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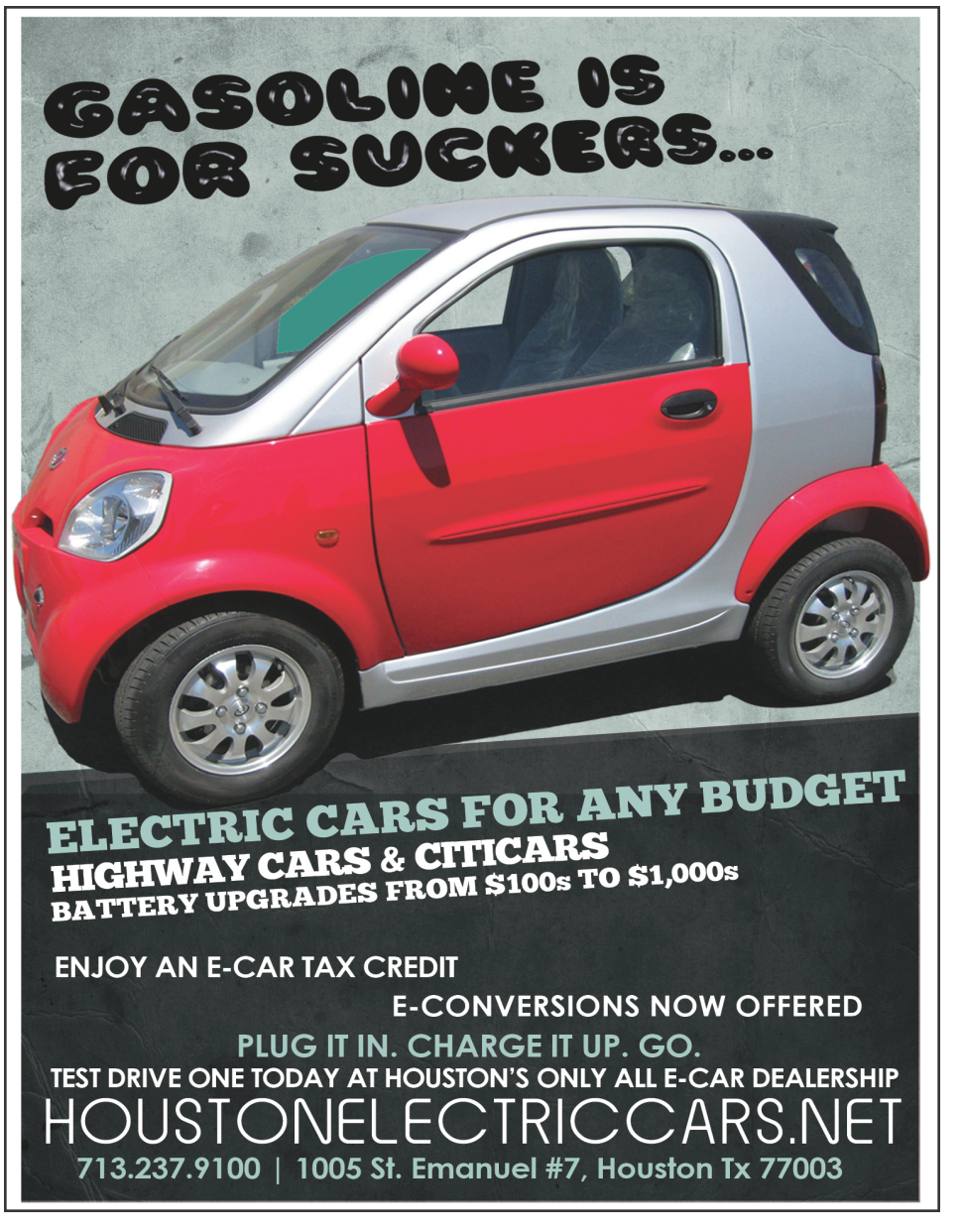
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march



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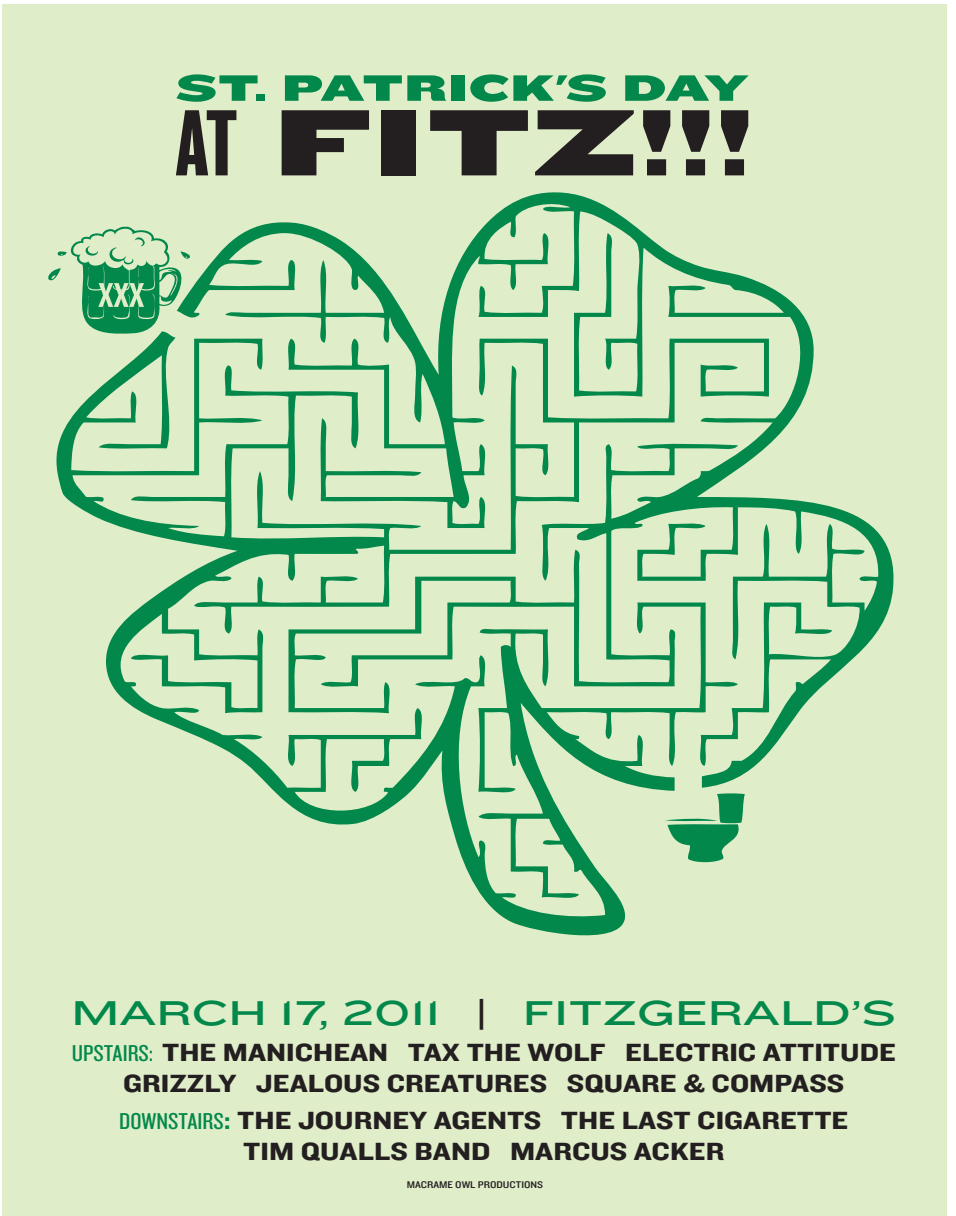
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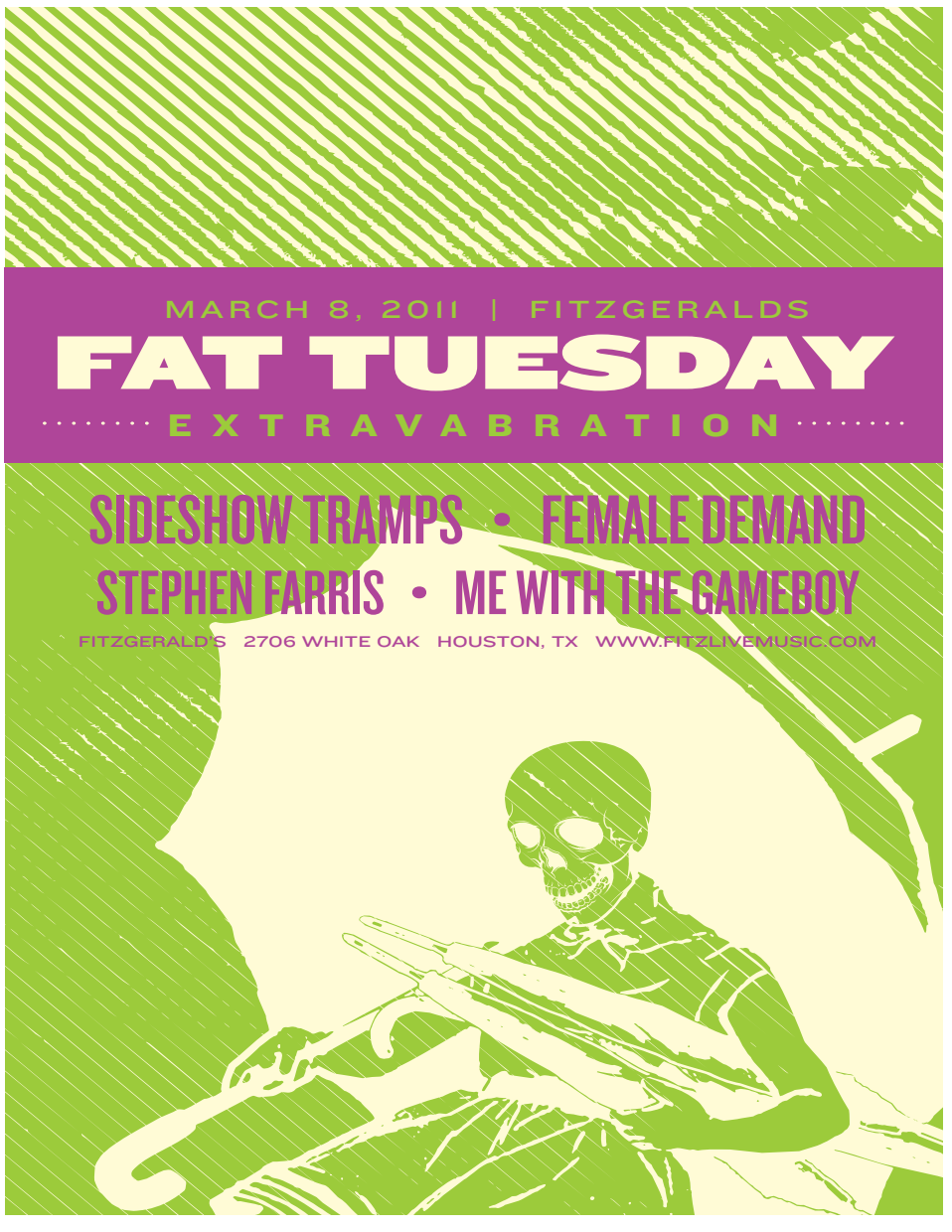
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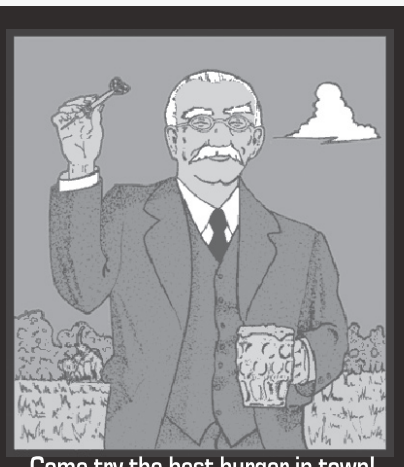

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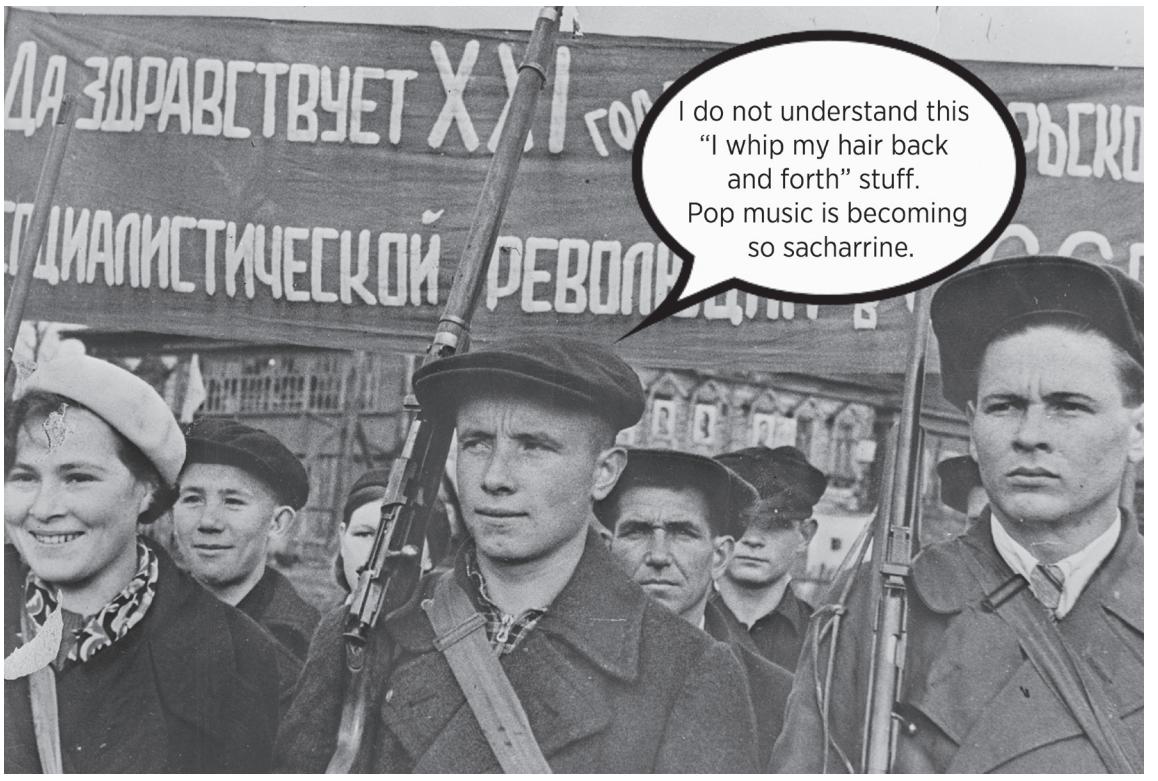
- Tue. 1: Tickle Switch, Generation Landslide, Sky Lounge
- Thu. 3: Rogue Improv (early), Elise Davis Band, Jimmy Pizzitola
- Fri. 4: Skyblue 72
- Sat. 5: Orange Is In, Lee Alexander
- Thu. 10: Rogue Improv(early), Megafauna, General Bye Bye, Electric Attitude
- Fri. 11: Hell City Kings, Texas Terri Bomb, The Hot Things
- Sat. 12: Letters To Voltron, Opposite Day, The Be Sharps
- Mon. 14: Divilla 666, The Mahas
- Tue . 15: Bootown Presents Grown Up Storytime
- Thu. 17: Jesse Malin & The St. Marks Social, The Bitters, The Booze
- Fri. 18: The HandMe Downs, Grizzly, Dead To Me
- Sat. 19: Venomous Maximus, Royal Thunder
- Sun. 20: Lo Pan, Backwoods Payback, Sanctus Bellum
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FEEL FREE TO TAKE US SERIOUSLY.

I booked a hotel in downtown Austin for the week of SXSW. The Free Press staff as well as our curry-eating friends from Pegstar will be staying in a suite, smoking sweets, and being sweet to eachother. But the significance other than what is sure to be a homoerotic weekend of a hotel shared by 6+ men is that fact that I am staying more than 36 hours. Last year, I managed the courage to stay in Austin longer than 24 hours (I even saw a black person there!). This year I will be staying for 3 days entire days. It's quite possible I will come back with a Canadian accent. Austin has that effect on people. Anyways, I have this theory about the 'hottest band at SXSW': It is much like winning the Heisman Trophy. Remember Andre Ware? Of course you don't and he was from Houston! Either way, see you kids there. If you catch me in the streets and scream " H Town Representah! " at the top of your lungs, I may give you some complimentary VIP passes to Free Press Summer Fest.

OURS IS A SPRING OF UPHEAVAL; 2011 IS BECOMING A METAPHOR FOR RELEASE AND EXPLOSION AND MARCH IS HERE. HISTORY IS A CURRENT; LOOPING AROUND CONSTANTLY BUT NEVER THE SAME.



DEBRIS Of Proof & Pudding

BY BUFFALO SEAN

WE CAN WATCH THE STOCK MARKET—predicting boom and bust as there has always been, or American elections—swinging the pendulum back and forth between our slightly different political parties. Pop music has been singing the same song for decades, packaging and repackaging personalities around nothing but a beat and three chords with nary a difference between Bobby Darin, Danny Partridge, Michael Jackson, Menudo or Justin Beiber. The only certainty is that whatever is happening right now will be deemed in the short term to be the worst—or best—ever. Only the perspective that time provides can contextualize the present and let us move on to the next Chicken Little revelation.

What is happening in the Middle East is reminiscent of many points in history; from the Prague Spring that encapsulated the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 to the French Revolution in 1789 that unleashed the Napoleonic Empire pundits have found parallels to draw contemporary comparisons to. Glen Beck thinks that this is the dawn of a new caliphate that will bring down the world economy. Calling for people to hoard their food on such a whim is ridiculous. Appropriately, his audience has dwindled 40%. Similarly, leftists and extremists who call for the entire Muslim world to throw off the yoke of corrupt power have been greeted with eye-rolling and incredulity. During these turbulent times in North Africa and the Persian Gulf the only way to react is with optimism and hope. Given the media footage, remixed dictator rants on Youtube, facebook-organized protests, smuggled cell phone videos and palpable rise in prices at the pump, the intermingling of desire and trepidation leave only one outlet—sitting on the edge of your seat. Discussion is better suited to another day.

Remarkably, an obscure reference has made its way onto editorial pages and TV screens, an ill-described attempt to downplay expectations. The European revolutions of 1848 are a blip in world history but their lessons loom large in contemporary events. The word 'revolution' may give off an aura of success, but 1848 was not a revolution of this kind. Hungarians were crushed by Austrian troops. German peasants never gained the favor of the middle classes. French republicanism birthed a mutant state that lived only 4 years. Italian partisans never united and the cause devolved into infighting that flared for years until a national state emerged by the end of the century.

If this is the model for the Jasmine Revolution then we are in for a disappointing finale, with the status quo surviving another day and world governments breathing a sigh of relief as the dust settles. It is true that the European revolutions of 1848 planted the seeds that turned the tide in democracy's favor in the succeeding half century but if parallels hold then the provincial governments in Egypt and Tunisia will fall in quick succession and Libya will morph into a civil war. Bahrain will negotiate a weak settlement that will invariably uphold the king and coming revolutions in other nations will be brutally crushed.

Do we have to be resigned to living through a moment in history that will be forgotten to the history books? No. One can hope for the democratic ideals that still reverberate through the adrenaline rush of representative power to find temperament and stability through trial and error. As much as this may become a forgotten era of revolution, it also has the potential to rise above the obstinacy of the status quo, reach for guidance in the past and break with recent history by remembering that consistency is found in looping, cyclical tremors, never one as bad as the last. The interplay between winter and spring plays heavily on everyone's mental state each year—and this year will be no different. I know a man who hates February. He was born in March. No phoenix rising or flag hoisted… but each year, like a crocus through the snow, the world turns from grey to color. Albeit differently hued. FPH

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COMING SHOWS

MARCH

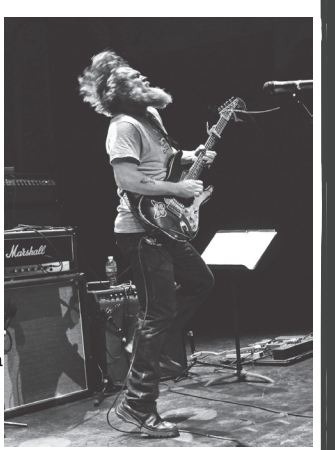
MARCH 4: TBA

MARCH 5: Champagne with Friends

MARCH 11: Anders Osborne w/ Vagabond Swing

MARCH 12: "Isabel's Rock Out Cancer" benefit early; Fondue Monks at 10 p.m

MARCH 18 : Governor's Chair



MARCH 19: Praia Urbana 19: Houston's All Day Electronic Music Festival

MARCH 25: D.R.U.M. with DJ Meshak

MARCH 26: Strawberry Jam with Zentropy

SEE WEBSITE FOR MORE SHOWS

Bobbindoctrin, Bobbindoctrin, Bobbindoctrin. Say it three times balancing on your left leg while chugging a beer and something magical will happen, I promise. Don't believe me? No, neither would I. So what is Bobbindoctrin then?

Puppet Fest

BY MICHAEL PENNYWARK



LET ME TELL YOU. Once upon a time in a far away kingdom called Houston, there lived a man named Joel Orr who dreamed of a time when puppets ruled the world and humans were just around to keep their insides warm. Okay, that's not quite true, but just go with it. Anyway, one day in 1996 this man, Joel, brought his vision to the stage, founding the Bobbindoctrin theatre. A theatre for, wait for it, puppets! Sure puppets could hang out in libraries, churches and kindergartens, but they never truly had a place to call their own, a place they could be free to explore their own puppetness in ways that children probably shouldn't ever know about.

So this band of puppets and their puppeteers roamed the nightclubs of Houston, opening up for bands and bringing their puppetfesto to the drunken masses. After just a year they were living the rock star dream and bands were opening up for them. Showing their versatility over the years, they collaborated with Infernal Bridegroom productions and Ars Lyrica Houston, performing at such prestigious venues as Moore's Opera House and the second floor of notsuoH. Eventually, like all rock stars, they decided that they needed their own festival, thus was born Bobbindoctrin's first annual Puppet Fest in 2004.

I caught up with Joel Orr and asked him about the festival, Bobbindoctrin, and what the hell a "Fambly Day" was (I tried to keep my fantasy of puppetist world domination to myself). As Orr explained, "the festival idea came up around eight years ago as a means to invite other artists in to produce puppetry, and to give our company members a chance to experiment with short works. Our longer shows require a long commitment to one idea, so this was a way we could still play and try out new techniques on a shorter-term basis." Audiences can expect to see a variety of puppetry traditions including hand, rod, marionette, tabletop, and shadow puppets in live works as well as short films from national and international artists distributed by Heather Henson's Handmade Puppet Dreams. Yes, Jim Henson's daughter distributes short puppet films for puppet slams across the nation and has been a sponsor of the festival for the last three years.

Acts range from the tale of a young Tom Waits in TOMMY, to a strange afternoon at the now-extinct Montrose landmark of Mary's Bar in SWIZZLE. As Orr mentions though, "Occasionally, we get into rehearsal and realize that kids of a certain age could probably attend, because not all shows call for strong language, graphic sex and drug abuse. Though many do. The festival is primarily aimed at adults, although last year we created an alternative, toned-down program for all ages."

"For legal purposes, we call the all-ages show "Fambly Day" so if anyone complains we can say, "Oh, you thought it was family day. This is fambly day, which is something else entirely." And last year we thought we had a great lineup of fambly-friendly acts, only to have a few kids run out crying when a stupid bird died in a show. We're still getting the hang of the all ages dealie."

As for the name, "I made up the name," Orr explained. "I wanted a name that had no apparent meaning and no previous association, so in time we would give the name a meaning by our actions and plays. So to our fans, Bobbindoctrin means dark puppet weirdness." **FPH**

Bobbindoctrin's 7th Annual Puppet Festival
March 4, 5, 7, 11, 12 at 8PM
March 6 & 13 at 2PM (Festival Fambly Days)
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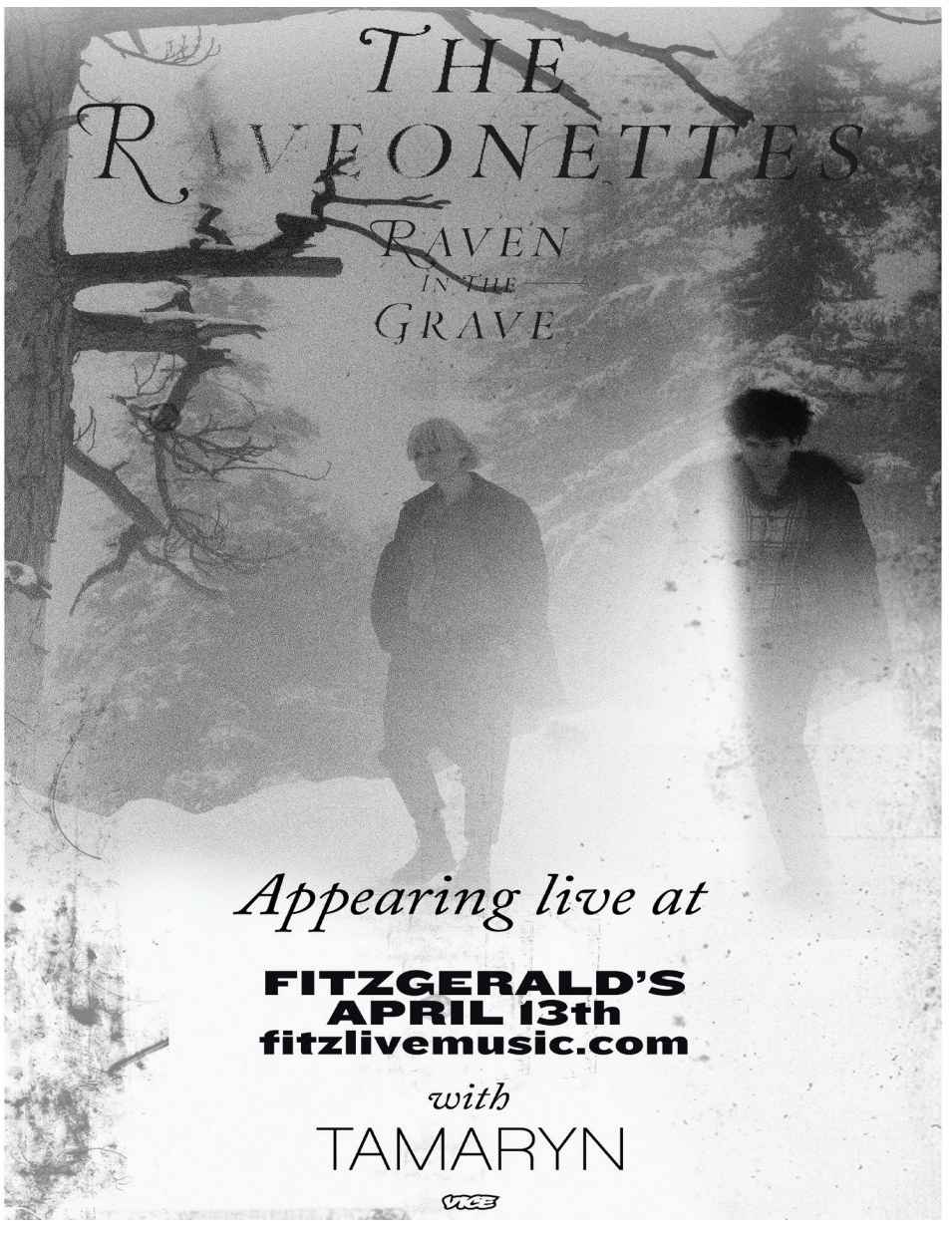
Juror: Alison de Lima Greene
Alison de Lima Greene is curator of Contemporary Art & Special Projects at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

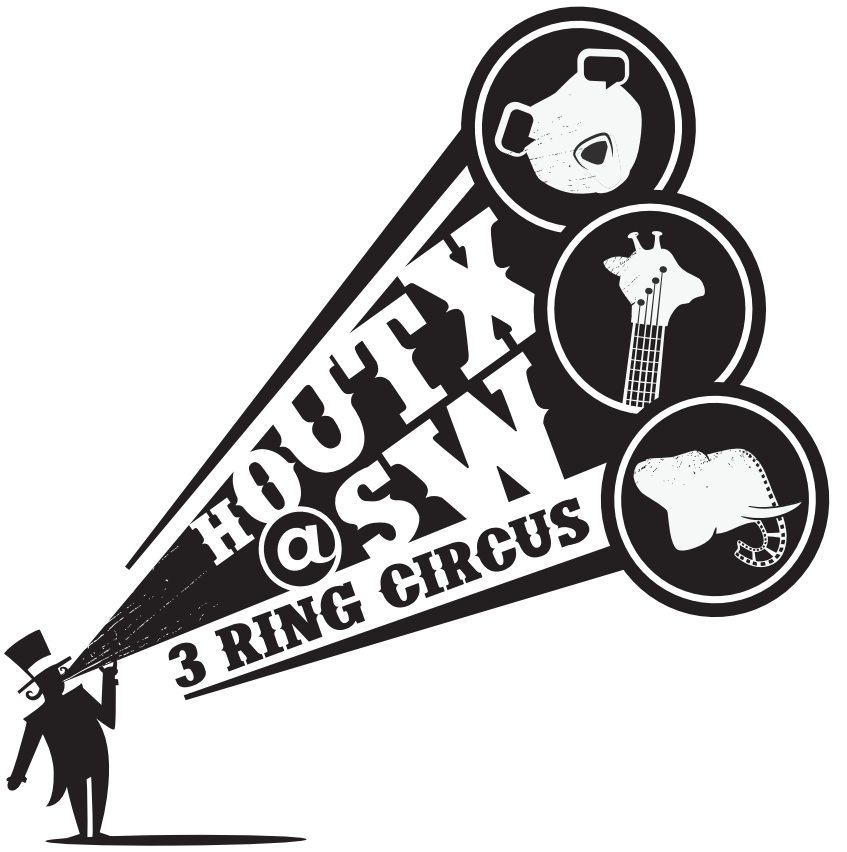
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For more information send e-mails to info@masurmuseum.org

Image: Ildiko Voros, Lonliness, archival digital Cprint from Polaroid, 2008





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It's On in March



BY MICHAEL BERGERON

Bambi identity

Meeting Donnie Dunagan, a former child actor who voiced the character of Bambi, is an incredible trip through the history of film. Dunagan worked on seven films between 1938 and 1941, and indeed his life in movies is only the tip of the iceberg of his personal story.

As I pull out my old school Radio Shack cassette recorder Dunagan sharply begins the interview commenting on the difference in technology of his analog youth and the current digital landscape. Dunagan looks fit and in his late 70s totally in shape. He holds advanced degrees in addition to serving for years in the military along with various entrepreneurial pursuits. "It makes you wonder how we won WWII using just 3-by-5 cards and landlines," Dunagan laughs. Speaking to Free Press Houston at a downtown hotel Dunagan has come to talk about the Disney release of Bambi as a two-disc DVD (Blu Ray and regular DVD in one package). "I think they thought I was dead because Disney didn't contact me until 2005," when Bambi was released on disc originally. Make no mistake, Bambi is Disney's finest animation achievement. Walt personally supervised the production. A documentary on the DVD on the pre-production of the animated film lasts twenty minutes longer than Bambi (which clocks at 70 minutes) and reveals the exacting process whereby the animators perfected the animal characters. Copious records were kept of the production meetings, and the minutes are heard in voice-over along with photos of the animators and excerpts from the film. Bambi unfolds in a swirl of impressionistic colors that take the viewer both through nature's seasons as well as Bambi's maturation. Bambi is an archetypal cartoon and the basis for numerous similar stories throughout the years. Just watch the multiple shots of Bambi standing on the rock plateau with his father and The Lion King all of a sudden becomes a copycat.

"Bambi is like a song that will never end, love is a song that will never end. Bambi will never end," Dunagan says. Through his life Dunagan rarely talked about his experience in Hollywood. "I was married a couple of years before my wife discovered I was in six or seven films," grins Dunagan. I had talked to Dunagan's wife Dana right before I went into the interview and some of the things she told me made my jaw drop. Dunagan values his privacy, doesn't like to talk about his work in the military, rides a Harley and doesn't suffer fools easily.

Dana revealed that the way she discovered her husband had been in movies was that one day he had thrown an old box away. "It was on the curb, ready for the trash." When she looked at the contents she found autographed photos dedicated to Donnie from Basil Rathbone, Boris Karloff and the Andrews Sisters among a host of others. Dana then mentioned that Donnie later delivered papers to Bugsy Siegel while supporting himself with odd jobs in his teens. She thought he should write his memoirs especially concerning his involvement in military intelligence but Dunagan prefers to maintain a tight lip on such matters.

I ask if they live in San Antonio (They don't, actually living in West Texas.) as that's the birthplace listed on his imdb.com bio. "His parents were actually immigrating into the US and he was born on the boat in international waters. The captain signed the papers inside the 12-mile limit and his birthplace was listed in Texas," says Dana.

Dunagan grew up in Tennessee and was discovered by a talent scout, which led to his being cast as a precocious curly haired child in movies at age four. For his depression era parents this was a financial boon.

"If you ask me a question, if I can I will answer," Dunagan tells me looking directly in my eyes. But now he's found something he likes to talk about. Some of his military nicknames like Old Potato or Martial Arts Guy don't bring the kind of smiles to the faces of children as discovering the man addressing them in their classroom is the face of Bambi. Dunagan was originally employed by Disney animators to pose and make faces as they composed their drawings. At that point in his life Dunagan has never seen a deer.

"Children get this film, 80 year olds get this film," smiles Dunagan. "In the course of the film you see several life themes or life cycles. Nothing I've ever seen in any language – love, real love, not the word we throw around recklessly; danger, and courage in the face of danger; broad humor and subtle humor; these are the cycles some of us live."

For the scene where Bambi receives his first kiss, the animators wanted Donnie to grimace, and his efforts didn't spark creativity until someone suggested recalling a bad food incident. Then Donnie remembered some castor oil he'd ingested previously and the contorted expressions came naturally. When Donnie ad-libbed some lines it was a natural fit to cast him as the young Bambi voice. Dunagan sites a couple of his favorites parts including the skunk that Bambi names Flower. "Kids ask me about that part a lot." But Dunagan's true inspiration comes from "the last quarter of the film when Bambi is shot, no blood showing, and is down. Bambi's down, semi-conscious but down and here comes the big stag. 'Get Up.' I can't tell you the number of times that I've used that with adults and teens. When you're down, down is easy and up is hard. And to myself I sometimes say, not all the time out loud, 'Get Up. Get Up.' As corny as that sounds, when somebody knocks you down in life you have to try to get back up."

But the best is yet to come. Now I ask Dunagan to talk about his other films. "Karloff could've been a stand-up comic. He was

my first lesson in leadership," recalls Dunagan who was the son of Frankenstein. "Mr. Karloff was my first sense of how it is to be respected and be a leader without walking around telling everybody you're the boss. Mr. Karloff was liked and admired, teased with affection by guys who were moving these heavy sets around. Basil Rathbone was respected every bit as much but he was like a Presidential figure, he was treated special. Karloff could care less if he swept the floor, he was a wonderful open guy." Dunagan worked with director Rowland V. Lee three times, on his debut Mother Carey's Chickens, then Son of Frankenstein, followed by Tower of London, which reunited him with Karloff and Rathbone.

"The theme of Tower of London was killing, from day one. The whole movie is based on killing the young Prince, heir apparent to the throne," relates Dunagan about his role, noting that over a dozen scenes have him in some kind of danger that is averted at the last moment. At the studio preview Dunagan remembers: "Rathbone, who never got angry at anything was angry at the film. They cut out all the scenes that had a direct reflection or imagery of killing a child. The war was on in Europe, there were reports in newspapers of women and children being killed. If you watch it carefully the movie's disjointed, often going from one scene to another scene without the middle.

"I'm having the time of my life talking about this. I prefer it because I don't really talk about my career in counter intelligence for 11 years, armed to the teeth, full credentials," acknowledges Dunagan. "A little regret for not telling my fellow workers about Bambi because now I see the joy it brings. It's not my style: 'Hey guys I'm Bambi.'"

The perfect wrap question for the interview has to be about Bugsy Siegel. "I was his paperboy but I didn't know who he was until they shot him," remarks Dunagan. "I'm supporting myself with two paper routes. I had the bicycle, I had to roll my own papers." Dunagan usually billed customers $1.10 for the month. Siegel had a doorman that was a giant Asian gentleman who would courteously pay Dunagan ten dollars and tell him to keep the change. "I was miffed when I saw the news in my own newspaper. I was going to lose that regular tip."

14 Pews

There's a new microcinema in town, 14 Pews (14pews.org) and it's located at the former home of the Aurora Picture Show at 800 Aurora in the north part of The Heights. Many of the films 14 Pews will unwind in March fill the slack created when the Angelika closed last year. Opening March 5 is Alex Gibney's stylish documentary Client 9, which details the rise and fall of New York attorney general Eliot Spitzer along with an analysis of metropolitan prostitution operations. This is the first screening of this film since it played once at last year's Cinema Arts Film Festival. The Aurora Picture Show also continues its mission showing films and videos at various venues in and around Houston.

SXSW warm up

The line-up for the 2011 SXSW Film Festival and Conference (March 11 through 19) promises another year of great music docs, cool star studded premieres and lower profile indie films that are so numerous that it's impossible to see and feel everything. Opening night kicks off with Duncan Jones' Source Code (going wide April 1).

While the controversy doesn't revolve around the film itself so much as its hand puppet wielding actor, The Beaver with Mel Gibson and Jodie Foster (she also directed) premieres March 16. There are a couple of foreign films that were nommed for last month's Oscar awards unwinding including Incendies (Canada) and In A Better World (Denmark). There's great exploitation fare at midnight like the haunted house thriller Insidious and the self-explanatory Hobo With a Shotgun. Announced music documentaries include 100 Bands in 100 Days (short subject) and the feature length retrospective of SXSW itself aptly titled Outside Industry: The Story of SXSW. Speakers include director Todd Phillips (Due Date, The Hangover) and Paul Reubens (Pee Wee Hermann). Suffice it to say that the doc on marijuana smuggling in 1970s Florida titled Square Groupers, and Takashi Miike's latest, 13 Assassins, are at the top of the list. **FPH**





Real quick, the cutting of funds to education is something that I feel more people (especially parents) should be up in arms about. Increased class sizes, the cutting of arts programs, the scaling down of school libraries, all of these things will greatly affect the future, negatively.

USING THAT AS A REASON, FOR KICKING SHIT, ON THE DUMB FUCKS



Sic Alps

THE SUFFERING OF ONE CLASS is directly related to the prosperity of another, which is sort of the rule of capitalism. Cutting funding to schools (mainly public schools: read poor people), social services, mainly at the cost of not taxing the rich, is horrid and unjust. I am willing to pay higher taxes so that my children can have art classes and a library, and not have to be one of 40 kids in a classroom with one teacher. Just saying...

SIC ALPS WITH CAVE & INDIAN JEWELRY

3.4.11 / FITZGERALD'S

Sic Alps' Napa Asylum was such a great record, I reviewed it twice. An example, a symbol of all that makes music, but mainly rock music, right, it is an example of instruments played through equipment you could possibly purchase, presented in a way that feels more honest than flawed. It sounds like people played it more than it was sequenced or processed-- you imagine a room full of chords and taped things rather than a wall of lights and screens with bouncing lights. Dare I use the worn adage, it sounded and felt...real.

"I mean I think a lot of it is down to trying to create a mood irrespective of a) your ability or b) the quality of equipment you have on hand to work with," commented drummer, Matt Harmon. "For us, it's partially down to the limitation equipment, but it's also, in our case, an aesthetic choice, or it has been up to this point...from the beginning it was like, there's only two of us, and it was like you were just trying to figure out what can we do to maximize what we wanna do and the mood we wanna create, and the control that we want to have on it,"

Sic Alps have a quality about their music that embodies all the shades of rock from pop to grit, from rhythm and blues to skronk and howl, it all somehow finds its way onto the album, and it all somehow makes sense.

"For me, personally, because we were doing a double album, I always had to go back to my favorite double, which as The Beatles White Album, some of the flow of Napa Asylum I'd have to credit, subconsciously to White Album and how it's such a hodge podge of material, but I really like the way you get from first track side 1 to the last track on side 4, it's an exhausting journey, but if you get all the way through, it's pretty amazing one."

A fair and accurate assessment, at one point the pop of a Jolly or The Ranger may shake your butt and bob your head, but then Saint Peter Writes His Book Zeppo Epp or Ball Of Fame may come along and pummel your senses only to have your soul touched by a song like Country Medicine.

Well, all of this discussion ultimately leads to the catalyst of the article, Sic Alps' show here March 4th. An event to witness, if for no other reason, than seeing these songs breathing, snarling ,and whimpering in front of you.

"Sic Alps, the live band, is sort of a different beast to Sic Alps, the recording band, and I think it was even mentioned in a review, someone gave the record sort of thumbs down because it was so much more subdued...I think live, a lot of it is just logistically hard for us to get the instrumentation. I mean if were some sort of big major band that had a lot of money we could try to bring a piano on the road...you could try to bring all this extra stuff with you, but at the end of day, I mean it's more so, but now than when Mike and I were playing as a duo with Noel in the band now, it's at least that much more closer, we're able to quite a bit more songs as a trio than we ever could as a duo."

RECORDED SONGS

JAMES BLAKE / JAMES BLAKE (ATLAS/ATLANTIC) - Sensual and cold. Robot love. Intimate while disengaged. You could bone to it, but not sing the words, but you could hum to melodies.

RADIOHEAD / KING OF LIMBS (XL) - It's Radiohead. It jams, but a lot of it sounds like your computer booting, or like when your iPod freezes. **FPH**

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March 9 - *Chicks That Rock!* Rox-Zee
March 16 - *Chicks That Rock!* Flicker System
March 23 - *Chicks That Rock!* ZLZ
March 30 - *Chicks That Rock!* Black Roze

Sunday, March 13
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FRIDAYS
March 4 - Adrenaline
March 11 - Wattzit2ya
March 18 - Falskye
March 25 - Kat James and Troublemaker with Lady & The Tramps

Thursday, March 17
St. Patricks Day Party and Bike Night with
La Raza Connection and Flicker System!
The Party Starts @ 4pm

SATURDAYS
March 5 - Chili Pepper Tribute, Sublime Tribute and Crackerman *(STP Tribute)*
March 12 - The Dogz
March 19 - Outlaw Dave's Live Broadcast from 5-7pm Dimitri's Rail, Weston Brown Band, 500 Miles To Memphis, Fear Fed Eyes
March 26 - Tool & Alice In Chains Tributes

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Cameron Bina of Gormeh Sabzi



THE BAND'S CALLED GORMEH SABZI AFTER THE TRADITIONAL PERSIAN STEW, SO WHAT GOES MAKES FOR A GOOD PLATE OF GORMEH SABZI? ¶ A good Ghormeh Sabzi stew has to be sour, with lots of parsley and tender beef (or not if your a veggie). Basically, my dad makes the best Ghormeh Sabzi.

GS HAS SOME PRETTY DISTINCT VOCALS. WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR VOCAL INFLUENCES? ¶ I'm influenced by a lot of different vocalist. I've always tried to literally imitate the voice and delivery of all my favorite artists, or just whatever I hear that I like. It's my trick to figuring out how they are doing what I'm not. So I like to sing The Beatles and Marvin Gaye and Sam Cooke the most in my spare time right now. But I'm also very influenced by Avery Tare from Animal Collective as well as Bob Dylan. I don't believe there's a perfect sound vocally to always achieve or at least I don't make it about that. I make it more about what each song needs and how much I can surprise myself. Lately I've been pretty indulgent when it comes to my vocals, but that's only cuz I'm excited about what I can do with it!

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ARCADE FIRE'S GRAMMY WIN? DOES IT MEAN ANYTHING AT ALL FOR MUSIC? ¶ Well I've never been an ecstatic Arcade Fire fan in the first place, (unlike my friends Carlos Jose and Cley of the Young Mammals -we're old high school buds) and to be honest I haven't actually listened to their latest records. But I was very surprised that they beat out some very heavy hitters, music industry speaking. That was cool because they've come such a long way and during my time!

WHAT'S THE BEST SHOW THAT YOU'VE SEEN IN HOUSTON, SO FAR? ¶ God, I've seen so many incredible shows in Houston. Well, if I have to pick one it might be seeing the Fatal Flying Guillotines play at this warehouse show somewhere (it was also the show where a stripper surprised the Young Mammals ((or was it the Dimes back then?)) on stage. I'm sure that figures in this as well. It was insanity, mayhem and blistering loud! And my sister was there and there were moshing meth heads all around us! Then this neon lamp shade fell from above and swung from a wire! It almost took my top off a few times and the lead singer grabbed it and sung it back in our faces. It was pretty dangerous and aggressive performance, a big "fuck you" with teeth. I've never been to a show where I was more legitimately in fear for my safety. I miss them a lot.

I HEAR YOU'RE CURRENTLY RECORDING SOME NEW MATERIAL, TELL US ABOUT THAT. ¶ Well, Ghormeh Sabzi has been recording a lot like mad! We've officially released our EP "Cupcake" on cassette (ghormehsabzi.bandcamp.com) and I'm really happy about that! That was recorded the summer of '09. Since then we've recorded material for our sophomore album "I'm Pretty as the Expression Goes" and I'm super excited about that! We've got some really good stuff on there. Now that's with me and Jaime (drums, of Giant Princess infamy) Diego (organ, who is also GP as well as records us) and Joe (bass, of Mathletes). So it's the full band, official second LP. That's almost done, I plan on finishing it asap.

The other big project I'm currently working on right now is a mixtape! It's gonna be a couple of really short songs strung together with some fun stuff in between! I'm doing that on my own so far, I want to keep it sorta low fi and I also want it finished soon. It'll be a free release online. That material is all about what I've been going through in the present (getting hit by a car while riding your bike to class can be pretty inspirational) as well as love, but what isn't? FPH

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MARCH 16TH



FRI, MARCH 25TH



SAT, MARCH 26TH



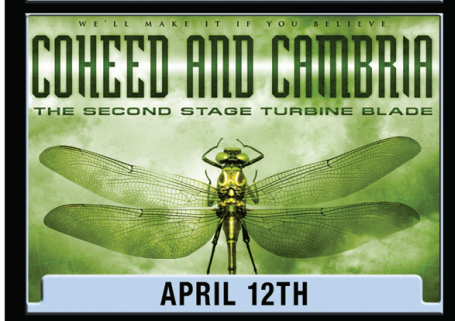
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APRIL 6TH



FRI, APRIL 8TH



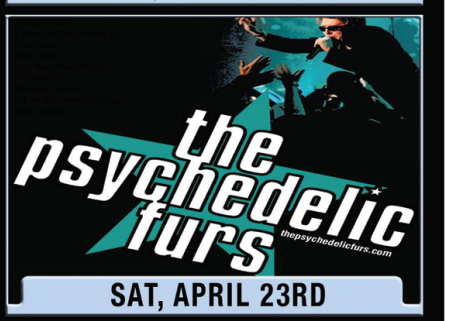
APRIL 12TH



FRI, APRIL 15TH



FRI, APRIL 22ND



SAT, APRIL 23RD



APRIL 24TH



FRI, MAY 6TH



MAY 12TH



MAY 17TH

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28 NORTH

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LOST COVES
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JANKA NABAY
THE TERROR PIGEON DANCE REVOLT
BLASTOIDS
THE DEMON BEAT

MARCH 15TH
SMALL HOUSES
BOATS
LANDS AND PEOPLES
SECRET MOUNTAINS
JOEL STREETER
COUNTRY MICE
CHRIS BATHGATE
GREG SMITH AND THE BROKEN ENGLISH
SCHOOL
ROOFTOP VIGILANTES

MARCH 16TH
SPIRIT FAMILY REUNION
COLUMBOID
LUSTER
GREYMARKET
INVISIBLE HAND
NAKED GODS
SECRET SOCIETY IN SMALLER LIES

MARCH 17TH
ARCHIMEDES, WATCH OUT!
GOLDEN TIME
CHRISTINA B AND THE FRENCH LANGUAGE
IJI
JAMES RABBIT
THIS CITY DEFECTS
$HINING PATH
THREE HAPPENING GUYS
UTOPIA PARK
MUMFORD'S

MARCH 18TH
BRONTOSAURUS
DUZHEKNEW
COUSINS
HEIGHT WITH FRIENDS
THE BACK POCKETS
PIRATE PIRATE MOTOR HOME
TRANSVESTITE

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BINARY MARKETING SHOW
BIRD NAMES

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Football, etc.

I CAN'T THINK OF A BETTER EXAMPLE of an under-appreciated band than Football, etc.. The band - consisting of Lindsay Minton (Guitar/Vocals), Mercy Harper (Bass VI), and James Vehslage (drums) - sweats DIY from its pores and creates music that is intelligent, melodic, and bursting with confidence yet, for all this, they are a band just off of many people's radar. Perhaps March will change all that when their upcoming album, The Draft, is released. Recorded in Norman, Oklahoma with Trent Bell (who's worked with artists as diverse as Watermelon Slim, Chemical Brothers, and The Flaming Lips), the album is beside itself with a joyous overabundance of ideas and though short by today's digital standards, the band packs more melodies and riffs in 12-inches than many bands pack in a full CD. Melodies glide or abruptly shift into new ones while the instruments volley back and forth. Minton's guitar work is a jangly complex mix of the mathy and the melodic and Harper's six-string bass jumps around it with counter melodies and, at times, boldly taking the lead role while Vehslage's assured and elegant drumming holds the rudder. It's a small gem of an album by a band that deserves your attention.

If the band seems a little different than most Houston bands, this may be because Minton and Harper are transplants. "Mercy and I met at Rutgers University," says Minton, "We played in a band [Tin Kitchen] in New Brunswick and when we graduated she was applying to grad school and I joined Teach For America. So Houston worked for both us - I got placed here and she got accepted to Rice."

Vehslage came into the picture via Craigslist, "All their ad on Craigslist said was 'We have a band, we want to go on tour, and we have a label in the US and UK.' I thought that sounded like someone who really wanted to play music."

"Yeah, James joined the band," laughs Minton, "got married a couple months later, then came on tour with us a few weeks after that."

The band loves local venues like the Mink, Vinyl Junkie, and particularly Houston House of Creeps but, for Minton and Harper, the urban sprawl of Houston lacks a focus. New Brunswick shows were maybe 50 to 100 friends living in a two mile radius showing up at a basement. If a show got busted, the shows would move a few houses down to shake the police. "Basements were great for shows in New Brunswick," says Harper, "It's silly to think that makes a big difference but it does because it gives people the space to have a show in their house every now and again and not get in trouble. I think the space defines [a show] too. If you are in a crowded basement with 50 kids who want to be there, it feels like a massive success whereas if you have the same 50 people in a big venue and half of the people came for one band, want to go home early, and are checking their watches, it doesn't feel too good."

When I ask about influences, Lindsay cites Rainer Maria guitarist Kyle Fischer (who recorded Tin Kitchen's Grace EP) but she also points to Harper's bass playing. Harper, who plays a Fender Bass Six says, "It was this really cool instrument but I never figured a way to make it work well until I started playing with Lindsay. She plays more rhythmic guitar lines so it gives me a reason to play more all over the place. It's also part of being in a three piece—there's more space to fill up and that makes it sound like a fuller band."

The band put out a demo, First Down, which attracted the attention of Keith Latinen (of Michigan based Count Your Lucky Stars) who contacted the band. Through CYLS, the band released a split 7" with Empire! Empire! and a two-song single. The upcoming album is also being co-released by the UK's strictly no capital letters. "Andy [Malcolm]," says Minton, "goes in on a lot of releases in the US and handles distro. He's a lot like Vinyl Junkie with a huge distro in the UK."

The deal is pretty typical of an indie—the band pays for the recordings and the labels handles manufacture and distribution. Some bands may scoff at a label these days but, to Football, etc., indie labels still matter. "A major label," says Vehslage, "is just a label—the money behind the whole thing—but a small label has its own niche; it creates its own image and is much more exclusive."

"You'll say there's something new out on that label," says Harper, "I haven't heard the band but I can go with that because I know the label."

Money, distribution, and getting the word out—all those things are important but Harper also points to the human factor. "[Keith's] like a friend," she says, "It would be different if he was just a business dude and we were thinking of this strictly that way but he plays in a band and he does this because he enjoys music."

When I ask the obligatory women in rock question Minton shrugs off the idea, "A girl in another band just wrote a manifesto on Feminism in the punk rock scene in New York and we were talking about how we can't really relate to it. She was talking about men making girls feel uncomfortable but we've never had that be an issue – we just do what we do."

"You don't have a choice," says Vehslage, "You're women, you have to rock, and that's all there is." Indeed. **FPH**



***Football, etc** play March 4th at Houston House Of Creeps with O'Doyle Rules, Muhammad Ali, Assemble the Skyline, & Rivers*

***The Draft record release -** March 18th at Vinyl Junkie with Empire! Empire!, Grown Ups, The Reptilian, & Moths*



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MARCH 2011

WHAT'S GOING DOWN CLOWN?

Spring is here. Haters and lovers abound. Deodorant and showers are once again necessary. You can smell me. Smell the cat. Smell the glove. Smell my smell.



1 **NMPERIGN / JASON LESCALLEET**

nmperign (Bhob Rainey - soprano saxophone, Greg Kelley - trumpet) was formed in 1998, but began working regularly with tape loop maestro Jason Lescalleet the following year. This trio developed a sound quite different from the members' individual works - a dense mix of lo-fi grit and precise, pure sounds that go from glacially slow and quiet to blisteringly loud and frenetic.

Sunday, March 6 | 8pm | Labotanica | 2316 Elgin St.
www.namelesssound.org

2 **FRENETICORE PRESENTS 'THE WAR OF THE WORLDS'**

Frenticore presents their live staged performance of The War of the Worlds inspired the HG Wells novel. The music blends prog rock and classical and is an adaptation of Jeff Waynes musical version of The War of the Worlds.

March 4, 5, 6 | Frenetic Theater | 5102 Navigation Blvd.
www.freneticore.net

3 **VENOMOUS MAXIMUS & ROYAL THUNDER**

Saturday, March 19 | Rudyard's | 2010 Waugh Dr.

4 **SXSW OVERFLOW FEST**

For the past 7 years, the patchouli smelling folks over at Super Happy Fun Land have hosted their annual SXSW Overflow fest featuring over 100 bands in under 2 weeks. Bands from all over the country, and the world at that, come through the famed arts warehouse and perform everything from pop to experimental music. Truly a Houston institution.

March 9-25 | Super Happy Fun Land | 3801 Polk St.
www.superhappyfunland.com

5 **OMAR RODRIGUEZ LOPEZ**

The At the Drive In/ Mars Volta guitar hero shreds his way into Houston. Expect lots of curly fros and gear nerd discussions to take place on site.

Monday, March 21 | Fitzgerald's | 2706 White Oak
www.fitzlivemusic.com

6 **DEVO**

Friday, March 25 | Warehouse Live | 813 St. Emanuel
www.warehouselive.com

7 **ANTHONY DAVID**

Sunday, March 6 | Numbers | 300 Westheimer



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Banksy & Beyond

BY JACOB CALLE

Henry Darger, Edgar Allen Poe, and Vincent van Gogh were all artists who no one knew yet famous for their work after their death. Conversely, London based Banksy, is a street vandal who is very well known and alive, but nobody has a clue about who he is.



HIS INVASIVE SATIRICAL WORK has bewitched the media who can't get enough of him. He illegally displayed his paintings in the Louvre Museum, paints rats on sides of buildings, recreated Paris Hilton's album with DJ Danger Mouse with matching barcodes and drops 500 copies across 48 UK record shops, defaced zoo exhibits, and tags on animals while keeping his real name discreetly undercover. Banksy's agent, Steve Lazaride, was even contacted by Fox to hire Banksy to write a couch gag intro for The Simpsons, which had children in a sweatshop working on Simpsons merchandise. It received mixed reviews but sky rocketed the ratings which is exactly what producer Al Jean of The Simpsons wanted.

Banksy's latest most talked about work is a documentary called "Exit Through the Gift Shop," a film about Thierry Guetta, a Frenchman who resides in LA that tricked street artists into filming them for his documentary. Skeptics believe that this is Banksy's greatest prank ever. Could this film be real or has he created another prank using a person as his center piece and directed a movie about it? "No, there is some people who still doesn't believe it. Even they get the fact left and right, they still like, 'Is it real? You make it up?' So I guess some people keep going, keep don't understand that it's real. We said the fact that it's real." says Guetta.

With this well received documentary The Oscars have nominated his questionable film for best documentary. So here's where the trouble lies. How will he accept his award if he wins? Will he go incognito or have one of his "people" accept it for him? Having Banksy at The Oscars raised the committees' eyebrows. "This is a big surprise," he said in a statement. "I don't agree with the concept of award ceremonies, but I'm prepared to make an exception for the ones I'm nominated for. The last time there was a naked man cov-

ered in gold paint in my house, it was me." Going incognito, claiming that one is Banksy, could be any trespassers ticket into the ceremony. After all, no one knows exactly who he is. Anyone could be Banksy at this point in time.

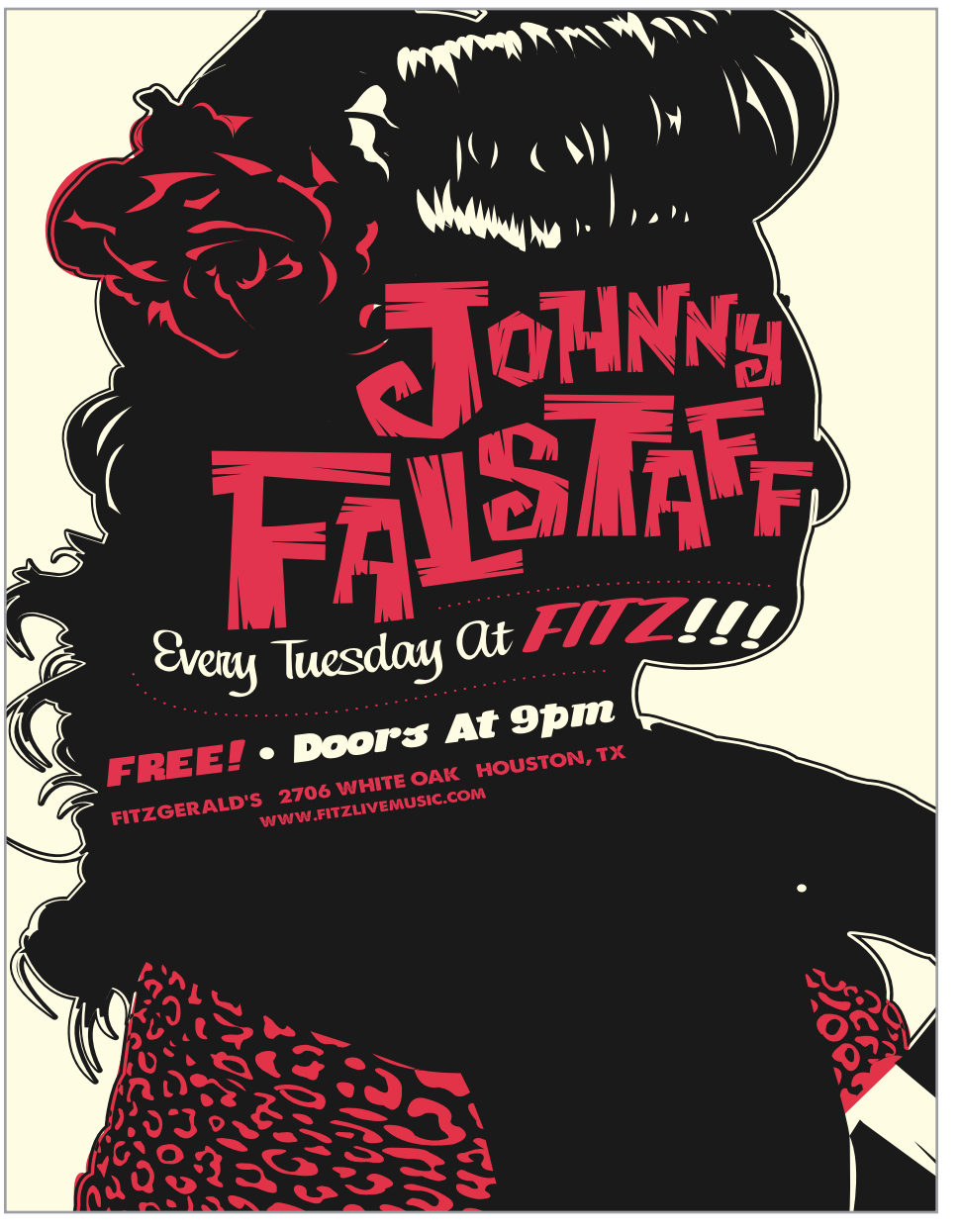
While The Oscars decided on Banksy's invitation, he painted Los Angeles' walls and signs including a deranged Mickey Mouse on a large bill board for the company Light Group on Sunset Blvd. "We thought it was really flattering," says Beth Bartolini, director of public relations. "We picked a great spot for our billboard, and he thought so too. It was one of our generic billboards. It's much cooler to have Banksy tag it." Even though Banksy's work was much applauded for CBS Outdoor, the company that owns the billboard took down the sign without permission from Light Group. CBS Outdoor said it was removed because "it did not meet our standards." The gas station underneath the billboard offered to pay $10,000 for the artwork, but CBS refused. Banksy also painted Charlie Brown holding a gas tank on a building that had recently caught on fire. The piece was covered for protection in hopes to be sold. Finding Banksy's art on your property is equivalent to someone handing you a lottery ticket, but that lottery ticket is taped to a wall with no protection. So your best bet is to hire a crew and rip that sucker out to preserve it's significance and collect a check with six digits. Hell, even the museums who were pranked by Banksy now own his work which is permanently in their art collection.

Just days before the award ceremony Academy president Tom Sherak announced that Banksy is allowed in. "The media is making it exciting with all these questions about Banksy. I think it's all good and if he shows up, he shows up. I won't stop him.", says Sherak. Many people poked fun at the idea of Banksy being there including Justin Timberlake, who claimed to be the infamous street artist. "I am Banksy. Wow, that felt good!". As the audience laughed Timberlake made a sigh of relief with his confession, but finally the moment had came, the announcement for best documentary, which was announced by Oprah Winfrey. If you are a fan of Banksy as much as I am you would understand when I say that my emotions were running high. Then Oprah announced that "Inside Job" won best documentary. So no acceptance speech by the English bloke. Banksy never showed his face. The media created a dynamite. A dynamite with so much gun powder that it could have blown the top off the Kodak Theater. The doors are locked. There are no emergency exits. Everyone would be screaming frantically. Oprah would have tripped over her broken heel. A stampede of celebrities run over her leaving her with internal bleeding. James Franco and Anne Hathaway are filling their last sexual needs in the mop closet, but Charles Ferguson, director of "Inside Job" humbly walks over to the dynamite. He licks his fingers and puts out the wick. The dynamite is out. The fiasco is over. And Justin Timberlake? He is behind the theater with a bottle of black spray paint stenciling a rat on a wall next to a rat hole holding a sign that reads "You can win the rat race, but you're still a rat."

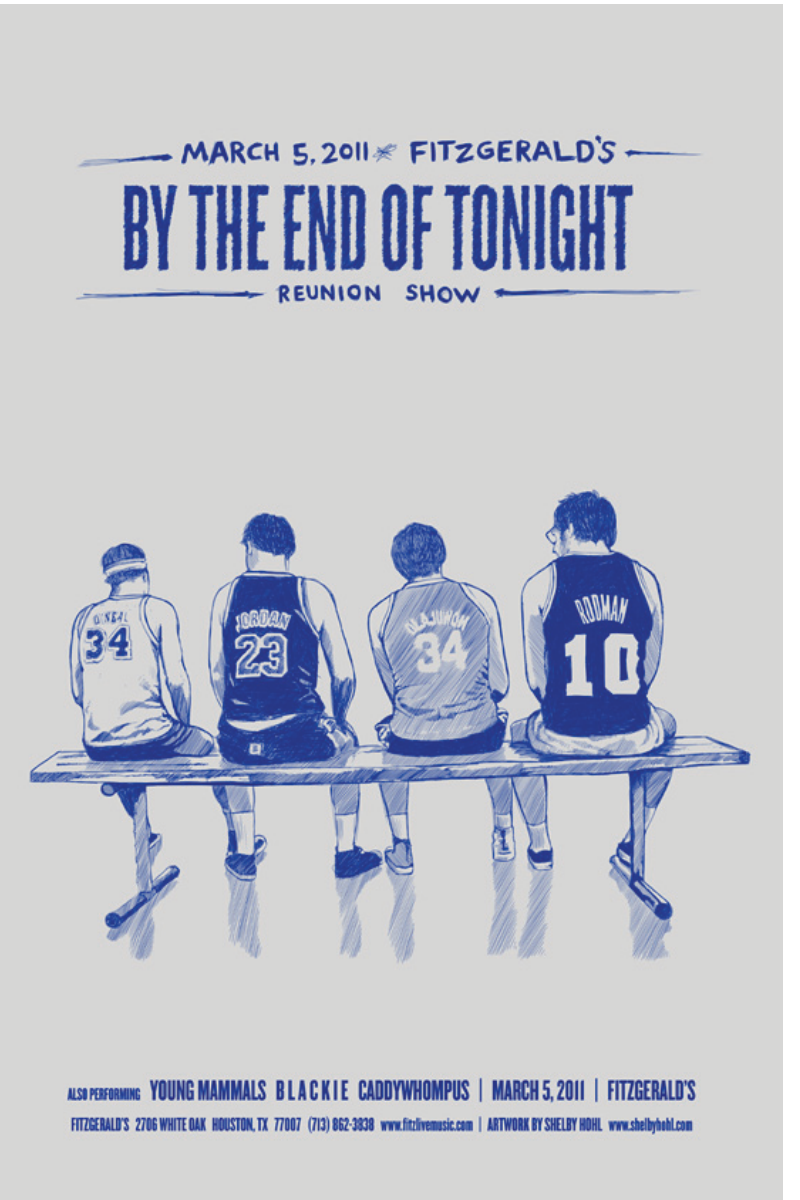
Street art is everywhere and Houston owns a great roster. Eyehate Eyesore, Gonzo, Coolidge, and more, but there's one that doesn't end and that artist is Give Up. His art is on every corner. On bridges, ditches, signs, and walls. There is no avoiding his mark. Many people view his work with a one sided view, but fail to look past the razor blade.

"I want as many people to see my work as possible. To that end the gallery model doesn't make the most sense. Plus getting up is still exciting. When saying "give up", it can be a threat or a challenge or an affirmation or something more personal and can fluctuate from time and date to spot to specific piece to individual interpretation. I never meant "give up" to be a moniker, but for now it's seemed to have evolved into one." The streets are the new galleries where proposals are unnecessary. So if you've gotta say it, spray it. **FPH**






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On a side street in the Montrose a slightly run-down apartment complex sits amidst the actual and faux-Victorian mansions. In one of the apartments, a small one bedroom with covered windows, a young woman, whom we'll refer to as C, sits packing condoms into a book safe. C is naked save for a pair of four inch black heels and a sheer gray scarf draped around her neck.

Sex Sales



Your dick is not that special. There are a lot of guys who will have sex with me and a lot of guys who will pay me for sex.

BY ALEX WUKMAN

SHE OCCASIONALLY TAKES A DRAG off a Camel Light or sips from a Diet Coke.

"One thing about doing what I do is that I can't do it for long. I don't want to do it for long," says C. In a slightly girlish falsetto C explains that her true passion is art. She shows off some paintings and photos. She has as well as a short film she's been working on. She wants to save enough money, she figures she only needs about $10,000, to open a gallery. It's just that it takes time to make the money and she doesn't charge her clients a lot.

"I only charge $100 because there's nothing to upsell. I'm very proletariat, it is about the art and I want them to fund my project," says C as she puts another condom in the book. She explains that despite what people think she does provide a vital service. The smoke from her cigarette briefly obscures her hazel eyes as she explains that her clients come to her for "recreational purposes." She describes how many of her clients find her Spartan existence focused on art alluring. "For a lot of these guys I'm a walk on the wild side," she says.

"I do offer a service and I don't want anyone leaving here feeling they didn't get what they want," she says. At 28 years-old she says she's "too tired to lie" and that she didn't think she'd end up here.

A year ago she and her husband divorced and she was on the street. "All I know was that when I left my husband I didn't have a place to stay," says C. Soon after she lost her job waiting tables and, as she puts it, "was sitting here with a disconnect notice, a borrowed laptop and five cigarettes."

Her shoes click-clack across the hardwood floor as she walks to get another soda, she talks about owing the landlord a month's back rent and getting desperate. "I always looked at casual encounters for inspiration. Honestly I was looking for beat-off material," she says. She describes how she posted an ad and "got an overwhelming response."

"The first time I had sex for money I told the guy to bring over two packs of cigarettes and to hurry because the lights were about to be turned off so the AC would be out and it was August. He came on his lunch break," she says. Her first client paid her $60, her second paid $40. She explains that didn't really know what to charge her clients so she just asked what she thought she could get away with.

She turns down the only CD she has, a Beatles compilation that was made for her wedding day, and explains how a few months later she had to raise her rates. However, she couldn't raise them too high or she would risk losing her repeat clients. And her clients are of a certain type.

"I can't just fuck some dude, there's the pee on me girl. I'm the talk to me girl," says C. She goes on to say that, in her opinion, more women would "do what I do if there wasn't sex involved and it was in a safe environment." When asked the inevitable question about whether her parents know what she does and what they think, she turns her dyed blonde head away for a moment before answering.

"My mom and I aren't speaking," she says, "my dad thinks it's great. He told me there will always be need for it." She explains that her adopted father is a financial planner and that he thinks it's a great way to make money. C and her biological father, who was the national advisor for Sex Addicts Anonymous, aren't close.

She says she tried to explain it to her mother, "I told her that there were times when she was running an ad agency she would wear a lower cut blouse or a tighter skirt to get a big client." She runs her hands along the recently polished wooden table.

"It'd be nice to be with a person I want to be with, it'd be nice to go out a dinner. I haven't been to dinner in three years. My husband never wanted to go out," she says. She explains that it's difficult for her to date. She explains that once she started she had what she called "a night off guy," but it quickly became a problem.

"He thinks he has a girl on call and I'm like ,'your dick is not that special. There are a lot of guys who will have sex with me and a lot of guys who will pay me for sex,'" C says. She also couldn't have someone spend the night. She says that her apartment/business is "a really bad place to couch surf." Despite the end of her marriage and a break up she tries to remain positive.

"I feel like I'm healing. I know I'm playing my wedding music, but I'm in a place where If I wasn't prostitute I'd be ready to date," she says. **FPH**

The Sportsdesk Vociferates

Houston, Why Do Our Franchises Suck?

BY MILLS-MCCOIN
ILLUSTRATION BY TYLER BARBER

The Luv' Ya Blue era was many decades ago. Clutch City seems to be going nowhere. And the Houston Astros are still peddling more Second Baptist Ed Young propaganda than proper baseball.

THE HOUSTON COMETS are defunct and the Houston Dynamo... well, I don't know much about them. Anyhow, the point is that the fourth largest city in this consumer junkie nation hasn't seen legitimate professional sports success since the Astros had their little cup of coffee in the World Series back in 2005—except for the Dynamo winning consecutive MLS championships in 2006 and 2007, but no one seemed to notice much. How can a city brimming with sports fans afford to tolerate these mediocre franchises?

(pours whisky, shoots whisky, slams glass onto the table) In terms of team value, the Houston Texans rank fifth in the NFL; the Houston Rockets rank fifth in the NBA; and the Houston Astros rank eleventh in the MLB. Clearly, the people who own these teams are making some serious money; otherwise the franchises would fold like the Houston Comets did in 2008 (the team that won the first four WNBA championships). The fiscal success of each of these franchises is incongruent with their performance.

At the start of the 2010 NFL season, I explained my theory regarding the Houston Texans (Theory: no need to win if you're making ungodly amounts of money). But at the end of this past season, the Texans' brass fired some folks as a Jedi Mind Trick to convince us all that they finally made a commitment to winning. I guess we'll see about that in September. We. Shall. See. McNair, you Enron lottery winner!

(pours whisky, shoots whisky, repeats, slams glass onto the table) Providence intervened on November 21, 2010 when Drayton McLane, Jr., owner of major league baseball's only baptist franchise, announced that the team was for sale. This is good news because putting the team in anyone else's hands is progress including Mark Cuban or fucking All State Insurance. Astros fans won't see any success for a couple of years. So don't hold your breath... unless you prefer Drayton McLane as the owner, in which case—by all means hold your breath. HOLD IT! Quick Question: How in the hell did the Houston Astros' team colors go from navy blue and strangely orange to... a bloody shade of sacrament red?

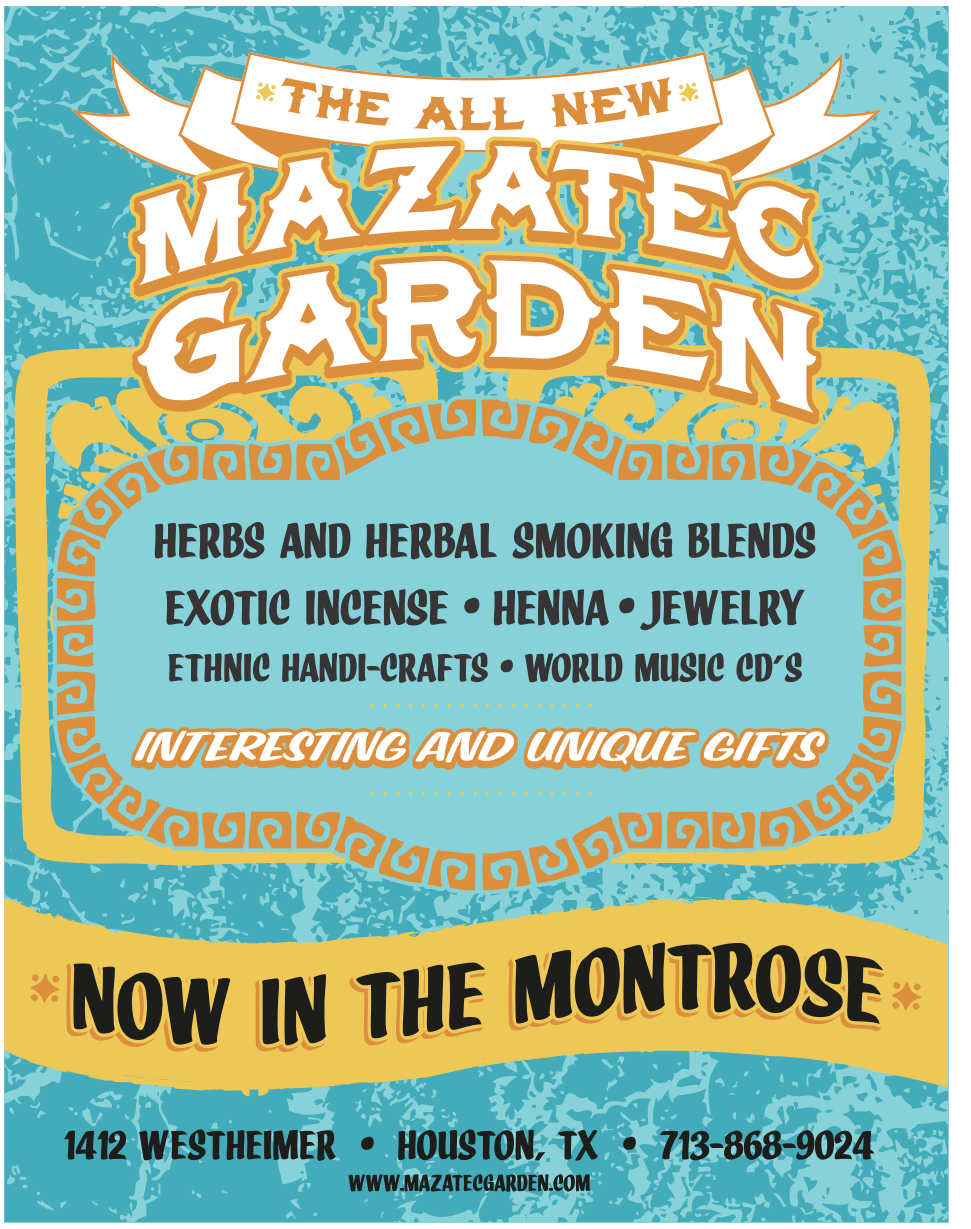
(pours whisky, raises glass, whispers "Hakeem 'the Dream' Olajuwon", shoots whisky, throws glass out the window) This is the heartbreaker folks. Our most beloved sports franchise—the only one to deliver a major championship, twice—The Houston Rockets are not fairing so well in the superstar driven NBA. Honestly, I can't complain about how this franchise is being managed. The Rockets have a GM that graduated from the MIT Sloan School of Management in Daryl Morey (he actually taught a class at MIT called "Analytical Sports Management"). But despite all of his genius, Morey has had nothing but trouble in his attempts to sign a major NBA star, which staggers the mind since Houston is the only team in the top five with NO STATE INCOME TAX. This means when a player signs a contract in Texas he gets to keep most of his millions. So if I'm a sports agent, don't I steer my client towards Texas?

(opens face, pours whisky) It should be noted that Houston does not have a history of attracting superstar free agents in any sport; and I have no idea why. Houston has warm weather year round. The schools are decent. Land is cheap and the economy is fairly resistant to change. The food and entertainment industries are top notch. And, again, there's NO STATE INCOME TAX. Also, there's a six million member fan base already built in. And let me tell you about these fans...

(just pours whisky on head) Houston sports fans are unwaveringly loyal... AND IT MAKES ME SICK! When our teams sink to the level of perennial losers, Houston fans just continue cheering them on. No public outrage. No protest. No boycotting. No nothing. Just freakish loyalty. If this were the American Revolution, you might say Houston would be the Tory safe haven. Philly and New York turn on their teams violently when they start losing with any regularity. Houston, on the other hand, just continues supporting the men in uniform (and if we had a women's professional bikini franchise then we'd cheer for the women in uniform). Cheers. **FPH**









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The Beatification of Ronald Reagan

BY CHARLES R. LARSON
ILLUSTRATION BY WILL HARRISON

The excess of emotion expressed in the nation over the hundredth anniversary of Ronald Reagan's birth might lead one to conclude that he wasn't the 40th President of the United States, but God. Ronald Reagan was the last president whom many Americans say they feel good about but—in a culture devoted entirely to making one feel happy and building up one's self-esteem—that is understandable.



REGRETTABLY, WE HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING YET about the beatification of the country's first trickster president (George W. Bush was the second).

When President Reagan was running for re-election, as a long-time Washington resident and commentator, I felt duty-bound to place a bumper sticker on my automobile that said "Honk If You Think He's Senile." Plenty of people honked their horns or waved from passing vehicles, and there were also the people who kept trying to remove the sticker from my bumper. My point was simple: the evidence was already there well before the second inauguration that Reagan was suffering from senility and should never have been reelected. Were people simply not paying any attention to his pronouncements and those silly movie lines that crept into his speeches? Were they that infatuated by his engaging smile? The people around him knew what was happening, but what could possibly have driven them to think of the country first? Still, I have to confess that senility started to look positively desirable when W Bush entered the White House.

It's questionable how history will judge Ronald Reagan, but two facts are indisputable. First, he rang up the fastest and the largest deficit in the country's history up to that time, which conservatives still won't admit. And second, it took the foresight of Bill Clinton to begin to correct the problem. All for naught, of course, since they were wiped out by W Bush and his cheerleader, Vice President Cheney, and his audacious remark: "Reagan proved that deficits don't matter." Republicans today want Americans to believe that the entire debt of the country has been amassed by Barak Obama, forgetting that our current economic morass had its foundations during the Reagan and Bush years. I'd call Republican attitudes toward the country's deficit a case of selective amnesia.

After the deficit, Republican sycophants like to credit Ronald Reagan with the end of the Cold War (as his followers have argued for years), ignoring that simultaneously Reagan began the country's move from Capitalism to Corporatism. Reagan convinced many Americans (including leaders of both political parties) that government is bad and, consequently, that taxes are unnecessary and even un-American. Until recently, being Americans meant that we can have it all for free. Tax money spent for infrastructure, for education, for health—even unnecessary wars—is an evil. This is the dirty little secret about Conservatives: they hate Democracy because what it means is having to share what you have with others, helping the less fortunate, people who have been passed over by the budget cuts for the rich and have felt the impact of the reductions of every program intended to help those at the bottom. The gap between the rich and the poor in the United States has grown so quickly that the American Dream is nothing more than a mirage for most of the people in the Middle Class, let alone those at the bottom. The end of Democracy, initiated by Ronald Reagan, pretty much was finished by Bush II.

After Reagan's death, Republicans had a field-day, and Democrats (always accused of lacking patriotism) had to remain silent as monuments were constructed, as buildings were re-named, and postage stamps began to bear the former president's likeness. Americans haven't seen anything yet. As my wife says, the most endangered national park is now Mt. Rushmore, which Republicans have talked about for years as a fitting memorial to their beloved hero. There's also been a continual cry to put Reagan's image on our currency, which so far has been thwarted. If he deserves to be anywhere it should be on the hundred dollar bill, reminding Americans that the hundred dollar bill is the new ten dollar one.

Thus the beatification of Ronald Reagan continues to ignore basic rules of economics just as the old issues of equality and helping others has been turned upside-down. And how can we forget Reagan's initiation of the concept of the preemptive strike (Granada, a major threat to the world's stability)? Ronald Reagan's legacy could not have come at a better time for subsequent global displacements brought forth by George W. Bush.

So what would be a suitable monument for Reagan on the Mall in Washington, D.C.? Three gigantic balls, hanging down from the firmament--the traditional pawnshop symbol--to remind all Americans that Reagan hocked our future.

Say one for the gypper. **FPH**

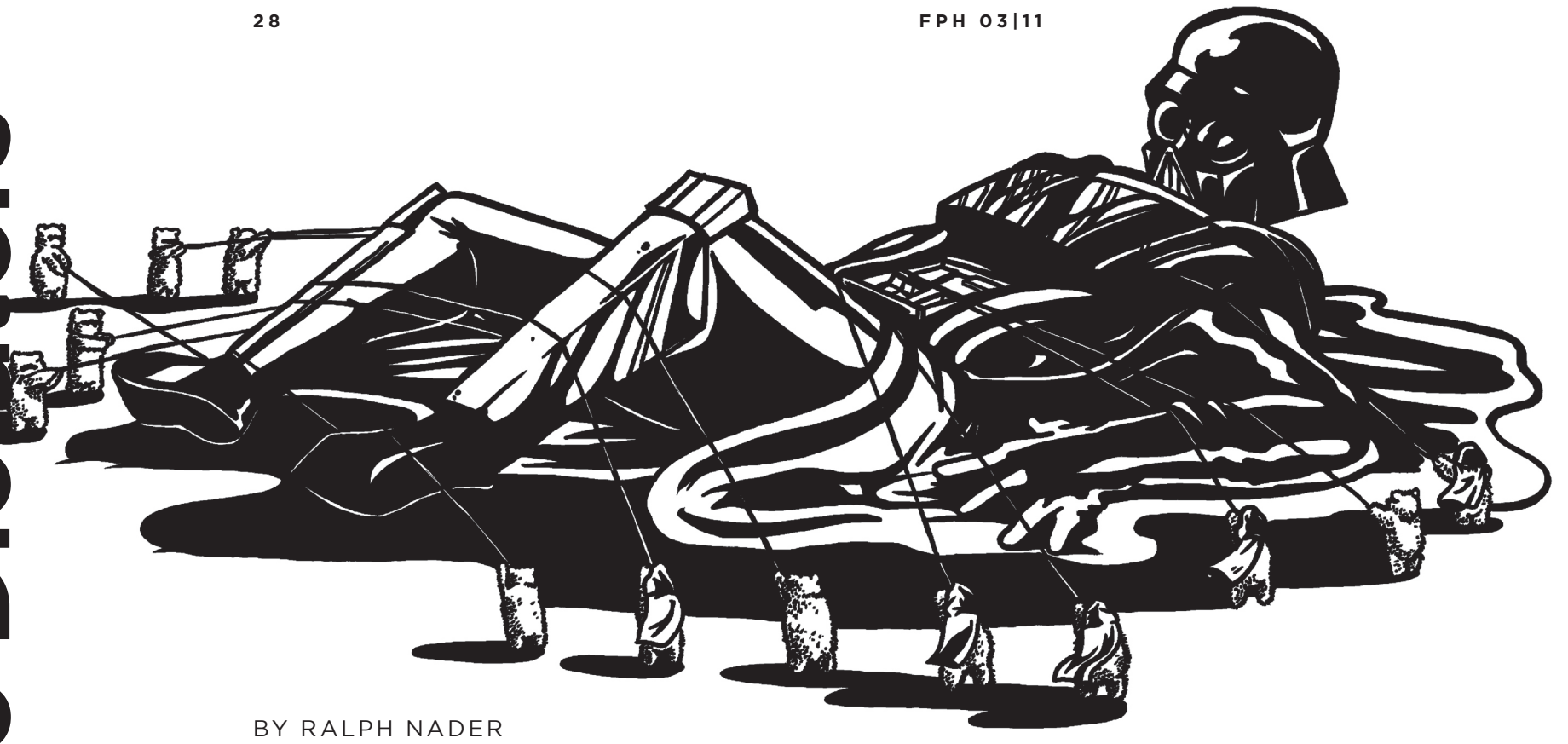

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Time to Topple Corporate Dictators
Americans Need to Start Showing Up



BY RALPH NADER
ILLUSTRATION BY SHELBY HOHL

THE 18 DAY NON-VIOLENT EGYPTIAN PROTESTS for freedom raise the question: is America next? Were Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine around, they would likely say "what are we waiting for?" They would be appalled by the concentration of economic and political power in such a few hands. Remember how often these two men warned about concentrated power.

Our Declaration of Independence (1776) listed grievances against King George III. A good number of them could have been made against "King" George W. Bush who not only brushed aside Congressional War-making authority under the Constitution but plunged the nation through lies into extended illegal wars which he conducted in violation of international law. Even conservative legal scholars such as Republicans Bruce Fein and former Judge Andrew Napolitano believe he and Dick Cheney still should be prosecuted for war and other related crimes. The conservative American Bar Association sent George W. Bush three "white papers" in 2005-2006 that documented his distinct violations of the Constitution he had sworn to uphold.

Here at home, the political system is a two-party dictatorship whose gerrymandering results in most electoral districts being one-party fiefdoms. The two Parties block the freedom of third parties and independent candidates to have equal access to the ballots and to the debates. Another barrier to competitive democratic elections is big money, largely commercial in source, which marinates most politicians in cowardliness and sinecurism.

Our legislative and executive branches, at the federal and state levels, can fairly be called corporate regimes. This is corporatism where government is controlled by private economic power. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt called this grip "fascism" in a formal message to Congress in 1938.

Corporatism shuts out the people and opens governmental largesse paid for by taxpayers to insatiable corporations.

Notice how each decade the bailouts, subsidies, hand-outs, giveaways, and tax escapes for big business grow larger. The word "trillions" is increasingly used, as in the magnitude of the rescue by Washington of the Wall Street crooks and speculators who looted the peoples' pensions and savings.

It is not as if these giant companies demonstrate any gratitude to the people who save them again and again. Instead, U.S. companies are fast quitting the country in which they were chartered and prospered. These corporations, which were built on the backs of American workers, are shipping millions of jobs and whole industries to repressive foreign regimes abroad, such as China.

Over 70 percent of Americans in a September 2000 Business Week poll said corporations had "too much control over their lives." It's gotten worse with the last decade's corporate corruption and crime wave.

Wal-Mart imports over $20 billion a year in products from sweatshops in China. About a million Wal-Mart workers make under $10.50 per hour before deductions—many in the $8 an hour range. While Wal-Mart's CEO makes about $11,000 a hour plus benefits and perks.

This scenario has metastasized through the economy. One in three workers in the U.S. makes Wal-Mart level wages. Fifty million people have no health insurance and every year about 45,000 die because they cannot afford diagnosis or treatment. Child poverty is climbing as household income falls. Unemployment and underemployment are near 20% levels. The federal minimum wage, adjusted for inflation since 1968, would be $10.00 per hour now. Instead, it is $7.25.

Yet one percent of the richest Americans have financial wealth equivalent to the bottom ninety-five percent of the people. Corporate profits and compensation of corporate bosses are at record levels. While companies, excluding financial firms, are sitting on two trillion dollars in cash.

On February 7, President Obama showed us where the power is by walking across LaFayette Park from the White House to the headquarters of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Before a large audience of CEOs, he pleaded for them to invest more in jobs in America. Imagine, CEOs of pampered, privileged mega-companies often on welfare and in trouble with the law sitting there while the President curtsied.

With Bill Clinton in the Nineties, corporate lobbies tightened their grip on our country by greasing through Congress both NAFTA and the World Trade Organization agreements that subordinated our sovereignty and workers to the global government of corporations.

All this adds to the growing sense of powerlessness by the citizenry. They experience hundreds of thousands of preventable deaths and many more injuries every year in the workplace, the environment, and the marketplace. Massive budgets and technologies do not go to reduce these costly casualties, instead they go to the big business of exaggerated security threats.

While the ObamaBush deficit-financed wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have been destroying those nations, our public works here, such as mass transit, schools and clincs crumble for lack of repairs. Foreclosures keep rising.

The debt servitude of consumers is stripping them of control of their own money as fine print contracts, credit ratings and credit scores tighten the noose on family budgets.

Half of democracy is showing up. Too many Americans, despairingly, are not "showing up" at the polls, at rallies, marches, courtrooms or city council meetings. If "we the people" want to reassert our proper constitutional sovereignty over our country—we can start by amassing ourselves in public squares and around the giant buildings of our rulers.

In a country that has so many problems it doesn't deserve and so many solutions that it doesn't apply; all things are possible when people begin looking at themselves for the necessary power to produce a just society. **FPH**

Ralph Nader is the author of Only the Super-Rich Can Save Us!, a novel.

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THURS 17: Big Daddys Assburn Bloody Mary party

FRI 18: The Rebel Crew

SAT 19: Southern Backtones

SAT 26: Robert Pearson, Carl Smith (Austin), Stefan Gonzalez (Austin/Dallas), Thomas Helton

THURS 24: Honkey Tonk Blood afterparty

CHECK CALENDAR ON WEBSITE FOR THE LATEST DETAILS

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DON'T PITY THE FOOL

BE THE FOOL YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD

Marcos and I walk along train tracks downtown. The heavy air is laden with refinery fumes and the exhalations of four million exhausted, yet lifted by ten thousand frog and cricket calls. He sports his ratty balaclava and chews the end of his spent pipe. In the distance, flanked by the anemic dome of the courthouse and the flaccid deco middle toe of city hall, a shimmering crystal bank skyscraper reflects cell phone towers and satellites and the monster parade on the elevated freeway. Closer by, a giant baseball on the stadium beams like a jaundiced moon behind a defiant silhouette standing sentry over an encampment where children wrestle cold pavement for dreams of full bellies. On the tracks, upturned chairs and bloody shards of fine china litter the train tracks like some tea party went slumming before it turned on itself. A glistening stream of maggots drips off the bloated carcasses of an elephant with its trunk up a donkey's ass. The Day of Fools will be upon us soon. I fling a stone at the railroad crossing sign and turn to Marcos. How will we celebrate this year?

MARCOS DOES A CARTWHEEL ON THE TRAIN TRACK then walks on it, ahead of me, arms outstretched for balance.

How would you like to celebrate?

What if we dress up like wealthy businessmen and beg for money in the streets?

We could do that, Marcos stops to pet a stray dog. He takes bread from his pocket and feeds the bony mutt. But we'd only be reinforcing the imaginary power of money. Better if we walk up to a motor bank and send a rose with a deposit slip through the vacuum tube. We'll write poems about freedom to the bank tellers on the deposit slip.

Yes! And then we'll head down to the bookstore and move Rumsfeld's new memoir from the Biography to the True Crime section. We'll do the same with W's book.

Ho hum. We should be doing that every day, chico! This day is special. Think bigger. Think bolder in action, yet subtler in message.

I know! We'll bring our friends and a roll of quarters to Market Square. We'll "rent" metered parking spaces and roll out a car-sized patch of Astroturf, then lounge in lawn chairs and play dominoes and sip lemonade til the meter expires.

Now you're talking, hermano.

Or we'll do one of those "flash mobs." We could tell people to wear silly costumes and join the office workers on a lunch-time power walk. High noon!

Those workers will remember that forever...

Or...wait...why limit this to you and me and the people we know? Let's put a call out to the whole city! Let's tell people to hatch their own plans with their own friends, and take pictures and post them on the internet. We could sponsor a prank contest!

I like the way you think, comapañero.

So the madcap revolutionary and I squatted beneath a streetlamp and penned this Call to Action:

HOUSTON—Ditch this Fool's paradise and join us on a Fool's journey! Get off your rear end and join us on a Fool's errand.

Let's spread out all over the city in small groups as a swarm of pranksters bringing pockets of amazement all day long. Please participate, this is not a spectator sport! No act to big or small!

FPH is offering a $100 Honorarium for the best prank! Email your best prank to editors@freepresshouston.com to be selected.

Make it fun. Make it funny. Make it irreverent. Make it something you'll brag about forever. **FPH**



WHAT: April Fool's Day Pranks

WHEN: April Fool's Day!

WHERE: All over Houston

WHO: You!

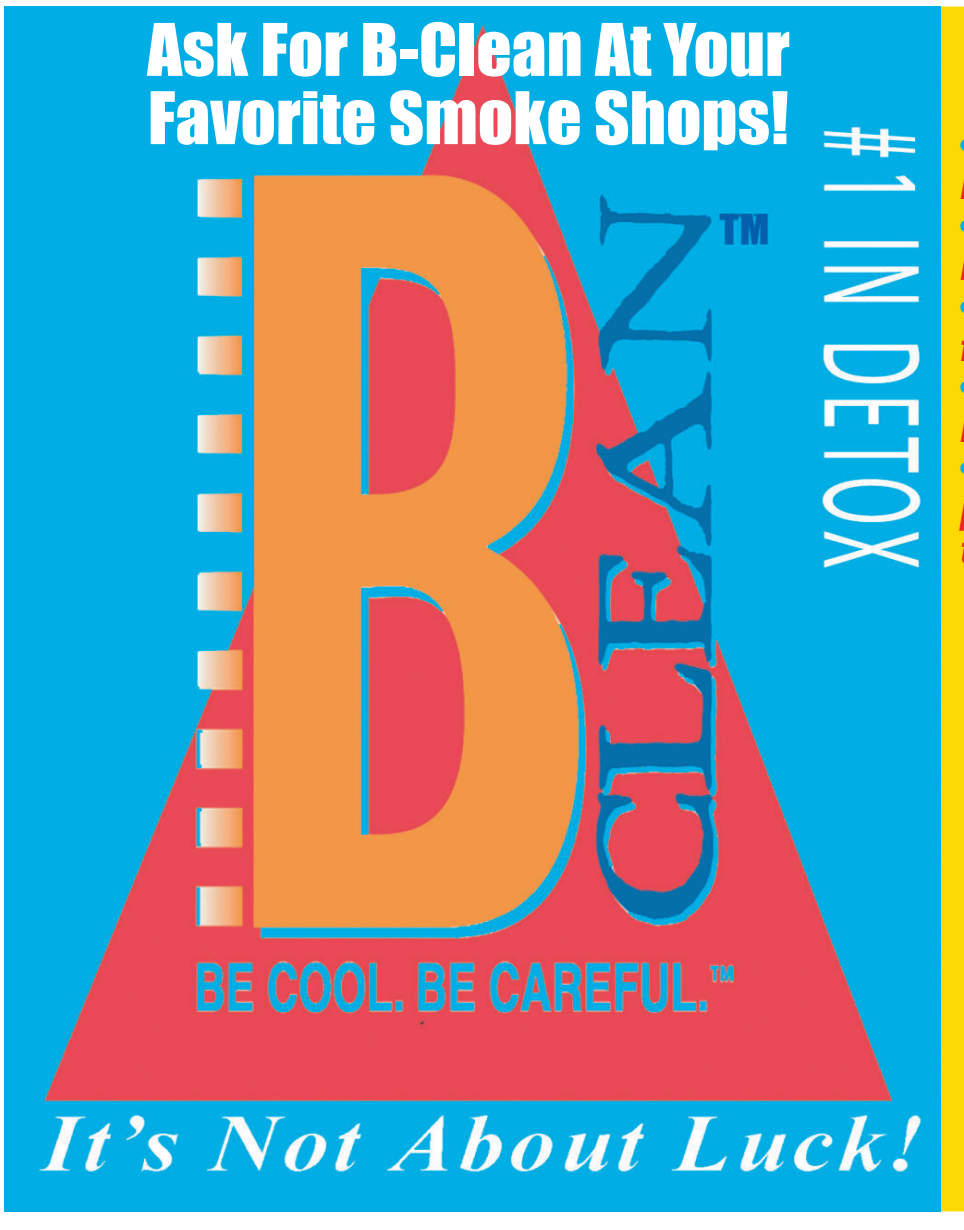
HOW: get with friends & hatch a plan. Execute said plan.

Don't hurt anyone or yourself. Have fun!

Document your prank & send to editors@freepresshouston.com







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houston.indymedia.org



Dozens of immigrant workers mobilize against DPS cancellation of drivers licenses

by Maria J Saturday, Jan. 29,

The successful effort of Houston United in Austin raised our collective voice for dignity and respect in the face of legislation that threatens at the core livelihood and well-being of millions of Texas immigrant families.

As part of the Houston United activities, CRECEN and America Para Todos encouraged the growing movement of TPS immigrants impacted by TX DPS cancellation of Commercial Drivers Licenses to directly petition those in authority to redress the harm inflicted by these unjust laws and practices. Truck drivers joined the effort.

One of the largest groups at the rally were over 100 legal immigrant residents of the State of Texas that are protected and authorized to work under the US DHS Temporary Protected Status. These are people in the Texas transportation industry, mostly truck drivers, who have had their Commercial Driver's Licenses cancelled under administrative decisions from the TX Department of Public Safety and the Texas Transportation Code.

As one truck driver told a representative of the TX DPS representative upon handing him over 500 letters from others directly affected, "My drivers license is my job."

While the legislative teams visited those at the State Capitol, TPS immigrants got on the two Houston buses, standing room only, and protested in front of the TX DPS Drivers License Office. Some had gone to Austin from Houston in the buses; almost as many had driven their own vehicules. Attorneys Gordon Quan and Houston's America for All Bianca Santornini had just had a meeting with TX DPS officials.

At the end of the day, the visible presence of over 100 truck drivers fighting for the fundamental right to a livelihood for themselves and their families laid bare the cruel unjust proposals and actions that drive many families to hardships and suffering when immigration law enforcement becomes state policy. It contradicts those who justify state anti-immigrant laws as a means of ending undocumented migration. Anti-immigrant legislators and supporters contend that this is about the undocumented, but by denying fundamental rights to certain categories of legal resident immigrants, the ugliness and ulterior motives are stripped off.

The truth is naked: it is about pure meanness of spirit driven by racism and entrenched power.

Houston United, all people of good conscience, and the truck drivers at the center, challenged that cruel reality and demonstrated that all persons deserve dignity and respect and that we must continue forward in our quest to say no to Arizona or any type of hate in Texas. After all, we are family.

www.houstonunido.org/

After months of waiting, Fort Hood soldier will be discharged as a conscientious objector

by James M. Branum Friday, Feb. 18

girightslawyer@gmail.com

Buddhist combat veteran at Fort Hood to receive discharge from Army after months' long struggle to be granted conscientious objector status

Killeen, Texas –

Several months after returning from a combat tour in Iraq, Fort Hood soldier SPC Kyle Wesolowski submitted an application for a conscientious objector discharge based on his Buddhist faith. Since that time, SPC Wesolowski has completed a rigorous examination of his beliefs by military authorities, including required interviews by a psychiatrist, a chaplain and an independent investigating officer. All of these officials recommended that SPC Wesolowski be discharged based on the sincerity of his beliefs.

Today, we are pleased to announce that SPC Wesolowski's Conscientious Objector claim was approved by the U.S. Army. Wesolowski's discharge will likely occur in early March, 2011. Kyle has received a great deal of encouragement from the community who helped to support him through this arduous process.

Here is what a few of his supporters had to say about this news:

"Kyle's decision to follow his conscience has required great patience and perseverance. I admire his command and the Army administration for recognizing his sincerity, and choosing to honor him with a conscientious objector discharge." - Fran Clark, Board Member, Under the Hood Cafe and Outreach Center

"It has taken great courage for Kyle to follow his conscience. He has diligently, respectfully and patiently pursued his conscientious objector status over the last several months. I trust that the Army recognizes Kyle's sincerity and will move quickly to approve an honorable discharge." Alice Embree, Board Member Fort Hood Support Network

Wesolowski's attorney, James Branum, had this to say:

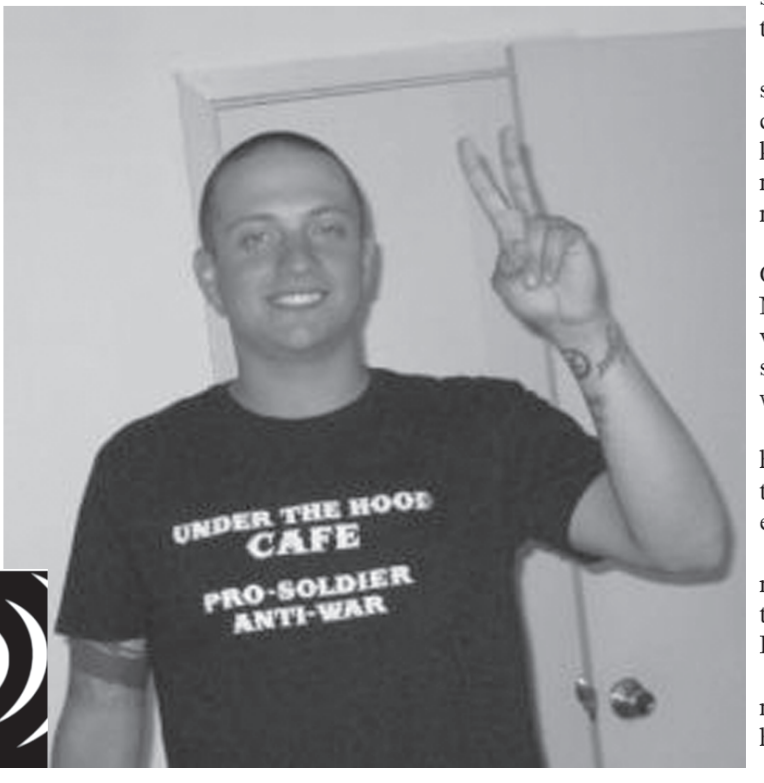
I am so proud of Kyle. He stood strong in a long and difficult process. Many other applicants would have given up, but Kyle stood firm. Thankfully the Army has now recognized what I've known all along --- Kyle is a sincere conscientious objector to war."

For more information:

http://freekylewesolowski.wordpress.com/

http://www.underthehoodcafe.org

www.underthehoodcafe.org



Blood tests reveal chemical poisoning linked to BP Disaster

by Ada McMahon and Liana Lopez 4 Bridge the Gulf Friday, Feb. 11,

Alarming levels of toxic chemicals from the BP disaster have entered the blood of some Gulf Coast citizens, who are showing symptoms like internal bleeding, kidney infection, muscle atrophy, pain, headaches, and bleeding from the ears. ⊠⊠At a community forum last Saturday in New Orleans, Dr. Wilma Subra presented these results and more based on months of testing from the Louisiana Environmental Action Network.

Several Gulf Coast residents from the study discussed their symptoms, and expressed their fear, sadness, and outrage at the lack of health care and attention the health crisis has received.

Did BP cause this man's seizures?

Paul Doomm, a 22 year-old from coastal Navarre Beach, Florida, was one of those to speak out. He has not yet received his blood test results, but has become wheelchair-bound since swimming in the Gulf and eating seafood this summer. He attributes his ailments, which include chronic seizures, constant headaches and pain, vertigo and partial paralysis, to the BP disaster. He says that none of the 93 doctors he's seen in the past months have found a definitive cause.

Just minutes after telling his story to the crowd of roughly 100 at the First Unitarian Church in New Orleans, Paul's eyes began to dart around in his head and the right side of his body began to seize and shake. Several men rushed to his side to help his mother carry Paul and his wheelchair off the stage. Panelist Cherri Foytlin broke the stunned silence. "Can we get some prayers?," she called out, then led the room in prayer.

For several minutes Paul embodied the health crisis facing most in the audience, and an estimated 4-5 million others across the Gulf Coast.

You may also watch a video of Paul's seizure here, starting around 6:22. Some may find this video disturbing.

Dr. Wilma Subra, the chemist leading LEAN's studies of blood, soil, and seafood, explained that chemicals like benzene, ethylbenzene and Xylene are known to cause health effects like internal bleeding, respiratory illness, cancer, genetic mutation, and reproductive problems.

These chemicals are found in crude oil and in Corexit, a chemical sprayed on the oil to disperse it. Now, LEAN's testing reveals they are also found in very high levels in Gulf Coast residents' blood. The subjects of the tests were selected because they are ill with symptoms that match chemical poisoning.

Dr. Subra reported that on average, the people in her study have benzene levels at a whopping 36 times the levels you would find in a normal population, and ethylbenzene 5.7 times that norm.

Based in New Iberia, LA, Dr. Subra is also the recipient of a MacArthur Genius Grant and advisor to the Gulf Coast Fund for Community Renewal and Ecological Health...

read more:

houston.indymedia.org/news/2011/02/72302.php

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Cat Power

Kristina Wong uses theater to further complicate the world

BY ALEX WUKMAN

There's an image on Kristina Wong's photo stream, mixed in with the vacation shots is her onstage, wearing matching blue windbreaker and news dealer cap, projected on to the back wall of the theatre are words that could be said to define most people in this country: race and identity.



***Cat Lady** debuts at Diverse Works on March 24 at 7:30 p.m. 713.223.8346 for ticket information.*

AS A SOLO PERFORMANCE ARTIST Wong dealt very overtly with race in her previous one woman show Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. In the show Wong opened a dialogue about the high incidence of anxiety, depression and mental illness among Asian American women. Her press kit explains that she was trying to use "art as a healer" by exploring the issue of mental health in marginalized communities and "move past oppression into [a] healthy [future]."

Through continual touring and performing Wong came to be widely known in theatre circles across the country, the Associated Press called her "raucous and irreverent" and LA City Beat described Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest as one "of the funniest shows in town and engenders a level of audience participation that's enthusiastic without becoming embarrassing." In a tale as old as time Wong began to feel isolated and alone by life on the road.

At her new production's fundraising site on the United States Artists.org network Wong discusses some of the burden she felt performing a show about suicide and mental illness for four consecutive years. "The process of making the show was the most heartbreaking and depressing endeavor I had ever taken up. The last four years of touring alone on the road have been some of the most isolating years of my life," she writes.

She goes on to explain that she was doing her show "so much, I was becoming the character from my show-- conversations from real life flowed into my real life monologues." In Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest she plays a character named Kristina who is hospitalized for mental illness, something that never happened to the real life Kristina Wong. However, the subtlety of the distinction between artist/actor and character were often lost on audiences.

"I'd have people come up to me after the show and say that it was brave of me to talk about being hospitalized," Wong said in an interview. She explains how over the course of touring so much of her identity became fiction that her own memory began to change because she "spent more time thinking about the script" than the events of her own life. She goes on to talk about how taking a show about mental illness on tour proved uniquely difficult. "It felt like I was a town crier, I'd show up at a college campus after someone had committed suicide," said Wong.

It was the isolation of the road and the feeling of being consumed by a character that allowed her to connect with a surprising subject. "In my isolation at home and on the road, I read Neil Strauss' "The Game" and started watching "The Pick-Up Artist" reality competition show," writes Wong. Strauss, a journalist for Rolling Stone, wrote about the subculture of male pick-up artists. Wong goes on to write that she became fascinated with the parallels between the life of a theatre performer and those of a pick-up artist.

"Their (morally questionable) techniques and (manipulative) seduction tools seem plucked straight from improv theater training. Like me, they used their "scripts" on audiences to escape the reality of their loneliness," writes Wong. According to Wong, during and after the success of Cuckoo's Nest loneliness came to define much of her life.

"I finally got to feel like an important artist and create a space where people got to talk about depression and suicide , but I felt so empty inside," said Wong. Wong also began to feel guilt about her success, as she went on to say, at times it seemed that the only reason she was able to get work was "because people are killing themselves." As Wong began researching the world of pick-up artists and interviewing individual pick-up artists she realized that both her and her subjects shared the same motivations. "We were both doing theatre from a need to connect out of our [own] loneliness," said Wong.

One of the things that Wong said surprised her was how much time pick-up artists spent learning to talk to someone. "The art of interpersonal communication is dying and these guys are paying thousands of dollars to learn to revive it for their purposes," said Wong. Seeing parallels in the unchanging scripts of the pick-up artists and the repetitive nature of many conversations Wong asked "is human communication just a script we play over and over again?"

It would be easy to say that Wong's other choice of subject for her performance piece, one of the enduring clichés of American life, cat ladies, offers a contrast to the forced extroversion of the pick-up artists, the only problem is that they are eerily similar. "They both hoard pussy as a surrogate for actual human connection," said Wong. One of the press releases for the show describes the juxtaposition of pick-up artists and cat ladies as "the parallel world of the pathetically lonely" and describes Wong "bending [them]...into an intersection of characters living at the margins of gender and society." FPH

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