FREE PRESS

HOUSTON

MUSIC - NEWS - PUBLIC OPINION - ARTS - EVENTS

INDEPENDENCE IS VITAL

ruled by 6

THE CURTAINS ARE COMING DOWN

JUSTICE IS DEAD

GANA MASSACRE

AUG. 2006
2ND DOSE
ISSUE 69

Free Press Houston
Issue 69 | 08/06

super happy fun land

...SUNNY DAY

Aug 22nd:
A Passing Feeling
Ayn
Ghost of the Russian Empire

Wed Aug 23rd:
Burned Out Bright
Wilmot Proviso
Fire Team Charlie
Adam Bricks

Aug 24th
Lebanon
The Snake Trap
The Curbside Tree Project
Warren Jackson Hearne

Aug 25th
Divided Like a Saint's
The Lovely Sparrows
Listen Listen
OMEGA MONSTER PATROL!
The Dimes

Aug 26th:
Cinema Bomar 8pm-9pm
VOIDMATE
Childcraft
DJ MR. PINK EYES

August 27th:
Lazlo Hollyfeld

Wed Aug 30th:
This Flood Covers the Earth
Lanterns
A Silhouette
Fire Team Charlie

Aug 31st:
Cosmic Starfish
Casket Architects

Thurs Sept. 7th:
Voluptuous Tusk
Uncomfortable Jams

Sept 8th:
Drums and Tuba
Atarimatt

Sept. 10th:
Esmerelda Strange
Jenny & the Belmont Boys

Sept 16th
Muzak John's B-day BBQ with
Abiku
Muzak John
9 volt
The Krinkles
A Pink Cloud
The Cornball Trio
Have A Nice Day
Mass Murder Media
Black Magic Marker
Modo Fejj
P.S.A.
Suspenderman
Doors open at 2pm

Mon. Sept. 18
Cop Warmth
The Amoeba Men
Hallelujah!

Sept 20th:
Shinding

Sept 23rd:
Houston Norml Fall Fling

Sept 24th:
Emo Side Project
Nada Brahma
Jinxed at Twelve
A December Tragedy

Sept 25th:
Picket Line
Bezoar

Oct. 3rd:
Voodoo Organist

Oct. 5th:
Hotel, Hotel
The Lymbyc Systym

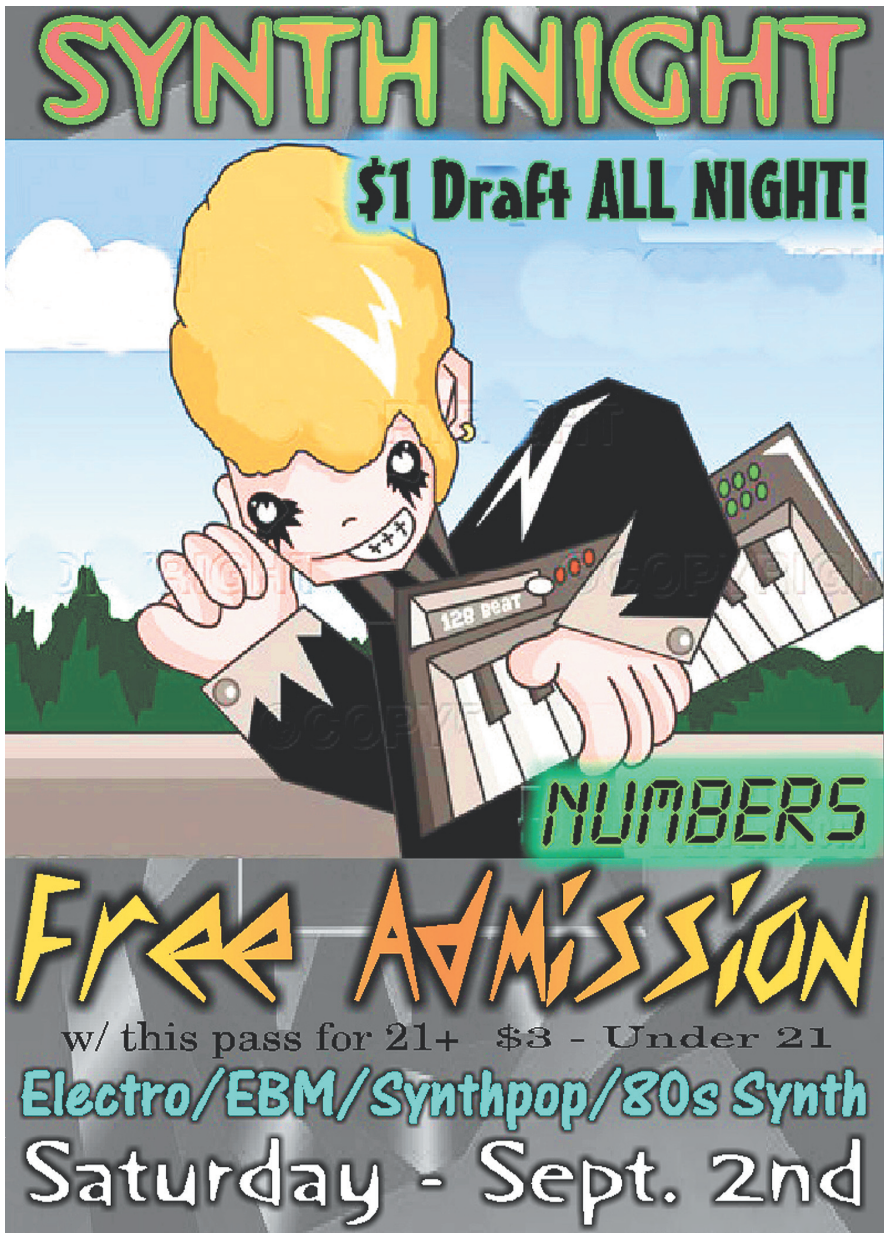
1pm Oct. 7 through 1pm Oct 8th
24 Hour Comics Day

Oct. 13th:
Sputnik Monroe

Oct. 14th:
Ethereal Planes Indian

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August 2006 what you'll find



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Cover Art: Matt Messinger

Letters to the ~~creditor~~ editor



Controversy over last issues 'inflammatory cover'

While I do not really support one side or the other, and have read about the history of the conflict in the middle east trying to gain understanding the cover art struck me particularly strong last night

I have sympathy for both sides of the conflict, but wondered if the irony escaped anyone that months ago people were being killed in the street and there was much anger over a cartoon that appeared and depicted Mohammad. Here in the US, while the cover art of your paper may anger some, or hurt them, no one is going to kill anyone over it, and you are absolutely supported in your freedom to print it.

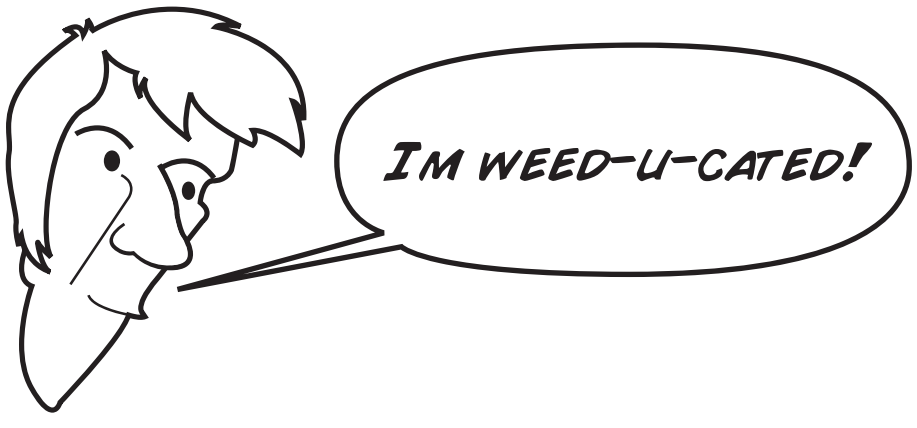
-Marilyn

Kudos on a very courageous cover! The Israelis have been very clever in diverting attention away from their building the illegal separation wall and the settlements by selling the story that the root cause of this current violence is the rockets fired into Israel by Hamas and Hezbollah.

-Jay

Your cartoon is offensive. The cartoon is blood libel and reflects the anti-semitisim practiced during the middle ages, nazi germany and the middle east. However, I supposed this cartoon is what one would expect from someone with no college education and whose hobbies in high school included weed addiction.

-anonymous poser girl via myspace.com



Horrors Unimagined!!!

Hi. I wrote a one-act play called Superwoman vs. the League of Evil. It was supposed to debut last month, but there were scheduling conflicts. The league of evil had to work every weekend in July. So we moved it to August. Then Superwoman had to go out of the country for two weeks. So we moved it to September. Then we lost our rehearsal space. Then Superwoman decided it was more important to go to Austin for a week than come to rehearsal. So we sacked her. Now after recasting the lead of the play and restarting rehearsals in my living room we've found out that startng in September the venue we were scheduled to perform in is closing down for two months to remodel. I swear that if this keeps up I'm going to put Superwoman in a Santa suit and call it a Christmas play. I have to wonder if this damn thing will ever see the light of day, it feels like this show is a flying dutchman; cursed to wander the earth trying to find someone to listen to it's message of insanity, identity and alternate realities.

Love,
Alex Wukman

UNDERWORLD'S MONTHLY BASH

UPCOMING DATES:

08.12.06
- The Leo's Ball
- Guest DJs Genesis & Breye (Provision)
- $7 Cover

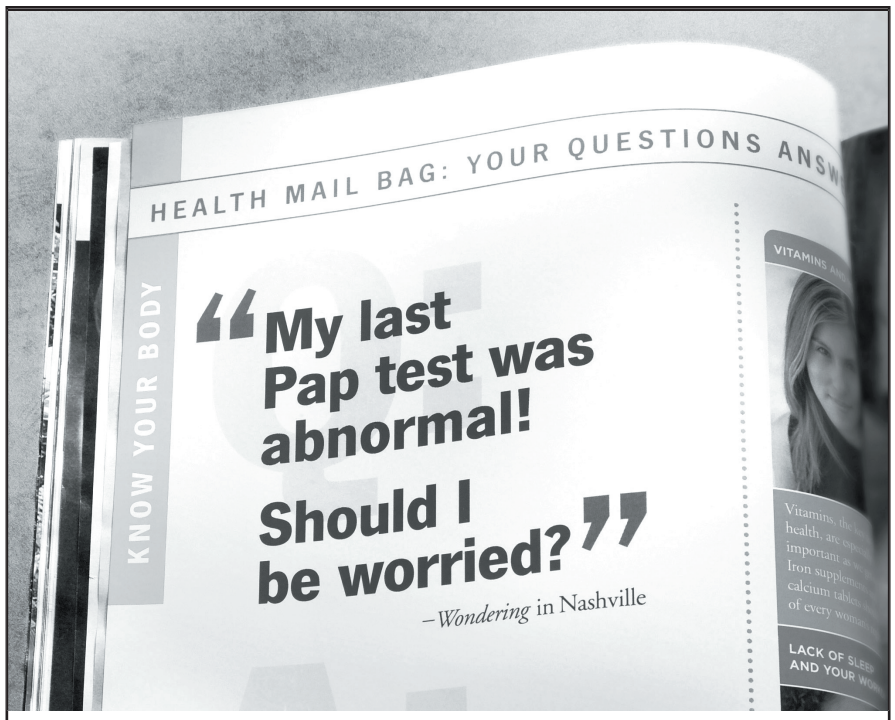
10.07.06
- Azrael's Accomplice Designs 10 Year Anniversary Fashion Show w/ Opening Show By Subkult Clothing (Austin)
  www.azacdesigns.com
  www.typografix.com/skk
- $7 Cover

10.21.06
- The Dance Macabre II
- Vendors, Door Prizes & Giveaways
- $7 Cover

- Spinning The Best of Goth / Industrial / EBM & Everything In Between
- w/ DJs Pthalo, Hideous & Mina
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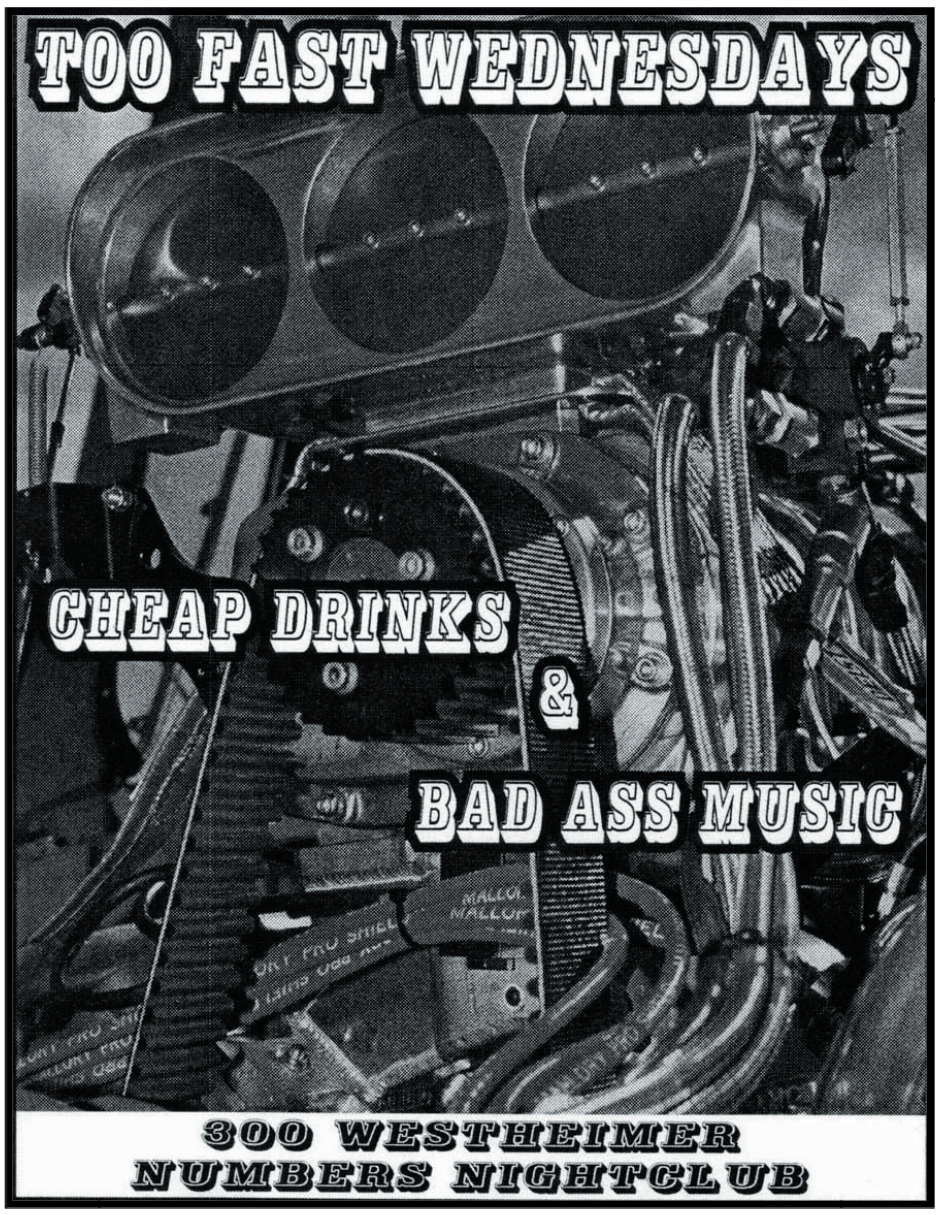
It's not uncommon to worry about an abnormal Pap test result, which could be caused by a number of things. This includes high-risk HPV (Human Papillomavirus), a common sexually transmitted infection which may cause problems of the cervix, and rarely, even cancer. A medical research study for women with cervical high-risk HPV is being conducted by physicians in your area. To find out more, call Planned Parenthood of Houston and SE Texas, Inc. at (713) 831-6561 or visit www.indigo4women.com today.

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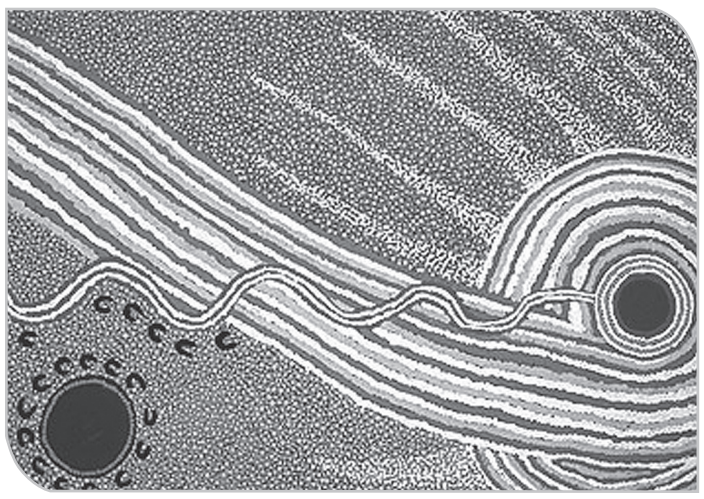
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J. Todd Allison, Marilyn P. Hemenway & Brent Kollock: Squiggs
G Gallery 301 E. 11th Street
Through September 2. (713) 869-4842



Dreamtime: Affordable Works by Emerging Aboriginal Artists
Booker-Lowe Gallery 4623 Feagan
Through September 2. (713) 880-1541



Houston Folk:African American Self-Taught Artists
TSU Museum 3100 Cleburne Avenue
Through Septemeber 10th



Summer Sucks III: Fast and Hot
Commerce Street Artist Warehouse
Through August 31. (832) 724-9464

DEBRIS: We Bleed

Buffalo Sean



Some people are total douchebags. Clark Flood, newly of glasstire.com, is one of them. In an acerbic take on the mal-nourished culture of Houston, Clark writes:

"Our sickly, paralyzed art community. Our bed-ridden, sore-covered art community. Pustulent. Cramped. Mortified. Necrotic. Deathly ill art community."

In taking the bureaucratic machinery to task the author indicts the whole of artistic production under the banner of non-profits and museums, the wasteful tumors of a aristocratic patronage system. Obsessed with painting the artworld as "prostitutes"; the shrill scream of



"Whores lie!" rings through Flood's ears, and unfortunately ours too.

Well mister sour grapes, what can you ever expect from the landed gentry besides entropy? How many in a position of power has ever had the chutzpah to enliven their situation with a long shot, a little chaos? Look not to the establishment for invigoration, it's at the edges and outside the white box that things really happen.

"'We're part of an alienated, mediocre art scene, crawling with scabby posers and itchy wanna-bes. We tested positive for Acquired Academic Schlock Syndrome and it's likely we have grant-fever. We probably got it from using a toilet seat right after some curatorial peckerwood!'"

One of the most transparent offenders, Art League Houston consistently gets spread-eagle offering exhibit space to bureaucrats of other institutions, nuzzling that nose further up the ass of whomever is nearby and horny. Something is up at The Contemporary Arts Museum when you can pick out the curator of the current exhibit based on stereotypes and political agendas. A retrospective, and/or semi-famous American exhibit? Lynne Herbert. Obscure, terribly hip, and dry-as-a-bone foreign artist? Paola Morsiani. African, or African-American work? Valerie Cassell. Come on guys, don't we deserve a little more credit? A little more diversity? The Lawndale Art Center, a spunky orphan of the University of Houston oh so many years ago, tries real hard ya'll – but the ennui of making decisions by committee does nothing for the great white box the Lawndale is known for.

"There's the mandatory positive attitude that turns everybody involved into lying whores." Fuck a bunch of that shit. If there is a generational split in America it may be that the progressives of the last generation cannot see past their own irony, while we of a younger persuasion can. Not that there's anything wrong with being jaded, but not being able to be positive can sure take a toll on people listening to you. Outside the money system where a Republican



party machine spin is de rigueur, optimism is the exclusive property of those of us who can't remember Reagan in the White House. Like hippies on acid, like Kerouac climbing a mountain, there's no reason to give up the ability to offer encouragement along with the derision.

Signs of life include independent curators The Young Republic, Texas United, Video Time, American Wandering Club, Art Star, and Michelle White; collectives Otabenga Jones, Lollipauperz, I Love You, Baby, Guerilla Art Show, and 713 Noise; artists Virginia Smith, Frank Olson, Maria Guzman, Adrian Brooks, and Daniel Adame.

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Change of Perspective

by Michael Bergeron

It's amazing how the depth of space can change the perspective on a work of art. Try 30,000 square feet of graphic art exhibition space for Singular Multiples: The Peter Blum Edition Archive, 1980-1994 now on display in the Law Building of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (taking up an entire wing).

Blum sees himself as the art world equivalent of a movie producer. Starting with what he described as "the shift to international art in the early 1980s" Blum sought art prints, many which could only be created in singular ways, and more often than not images that fit as a portfolio in a suitcase. In many cases, like a producer, he found workspaces and materials for his coterie of artists and promoted the subsequent prints.

Over 20 artists are represented, as well as over a dozen printers, one of whom Blum had to convince to print a series known as The Collinasca Cycle on special paper. Previously that printer only used their own manufactured paper.

The American artist John Baldessari took a black-and-white photo from an English film called No Orchids for Miss Blandish (1948, released in the US as Black Dice) and manipulating the image ("photographically transferred to an etching plate") divided it into nine different prints that heighten or obscure certain details of the original photo. Further research on that source movie reveals that not only does the film no longer exist it also was considered so violent (probably action that would be shown on network television today) that it ruined the careers of the director and star.

There's more than one centerpiece to this exhibit but standing out are a series of three woodcut prints that are billboard size (approx 107 by 188 inches each) from German artist Josef Felix Miller. They were carved into a hardwood floor with a chainsaw and knives then Miller got dancers to walk in patterns over a paper canvas placed over the inked floor.

One has to look up as they are hung above eye level. Seen up close the images seem to combine horrific collisions of animals and body parts. Seen all the way across the museum, from the second floor looking down onto the first level, the tormented swirls of the images come into a different focus and the color of each one (violet, blue, dark green) becomes apparent.

Also running throughout the summer in the adjacent Beck Building is Gee's Bend: The Architecture of the Quilt. Hung on walls rather than spread over sofas and beds these piecemeal cloth blankets and quilts qualify as art with their asymmetrical shapes and mismatched textures. Corduroy, cotton and denim meet to form impressive unique patterns. One difference between a Gee's Bend quilt and the quilt your grandmother sewed is that grandmas is probably stored in some closet and the Gee's Bend quilts are selling in galleries for as much as $25,000.

One difference between a Gee's Bend quilt and the quilt your grandmother sewed is that grandmas is probably stored in some closet and the Gee's Bend quilts are selling in galleries for as much as $25,000.

When the museum held their press preview for this show it was unlike any previous museum function I had ever attended. Many of the Gee's Bend, Alabama quilt makers or their descendents were present. As the speakers told their family history the oration slanted into a rousing gospel-style celebration with many audience members periodically shouting out "Amen." The only disappointment was when the press went upstairs for a formal lunch whereas the family members got to dine on Bar-B-Q in the museum's Café Express.

Singular Multiples remains on display until October 15, and the Gee's Bend exhibit ends on September 4.

Now for the truly macabre, an exhibition that even a few years ago one could only imagine in a medical school museum. The Houston Museum of Natural Sciences, in partnership with the Baylor College of Medicine, presents Dr. Gunter von Haagens' Body Worlds 3.

Legally, American laws prevented von Haagen from bringing his dissected gorilla on this most recent of his tours. Don't worry, whether it's a horse in mid-gallop or a ballerina in a bow with the skin removed and all the inside showing, it's all in this show.

Sure, some of the corpse poses are artistic and downright hilarious, like a group of skeletal-and-organ-revealing poker players. Part of von Haagen's humor can be seen in one grinning card player whose blackened lungs reveal how much they smoked in life. His process, called plastination, removes all liquid from the corpse in a vacuum and halts decomposition. von Haagen claims his specimens will last longer than Egyptian mummies.

After the main press conference, an electronic media affair with cameras focusing on all areas but the human and animal genitals, von Haagen frankly spoke to print media in a round table lunch session in the basement of the HMNS. As a youth he wanted to become a sculptor but all that was sanctioned were busts of Lenin or Stalin. Not long after von Haagen was imprisoned in East Germany after being caught while distributing flyers protesting the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Now von Haagens puts his talent towards what he described as the "democratization of anatomy." Perhaps not oddly, his company was approached about the plastination of Pope John Paul II's heart for display in a Polish Church. Vatican officials eventually decided against that proposal.

During the Renaissance medical doctors would perform public autopsies. The Rembrandt painting The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaas Tulp depicts such an operation. Like the physician in that painting, von Haagen too wears a distinctive hat at all times while in public.

The Body Worlds 3 exhibit runs at the HMNS until September 4.


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Is Yellow Funny?

by Michael Bergeron

In an article about early horror film posters Stephen King mentions that yellow is never used for comedy. It's hard to visualize many yellow posters although the one-sheet for The Shining (a horror film) comes to mind.

So along comes a comedy that's not about to be painted into a corner. In the poignant and funny ensemble film Little Miss Sunshine not only does the poster glare with yellow, but one scene-stealing character is a yellow VW van.

For LMS's directors Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris the decision to modify their character's beliefs and feelings started with a color scheme. "People, whether they know it or not, tend to flock to certain colors," Dayton told Free Press Houston while in town promoting the film.

With so many characters dominating the frame they didn't want people to get lost or confused. Regarding the part of the suicidal uncle played by Steve Carell, Faris noted: "He was like this clean plate. He comes to stay with this family and he's drained of all life and color."

Adds Dayton: "We all go through calamity, but then later we can laugh at it, and learn."

In LMS Carell wears complete white in every scene. His pajamas are white with a monogram, and even when he dons a pink shirt, it looks white. His sister (Toni Collette) and her family, including husband Greg Kinnear whose goal is preaching a nine-step self-awareness program that nobody cares about, a cynical teen Paul Dano who reads Nietzsche and refuses to speak, and the drug snorting grumpy grandpa (Alan Arkin), are multi-hued. When their daughter Olivia (Abigail Breslin) gets accepted in a children's beauty pageant (sardonic shades of JonBenet Ramsey) the only way this dysfunctional Albuquerque family can come together is to hop into their family van and drive to California.

"We came up with a color scheme for the movie," Faris related. "We picked three predominant colors. There's turquoise that Richard wears (Kinnear), Olive always has some element of red, and then there's the yellow of the car, and the house has a warmish gold color to it."

Dayton and Faris made their mark with award winning rock videos and cutting edge commercials. Even though those particular film projects pay the big salary it's a labor of love like Little Miss Sunshine to which they proudly point.

Dayton and Faris took as much care in choosing the car as they did in casting the superlative list of actors.

The VW van hails from the 1970s, a bit more conservative in its angles and lines as





LEFT: The yellow VW van is as much a character as the actors in Little Miss Sunshine.
RIGHT: Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris, directors on the set.

compared to the 1960s-era VW vans. "We didn't want it to be so groovy," says Dayton. "Or too cute" chimes Faris. "This wasn't Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, and as the movie progressed it became clear how important the car was as a character," explained Dayton.

One audience pleasing sequence has the VW's horn malfunctioning, over and over and over. The film only gets funnier with each languid beep. "The sound guy literally took a horn apart and dragged a bare wire across the connection to get that sickly sound," laughs Dayton.

Little Miss Sunshine is currently playing in area theaters.

While DVDs and home entertainment systems have eroded movie crowds there's always a new hook the studios and theaters have to attract people back to the plush darkness that we call cinema. Currently that angle is 3-D.

The recent Superman Returns was spiced up with proprietary software that converts two-dimension to three-dimension. A handful of times during the film an icon appears along the bottom of special 70mm IMAX prints of Superman Returns clueing the audience to put on their 3-D glasses. The effect is simply astounding especially in the Space Shuttle/Airliner crash scene. But wait, Ant Bully, Monster House and the upcoming Happy Feet are all being released in flat and 3-D version. Next year's sure thing Spiderman 3 will be completely shot in 3-D. Classics as recent as Nightmare Before Christmas will be re-released in new 3-D prints. How long before great films from every decade of the last century get a theatrical 3-D once-over? Seeing is believing – ask anybody who has seen one of the recent 3-D releases. Now if theater companies would only upgrade the stale popcorn and cola drinks the total experience would improve three-fold.

Oddly, two films released this year share a few similarities – only one will open and close in relative obscurity while the other claims the prize as one of the year's top grossing films.

The Celestine Prophecy rolls out in true platform style (city by city, August 11 in Houston at the Angelika). By contrast The Da Vinci Code revealed itself to moviegoers in a worldwide marketing blitz. Both movies are based on hugely successful books, although Celestine Prophecy was originally self-published. Both books involve a quest. And both books offer an alternative view of spirituality not found in your weekly mass or religious service. Oh yes, both movies feature Jurgen Prochnow as a baddie.

Celestine's journey to the Andes beckons like a modern day search for Shangri-La (Lost Horizon), only with an angry junta army in pursuit. You will recognize most of the B-list actors who populate The Celestine Prophecy. Some of the action scenes are exciting, at other times the action seems clichéd. Still, this is a film about the vibrations of life, and the kind of groundswell that another metaphysical film, What the Bleep, enjoyed on the art house circuit seems like a natural.



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Libérez les Moutons

By Kwame M. Anderson

There has been much talk among the Christian community about the Middle East wars signaling the end of the world. However, I would like to add that while I do not wholly subscribe to the Christian faith, I can say that is something we may agree on. Just kidding. Of course it's not the end of the world. Of course the Middle Eastern nations will find a diplomatic solution amidst the death and mayhem. Of course the Iraqi people will realize the good of America's attack. Everything will be fine. The world will recognize that it is destroying itself. The environmental hazards will be reversed, love will take us all over, and we will stop this ball of fire we call life in the new millennium. I believe, do you believe? My children will live in a world where democracy and logic will overhaul hatred, bigotry, and capitalistic, imperialistic regimes. For any day, we will all know that there is one God, and we will all worship the same God, and there will be no need for masters or servitude, or separation. You believe that, don't you? The government of every nation will take responsibility for the plight and suffering of their people, and poverty and death from disease will end. There will be international health care, the hungry will be fed, and the rich will impart wealth amongst the poor. The world will become one nation, separated not by class, color, or deity, but only by water and land. I can see this future, can you people? Can you not imagine this? I also believe that once the pot wears off, I will forget everything I just wrote, deny ever writing it, and instead settle on a comfortable chair and eat a bag of Doritos.

Hello people, for I have been seeking employment. Surely you can't believe that this article pays my bills, the truth is free. I will not charge you for the truth, but deception, that is where I hope to profit. While I may write these things that act as rebellious rants towards to "the man," it is working for that man that will pay my bills, so under the guise of humor and lucidity I will cop to these ramblings, but only under that guise. For if questioned, I will deny my name, because there is no money in the truth , there is, however, money in entertainment, escapism, denial if you will. Watching the news at the present time would lead one to see the world as depressing, sad, like a stripper's past. Well, not focusing on that life and getting jacked up on substances and sensations, is the key. Like any exotic dancer would tell, "Fuck all that shit, and put a dollar in my panties."

So let the party begin….

MUSIC PLAYED LIVE

9/2/06

RAKIM w/ V Zilla

Warehouse Live

Is this show important? Yes, if you are over thirty and remember when lyrics were the basis of hip hop success. Rakim is perhaps one of the finest emcees to ever grace the mike, BUT you very rarely see him mentioned as one of the greatest rappers on the proverbial lists, and his accomplishments are not as heralded as they would be say he had been murdered or incarcerated. So yes, there was rap music before Biggie and Pac, and yes, at one time what you actually rapped about mattered. So, let's say the nostalgia of the pre-everybody's-from-the-ghetto-and that's-all-the black-experience-is phase of rap interests you, Rakim is coming to town. This is special, but kind of in that support the old school way. Let's be honest, nobody bought Rakim albums when they were out, and outside of his possible collaboration with Dr. Dre, a lot of those people at this show won't be able to name any Rakim song he released in the last 10 or so years. But, V Zilla is opening, and this will lend him credibility for performing with a legend, and it will make those who never saw Rakim in his heyday feel like they are witnessing something important. Some of you will go see Devo, some of you will go see Rakim. As long as you have a ball, as long as you have a ball.

9/6/06

THE ADVANTAGE

Walter's On Washington

The Advantage is a band that plays covers of songs from Nintendo game soundtracks. I know, it doesn't sound interesting, unless you're into that kind of thing, which a lot of people are. There are some fantastic musicians in the band which gives the music that "oh shit" factor necessary to really enjoy instrumental rock. Add to that the accuracy at which the melodies are re-created, and you have something to get excited about. Only thing is, I never had a Nintendo, so I would go more to see the band, than to actually be like, "Man, is that the theme music from Castlevania!" But hey, some of you may know that kind of thing, and you know, you may also know the intricacies of Rush albums. Musically, the band kicks ass, and that's the most important thing.

MUSIC PLAYED ON DEVICES

Tapes N' Tapes

The Loon

(XL Recordings)

There used to be a hotter market for guitar based indie music. A time when bands like Guided by Voices and Pavement were praised. A time when quirky songwriting and sloppy song presentation was grand. I'm one of those people who has not completely embraced the disco, new wave, thing that permeated a lot of rock, and hey, I have no desire to hear the "next' Zeppelin or whatever, so this album is right up my alley. Minnesota's Tapes N' Tapes is one of the bands that will make a lot of hipster lists, but you don't have to be hip to dig it. It's basically why we all loved indie rock. "Manitoba" is a good middle ground between Stephen Malkmus and Frank Black. "Cowbell" contains the lyric, "I've been a better lover with your mother." "Illiad'" is maybe about sailing, maybe it's about the actual story, or maybe it's about love. "Crazy Eights" has that sloppy Fall-esque quality that drove so many of us amateur guitar players to forego practicing for pretension, it's not what you play it's how you play it. The album has a young energy, unaffected by the

More Shows



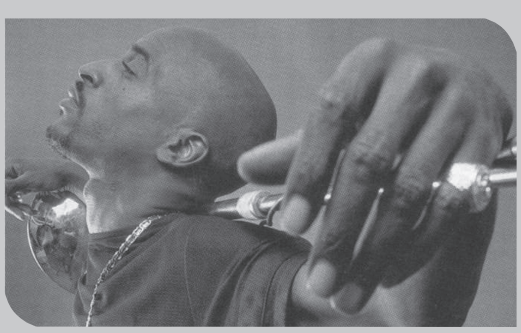
Stadium
8/19 @ Walter's



Voidmate
8/26 @ Super Happy fun Land



Zipperneck
8/19 @ Meridian



Rakim
9/2 @ Warehouse Live



The Generic Tribe
8/19 @ Helios



Jude Ross
8/24 @ Rudyard's

current state of rock, and that actually owes more to rock music from your collection, than your parents.

XIU XIU
The Air Force
(5RC)

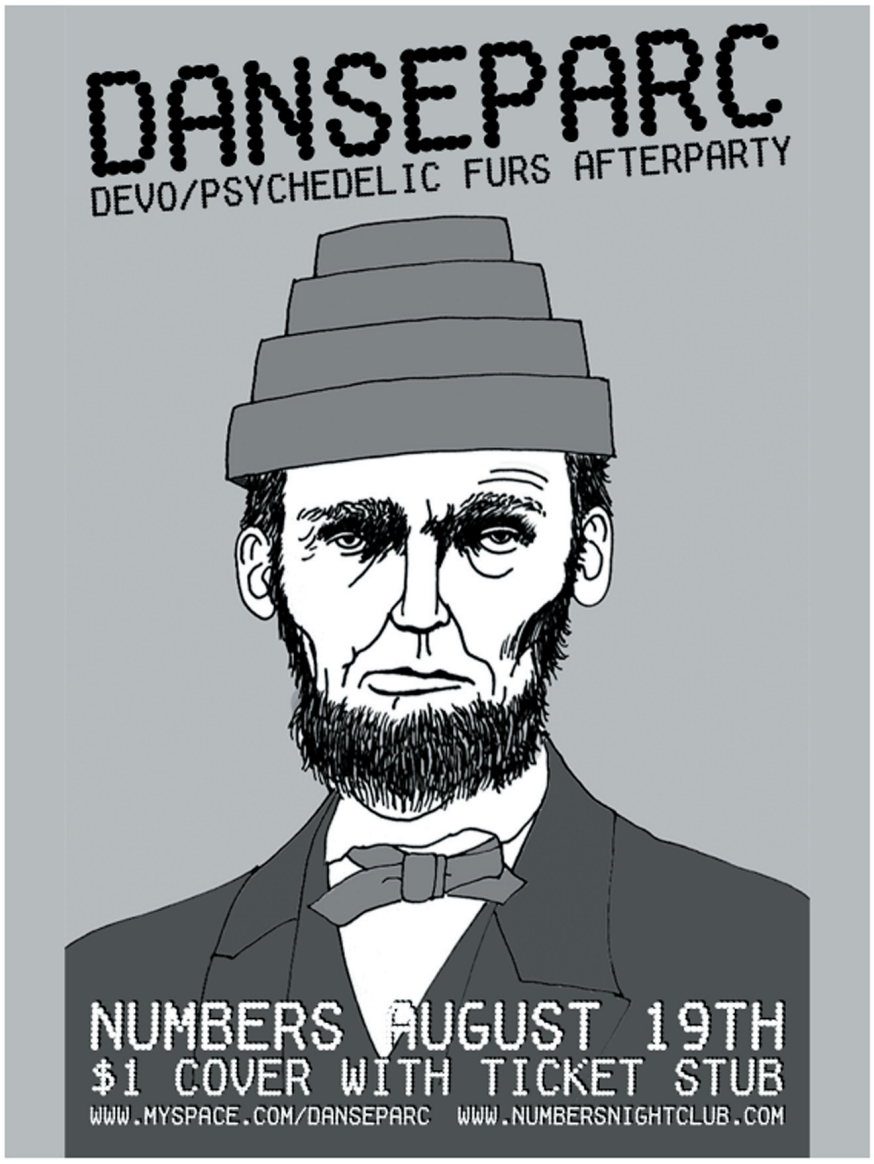
Xiu Xiu has never made an album that is anything but emotionally enthralling. This album is no different there are the uncomfortable moments of silence, the affected tones. Rhythmically, Xiu Xiu has always walked a line between groove and chaos, well this albums grooves, albeit in a chaotic way. Produced with Greg Saunier (of Deerhoof), the album has many shades "Buzz Saw," and 'Boy Soprano" could almost be rand b songs in the Timbaland vein. They move you, while they move you. "Hello From Eau Claire"' is reminiscent of Bjork's 'Hyper Ballad" although more skewered, but it's there. This is double edged album it can make you dance, but upon further inspection there is still that slightly dark quality. Play it at a party, play it at a rally, play it at a rally for a party.

THE HOWLING HEX
Nightclub Version of The Eternal
(Drag City)

The Howling Hex plays New Border rock n' roll. What is that? It is music of a tradition that doesn't exploit tradition. There are pieces of many types of music, but played in a style that is so blurred and tainted, that you may hear afro beat and tropicalia within the same guitar line. It's a difficult thing to grasp, maybe, but let's not over intellectualize it. There are riffs, there are bass lines, there is a funkiness. "Good Things Are Easy"' is a song that could play at a juke joint or dance club in Kenya. As Neil Hagerty is part of The Howling Hex, smoking guitars solos are a must and are present in all of their harmelodic glory. While the direction of The Howling Hex is hard to predict, this one has more in common with their boogie woogie classic All Night Fox than the swamp romp of You Can't Beat Tomorrow, but the mood of both albums still exists and leaks from the songs.

Yeah, I know I haven't given a clear vision of what is, but what it is is clear. It's New Border rock played by The Howling Hex. Hop on that train and don't look back.

RIP ARTHUR LEE





MERIDIAN
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Sun. 27 - Gorilla Biscuit w/ Comeback Kid, Terror

Mon. 28 - The Rollins Band W/ X, The Riverboat Gamblers

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Wed. 30 - Bodog Battle of the Bands

Fri. Sept. 1 - Labor of Love Tour

Sat. 2 - Houston Metal Fest

Sun. 3 - Genitallica

Wed. 6 - Bodog Battle of the Bands

Mon. - Sep. 11 - Bodog Battle of the Bands

Tues. - Sep. 12 - Hank Williams III w/ Bob Wayne & The Outlaw Carnies

Wed. - Sep. 13 - Ben Kweller

Thur. - Sep. 14 - Eric Sardinas

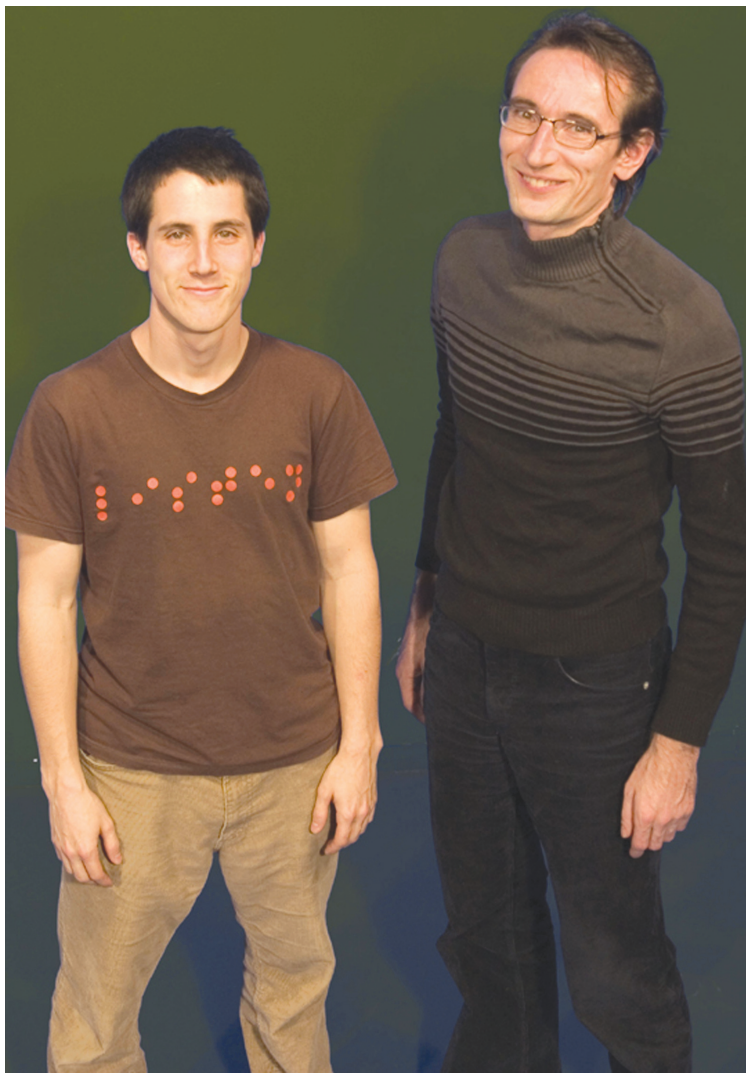
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Issue 69 | 08/06



Your favorite band versus Hummer

Or: Tearing The Books in half

By Lance Scott Walker

So The Books sold out.

No, that's not harsh, nor judgmental. It's just the truth. The very fabric of the term "sellout" applies here, in its purest form.

Earlier this year, there was a big uproar in the press about the fact that both The Thermals and Trans Am turned down licensing dollars from Hummer to allow their songs to appear in commercials. To talk numbers, The Thermals were offered $50,000 to lend out "It's Trivia" and Trans Am was offered $180K for "Total Information Awareness." Why the disparity between the two offers is anyone's guess, but it matters little in the end: both bands refused. To quote one member of The Thermals in particular: "Anyone *but* Hummer."

But The Books, those quiet scientists behind some of the most unique, delicate and otherworldly records any of us had heard in years, *did* take the dough.

Maybe this was so shocking because The Books, to a lot of us, seemed like the most non-vocal of bands. For all the outspoken Vedders and Stipes out there, who crawl up our spines by heaving their outlandish, hypocritical "indie" shtick at us in the shadow of cushy major label deals, there are the true underground artists out there who say very little. And I don't mean 'underground' in the respect that they'll only sell as many records in a career as they pay in rent in two months; I mean underground in the sense that they make records for the art of it and little more. A platform, for many, only comes when they've got a comfy enough nest egg under them to mouth off.

Which brings us to the website for the Northeastern duo, where they all but confess that their state of financial freedom is anything but, making a sort of plea for support from their fans:

Our work, although deeply satisfying to us, has left us both on the brink of financial collapse since we began, so we are asking you: Please, do not steal our music thinking that we can afford it. We barely get by, and aren't able to afford basic things like health insurance, let alone raising a family, etc. We love what we do, and we love that people listen, but if you would like to see our work continue, please support us, and all of the artists you enjoy, as directly as possible.

It sounds mortal—and it is. The Books are human. They're not pop stars. They're not even rock stars (yes, there is a difference). They live an uncharmed, unsexy life of unpaid bills and mounting debt that can only serve to drive their creative interests right back into their gut with a good, swift mean kick at the end of each month.

And then Hummer comes along, dripping with cash and screaming for credibility…

We'll take the dough.

But The Books have to realize that, as entertainers, their livelihood is inherently fan-based. They wouldn't have their records pressed if they had no concern about reaching people that connect with their music and would become fans of their band. That said, they've taken a gamble by selling their music *back* to the ears of the public through advertisers, and particularly such a gut-wrenchingly awful company such as Hummer. I mean, how many of us got sick to our stomachs when we heard "Lust for Life" advertising the first of the 5,000 products and radio shows to which it has since played soundtrack? But even Iggy himself noted (and I paraphrase): *use my songs to sell whatever you please, because they weren't conceived commercially.*

Now multiply that by the variable of using one's song to license Hummer, of all products, and the commercial (read: fan-based) risk goes up. In an Associated Press article that ran in The Austin American-Statesman back in February, Lyle Hysen of Bank Robber Music (who works with Hummer on licensing music from bands) told Otis Hart the following:

"I will say about the Hummer guys, they are some of the most intense music listening guys out there. They are on my A-list. They find music on their own, go to shows, they aren't waiting for a major label to call them."

Yeah, so what? One can't be applauded for having good taste in music when they have zero ethical standards in an employer. Dumping corporate money towards independent or underground acts isn't going to do much to quell the distaste that most of us (probably a lot of you reading this article) have for Hummer and its useless, gas-swallowing, absolutely *perfect* example of American excess.

Andrew Morgan—former Houstonian, currently Seattleite and now with Aero Booking—turned me on to The Books years ago. He said it best: "While it completely destroys whatever indie cred they might have had, it doesn't diminish their worth. They're musicians trying to make a living. While I don't agree with their choice in advertiser, I don't exactly blame them or hold it against them. I mean if they were like on a cigarette billboard I'd take them a lot less seriously, or like... dynamite."

On the artist's side, the bottom line is that, for better or worse, you're jerking with your fans, the very people that support you, when you introduce an unwanted commercial element into your music. Especially something like this (Hummer). It's difficult to really argue out exactly *why* selling out for licensing grates on the nerves of music fans, but it would be fair to say that fans of a band's music want to feel as if that band's music somehow *belongs* to them as fans. If only a little bit. Regardless, it should be mentioned that The Books aren't the first. Your beloved Diplo, LFO, Everything But The Girl, The Album Leaf, and Casino Vs Japan have all given in. The Books were just the ones we all expected to do so last.

THE Rhythm Room

Hammerly
Britmoore
Westview
Beltway 8 West
I-10 West

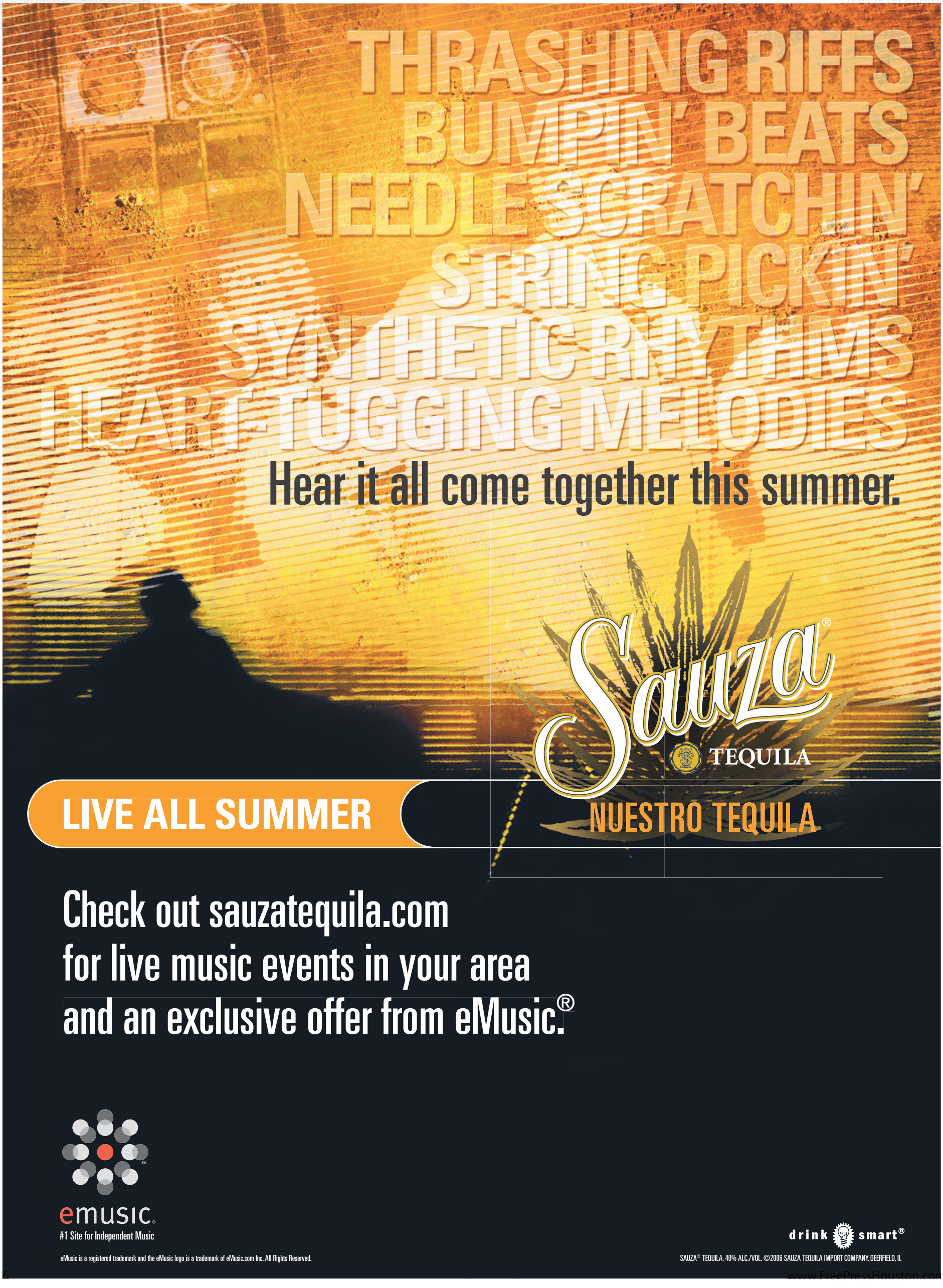
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Free Press Houston
Issue 69 | 08/06

The Squared-Circle of Next-Gen

By Tyler Barber

The looming holiday season has you honing your choice for your next-gen console. Sony's Playstation 3 will bring unprecedented punching power to the console market, and will have a strong third party library in its corner. To round out Sony's competition the marginally less powerful Xbox 360 has been fighting for the heavy-weight belt for a year now and has caught its second wind with their ultra accessible Xbox Live service and accompanying Xbox Live Arcade. What about Nintendo you ask? Officially Nintendo claims not to be in competition with either company, and that their console is so vastly different that they are in their own weight-class. Sony echo's this meme saying that the PS3 is not a video game console, rather that it is a high performance computer (whaa?). This guide will usher you past the pre-fight hype to the front row of the next-gen championship.

Playstation 3 - Sony



Pros

- **The most powerful system.** In terms of graphics the PS3 sports the fanciest footwork, and can take a virtual pounding of information with either the 20 or 60 gigabyte hard drive.
- **High Definition Gaming.** The PS3 will bring you the MGM Grand of viewing pleasure. 1080p, true high definition, delivers Sony's final blow in the graphics throw-down.
- **Strong AAA support.** You mean car towing service? No, AAA titles are those franchises that receive movie quality production (ex: God of War, Metal Gear Solid, Final Fantasy), and the PS3 will host these few ultra-polished exclusives.
- **Free Online Service.** Details are dodgy, but Sony boasts free online gaming with all the bells and whistles found on Microsoft's Xbox Live Gold service, and throws in web-surfing to boot.
- **Blue-Ray.** Consoles are having their next-gen bout and so are disc media. Blue-Ray stands opposite High Definition DVD with more storage capability. Expect seven to eight times the storage of DVDs.
- **PSP Connectivity.** Though many gaming refs are counting Sony's PSP down for the count, the PS3 may inject some needed motivation in the PSP's corner. The PSP could be used as glorified controller to a complimentary screen for innovative gameplay.

Cons

- **Expensive.** Both the console and the games are going to be the high-rollers on store shelves. Shadow-boxing Microsoft, Sony has two console packages, one premium at $600 and one neutered-retard-version at $500
- **Expensive.** Gamers aren't the only ones throwing in the towel on Sony's ginormously priced console. Development costs are TKO'ing games left and right, and their black and blue developers are looking toward the other two consoles to train their creativity.
- **More Powerful?** Though the PS3 is more powerful than the other two, it is only marginally more powerful. Don't expect to be blown away by killer visuals at launch as most launch games are going to have graphics identical to their Xbox 360 rivals. In fact developers may not begin to push the machine to it limits for years to come.
- **Its Big.** Sony weighs in as the heaviest and biggest console. If you've seen how big the 360 is in person, imagine a system wider, taller and longer than that.
- **No Feeling.** Due to a ka-trillion dollar lawsuit Sony is barred from using any rumble technology in their new controller. I love my vibrating controller. This is a big one.
- **Their President.** Ken Kutaragi has been saying some crazy stuff lately (the PS3 is not a gaming console, people would buy if there were no games on it etc.). So crazy that this game journalist is coining him as the Don King of gaming.

Xbox 360 - Microsoft



Pros

- **Xbox Live.** Microsoft has established the fundamental footwork in next-gen online gaming. If Sony or Nintendo plans to dominate in this area they better watch plenty hi-light reels from the 360's online triumphs.
- **3rd Party Support.** The 360 is a well-rounded machine. Not the strongest, not the weakest, not the most expensive, and is easy to develop for. Therefore, 3rd party developers are more apt to throw their big bucks and development time at the 360.
- **A Year Head Start.** The bumpy launch of the 360 has been beaten smooth and now time has shown developers how to get more punch out of the system. The games releasing this Fall are what we expect of next-gen. Will Nintendo and Sony have enough steam out of the gates?
- **Hardware Add-ons.** Not just gimmicky hype, the 360 is bringing an arsenal of peripherals this holiday including the High-Definition Disc Reader and the Xbox Live Vision (a USB camera).
- **Xbox Live Arcade.** So you got a knock-out system with true next-gen visuals and gameplay, what about the off-season? XBLA offers fast, easily accessible (stored on the HDD) arcade games. XBLA's leaderboards magnify what made earning the high-score so alluring.
- **Halo.** Not only Halo, but all those killer exclusives like Gears of War and Mass Effect will make the 360's fight one for the record books.

Cons

- **Less Fire-power.** Though only marginally weaker than the PS3, many consumers are going to view the 360's power as greatly inferior. This is not going to be an issue for the next two years, but expect the 360 to start aging before the PS3.
- **Weak First Round.** The 360's launch was pummeled by critics as developers slapped an extra 10 bucks on the price of their multi-platfrom game will no differentiation from the lesser. Compounded with some fierce punches by the way of massive system shortages and bugs, Microsoft has their work cut-out for them in gaining consumer trust.
- **Japan.** The Japanese hold a bigger market in gaming than the US. Microsoft, being aware of this, has tried to appeal to the island by gaining major Japanese developer support. Still, the 360 has done FAR worse in Japan than its predecessor; the Xbox.
- **Backward Compatibility.** What a mess. Many original Xbox games won't play on the 360. Not just any game, major critically acclaimed games like Psychonaughts, and Chronicles of Riddick.
- **Uncouth Hardware.** The power supply for the 360 is bigger than a boxing ring and the noise of the 360's cooling fan is louder than an arena full of heckling attendees.
- **Microsoft.** So what if Bill Gates plans to transfer his work-load from Microsoft to helping world poverty. He's still a reptoid and I'm sure he's only got the illuminate's plan for world domination in mind.

continued pg. 19



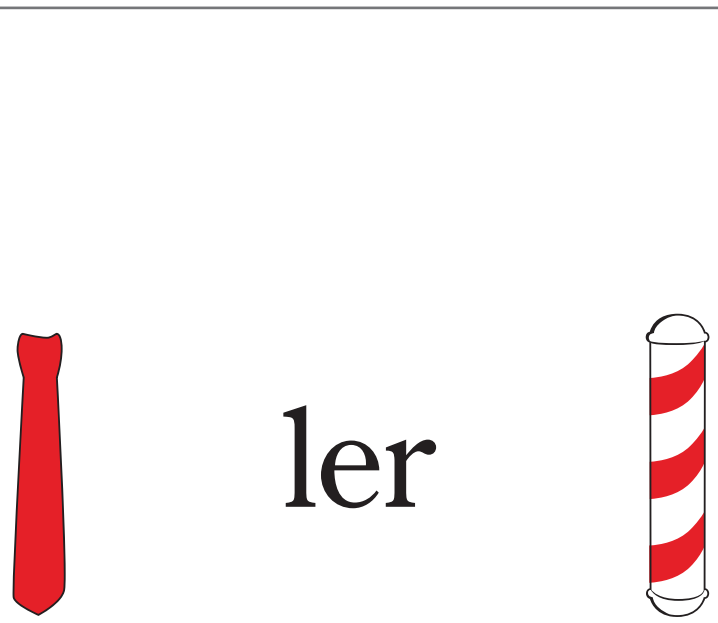
Wii - Nintendo

Pros

- **One word: Nintendo.** Remember who made you? Nintendo did gamer! Their first party games are some of the most creative, fun, and addictive games in the history of gaming. Mario and friends are sure-ringers in the Wii library.
- **Innovative.** The motion-sensor Wiimote™ will have hardcore and non-gamers alike waving their arms in the air reeling in virtual fish, flipping a pan of fried dumplings to anything developers dream up to make the Wii experience more tactile than anything we've played before.
- **Cheaper.** It will cost you no more than $250 to go toe-to-toe with the Wii. However, the exact price is still unknown as well as the exact launch date.
- **Cheaper**. The cheapest system to build games on is, by far, the Wii. Not only are production costs low, but the creative implications of the Wii have garnered wide-spread support from indie to AAA developers like Ubisoft, EA, Gearbox and Activision.
- **Smaller**. This light-weight will take half the space on your entertainment center and is clearly the best looking machine.
- **DS Connectivity.** Like the Gameboy Advance with the Gamecube, the DS will connect (via Bluetooth) with the Wii. Expect a fun TV screen to handheld gaming experience.

Cons

- **One word: Nintendo.** For many Nintendo is synonymous with kids, and Nintendo is aware of this. Ready to shake their kid-only appeal, Nintendo has an uphill battle convincing Grand Theft Auto weaned gamers of their mature intentions.
- **The Least Powerful System.** Without a wider audience gaming will become stagnant. Nintendo hopes to bridge the gap with innovative controls instead of pumping more iron into the hardware. With the show-stopping visuals of the 360 and PS3, Nintendo has to convince alot of people that playing=believing.
- **Innovation**. Though developers, gamers and the media are all buzzed about the new control scheme, the fact is that it is an untested formula. This ballsy' step could backfire and end in a quick KO for the Wii.
- **The Name**. Many people, (excluding myself) loath the name Wii. Nintendo nay-sayers and rouge fan-boys have littered the internet with plentiful Wii puns and trash-talk. Nintendo argues that names like Google and Ipod are equally strange so we'll use the ol' time will tell motto here.
- **Online**. For their handheld DS, Nintendo requires a "friend code" (comprised of the random numbers and letters reminiscent of those old NES game save codes) for each game in order to hook up with friends. This is like using 1920's boxing techniques against Evander Holyfield (not pretty).
- **Virtual Console**. This one will have to do to judges' decision. Games from the NES to the Nintendo 64, Sega Genisis, and Turbo Graphix 16 will be available for download for a fee. But how much? Just don't charge $20 for em' like you did with the Classics pack released on the GBA a few years back.



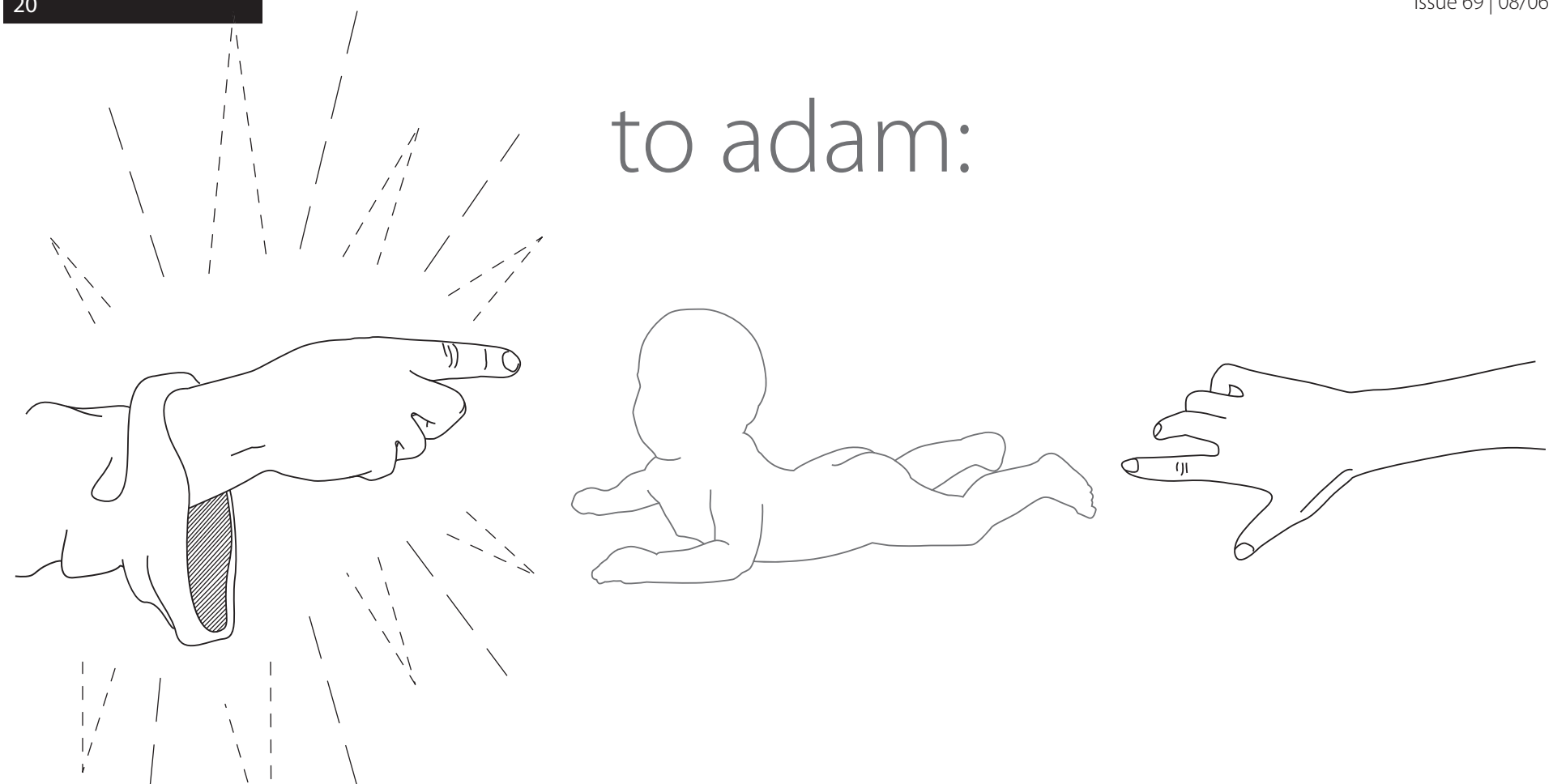
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Free Press Houston
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to adam:



what was it like, the night you were born?
did your mother get up from her bed when she felt a pain?
did she grab a coat before going out into the cold night?
did she make it out of the house before her water broke?

President's day, two days before my birthday, the phone rings.
"Is this Alex Wukman," asks the voice on the other end.
"Yes," I answer, "Who's this?"
"Mr. Wukman this is Deputy Mark _____ from the Fort Bend Sheriff's Homocide Division. Do you know Chelcey Pollock?" I swallow my heart.

did she know where she was going, or did she just walk?
how far did she go before she felt safe; half-a-mile, one, two?
did she go to the first empty field she could find or did she have one in mind?

"I know her," I say, "is she alright?"
"Chelcey is fine," he says, "I need to know if you had sexual relations with her."
"Yes," I say.

was it the field where she used to pretend she was a princess in the land of fairy kings?
or was it the one where she smoked pot and drank stolen beer?

"Congratulations Mr. Wukman you may be a father and Chelcey is the mother. I'm sorry Mr. Wukman, the baby is dead and we believe that Chelcey killed it."

did she shed her clothes as she parted the grass?
was she standing like Eve, naked waiting for you to come?
probably not, but I'd like to think so.
it makes it more romantic.
but what I want may not have happened, so I have to ask.

"Where were you on the night of January 20th?"
"I was out drinking."
was she lying in a patch of grass cursing, screaming?

how long did the labor last?
were you an easy birth or a difficult one?

"Can anyone verify that?"
"Yes quite a few people. Am I suspect?"
"No you are a material witness."
"Since she named you as a possible father we need to clarify some things."

after it was over did she smoke a cigarette and look at the stars?
did she see one shoot across the heavens?
did she pull a knife out of her pocket?
did she cut the cord easily, or did she have to saw it?

"When was the last time you talked to Chelcey?"
"Two or three weeks ago, I saw her at a poetry reading and she asked me if I was going to a show."
"Do you know the exact date?"
"The last Wednesday in January."
"That would make it the 25th. And you didn't notice that she was pregnant then?"
"Well she is a big girl, and she was wearing loose clothing."

did she wrap you in her coat to muffle your screams?
was she barefoot as she walked back to her house?
were you quiet when she got the shovel?
did you scream as she dug the hole?
"Did you speak to Chelcey after that night?"
"No. What happened to the baby? How did it die?"

what did she say when she laid you in the grave?
did she apologize as she poured the lighter fluid?
did she ask forgiveness when she set you on fire?
did you cry when she threw in the dirt?

"It was born on or about January 20th in a field. We have to wait for the autopsy results from the Galveston County M.E. to determine if the baby was born alive. Either way after it died she took it back to her parents house, set it on fire and buried it behind the garage where it remained until the neighbor's dog found it on Valentine's Day."

what was she thinking when you went quiet?
did she flick a cigarette on your grave or lay flowers?
did the door slam when she went inside?

"My God."
"Yes Mr. Wukman. I know this is hard to grasp. I'm going to need to take a statement."
"Do I have to come into the station to do that?"
"Normally yes, do you know the Jack in the Box on 59 and Hillcroft?"

did she crawl into bed and turn up the TV?
did she cry into her pillow?

"I can find it."
"Good I'll meet you there in two hours to take your statement."

probably not, but I'd like to think so.
it makes it more human.
but what I want didn't happen.

MOTOR HARLEY-DAVIDSON CYCLES

"I can't buy a Harley® because I don't know how to ride a motorcycle." While that may be technically true, let's sit on that for a second and follow that train of thought to its logical conclusion, in terms of your personal development thus far: "I can't leave my crib because I don't know how to walk." "I can't take off my diapers because I don't know how to control the natural urges of my bladder." "I can't French kiss because I don't know anything about France." "I can't get a job because I don't know how to work." "I can't buy a Harley because I don't know how to ride a motorcycle." Truth is, if you never learned anything new, you would never amount to squat.

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Issue 69 | 08/06

Justice Is Dead, If You're Born an Arab

by Lubna Hussain

I still feel a shudder of deja-vu at the irony with which I wrote last week about the 'generosity' of the US government's gift of 2,000 rolls of plastic sheeting to the Lebanese as it rushed precision guided missiles to its henchmen in Israel. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that my macabre analogy would become a self-fulfilling prophecy. But there it was right before my eyes. A picture of a series of tiny bodies wrapped in plastic sheets so magnanimously donated by Uncle George and Aunti Condi, callously murdered by the very weapons they had so eagerly equipped the Israelis with. The names of little Mehdi aged seven and Abbas aged one were scrawled in black ink on labels identifying the victims of the US-sponsored Israeli genocide of innocent Lebanese civilians. (I wonder if the felt tip pens and labels were included in the humanitarian aid packages as a gesture of thoughtfulness? What a touching detail!)



The obscene slaughter in Qana (and yes, for the hundreds of detractors who accused me of being 'bias', 'obscene slaughter' is a pathetically gross understatement for this wholesale annihilation that defies definition) of 62 people, 34 of whom were children, made my blood boil with anger. I read in absolute horror how the Israelis had, with 'surgical precision', bombed the house where these terrified souls had been hiding in the basement. Some of the children were awake playing when their lives were so cruelly cut short. Children. Babies. Murdered in cold blood.

But according to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert they had time to make a quick getaway. It was one o'clock in the morning for God's sake! Who would have warned them and where would they have gone considering his air force had already bombed the roads and gas stations in the vicinity? In whose footsteps were they expected to follow? All those others who had foolishly heeded Israeli warnings to evacuate and then were deliberately murdered as they fled? Perhaps they should have been more considerate and departed in an ambulance so that the big red cross on top would have made it easier for the Israeli fighter pilots to spot and hit?

And how absolutely awful that Fuad Siniora, the spoilsport prime minister of Lebanon, ordered Aunti Condi to call off her peace-making trip even though she had just been to the hairdresser's and ordered a new black suit especially for the occasion. And to add insult to injury he even insisted that she call a cease-fire! What on earth could he have been thinking? But that is of course yesterday's news. It seems that no massacre of civilians in Lebanon is worthy enough to secure a lull in the vicious and illegal Israeli onslaught that continues unabated with the full blessings of its American and British consorts. (Uncle George and Aunti Condi were enjoying a quiet dinner together as Tony Blair schmoozed with the rich and the beautiful in California and embarked on the more pressing campaign of sympathizing with Chelsea football players on the 'pressures of taking penalties'.) Even Israel's promise to halt the bombing for 48 hours after the Qana tragedy was yet another lie.

Within a few days the repeated cycle of shellings, killings and destruction will bore the already-jaded TV viewers and this tragedy will all too quickly be forgotten like its Iraqi, Palestinian and Afghani predecessors.

But we will never forget. Even though the so-called 'civilized world' may have its selective bouts of amnesia we will remember the people of Qana, like we remember the 106 refugees who were killed there by the Israelis as they sheltered in a UN base a decade ago. And what's more is we will recall with clarity what started this all in the first place.

The media circus would like us all to believe that this crisis has proliferated solely because of Hezbollah's irresponsible capture of Israeli soldiers. There is some truth to this. But I wonder how it is that statements by the Israeli government about threatening to take Lebanon back 20 years and putting the whole population of Gaza 'on a diet' are mysteriously seen as pacifist, uninflammatory and unprovocative? Does it not strike the intelligent reader as a bit strange that the kidnapping is considered such a heinous crime and an outrage whereas the illegal occupation of the Shebaa Farms and Tela Kafr Shooba in the South of Lebanon as well as the entire West Bank and the continuous build-up of illegal Israeli settlements is not?

But who talks of the Israeli abduction of a Palestinian doctor and his brother from Gaza that led to the eventual capture of these soldiers? Who even bothers to mention the fact that 10,000 Palestinian prisoners languish in Israeli jails? What about the Israeli bombing of a power station that condemns the already wretched Palestinians to a life without water or sewage? Or the wall of apartheid that has been constructed to strangle the Palestinians of their basic human rights?

Does anyone remember the failed illegal assassination attempt by Israel that not only missed its target, but left three Palestinian children dead and 15 civilians wounded on June 20? Or how about on June 13 when in a similar feat, the Israelis missed again (pinpoint accuracy, remember?) and killed nine? Or June 9 (perhaps that's pushing history a bit too far) when Israel shelled a beach in Beit Lahiya killing eight and injuring several others?

Oops! Silly me! I forgot that the dead I mentioned are Palestinians, the new millennium equivalent of the World War I term 'cannon fodder'. Am I mistaken or was it not the same Uncle George who warmly welcomed Prime Minister Siniora in the White House three months ago (now we're getting into pre-historic times!) praising the 'hundreds of thousands of people who took to the streets to express their desire to be free'? And now Uncle George leaves them 'free' to hang by allowing the Israelis a little bit more rope?

And, pardon me for asking, but if there was just such a huge threat to Israeli security by the crude missiles and rockets fired into it by Hezbollah why is it that the massive evacuation of foreigners that was so urgently carried out from Lebanon has not been deemed necessary from Israel?

The world is a sick place afflicted with a malaise of hypocrisy, deceit and treachery that has made it rotten to its core. The United Nations, perhaps one of the only bastions of remaining hope, was left neutered by the Israeli attack on its observation post leaving four of its personnel dead. How utterly bizarre that there was no expression of remorse or regret from either the US or British governments? A confirmation perhaps of the UN's increasing impotence on the global stage and yet another superfluous green light that Israel hardly needed to continue to run amok. It comes as no surprise that Aunti Condi is flogging the dead UN horse to pretend to seek a new resolution and international force to stall for time so that the carnage can continue giving Israel the all-clear to inflict more civilian casualties and obliterate the infrastructure of an entire country.

And if the EU was our last realistic hope for a diplomatic push, then here too we have been bitterly disappointed. Britain's and Germany's block of a call for an immediate cease-fire has taught us in the uncivilized world that the only lesson that is valuable to note is that justice is dead. At least if you're born an Arab.

If Bush, Blair and Olmert truly believe that their war crimes in Lebanon are going to crush the influence of Hezbollah they not only suffer from all of the aforementioned ailments but are, in addition to those, utterly delusional. The terrorists of tomorrow are being created by the failed politicians of today. And for those of you who are about to fill up my inbox with justification for these atrocities, just remember: you wouldn't try so hard to convince me if you didn't think I was right.

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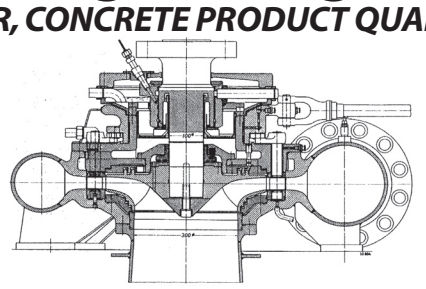
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Free Press Houston
Issue 69 | 08/06

Independence is Vital to Living

The Houston Meals on Wheels Program Helps Seniors Stay Independent.

by Mandy Tague



"Folks dont mean to be too busy, but time runs out, and then there isn't anything left to do. Meals become a challenge as you are trying to maintain a full time job along with the full time demands of life and caring for a loved one."

My grandmother lived to be 94 years old. Dealing with all of the issues that confronted us was not easy nor were we well prepared. The first thing that comes to mind as a challenge was the lack of support from family members and friends, who she cared for most of her life. Barely making visits or phone calls, the lack of contact contributes to depression and loneliness and makes it more difficult on the few that are there every day. Another challenge was giving her independence, as she wanted. Many times we thought that an assisted living facility would be better or easier (mainly for us), but leaving her home was not on her agenda. We realized her home is her lifeline.

Folks dont mean to be too busy, but time runs out, and then there isnt anything left to do. Basic needs must be met, including nurturing and love, and what is essential for us to function. Meals become a challenge as you are trying to maintain a full time job along with the full time demands of life and caring for a loved one.

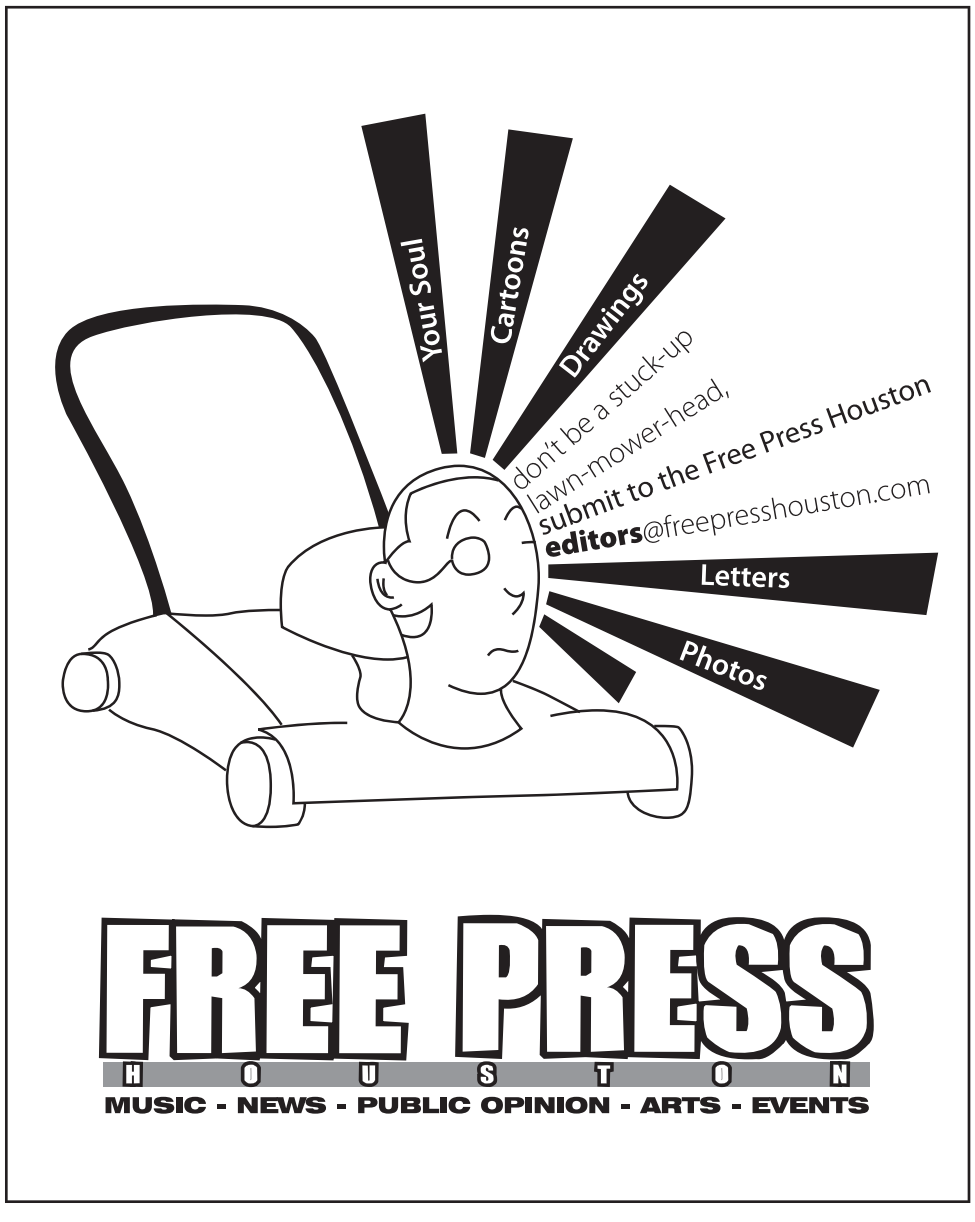
It seems like a straight forward decision to put your parent or grandparent in an assisted living situation at a certain point, however, when the time comes if they are getting around, we found we would do anything to keep her independent. To do this, one of the most critical organizations we worked with was the Meals on Wheels program, every Monday through Friday they would drop off a hot meal and give a Hello. This would not only give us an additional visitor during the day but would cover a meal until we could get there after work and on the weekends.

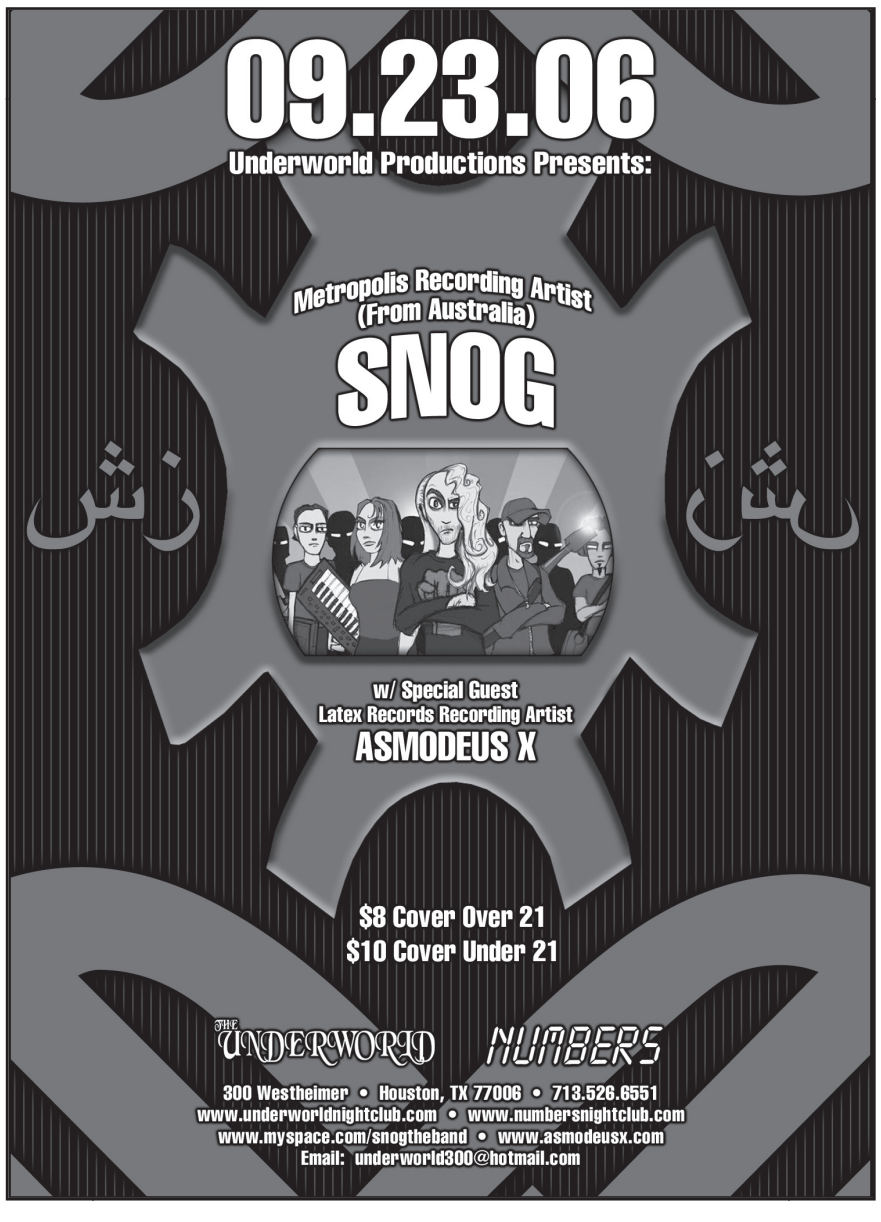
This was a huge relief to us as there was no insurance or money to provide the many comforts we wanted. Most folks arent so lucky and are left by themselves the majority of the time. Can you imagine not hearing from anyone for weeks on end? But it is real and it happens. Meals on Wheels helps people stay in their homes that cannot cook for themselves, and provides someone who is stopping to say, looking good today or not so good they could call for help if needed. There have been many stories of drivers saving lives from routine visits, and as we know staying independent is vital to living.

To qualify you must be 60 years old, a home bound senior with a reason why you cant cook. There is no income criteria, and hot meals are provided Mon-Fri. Some folks are provided with a nutritional cereal or breakfast for the Saturday. Sometimes their next visitor may not be until the following Monday by Meals on Wheels.

The ultimate goal of Meals on Wheels is to eliminate senior hunger in Houston. With your support, they can reduce the current 1,000 person waiting list to zero. They can expand from providing one meal every weekday excluding holidays, to providing three meals every day, no exceptions. They can include case management services that assist seniors with needs ranging from problems with prescriptions to necessary home repairs to utility assistance and transportation to medical care.

If you or someone you know is dealing with caring for a senior family member or friend, here is a great place to start. The process can be overwhelming and you will need help and support. For more contact Meals on Wheels at 713.533.4978, http://www.houstonseniormeals.org/ Interfaith Ministries of Houston 713 533-4900, http://www.imgh.org/ and Houston Area Center on Aging http://www.ci.houston.tx.us/departme/health/area_agingpage.html





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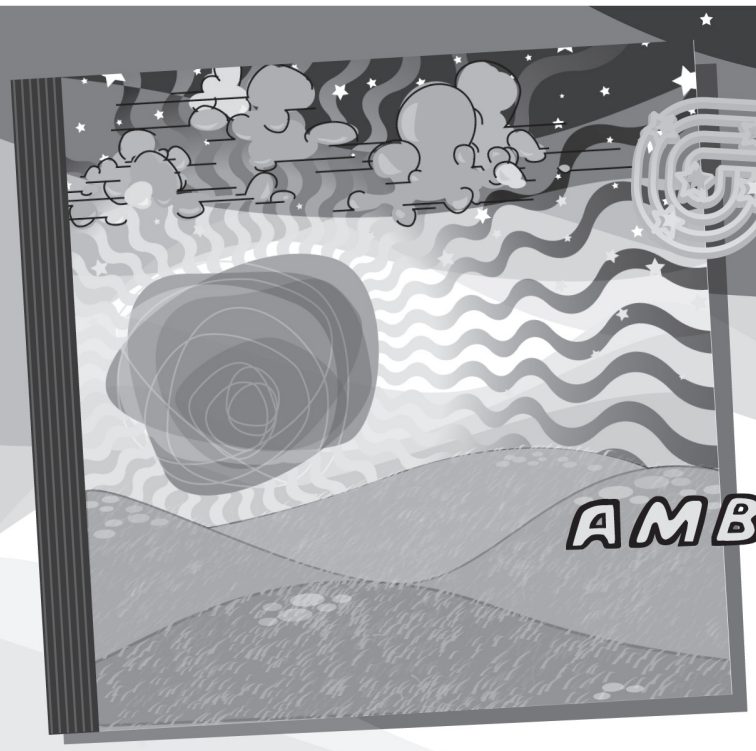
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Qana Massacre Again:

Foreign and Domestic enemies of our constitution

by Mazin Qumsiyeh, PhD (http://qumsiyeh.org)



It is almost unbelievable that after the US speeded delivery of guided bombs to Lebanon, Israel forces shell civilians in Qana, the same city in Lebanon were they committed another massacre ten years earlier (18 April 1996 shelling of a UN compound killing 106 civilians). As in that incident, Western mainstream media, guided by pro-Israeli forces, failed to report the reality of what was happening on the ground before then. Only Reuters for example carried the statement 9 days before (on April 9, 1996) of Maj.-Gen.

Amiram Levine: "The residents in south Lebanon who are under the responsibility of Hezbollah will be hit harder, and the Hezbollah will be hit harder, and we will find the way to act correctly and quickly." So indeed residents were hit "harder". Yet, left wing politician and architect of Israel Nuclear program Shimon Peres stated then with a straight face that the 1996 attack was simply a mistaken targeting.

The U.N. appointed military advisor Major-General Franklin van Kappen of the Netherlands to investigate the 1996 incident concluded that facts on the ground were at odds with the Israeli explanations given. Amnesty International investigation concluded, without mincing words: "the IDF intentionally attacked the UN compound, although the motives for doing so remain unclear. The IDF have failed to substantiate their claim that the attack was a mistake. Even if they were to do so they would still bear responsibility for killing so many civilians by taking the risk to launch an attack so close to the UN compound." Yet, Israel was never punished for that crime in Qana and the hundreds of other massacres going back six decades.

Israeli historians now acknowledge for example that some 33 massacres of civilians occurred between November 1947 and May 1949 that helped precipitate the exodus of the Palestinian refugees. More crimes ensued since then and today over 2/3rds of the native Palestinians were made refugees and displaced people and Israeli Zionists increased their control of Palestine from 7% of the land in 1947 to over 90% today.

Now we are faced with another massacre in the same city of Qana and with a parroting of the same "explanations" used in 1996: "a regrettable mistake". So far 54 are confirmed killed including 37 children. Unfortunately these never-ending "mistakes" are perpetuated using US weapons (violating the terms of the US Arms Export Control Act and Foreign Assistance Act). In the past two weeks alone over 500 civilians were killed in Gaza and Lebanon. Our Congress and media, succumbing to the pro-Israel lobby, chose to close their eyes to the damage done to the US. The damages go beyond public image around the world (a majority of Europeans now think of the US and Israel as the most dangerous countries on earth). The damage also includes the foolish attack on Iraq (2560 US killed, over 25,000 injured, $300 billion of our taxes spent so far). Each day we remain there over 100 Iraqis are also killed. A vast majority of Iraqis and even 70% of US servicemen and women want us to bring the troops home. Lest we forget, it was Wolfowitz, Perle, Abrams, Wurmser and other neocons who argued (well before 9/11/2001) that an attack on Iraq would serve Israel.

It was these same neocons who support Israeli extremist political parties who violated constitutional protections with domestic wire taps, attacks on civil rights of Arab and Muslim Americans, infringment on academic freedoms, and allowing torture and imprisonment without trial. When defending the constitution, we pledge to defend it against enemies both foreign and domestic. Isn't it time to challenge the domestic enemies of our constitution? Isn't t time to realize the danger posed not just to the US but to the whole world (as Europeans and Latin Americans are now realizing)?

Isn't it time to challenge the myth (found among the left and the right) that Israeli militarism serves US interests? Isn't it time to stop delivering billions of our tax money to Israel (largest recipient of US foreign aid)?

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Dear Bankers Pen:
I've heard a lot of banks offering "free checking." But then, they all have different ideas of what "free" means. For example, WaMu offers free checks for life, but other banks don't. What do you think a bank really means when they say "free"?
- Dumbfounded in Dallas

Dear Dumbfounded:
It means they want to go out of business. Actually, I have no idea. Are you sure it was a bank? Maybe you only thought it was a bank, but it was really your next-door neighbor's garage sale. I can't imagine any God-fearing bank manager offering services for no cost and actually meaning it. Hogwash!

Dear Bankers Pen:
I'm in a real pickle here! I'm a bona fide cat lover, but my husband has severe cat allergies. He starts to sneeze and his throat closes up if he's within 200 yards of a cat, bless his heart, so I've learned to live without felines in the house. But my sister, who lives across town, just adopted the most adorable pair of kittens ever. After antiquing on weekends, I'll follow her to her house and play with her kitties. Then, as soon as I walk through the door at home, my husband goes into a sneezing fit and accuses me of bringing cat hair into the house. I don't want to hurt him, but I can't help my love for these adorable little creatures. Is there any help for me?
- Hopeless in Houston

Dear Hopeless:
Shut up. Just shut up.

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Free Press Houston
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Houstonians protest the brutality of the Harris County jail system



from the open publishing newswire: Members of the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, the Howard Guidry Justice Committee, the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, the Green Party, and other supporters stood on the corner of San Jacinto and Baker for almost two hours in solidarity with the men and women who are brutalized or whose loved ones are brutalized by the prison system. Many passersby stopped to ask for more information about Howard, to talk about their own loved one's experiences with the racist, inhumane Harris County jail system, or to thank the protesters for coming out and making their unspoken complaints heard.

"We are not isolated," Njeri Shakur said, "and Howard Guidry is certainly not the only poor, black man being abused and disrespected behind these very walls. All of us whose loved ones are being treated like animals in these jails and prisons must come together and put our voices together. Alone, we are victims. Together, we are an unstoppable force. Nothing but the organized anger of the people will ever stop these injustices. They give us no justice, we give them no peace!"

Gloria Rubac also spoke to the crowd, asking, "Would Ken Lay go to court barefoot, without his glasses, after being sat on by a SWAT team?"

Help save one of Houston's (few) Cultural Landmarks

The River Oaks Shopping Center was built in 1937, and in 1939 the River Oaks Theater opened. It is the longest operating movie theater in Houston. The Theater was declared endangered by the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance, following the discovery that Weingarten Realty Investors plans to demolish the shopping center in early 2008. Houston has some of the weakest historic preservation laws in the country. Activists have launched a petition to Save the River Oaks Shopping Center & Alabama Theater that has already received more than 10,000 signatures.

Stop the Houston Youth Curfew

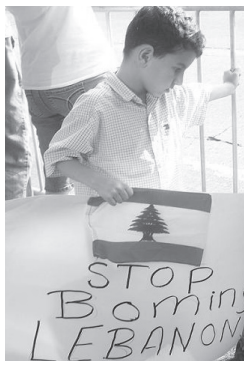
From the open publishing newswire: The City of Houston is proposing a nighttime youth curfew of 10 pm on weekdays and 11 pm on weeknights for those under 17 years old. The curfew will do nothing to prevent youth crime, is hostile to civil liberties, sends the wrong message to our youth and their parents, and criminalizes innocent behavior. Currently the curfew is set at 12 every night of the week.



In 1999 researchers in California performed a comprehensive analysis of the effect on youth crime of juvenile curfew laws in the state. The study found no evidence that curfew law enforcement reduced youth crime. When the study showed any correlation at all between juvenile curfew laws and youth crime it was more often that increased curfew enforcement was coincident with more youth crime! Moreover, the police's ability to stop and question anyone who looks under 17 past the curfew time could lead to more racial profiling. Racial profiling in regards to the searching of the vehicles of African Americans and hispanics after routine traffic stops has already been shown to occur in the Houston Police Department and the Harris County Sheriff's Department. Police can always investigate underage drinking, vandalism or other crimes--they need no broader curfew law.

More than 100 protest Israeli aggression in Houston

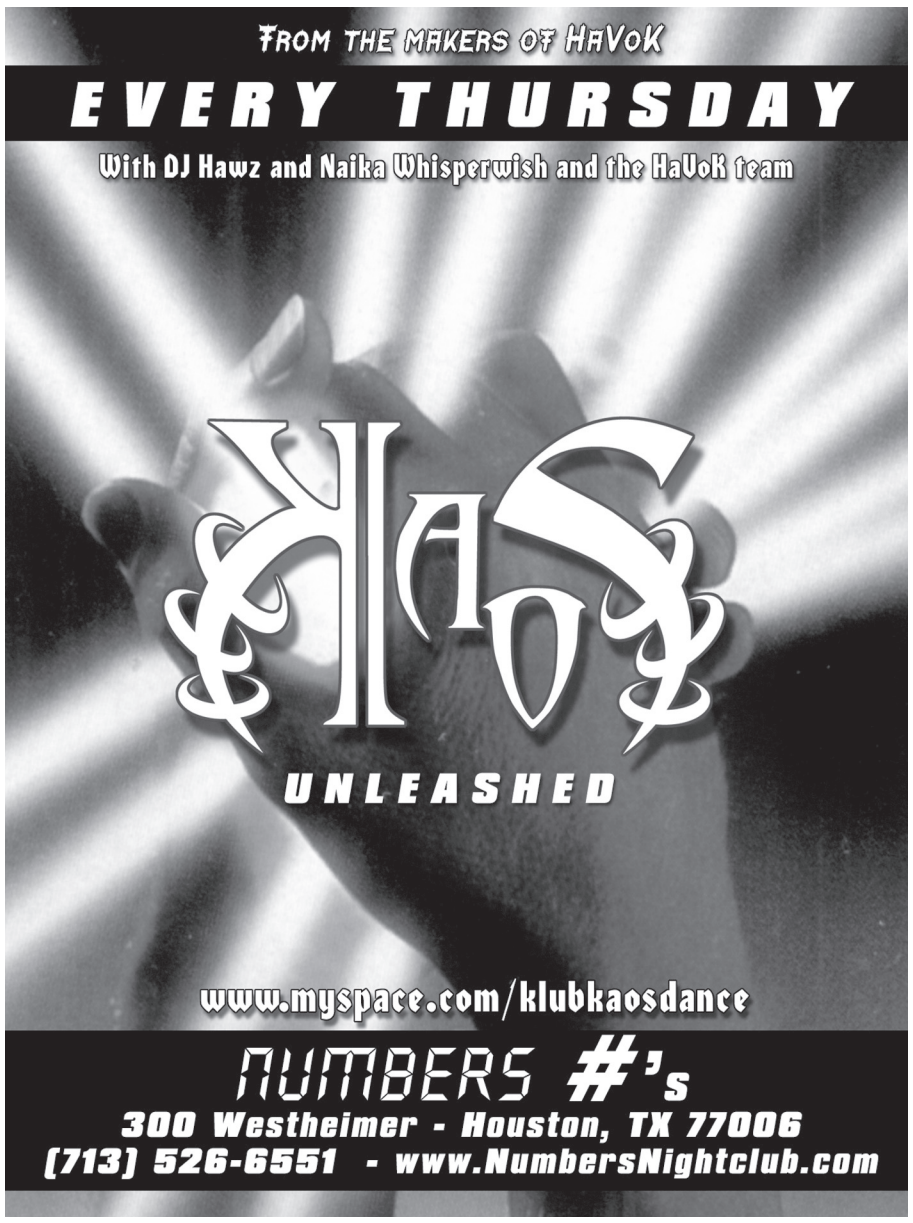
On July 17th a large and diverse group of Houstonians (and other Texans) assembled in front of the Israeli consulate on Weslyan during rush hour, to protest the Israeli aggression in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. People carried signs opposing the state violence as well as Palestinian and Lebanese flags and chanted "Stop Bombing Palestine, Stop Bombing Lebanon". The protest was characterized as urgent and full of youthful energy. Two arrests took place, one of peace activist Herb Rothchild as well as an unidentified young protester. Herb was interviewed on the July 18th edition of KPFT local news. Both have been released. This protest received widespread local news coverage, and is one of many that have taken place across the US and the world.



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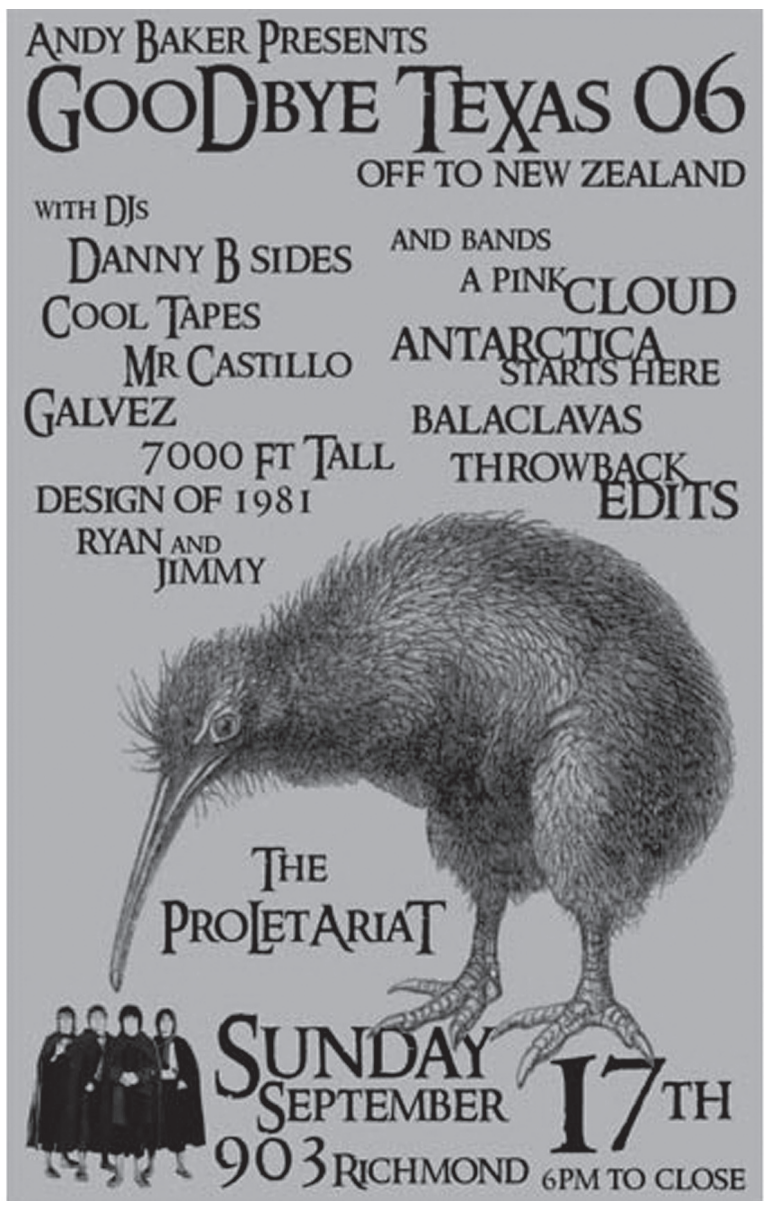
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Free Press Houston
Issue 69 | 08/06

Prison soup



by Majority Whip

In my last article I briefly chronicled my life as a drug dealer and businessman in jail and prison. It was by no means a description of my lifestyle or moral foundation; one simply performs these actions to make time go a little easier. There are many different ways to make money, or rather, "MAKE SOUP".

If you didn't read the last article then shame on you for not reading the Free Press cover to cover. I guess you missed the description of monetary standards... The $.55 Soup. Everything is based on this high saline, high caloric, sub-standard meal (Ramon Noodle). This is the way of life. A cup of coffee can get you a soup. A stamp ($.37) will get you a soup (still keeping up with the Dow Jones Industrial average!). Hot water is even a commodity. However, being a good businessman takes more than fiscal responsibility, you have to be an entrepreneur.

There are many ways to make soup while incarcerated and people perform these actions to accomplish two things: Keep themselves occupied and eat better. One of the most popular activities is to make alcohol, or "Hooch". Production of hooch consists of taking your daily allowance of fruits (oranges, fruit cups, etc...) and water then fermenting it in a variety of ways. You can put it in soda bottles or plastic bags, just as long as you vent the container on a frequent basis (otherwise your little brewery will literally explode). Adding bread will make it ferment faster but the alcohol level will be more like a malt liquor instead of a wine. It takes about a week for a batch to be turned out and can garner about 2 soups for a small Styrofoam cup (that's about 6 soups for every soda bottle). Yes, we are talking about molding fruit, but it gets you really drunk. Good money but very risky if the block gets shaken down.

There are some extremely artistically talented inmates in the penal system. I have known some great artists in my life, but some of these guys are outstandingly gifted... misguided, yes... but overly gifted. These guys paint pictures and lay down tattoos. When it comes to painting they use real colors with hue, tone, and shading. They rub deodorant into a color advertisement (Sunday newspaper inserts) and it removes the ink onto the cloth applicator. They then apply it to the canvas... an envelope or handkerchief going home to the customer's family. This also works very well for removing the ink from a canceled stamp, ready for re-mailing! As far as tattooing goes, you melt down ink from a pen, construct a gun with two magnets (taken out of the radio speaker in a wall), a paper clip, an elastic band (for retention) and a needle inserted into the spent ink barrel. Hook up electricity from a light and now you have a reciprocating servo. I witnessed some of the very best tattooing including colors and shading on many parts of the body (my favorite was on the feet). Very cool.

Hygiene is not just about odor, especially when confined to such small places with so many people, but about appearance as well. Once you get your hands on a good jumpsuit, you want to hold on to it and keep it clean. There are people that will make a concoction of soaps and literally scrub your scrubs, then dry and press them. But what if you have a clean-cut image to portray? Then you'll need a haircut. They take a black comb with cylindrical teeth, not elliptical (those don't work worth a damn), and break open a disposable razor blade. They feed the teeth through the holes of the blade about half way up and start shearing. They can fade and layer, all with a blade. Sometimes I wish I could get a "Jail-House-Cut" because of the attention to detail. You provide the blade, comb and soups. An "A-Plus Must" if you have court the next day.

It's no mystery people like to gamble. Inmates bet on a variety things... Sports, chess and cards. But never have I seen fortunes lost, regained, and lost again like a good game of craps. I never really understood how this game worked until I went to TDCJ. Holy Crap! One time I saw this one guy lose his entire $40 cache, go into debt and finally finish the game with over $100 (4 hours later). Making dice is interesting. Paper mache is the easy way, but not very heavy or durable. The correct way is to boil down some plastic from spoons or a food tray and then form them very, very accurately. Lopsided dice will get you no game.

These dollar amounts don't seem like much until you have nothing, absolutely nothing at all. But my very favorite activity was being the resident librarian, think Andy Dufresne in *Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption* by Stephen King. You're only allowed to have three books at a time (turn one in and get another), so I had other people get books I wanted in my library. At one point I had over forty books on hand and another thirty on loan before having my treasure taken away in a police raid (still a little bitter). The inmates would come by, ask for a book, and I would quantify their reading ability and interests. I would help people learn to read and write their letters if needed. I taught people to play chess and read the financial markets. No charge, my absolute pleasure. Sometimes I would buy someone a haircut or a wash and press; anything to occupy my day and feel normal again.

Next: Prison Issue #3 – Violations and Violence

Written honestly by the majorityWhip@gmail.com

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