the ‘burbs to the city. Give us proper sidewalks for walking and bike lanes for biking. We have a bus system, let’s make it more appealing to commuters, get more bus routes and more buses. Build it, and they will come. I know Houstonians like their big obnoxious trucks and SUVs, and I am sure those people will still prefer to drive those honkin’ pieces of shit, but some people, such as myself, will make use of a good public transit system. –MARIAM AFSHAR

WORST PREDICTION ABOUT THE NEW POPE _MINE

In April, when the new pope had been chosen, I wrote an article about the history of Vatican collaborations with Nazis, Latin American right-wing governments and torturers. Though I quoted a nun who had high hopes for the new Pope, my cynicism won out, and I concluded: “... in addition to inheriting a legacy of Jesus, the Catholic Church also inherited the legacy of the Roman Empire. Pontius Pilate, who authorized Jesus’ crucifixion, did so to defend the interests of an oppressive government. There is always hope that a new pope may more closely emulate Jesus, but when collaborating with governments that arrest, torture, and kill civilians, popes more closely resemble Pilate.”

Fortunately, my prediction was way off. From saying he was in no place to judge gay people to decrying the wickedness of unbridled capitalism, Pope Francis has been defying my expectations. Before becoming pope, Jorge Bergoglio gave many indications that he supported a conservative oppressive Vatican. He called gay marriage “a dire anthropological throw-back,” and said, “Let’s not be naïve. We’re not talking about a simple political battle; it is a destructive pretension against the plan of God. We are not talking about a mere bill, but rather a machination of the Father of Lies that seeks to confuse and deceive the children of God.”

However, once elected pope, he quickly began preaching tolerance. Instead of denouncing homosexuality, he denounced greed, saying, “Not paying a fair wage, not giving a job because you are only looking at balance sheets, only looking to make a profit, that goes against God.” He decried Vatican riches, saying, “Ah, how I would like a poor Church, for the poor.” He denounced judgmental priests, “In our ecclesiastical region there are priests who don’t baptize the children of single mothers because they weren’t conceived in the sanctity of marriage. These are today’s hypocrites.”

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Lastly, he called out capitalism itself, “Human rights are not only violated by terrorism, repression or assassination, but also by unfair economic structures that create huge inequalities.”

At 76, Francis seems to have laid low enough for an entire lifetime to be able to get into a position of power, earning him the distinction of being a sleeper-pope. Like Mandela who became president at the same age, Francis seems to have at least a few years left in him to stir things up, as long as he isn’t killed by some crazed capitalist cardinal. –NICK COOPER

WORST THING TO SEE WHILE DRIVING _PEOPLE HOLDING SIGNS

Listen, I dont give a fuck if your sign says “Fags R Dumb,” “Will Rap 4 Weed” or the latest “You’re PERFECT,” anybody who feels they HAVE to stand on a street corner for hours with a tacky sign needs to reevaluate their existence. You could literally be doing almost anything and it would be a better use of your time. The people who feel the need to do this obviously have some dire need to be the center of attention NO MATTER WHAT. You are basically the equivalent of every 16-year-old, Hot Topic atheist goth, rocking a pentagram necklace, just waiting for someone to pay attention and be shocked by your shitty white boy dreads. Put down the poster board, go home, call your parents, tell them what you did for 3 hours today, and beg for forgiveness. –BLAKE JONES

WORST PREPARED CALLER _REVERSE-RACISM JOE

On July 23rd, a week after George Zimmerman was acquitted of killing Trayvon Martin, Hitaji Aziz was taking calls on her KPFT radio program, Earth 101, and heard from a man named Joe.

Hitaji: Joe, you’re on the line.
Joe: Hey, just wanted to call and give you my perspective in the interest of being all-inclusive. I’ve lived here all my life in Houston, and these days the only racism I’ve seen is from blacks against whites. I have yet to see a white person get away with a racist act in the last 20 or 30 years. Yet, I see white people as the victims of blacks all the time. So, in my view the only racists around, or the majority of the racists around, are blacks.
Hitaji: Can you give me some examples?
Joe: ... (4 seconds pass)
Hitaji: Hello?
Joe: Yeah, let me think... (5 seconds pass) My mind’s a blank right now.
Hitaji: If it’s that critical, if you’re surrounded by racist black people for the last twenty-something years, and they do it all the time, I know you got about five or six examples you can teach us about. We’re here and we need for you to teach.

Joe: ... (4 seconds).... Well. let’s see.
Hitaji: Give me the examples, and then give me some remedies...
Joe: If I come up with some examples in the future, I’ll write them down, I can call back...

Hitaji handled him like a pro. Instead of responding to his initial assertion, or decrying his stance, she gave him the space to take himself out. –NICK COOPER

WORST WALKABILITY _HOUSTON

I’ve been mulling over this for weeks and I am no writer, as you are about to see, and to make this even more difficult, I love Houston. To me it’s a vibrant, warm, and inclusive place where there’s always something to do, some organization to get involved with, or some opportunity at your fingertips. So what would I change, if I was forced to choose (and I am), about Houston?
I only have one answer. Walkability. I do not know of one pedestrianized area, in all of Houston. You might say, “No Shadi you’re wrong. What about the River Oaks Shopping Center?” No. That is a fancy strip mall with a parking lot in the front. Just because they string lights in the trees for 6 months out of the year and station police officers on the road at the weekend (because who can expect busy shoppers to observe crosswalk signs?) does not mean an area is pedestrianized. Well then you might implore me to consider St. Martin’s Square downtown, or even Rice Village. Okay, I smell what you’re cookin’, but it’s still a no. Pedestrians in these areas are confined to a space surrounded by roads focused on vehicle access.
Don’t get me wrong, I’m all for the development of downtown Houston. The light rail is the closest thing we have to public transportation next to businesses, residential homes, restaurants and bars (for the people who can afford it), but it’s still not quite what I’m looking for.

This is my utopia: a place where I wake up on Saturday morning, roll out of bed, and walk to the local coffee shop. I can choose to sit, in the middle of the street, and watch as the people who live in my community walk past me, shopping, eating, drinking, working, or whatever, because there are NO CARS ALLOWED.

THIS SIMPLE ACT OF PEDESTRIANIZING AN AREA DOES THE FOLLOWING:
1. It forces us out of our bubbles and into the opportunity to meet new people. Let’s face it, we all live in bubbles. We have a bubble at work, at school, even at our favorite bars and coffee shops. We navigate from our homes, to our cars, to our destination, back to our cars, back to our homes. When do we have time to meet new people? Sure, we go to bars after

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DECEMBER 31

THE SPICOLI'S NEW YEARS EVE PARTY

• DECEMBER EVENTS •

DEC 6 80 PROOF

DEC 7 RADIOACTIVE

DEC 13 ALTER EGO

DEC 14 THE REDS

DEC 20 RAISED ON RADIO

DEC 21 BENASTAR

DEC 27 BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S

DEC 28 LOTS OF BANDS

JAN 3 THE FUSE

JAN 4 ENCORE PARTY BAND



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THURSDAY

BIG ASS BEER NIGHT

DRINK SPECIALS

PARTY WITH DJ EDDIE

FRIDAY

LIVE BANDS INSIDE

LIVE DJ ON PATIO

SATURDAY

LIVE BANDS INSIDE

LIVE DJ ON PATIO

DEC 15

WILD RABBIT SALAD

DEC 17

ELVIS CHRISTMAS SHOW

DEC 31

BIG NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

• DECEMBER EVENTS •

FRIDAYS

DEC 6 SUBDIVIDED BLACK DOG

DEC 13 LA GUNS

DEC 20 LOCAL METAL SHOWCASE

DEC 27 ROCK RADIO

SATURDAYS

DEC 7 TOYS FOR TOTS BENEFIT

DEC 14 HIGHWAY TO HELL

DEC 21 RAISED ON RADIO

DEC 28 VICTIM THE ONS

JDS THROWDOWN BAND SHERREE B. & FRIENDS

JAN 4 BENASTAR NIGHTBIRD



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work for happy hour, with our coworkers. We see the same people we see every time we go there: people with similar socioeconomic backgrounds, but we almost never interact with them. When we give ourselves the opportunity to interact with a larger percentage of the population, it opens doors, engenders creativity, music, art, empathy....le sigh.

2. It stops us from being so damn fat. When you have to walk further than from your car to the entrance of Target, it's called exercise. Houston is a fat city, and has been for years. I am not saying this is solely because we do not have decent pedestrianized areas, but it is a contributing factor.

3. It's good for the economy. When you have to walk past business after business, you're more likely to go inside it, albeit to buy some shit you probably really don't need, but that's besides the point! Explore this more. Do more research.

4. Less cars = less pollution. Look, I know where I live. I know the only reason Houston is what it is today is because of oil. But I have this crazy idea that, even if we had three or four (or hey, let's go crazy and say ten) city blocks that had NO vehicle access, somehow the oil companies would survive. Maybe I'm wrong?

5. Less drunk driving.

6. It's cheaper. Imagine if we didn't need cars? Imagine if having a car was actually more hassle than not having a car. Imagine not having to pay for oil changes, gas, tires, insurance...just imagine how much money you could spend on vacations, or clothes, or whatever it is that makes you happy. –SHADI JAM

WORST PITCHMAN _JIM PRUETT

For those of you who are too young to remember, Jim Pruett once went by the moniker, "Rado God," on his buddy show, Stevens and Pruett. But, since Clear Channel switched the Rock 101 format from rock to, well whatever it is now, Pruett has gotten into the gun business. A gun shop owner, Jim has a vested interest in promoting gun culture. Whether it's recommending an AR-15 similar to what was used at Sandy Hook Elementary, or almost falling over from shooting a fully automatic rifle, Pruett's "Bullet Points" segments are ridiculous. You could give Pruett a little bit of positive credit for promoting responsible gun ownership and gun safety, if he was selling only shotguns. I have to wonder what the powers that be at CW 39 are thinking with Pruett's segments, as his lead in for NewsFix is Maury Povich.

It was billed as "good for the city," as are most things that are hard to swallow. So when the city allowed the NRA to host a Youth Day event at The NRA

Annual Meeting, kids were allowed to play with fire-power. Free six-month memberships and gun safety events were toted alongside, allowing kids to handle pretty much any gun on the floor. While gun safety is extremely important, especially with children, it's a lesson that most kids should learn from their parents. The act of allowing children to handle semi-automatic rifles and an airsoft gun shooting event have very little to do with safety, and the act of such an event is a promotion of violence, while it allows the NRA to market to minors. It was easily the most shameful use of tax dollars by the city in a long time.

I promise that there's a lot more profit in a \$1200 AR-15 than there is in a \$300 shotgun. We all know deep down, that there's no plausible reason to own an assault rifle. Hopefully in 2014, the city, the media and the gun shop owners will start looking deep down, and not deep in their pockets.

WORST DISCRIMINATORS _HARRIS COUNTY GOP AND HOUSTON AREA PASTOR COUNCIL

While Texas citizens have progressed in their acceptance of gay marriage and human rights in general, the Harris County GOP is blocking Mayor Parker's recent approval of city employees' health and insurance benefits for their same-sex partners. Family District Court Republican Judge Lisa Millard issued a temporary restraining order on the decision to extend these benefits to couples with matching genitalia, due to a lawsuit filed by local haters Jack Pidgeon and Larry Hicks. The lawsuit is being led by Harris County GOP chairman Jared Woodfill, while plaintiff Larry Hicks is Woodfill's campaign treasurer, and Pidgeon is a pastor at West Houston Christian Center. HAPC's executive director is David "I enthusiastically endorse Jared Woodfill for reelection as chairman of the Harris County Republican Party" Welch.

Woodfill—no jokes about his name, y'all—had the audacity to say, "This is one of the most egregious acts by an elected official I've ever seen. They just decided to, unilaterally, as a lame duck, thumb their nose at the will of the people and just spit on the U.S. Constitution."

According to an Equality Texas statewide survey, not only do the majority of Texans believe in same-sex partners' rights to hospital visits and end of life medical decisions, but they also support the extension of domestic partnership benefits to government workers 62.3% to 30.8%.

When genitalia is the deciding factor in the extension of health benefits, I'd say that's pure discrimination. And when progress is blocked by self-serving campaign stunts like this, I'd say that's purely dangerous to all of our rights. –ANDREA AFRA

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