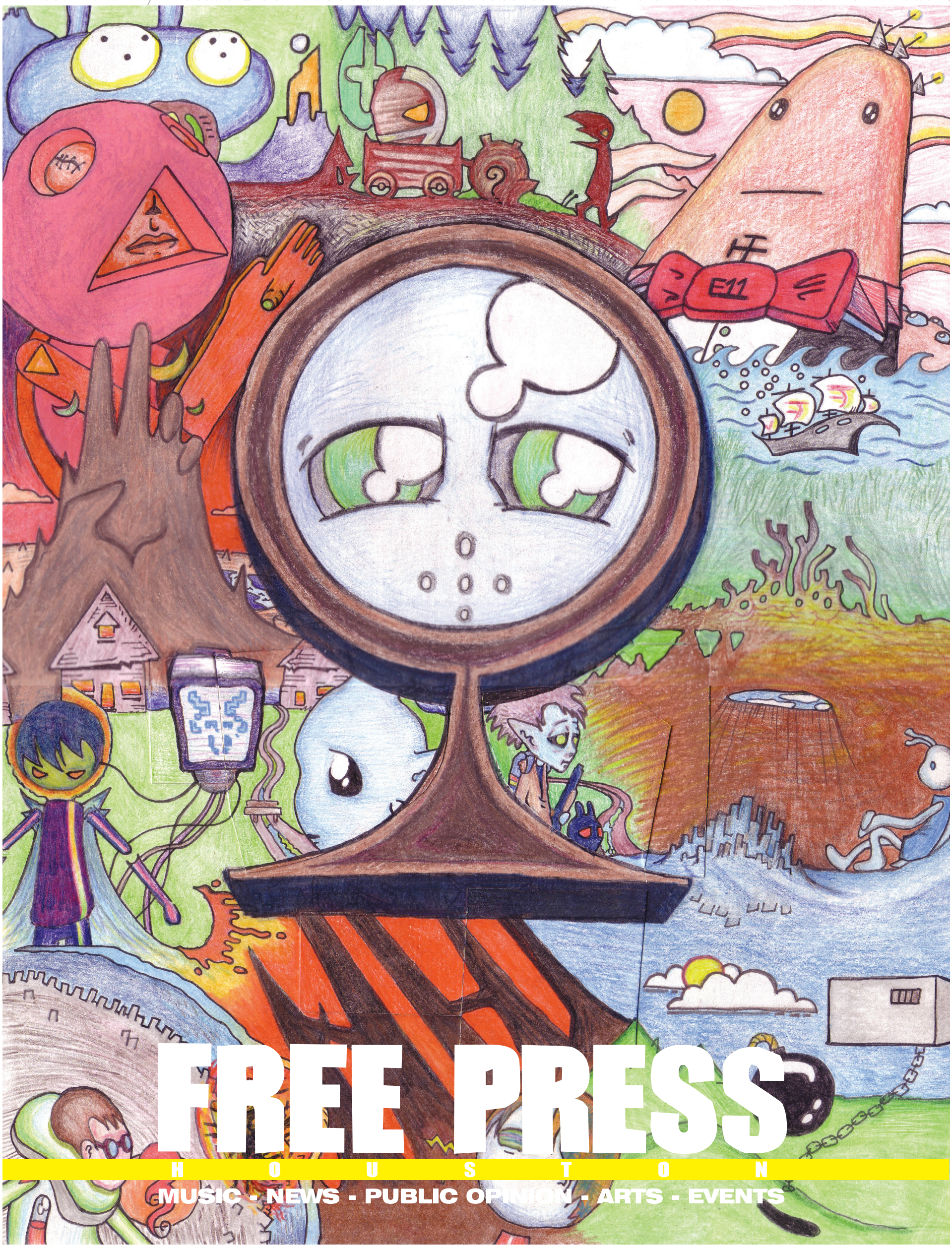
Interview w/ Natalie Dee • Freedom Filter • Houston Wii have a Problem • Iran is No Threat



FREE PRESS

H O U S T O N

MUSIC - NEWS - PUBLIC OPINION - ARTS - EVENTS

super happy fun land

...THIS IS ONLY A TEST...

May 10th:
Seekonk
The Duck Duck Goose Band

May 11th:
Brian Allen and Corey Fogel
Muzak John

May 12th:
Annabella
A Crack in the Wall
Headwhurk

May 13th afternoon
Japanese Language Saturday Study Group

May 13th:
Sicker Than Sick
The Low Ends
The Hit Em' UP Squad
The Low Ends

May 14th:
Stephen Flinn
Infant Mortality Rate
Price Taggery

May 16th:
Baby Calendar
Boogdish
0 Pioneers

May 17th:
Awaiting the Fall
Stove Blow
Permanent Daylight

May 18th:
Hotel Hotel
Sabra

Fri May 19th
The Transmission
Bad Sun
Taught Me

Sat May 20th
Southern Girls Convention benefit with Rua Minx
The Lonely Ritual
Acts of Sedition

May 21st:
Trampled by Turtles
Generic Tribe

May 24th:
Band Sugar Bang
The Press
Avenger

Thursday May 25th:
Extemp-O-Rama sponsored by Jam Houston
8:30 PM - Brandon A. Brown (Austin)
9:30 PM - Graham Reynolds of Golden Arm Trio (Austin)
10:30 PM - Blendt
11:30 PM - Plump

Friday May 26th:
School's Out Fest with
The Dimes
The Pilot Lights
Emperor X
Cocker Spaniels

Sat May 27th:
Westheimer Bloc Party
Organ Failure
Rusted Shut
PSA
Suspender Man
The Krinkles
Chim Charoo
Skandals
Magentic Frosties
Stare Decisis

Sat May 27th:
South Chamber Trio
Downtown Grapeshot Band
Blabat

Sunday May 28th:
Oscillating Innards
Pedestrian Deposit
S-21
Crawling Iris
Respirator
The Secret Geography
Murex
Astrogenic Hallucinauting

Monday May 29th:
The Twats
Organ Failure

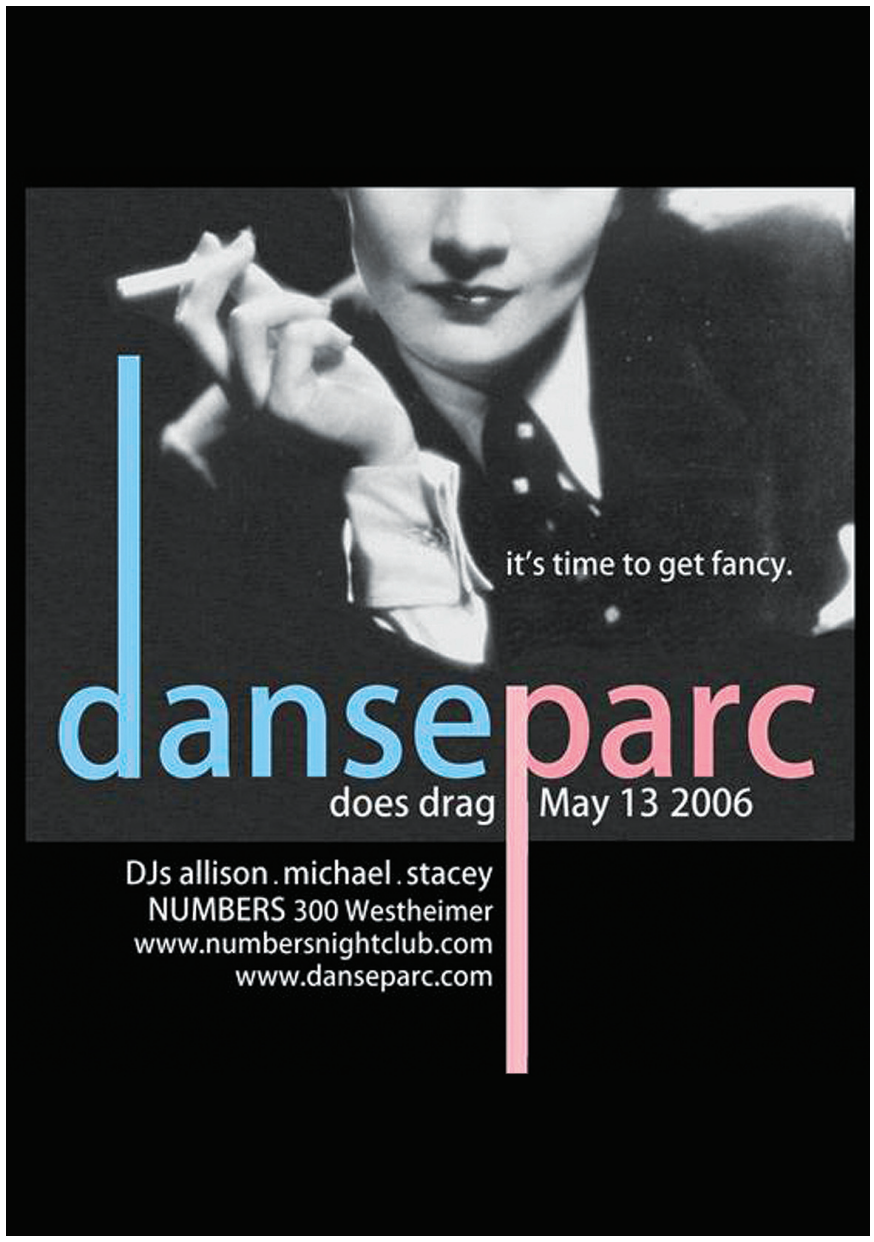
Tuesday May 30th:
Brookside
Beat Strings
The Duck Duck Goose Band

May 31st:
Secret Annexe

June 1st:
Meryll
Comrade
Tambersauro
Rosewood
Listen Listen

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ThisIssue

May 2006 what you'll find

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The United State's
Freedom Filter

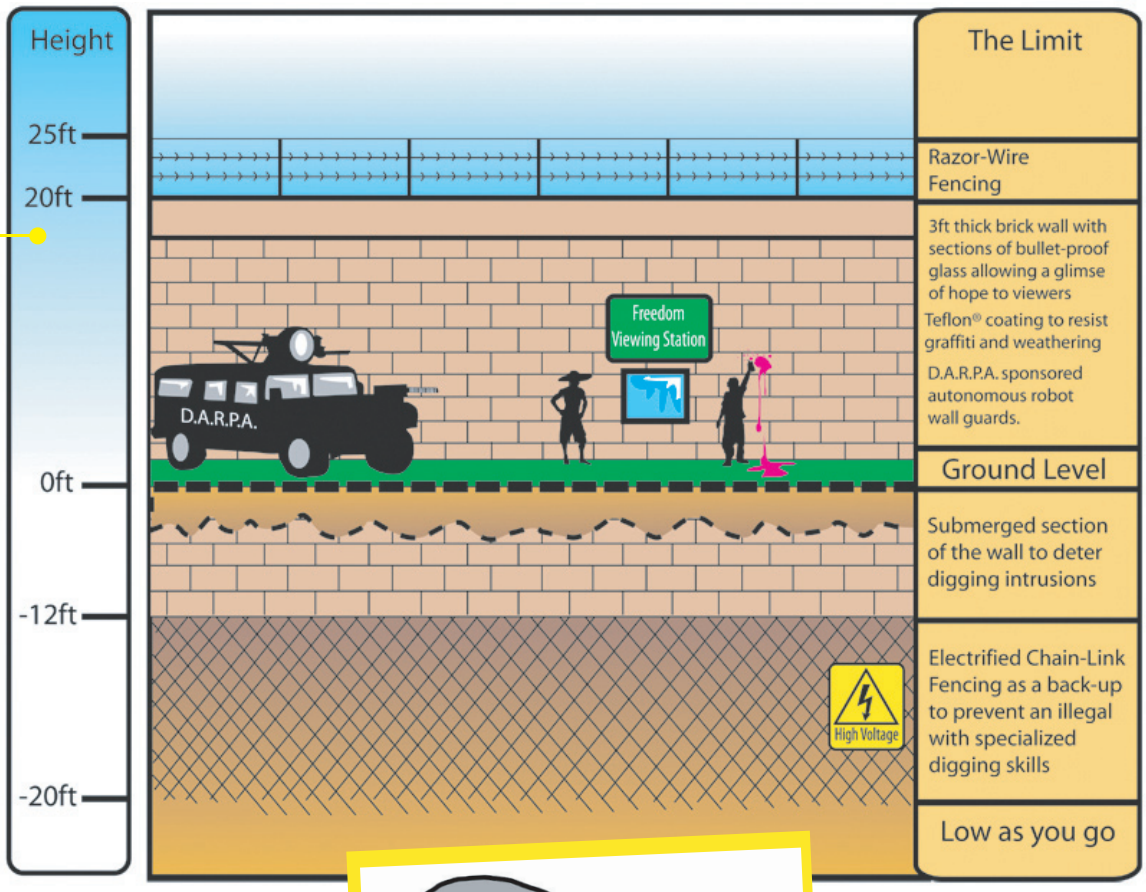
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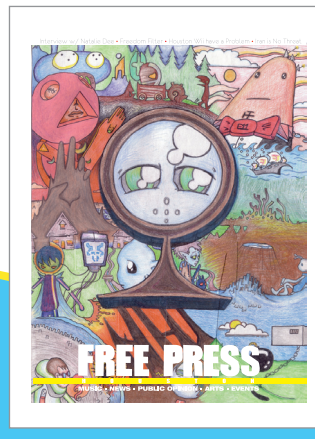
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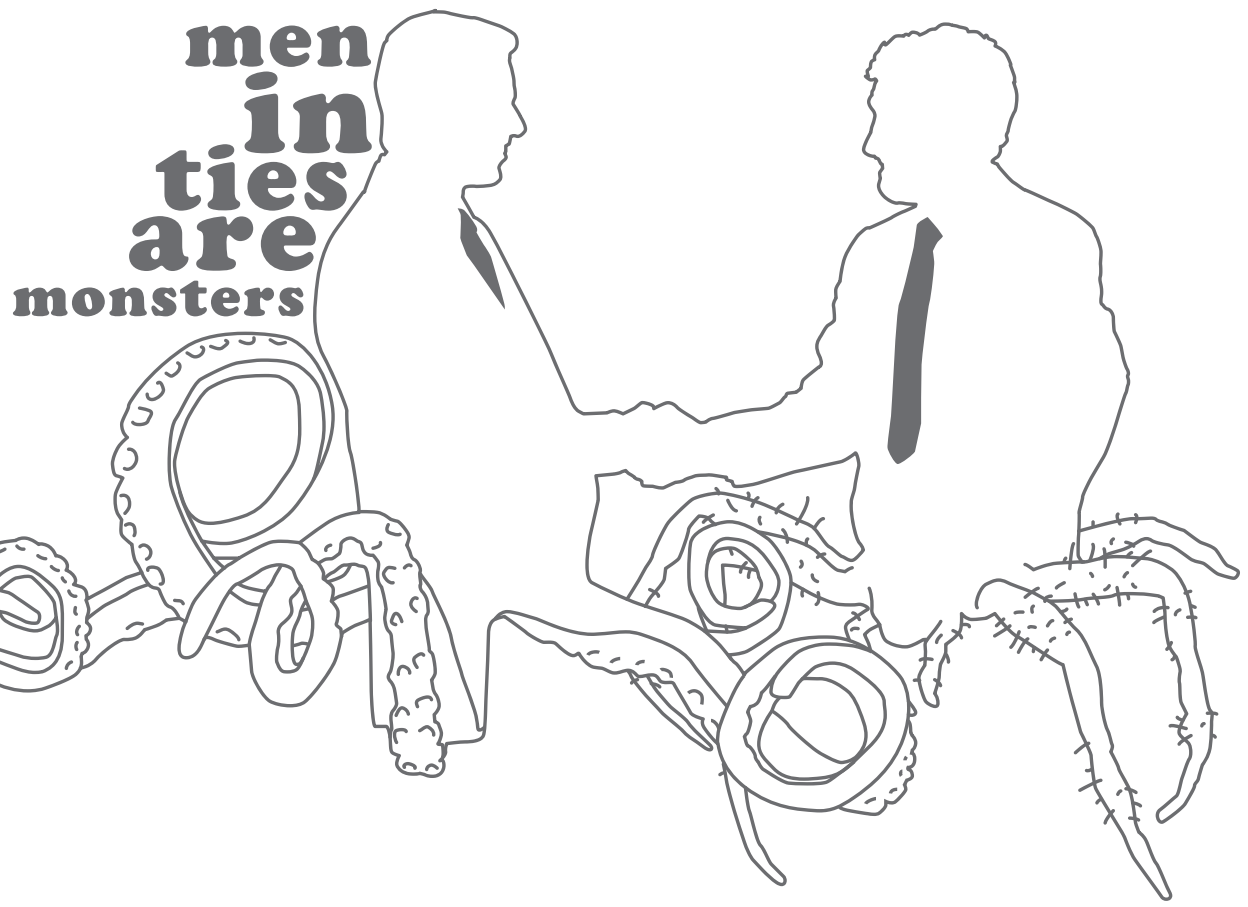
Cover Art: The Ocular
By Tim Dorsey

Feel FREE to take us Seriously.

editors@freepresshouston.com

Shitbirds. It rained. What would have been a clutch little party was rained out. Fret not, we have a rain date for the Westheimer Block Party: Saturday May 27th. Be there and make sure to wear golashes. As for Travis Ritter of the Houston Press, him and I had some great gay sex last night. No joke.

– editor



P.S.A. courtesy of:
the Free Press Houston

Letters to the ~~creditor~~ editor

Let me guess... your hair is in your eyes?

houston is a hard market and were trying not to oversaturate it. For me to get approval to play houston again so soon I know im going to need a 1500 gaurentee. let me know how feisable this is.

-from unnamed 'signed' yet not so literate' band.

Flattery is a form of Flattery

who the fuck did [last issue's] vector cover? amazing!!! thats it. i quit, im never using illustrator or photoshop again. ever.

-Chris

Your President doesn't, but we care

I'm currently stuck in Iraq with the TX National Guard and am suffering greatly without the Free Press. Do you think you could increase your distribution to include Tikrit as well? I'll pay for the shipping, if that's an issue. There're about 100 of us from Houston up here and some quality local journalism would be great. My friends back in Montrose are supposed to be sending me copies, but they're too lazy to go to the post office.

Also, I've got a picture of the Hummer I drive with a certain candidate for governor's sticker on it. And it certainly isn't Perry. I'd have sent it, but not sure how you are about attachments.

Thanks for your time.

SGT Kirston L. Otis
Bravo Company NBC NCO
136th Signal Battalion


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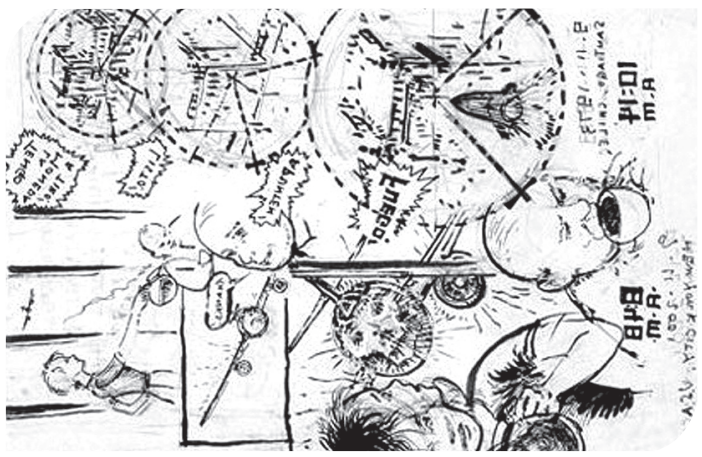

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arts



Shine: Rice Student Exhibition 43
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Otis Lumpkin/ James Michael Starr
Hooks-Epstein Galleries 2631 Colquitt
Through May 27. (713) 523-8238



Gael Stack: The Jim Drawings
Moody Gallery 2815 Colquitt
Through May 27. (713) 526-9911

DEBRIS: Real Noise

Buffalo Sean

What does art have to conquer now that we've eaten every foreign influence, Americana, adolescance, and the woman? Why, men of course. *natured and nurtured (and then some)* is **Andy Taylor**'s attempt to hit the nail on the head, ditching the narcissism of Matthew Barney and creating his perspective instead of a self-contained world. Downtown at **Travis Tower** (1301 Travis in the lobby) through July.

After May 15th if you go to visit the gallery at **Diverseworks** you'll be walking into some artists studios instead of a white box! Getting nice and voyuristic on us the heavy hitter down on the

Docks present *The Real (Art)World*, a chance to have an opening at the end of the show's run when the four contestants fight to the death (or maybe just put paintings on the wall) on June 23rd.

Noise musicians **rotten piece** will play the opening of Patrick Medrano and Katy Anderson's show at **G Gallery** in the Heights Saturday, May 6th somewhere between 6 and 9. Their *Eyeball Stew* video really made an impression on me last year, and their experimental energy has been around for much longer than that. 301 East 11th.

May 19th opens three floors and four galleries of shows at the Lawndale Arts Center, with the addition of the third floor studios being put to use for Michelle White's exhibit it's more like a block party of shows instead of a single event. Seth Alverson gets big and heavy with epic paintings of a fractured narrative in the large gallery; *THUNDERDOME* is full of Victorian gore and reserved gazes, the paintings are impressive and complex. Up from Brownsville, George Lorio mans the second floor with technicolor homemade cacti, it would probably look awesome after eating a bag of mushrooms. Photographer Dixie Friend Gay waylays the typical course here in the small back gallery of Lawndale as she prepares to work on large public art projects for the Indianapolis Airport and the Woodlands, it's good to see flexibility and locale working in Houston- it is a hometown if you treat it like one. *Drawing Inside/Out* brings Angela Fraliegh and Wesley Heiss back to town and features CORE kids Carl Suddath and Jonathan Durham, intricate work from Scott Calhoun and David Ubias, current MFA headliner Joe Havel and scary face paste man YAR.





Congratulations to Fanchesca Fuchs for winning the Hunting Prize, a $50,000 award for an established artist in Houston. What the fuck? Well, after relocation from London last year by international oil company Hunting PLC, all of a sudden we have a real golden egg laying giant octopus. I'm not sure how much information gets through to the administrators for this selection process, and I hope they don't run a conservative streak over a few years but heck, congats.



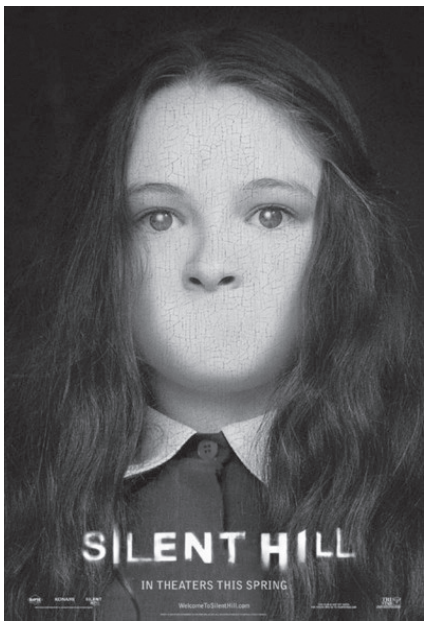
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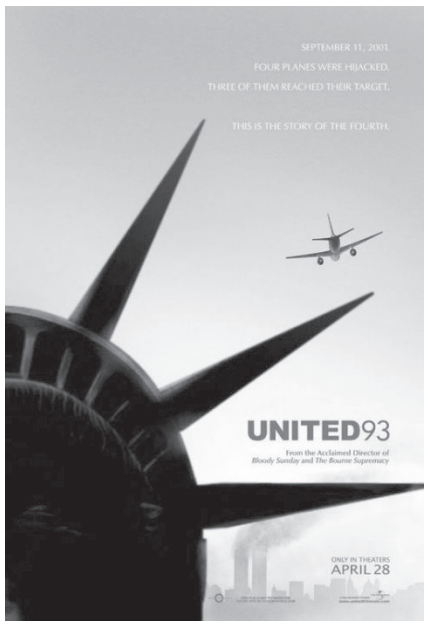
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23 FILM 45

THE PERFECT CLEAVAGE

by Michael Bergeron







The film The Devil and Daniel Johnston has been around for well over a year although only in release theatrically as of a couple of weeks ago. But D&DJ played Sundance and SXSW in 2004. As we know from movie dialogue, there is no coincidence only the appearance of coincidence. So it's no coincidence really how the powerful revelation of Devil and Daniel Johnston - that the songster took over the controls of an airplane in flight and tried to crash the craft – parallels United 93, another film where terrorists take over an airplane, and accomplish their fatal goal. In Johnston's case, his demise would have included his father who was pilot of the single engine craft. Johnston gave up his struggle after sending the plane into a vertical dive. His father was able to crash land. We know what happened at the end of Titanic and we know what happened to United 93. Despite expectations of already knowing what occurred United 93 has the amazing kind of timing and editing that propels the best thrillers. If you want to speculate on whether United 93 crashed, or was shot down, or landed in Cleveland, emptied of its passengers and a drone airplane placed in its stead, the latter a theory that's much harder to swallow than speculation that the Pentagon crash was not as portrayed, or that the Twin Towers were brought down with a series of controlled detonations, check out the documentary 9/11: Loose Change. That docu can be downloaded at: http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-8260059923762628848%20

The appearance of coincidence has two films dealing with people trying to crash planes, with both films playing in theaters simultaneously. But wait, two other recent films, Running Scared and Lucky Number Slevin, are neo-noirs with whoosh zooms and happy endings (a deconstruction of true noir). And Silent Hill and Stay Awake are both films based on popular video games. So films can be alike even while diametrically opposed.

In the case of Silent Hill, it helps that the video origins are masked behind the visual splendor of Brotherhood of the Wolf director Christophe Gans and the horror film institutional memory of writer Roger Avery. Images and script quirks recall films as diverse as The Conqueror Worm and Suspiria. Silent Hill with its eerie ending and Bosch-inspired grotesque creatures can take its place, along with Hostel and Wolf Creek, as a horror genre classic. Frankly it's been an awesome year for cinema, what with the previously mentioned films and yes, V For Vendetta, one of the best films in the last decade, and the truly riveting United 93 and the equally edge-of-your-seat psychological thriller Hard Candy a filmgoer might rightfully expect a banner year. Next-tier films, or movies that are a pleasure to sit through and often worth your time and money, but just not bona fide classics, would include: The Inside Man, Art School Confidential, Joyeux Noel, The Promise (a Chinese film from Chen Kaige that features slaves running alongside stampeding bulls in a horseshoe canyon that looks as good as that dino stampede in King Kong), and even The Notorious Bettie Page to remind us that kink and bondage 1950s style was idyllic and shrouded in an almost virginal innocence. Back when your humble scribe was four years old and living in Plattsburg, New York, I had a girlfriend who was my age. We played doctor, a game consisting of giving each other shots on our duff, followed by a kiss on same. Her mom came in and explained that the pants should stay on, and the shots should be applied to the stomach. We said okay. As soon as her mom left, doctor and his mistress resumed their butt kissing. Bettie Page extols that kind of innocence. Even though Page is born again she merely quotes scripture: "After Adam and Eve sinned, they started wearing clothes."

When a film provides edge of your seat thrills that edgy feeling registers less during a second viewing if the suspense factor depends on surprise. Hard Candy was easy to chew because I went in knowing nothing about the story and was rewarded with a two-person psychodrama with unbelievable high tension. The poster shows a little red riding hood draped figure standing in a huge bear trap. The releasing company, Lionsgate, tries to ape the imagery of Saw. While there are elements of horror, Hard Candy bears more resemblance to hostage thrillers like Death and the Maiden. When the distaff member of Hard Candy mentions Death and the Maiden director Roman Polanski it isn't about his career but the fact that she's 14. The less one knows going in, the better the viewing experience, but you have to know something so let me fill you in on the first couple of reels. Graphic text messaging opens the film, showing a flirtatious session in a chat room. A teen femme (Ellen Page, unknown Canadian actress who's also the third thesp to play the character of Kitty Pryde in X-Men 3) meets thirtysomething photographer Patrick Wilson (does anybody remember him from The Alamo or Angels in America?) at a trendy coffee shop. Conversation ensues and they proceed to his sleek apartment. You guessed right, a predator stalks its prey. Only the prey is the guy who awakens with a drug stupor (she served him a roofie) to find himself tied securely to his stainless steel kitchen table with a large baggie of ice on his crouch in order to prepare him for surgical castration. You don't want to walk in late. One ad for Hard Candy calls it a new generation Fatal Attraction. Wrongo. Fatal Attraction was a new generation Play Misty For Me. Hard Candy, with its smart dialogue and filled with riveting scenes that seem to want to settle a score, resembles Sleuth, a two-person play with a nasty ending that was turned into a lauded film with Michael Caine and Laurence Olivier. (If you haven't heard of Sleuth don't be surprised when it's remade with Jude Law and Caine in the Olivier role.) Hard Candy has a stage drama magnetism that wouldn't be out of place in a Strindberg play. That kind of intensity won't last long.

The MFA, Houston unrolls an Isabelle Huppert retro in May and June with over a dozen films. Some are familiar, some are less known, but expect powerful films from a who's who of French directors of the last few decades.Also note the MFA screening of Duma at the end of May. This film about a boy and a cheetah, set in South Africa, and directed by Black Stallion helmer Carroll Ballard was dumped by Warner Brothers last year because that's life in the cinematic big lane. Duma stars some kid and a cheetah that had an uncle on Daktari. Co-stars include Campbell Scott and Hope Davis.

Since Free Press Houston lives to reward reader loyalty we offer a certificate good for One Free Workshop during SWAMP's 2006 Film and Video Workshop series. Send a post card with contact info to Free Press Houston (our address in masthead). First one received gets the certificate.

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SOUNDBYTES



GO AHEAD MOUNTAIN FALL TO THE SEA, BUT DON'T FALL ON ME

Kwame M. Anderson

Greetings supporters of literacy and liberal views on government, it is I the scribe returning to jot down my opinions of music and culture and how this effects the quagmire lives we lead in search of freedom, fertility, and financial stability. For right now there is someone with nothing stressing on maintaining their nothing and on the opposite end there is someone with everything trying to maintain that everything, and both believe that at any time the bottom may collapse. What about the price of gas? I know, it's a tired subject, but I will say this, it doesn't stop the party. Yeah, people might not go out as much, or they may car pool to the shindig, but stay home and save gas, oh hell no. I would rather drive all around the city, and say things like," money is made to be spent," and "I work hard so that I can play hard," and other slogans that support a relaxed view of the needless desire to be mobile and social all the time.

Immigration is a hot topic in the news. Here's the thing, I believe in all the walk outs and strikes, because I mean why should someone have to fight to be underpaid. This country was built on immigration, sometimes forced immigration, Blacks in this country were made to come here, and once here we were forced into subservient positions, robbed of our true culture, raped, exploited, and we can't do anything about that. I believe that the immigrants have a right to be here, they came of their own free will, Blacks are citizens and are still marginally underpaid, under-educated, and after 500 something years we still have not caught up economically to Caucasians, which is proof the system doesn't work. The idea that the government would attempt to penalize the lowest paid faction of our society, and then have Blacks and Latin American immigrants fighting over low wage jobs and servitude, well I think it's disgusting. So yes, I say walk out, make a scene, stop the economy, shake the nation up. Why should you not? Trust me, there will be no justice, you have the right to be underpaid and marginalized, look at Black people in this country, as a whole, we still have nothing, and we can't go back.

The war in Iraq…I'm not even fucking with that this morning

Tan aquí estamos, los consumidores. Hagamos compras y suframos junto. We cannot change the oppressors, but we can buy the products promoted from the companies of the oppressors, and create a freedom based on the idea of vacation and high price items, for even if we are not rich, we can own the things of the rich. So get off your behind, get dressed in whatever is fashionable, put away those bills, close that newspaper, for there will always be injustice, ignorance, and poverty. Here's a better P word…PARTAY!!!! OW!!!

SHOWS

PELICAN w/ MONO
Walters On Washington
5/21/06

I wrote an article on Pelican last year, or earlier this year, I can't remember, damn marijuana. Anyway they are an instrumental rock outfit whose latest album "The Fire In Our Heats Will Beckon the Thaw" is a fine example of pace, volume, tone, mood and melody being expressed through the manipulation electric guitars and drums. Considered by many as a fine live band, they are returning to our city to bask in the heat and humidity, while fulfilling their arrangements with booking agents and club owners. But while in town they will rock you, shock you, and knock you into a state of bliss. This is Mono's show, so of course you should go and check them out as well, but while a quick jaunt through the internet could give me information about the band, I would rather you go and be intrigued by the mystery my laziness will create. Or, you could just ask the guy with the Mono shirt on, how they sound, and I'm sure he will give an opinion.

ICE CUBE w/ THE CLIPSE
Warehouse Live
5/21/05

Ice Cube is a legend in the rap world. Forget the movies and all that mess, he is a founding member of NWA, and his first two albums (Amerikkka's Most Wanted and Death Certificate) stand as two of the most important albums in the history of rap. Well, after some time off he is returning to the microphone with a new album that is partially gangsta and partially political. As a social critic, his commentary is always insightful. As a hardcore OG? Well' I guess he's believable there too. The Clipse are what hardcore rap should be, brash and arrogant. Their stories of coke, coke selling, the benefits of coke selling, the down side of coke selling, basically they talk a lot about selling coke, but hey I won't knock 'em. It's like how in heavier metal they talk a lot about Satan, The Clipse are like heavy metal for the hood set. But more importantly, their debut album is one of the greatest debuts of the last 10 years, one of the few cases where an album stands up and has maintained its greatness years after its release. While they have been embroiled in a battle with Jive, for the right to sell and promote their crack gospel, their "I Got It 4 Cheap" mixtape series has only solidified their movement. They might even be selling the classic mixtapes at the show, and they may even have it for cheap. If you are not afraid rap music, seemingly rowdy African Americans, negro-fied White people, and clubs with strict policies on markers, cameras, and shit like that, come on out and boogie.

MUSIC YOU SHOULD BUY SAYS GIANT HEAD

ISLANDS
Return To Sea
(Equator)

Some of the guys in Islands used to be in a band called The Unicorns, but I've never heard

Shows



Sharks and Sailors 5/26 @ Rudyard's



Junkie XL 5/12 @ Meridian



Boogdish 5/16 @ Super Happy Fun Land



Perseph 1 5/27 @ Westheimer Block Party



Imogen Heap 5/12 @ Warehouse Live



The Finalist 5/13 @ Fitzgerald's

for info on venues, visit **freepresshouston.com**

the Unicorns, so I miss some of the hype behind this album. This album is shall we say eclectic, it features many guests from far reaching genres (Spencer Krug of Wolf Parade/Frog Eyes/Sunset Rubdown, Busdriver, members of The Arcade Fire) with sounds that are sometimes Caribbean, but always spacious and expansive. With song titles like "Don't Call Me Whitney, Bobby" it is clear they are in touch with pop culture. The album is OK, the song "Renaud" features like 7 minutes of just the sound of water rushing up on the beach, and this, while being a trial in patience, isn't so impressive when the song kicks in. The band played here recently, and I hear it was a good show, but I also heard this was a good record, and let just say opinions vary.

SUNSET RUBDOWN
Shut Up, I Am Dreaming
(Absolutely Kosher)

Spencer Krug is a busy man. On top of rocking the world with his band Wolf Parade, rocking the world as part of the fantabulous Frog Eyes, he released a solo effort last year under the moniker Sunset Rubdown. It got the usual David Bowie comparisons, it was mostly keyboards, reverb, beat machines and it sounded like very good sketches of songs , some that would end up on the Wolf Parade album Apologies to Queen Mary, and some have been transformed on the new Sunset Rubdown album, Shut Up I Am Dreaming. Here's the difference though, while Sunset Rubdown was a solo project, it is now a full fledged band, giving these songs an added punch, kick, and elbow drop to the face. If you are a fan of either the aforementioned bands that Krug is a member of, you will like this album as touches of both sounds are present here. But there is something else, the arrangements, the songwriting. "The Empty Threats Of Little Lord," begins with the phrase "If I ever hurt it will be in self defense,' and it only gets more beautiful from there. "Us Ones In Between" is like a national anthem of sorts, a proclamation. Pondering thoughts such as, "I heard of creatures who eat their babies, and I wonder if they think about the taste." A lot of times the term side project is used, but the thing with Krug is, every band he is involved in is capable of greatness, and so it would be insulting to suggest that this album is some sort of throwaway thing. It is beautiful, it is moving, it is out now, so go and buy it.

BLACK HEART PROCESSION
The Spell
(Touch and Go)

For a while the Black Heart Procession had one sound, sad and longing. Their music was the slow pulling of a knife from your chest, it was anguish and misery, and I liked it a lot. Well, there last album Amore Del Tropico, was a concept album, but also a foray into different sounds for the band. Their latest album, The Spell, continues in that direction. While still a BHP album, it is sonically more varied, the subject matter still remains, but just because you add some instruments, doesn't mean the pain has gone away. The drum line on the song "The Spell," is, plainly stated, terrific, and gives the band a rhythmic presence unseen in any of their past work. "Not Just Words," could be a Stevie Knicks song, while "The Waiter # 5" keeps alive the tradition of slowly brooding blood curdling sadness that BHP do so well. However, don't take the pain so seriously, it's like reading a book, the mood and theme must be maintained, but this one has a few upbeat numbers, so there are times to come up for breath. I say pick this album up, and use it to motivate you to obsess over the one who left or broke your heart, and then you can call them 5 times a day and say things like "What do you mean you didn't call me back because you were sleeping, you weren't sleeping ,you crushing my soul, while you kissed him you heartless, hateful, (insert derogatory word here) I hate you, I love you, I hate you, I love you…"

CALEXICO
Garden Ruin
(Quarterstick/Touch And Go)

There are a lot of people who only know of Calexico as this Spaghetti western-ish sounding band with mariachis and whatnot, but very few respect the pop rock band that exists parallel to that image. Garden Ruin is a seemingly personal album, it deals a lot with personal relationships, where as Feast Of Wire was more a commentary, a look into policies and societies, this album is about not the people but the person. In addition, the rock band Calexico has shown it's face. There is not as much mariachi, but songs like "Roka" show the band has not completely abandoned their Spanish tinged stylings, but it is infused with more of a rock approach. Songs like "Panic Open String" and "Smash" have Joey Burns singing in a higher register than usual, maybe a result of the Iron and Wine collaborations, but still it is another shade of color in an already vivid palate. There are many directions this band could have gone in, and I love the direction that they have chosen, it nods to their previous sound, but it also reveals new possibilities, which is wonderful, seeing as the band's formula was already pretty flawless, but rather than rest on their laurels and continue to pump out the same record, they show that you may think you know them, but quite the contrary.

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The Three MCs
A word on three new Houston hip hop discs

By Lance Scott Walker



K-Rino
Time Traveler
(Black Book International)

You have to wonder if K-Rino, one of Houston's original rappers, can himself keep track of how many albums he's released at this point. Worst Rapper Alive came out right around Christmastime, Time Traveler will see its release this month and he's already laying out the next one as this goes to print. Thankfully, that productive rampage doesn't seem to have affected his quality. It's tough to figure out where this one falls in line with his previous releases, except to say it's probably the most organic, and yet the least organic-sounding. That is to say there are no samples of which to speak on the entire record -- the bulk of it being produced by the one-man studio that is Dope-E of the Terrorists -- but it's also the most studio-crippled of his releases. With the exception of the Z-Ro produced "Talkin' Loud" (on which he also appears), the tracks have trouble keeping up with or matching the viciousness of K-Rino's lyrical content. Backwards as it may sound -- raw, sample-rich tracks with heavier beats would do him good with this, his darkest material yet.

But that doesn't handicap the album fully. Dope's beats are thick, almost like classical compositions in his overlaying of keyboards and basslines, and he has continued on with perfecting K-Rino's penchant for visiting horror themes in his backing tracks (the theme from "Halloween" has lent a generous hand to his career). And while the sort of meandering pace of the tracks doesn't echo the intensity of the lyrics, it does give them room to breath. Dope-E doesn't spend all of his time behind the board, either -- appearing on "Politricks," as a sort of follow-up to the Dope/Rino collaboration in "Death of a Politician" from years back.

The brightest moment on the record might be the alternating forked tongues of K-Rino and Z-Ro in "Talkin' Loud," but its most significant is in "Almost," where Rino visits a wicked theme "I almost murdered my girlfriend" with a hauntingly accurate recollection. And in consummate K-Rino fashion, his best concepting on the entire record once again involves a religious theme -- this one ("Valley of Decision") being a conversation with both God and Satan where one of the two is imitating the other in an effort to convince Rino to give up his soul.

And does he? Hell no.

Caper
The Show
(J.T.U.D)

What is sometimes the case with singers doesn't always work out for rappers: siblings do not sound alike. In this case, though, newcomer Caper does sound a lot like his brother Big Pokey. In fact, if he were bigger, as it were, he'd probably sound exactly like him. The saving grace here, though, is that his beats and his style of rapping isn't much like Pokey at all. Caper's beats are dragged out, almost as if they were chopped and screwed before he ever stepped into the studio, and the pace of his delivery slows it all down even further. Lots of space between verses, lots of hesitation on the beats, lots of stream-of-consciousness in the lyrics rather than any over-practiced execution. You can almost smell the weed smoke.

Monk
Gangsta Demena Vol. 1
(Wesley World)

When J-Chill and The Klondike Kat released Eating off the Streets Vol. 2 last year, the guest appearances were so thick it made the album impossible to listen to without constantly checking the CD sleeve to see who was on each track. The most overwhelming guest presence on that record is claimed by Monk, one-half of The Officials and perhaps one of Houston's most promising young MCs. In the space of his three tracks, he etches out stories about a childhood lived with a father he didn't meet until he saw him in a casket, a lifetime of unforgiving poverty where he had to take baths using baking soda instead of soap and a tryst with a woman who lied to him about the death of his own son (later finding out it wasn't even his). But none of that seems to have cracked his spirit -- as much as Monk's stories are built on the most desperate of situations, he inks a sense of hope onto each one as he ties the story up. This disc is but a mixtape -- his own verses over the beats of other rappers, which gets distracting, but the rapping is arguable evidence that this young storyteller has got a lengthy and possibly very lucrative career in front of him. His presence behind the mic is fresh, borrowing from anything but the dim delivery of his fellow gangsta rappers and instead climbing all over himself to get out his stories in a wild, upbeat manner. He's also got a sense of humor -- parlayed in the dis "F@$k Chamillionaire," rapped over the beat of Chamillionaire's own "Turn it Up," and featuring the sure-to-catch-on taunt "Here lizard, lizard, lizard..."

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a horse is a... georgia's horse

by Sarah Gajkowski-Hill

The Proletariat bar can make anyone feel like a KGB insider, a secret Soviet bloc dissident, even Niko from the Velvet Underground—unless that last one's just me. But don't worry, all that red and black décor—although it may feel like a feng shui artist's conception of hell—is actually a sweetly sinister backdrop for some of the greatest bands in Houston. For instance, Saturday night brought a long list of punk bands…and then I got a treat—the intense explosion of a three-member outfit called Georgia's Horse, with a female singer.

Teresa Maldonado of Horse jokes that she's been told she sounds like Fiona Apple. She does not look happy with this as she swings her heavy black bangs out of her eyes.

"Yeah, they mostly say Apple or PJ Harvey." They?! I think to myself. Who is this "they" that compares Fiona Apple to PJ Harvey?!

The band's sound is nothing like either of the two ladies mentioned above, although in the low register I can hear a faint growl in Maldonado's voice that may be a tad PJ Harvey-esque. The influences of this band are much more eclectic than you may imagine. I know the stereotypes of male bands with a hot, octave-jumping-front-woman. This is no No Doubt (thankfully—like we need two Gwen Stefanis in the world.) The two young men on bass and drums cite the Pixies and Cat Power as influences. Both of those bands had strong female presences, as did the last two bands Horse's drummer, Brad Thomason, played with.

Horse has a darker, more layered sound than I had expected. I mean, there are just three people on stage and the sheer noise they are able to produce is daunting. Their music is filled out with the help of a little pre-recorded box named "Erwin"—on which original sounds are sampled, then played by their clever, pedal-plying, multi-tasking drummer during the live performance. People say men can't multi-task, but Thomason is really about a dozen projects all at once.When Thomason is not mixing stuff for Erwin or playing the tightest and most animated drums I've heard to date, he is DJ-ing the graveyard shift on KTRU, Saturday nights/Sunday mornings from 1-4 a.m. That's apart from his day job.



there are just three people on stage and the sheer noise they are able to produce is daunting

The bassist is a visual artist who is musically self-taught. Tiziano Hernandez is beautiful (why lie?) and so is his immaculately polished bass playing. When asked, Hernandez likened Georgia's Horse to Portishead. His favorite musician? Bonnie "Prince" Billy.

The beauty of Georgia's Horse (along with their members' similar tastes in music and the skill with which they mix live music with pre-recorded, original undertones) is that you can still hear the poetics and power of Teresa's voice soaring over the dissonance, distortion and heavy minor chords.

Look for a 4-song demo out next month (it will be announced on their myspace page or at their very cool website www.cityofnosun.com). In addition, expect a show around the Montrose area in roughly three weeks. I hope it's at the Proletariat again. This time I think I'll use a code name and wear leather boots. Nothing says Russian working class like thigh-high leather boots.







the Wii controller

Houston, Wii have a problem

by Tyler Barber

If you hear video games covered by major news stations it's probably about another angry pre-pubescent kid shooting someone with a shotgun and blaming Grand Theft Auto. How shocked I was to find Nintendo's new console taking front page on CNN.com. Well, actually, I wasn't shocked at all. Nintendo had just released the name of their new console, and immediately all gaming forums and websites ceased to exist because of the controversial name. Get ready to ask friends over to play with your Wii, (yeah, its pronounced "we").

Nintendo reports that their new name is prefect for the direction they would like to see gaming headed. Aesthetically, the Wii illustrates both the new controllers with the lowercase "i's," and alludes to playing games together with a friend with the two lowercase "i's" representing generic people icons (think: the men's restroom dude). Phonetically, Nintendo says their name can be understood across language barriers, and has the universal sound of fun (wee!). Metaphorically, Nintendo holds that the code name: Revolution was the question (what will be the next Revolution in gaming?), and that the answer is we, or Wii.

Okay, so with all that marketing lingo out of the way, lets get down to the public's reaction. Forum poster Keefman -X- sums up the internet's reaction on 1up.com's message boards: "When I found out [about the new name], it felt like getting kicked in the Wii Wii. Really hard. Like someone wound up and kicked as hard as they could with rocket thrusters attached to their boots, resulting in a force tangent to a Centripetal Force of 7.5 x 10^12 N being applied to my testiclads. Wii, Nintendo? WIIIIIII?!?!" And that's a nice one. As we speak, almost every possible penis/urine joke and pun has been said in message forums throughout gaming websites. Hardcore gamers are having a field day as many Nintendo fanboys are crying as if their myspace girlfriend from three states over just broke up with them. Regardless, Nintendo maintains that they are not targeting the hardcore gaming market, that they want non-gamers to return to the couch. In the defense of their name, Nintendo references names like Google, Virgin Airlines and iPod as odd names that are now commonplace. True, but none of those make me think of urinating, nor of my wing-wong.

At the end of the day, the bottom line of every angry forum-poster on the internet is that it all comes down to the games. And while I don't like what the name is associated with, I like it. Its simple, poignant and aesthetically appealing. Regardless, the stream of criticism and toilet humor associated with Wii will continue to flow, and will be something we wont be able to shake.



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DS Lite - on your pockets

Nintendo's Re-designed Hand-held gets price and date

Keeping with all things Nintendo this month, the current champs of the hand-held market announced that on June 11th we'll see the new DS Lite stateside with the friendly price point of $129.99 (the standard price of the current DS). The new design features a number of upgrades, most notable the DS Lite is 2/3 the size of the current DS, and the brighter screen has an four adjustable settings (making the DS Lite as bright as the PSP). In addition, the unit will have longer battery life, an easier-to-grip stylus and a changes to the button layout. The DS Lite comes in three colors: crystal white, ice blue and enamel navy. Expect bundle packages including the New Super Mario Bros. game.



Eat Shrooms

The pipe laying duo are back

Just in time for Nintendo's new DS Lite, the New Super Mario Bros. game is set for a May 15th release. This is the first non-spin off Mario game (ie: Mario Tennis etc.) since Mario Sunshine for the Gamecube. The game reflects the classic look of the first Mario game with 2D side-scrolling, but with new 3D character models. New moves and gadgets aplenty, Mario and Luigi can now grow to an enormous size (pictured), ride in turtle shells, perform acrobatic jump combos as well as a number of stomp attacks. Expect this game to ring true to Super Mario Bros. (NES) and Super Mario Bros. 3 (NES) in both style and gameplay.

E3 Next Issue:

This lucky journalist is headed to Los Angelas to bring you coverage from the biggest event in video games period. Abridged list below.

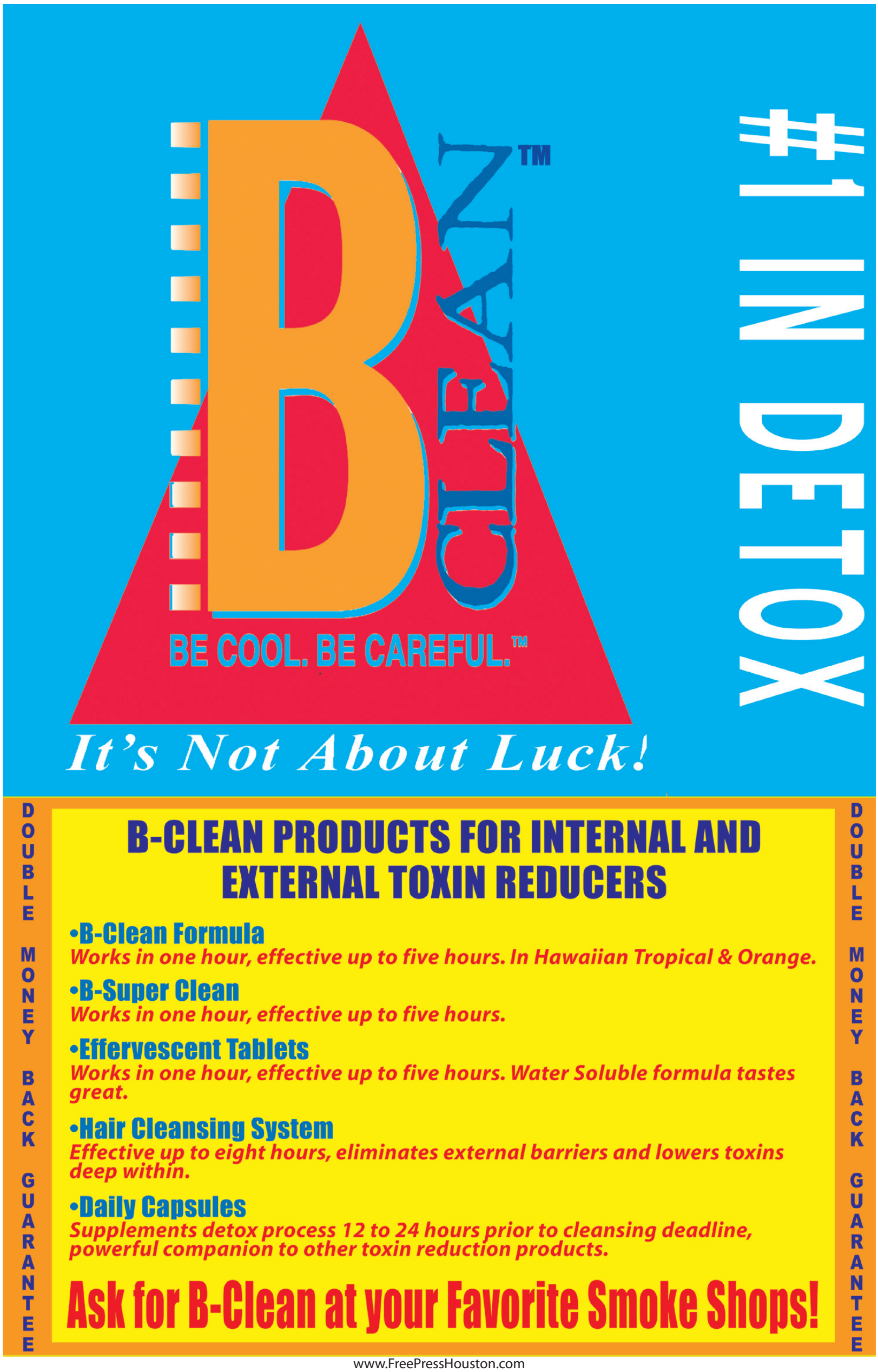
Confirmed Previews:

- Halo 3 • Final Fantasy XIII
- Call of Duty 3 • Spore

Hands on (all platfroms):

- Gears of War • Mass Effect
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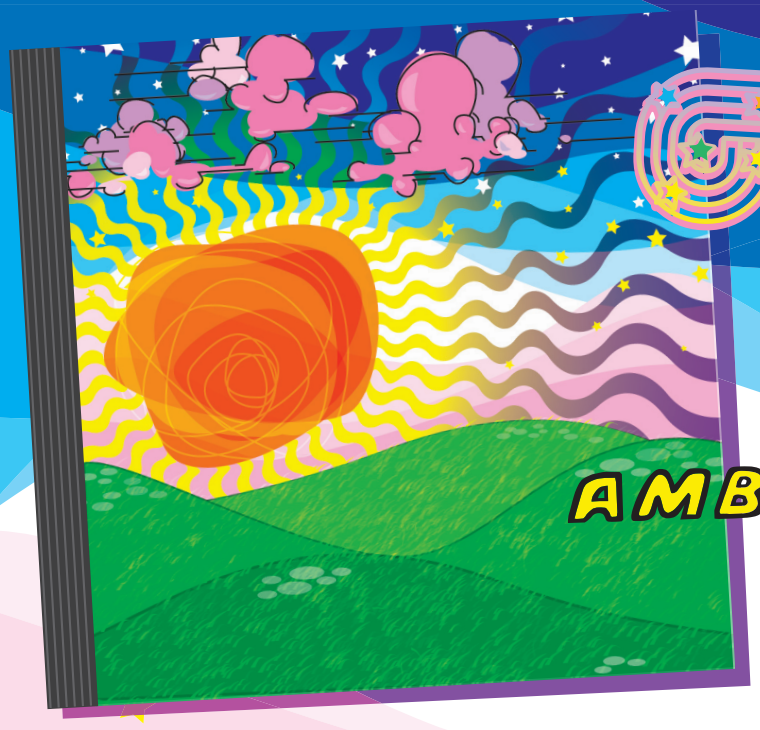
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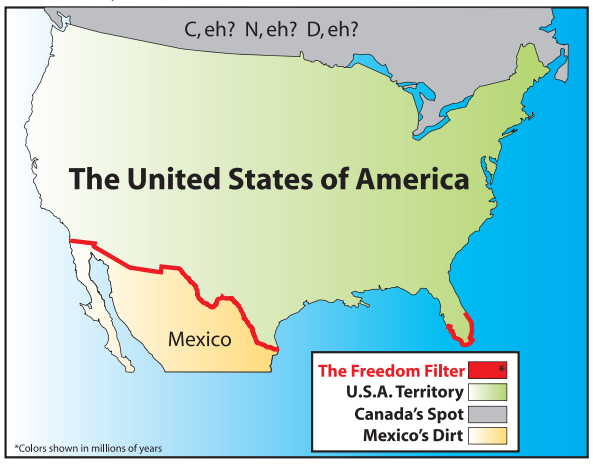
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So why do all of this? For starters, if you are going to do something, you might as well do it right. A 100ft wall would be useless if "job seeker" could just crawl right under it.

Who would pay for this? Well, you will but don't worry. The national debt won't be paid off anytime soon, so tripling it won't matter much either. As an added bonus, if we're all broke, no one will want to sneak in anymore anyway.

How will you power the electrified fencing? California always seems to be making out ok with their Electricity provider, so why not stick them with that service to the country? To complete the circuit and maintain steady electrical current, the neutral wire can be connected somewhere near McAllen, Texas. Florida will have to fend for themselves to atone for their little "voting mishap."

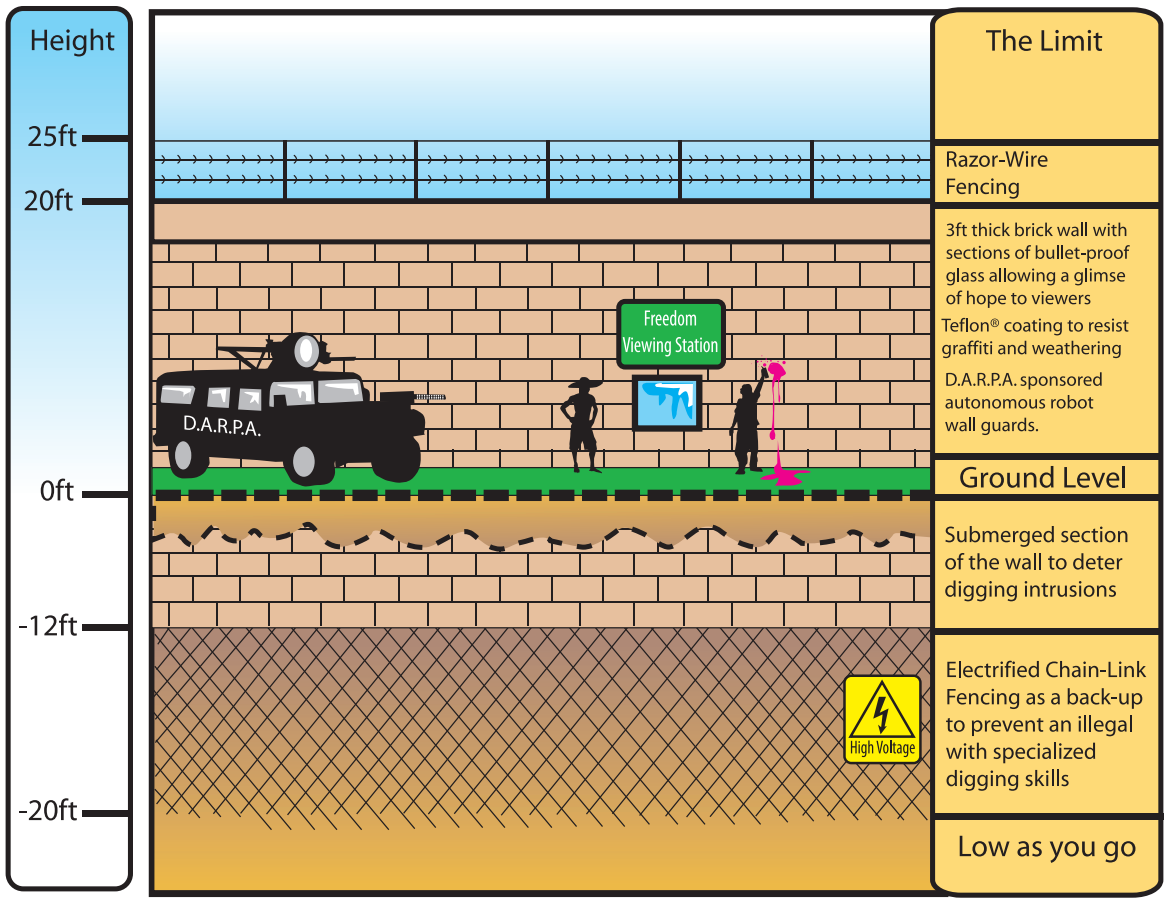
Where will we get the man-power to build this if we deport all of the illegal aliens? China. Wally - mart pretty much owns them anyway so it should be no problem to legally and temporarily import them. With over 5 billion people and their given experience in this matter, the wall could be built overnight.

What can I do with this? You can mail it to your local congressman or other state representative. You'll be doing a great service to yourself and your fellow legal countrymen.

-By Mirrorz

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The Finalist WITH Morningside Drive Eyeagainst Million Year Dance

5.13.06 .....
FITZGERALDS.....

If there is one thing the scene has been lacking since the days of yore, it is without a doubt, diversity and acceptance in local shows. We used to see it in various shapes and sizes dating back to the mid-90's which I'm sure many of us would like to forget and most of us are unfortunately still clinging onto.

Maverick Recordinga artist, and local kids, The Finalist, will be returning home May 13 to throw a sonic spear into the once prevailing and hopeful, yet now, unfortunately monotonous drudgery that has been Houston's music scene. They will be bringing other locla favorites, Morningside Drive in tow, as well as hardcore legends, Eyegainst and the ever-ethereal Million Year Dance. With all respect, none of you will have to make sure hair is parted on the "scene" side for this event.

With membes ranging from Cypress to Humble to 5th Ward, The Finalist have busted the appropriate amount of ass to get what's been bestowed upon them in the last two years. Brothers Jerry and Brent Nettles are probably two of the most business - saavy individuals in Houston right now, scoring their band, with the right amount of work ethic, a deal with Warner Bros./ Maverick. They just recently finished recording a full length album in Vancouver, CA with GGGarth Richardson, who helmed the board behind such gems as Rage Against the Machines self-titled debut and the Red Hot Chili Peppers "Mother's Milk". Now, not to rub shit in your face or anything but take a wild fucking guess at how old these kids are.....done yet? Yeah. 1/2 of them aren't even legal to drink yet, and the other half just graced the wonderful age of 21. However, all of their cards have been in place since at least early 2003-late 2004.
Its okay to get on those kness and start sucking now.

Now, not only will you be attending this show and catching the only band to come out of Houston to be LEGITIMATELY signed to a major labvel, but, you'll also catch some serious contenders for the crown of rock and metal.

Morningside Drive will be returning with The Finalist from a 4 week tour that granted them the chance to play with notables Spoken, and even obtaining a slot opening for Everytime I Die , Between the Buried and Me and Haste the Day. If Houston isn't cooking like one of Paul Wall's grill's right now, then I am obviously out of touch with my sensory perception.

Not that this isn't enough to guarantee a fucking definitive "sold-out Fitz crowd", but local metal gods, Eyeagainst will be setting the later acts up with plenty of intimidation to make sure the night will be a very, very bruised one. Eyeagainst's recently returned from a far-too-goddamned-long hiatus, and since they've started the fire again, Houston has felt it like a railroad spike to the skull. I would suggest the following:

Do NOT wear a white shirt, or anything you'd be afraid to get bodile fluids on.

During the Eyeagainst set, go ahead and tell your significant other, "I'll be right back, I need to get a drink." So as not to feel compelled to putting their face through the wall

And definitely, buy lots of drinks because Jay at Fitz hooks it up on that Rum and Coke.

To open the night will be the ever-intellectual, magnifying experience that is Million Year Dance. I know, I know, this IS too much, but see what WE here at The Free Press did, was send a cute little bird called Avian Flu to The Reptilian World Order just to make this show happen and be able to take place. No one who has the proper say-so in media events would let something THIS diverse happen, in, of all places, Houston, TX.

If you miss this, consider yourself not one of the 144,00.



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The Masters of Chaos Metal Moment

Morbid Prove They're Still the Kings

by Jeff storm

I come to you mere hours after the conclusion of the Masters of Chaos show, the fiercest tour this year, including Despised Icon, Krisiun, Behemoth, and Morbid Angel!

Canada's Despised Icon played first with something that surprised the hell out of me . . . a killer set from the opening band. Although Cryptopsy should probably receive royalties from Despised Icon, everything from the band was impressive, the drumming especially. I don't know if their skinsman owns Flo Mournier's instructional DVD, but he can definitely pull off some of his trademark techniques.

My only real complaint against Despised Icon is the whole dual frontman thing. Its not that both vocalists weren't good, it's just that having the two of them in the band is kind of unnecessary. Stick with whoever the better performer is and I think people will take y'all more seriously.

Krisiun played a technically impressive set, playing tracks off the new Assassination album. Krisiun pounded hard as ever, making it known that a softer more sensitive Krisiun ain't comin' any time soon. Their set also managed to show what good music they made on the Ageless Venomous album, which all in all had pretty shitty production.

Behemoth played a killer set too! They seemed to have the crowd at their disposal for the entire set. Also, frontman Nergal had an interesting stage presence that combined some Steve Harris like poses and heavily accented anti-Christian manifesto. Out of the opening bands Behemoth really stole it, they had the best stage presence, they were tight as a band, and had blinding strobe lights which no truly possessed metal fan can resist.



And finally Morbid Angel's return to Houston with David Vincent taking the reins. Despite the best efforts of the opening bands, Morbid almost completely erased their memory while grinding through classic Vincent-era tunes. Some of the highlights of the evening were "God of Emptiness," "Rapture," "Fall from Grace," and "World of Shit." Out of the times I've seen Morbid, this was definitely the best and let's just hope that this won't be the last we hear from Morbid Angel.



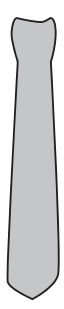
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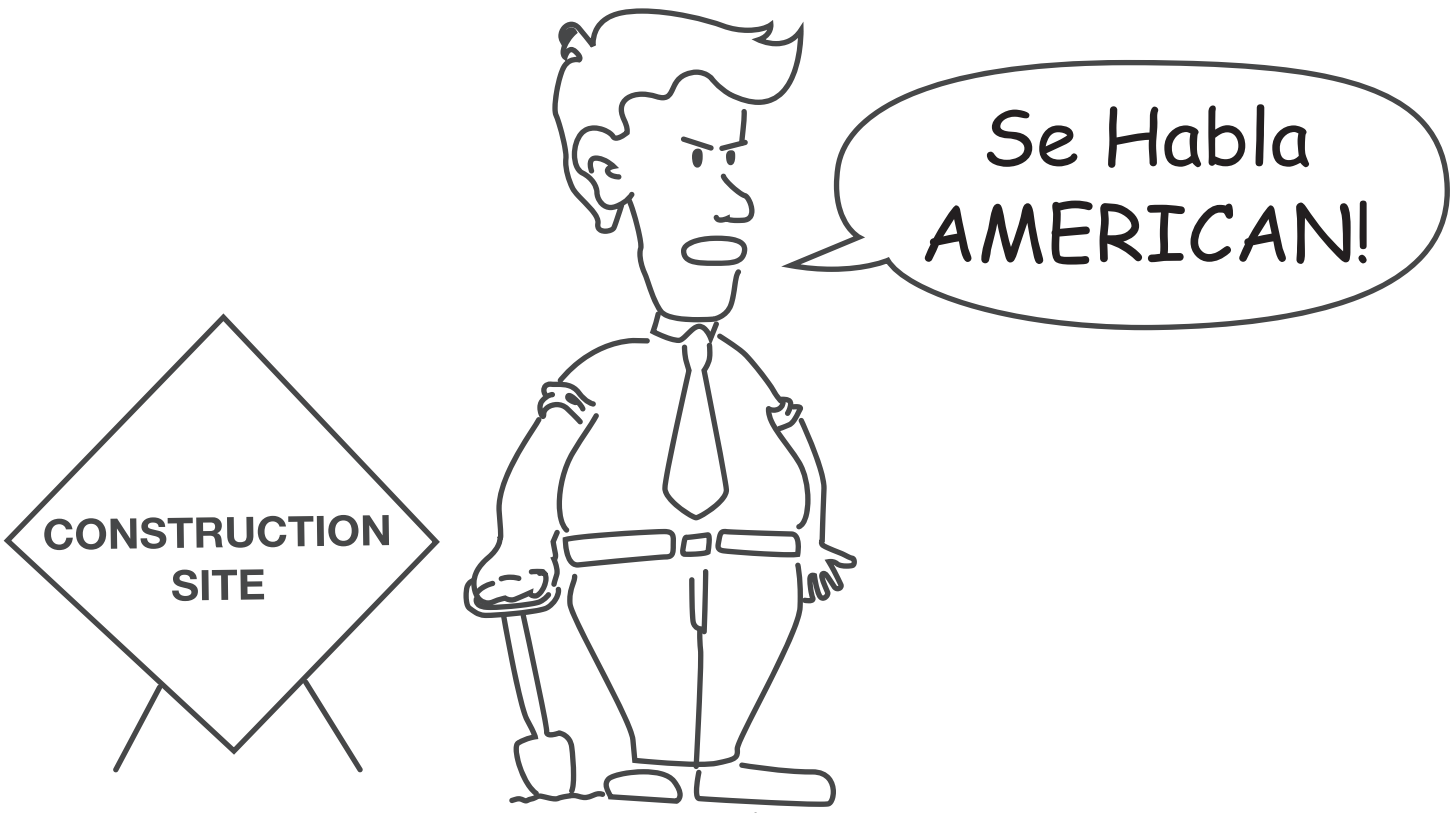


WORLD VIEW

Give Us Your Poor, Your Tired, Your English-Speaking ...

Xenophobia in a Land of Immigrants

By JOHN CHUCKMAN



"One of the important things here is that we not lose our national soul."
– George W. Bush

Was George Bush speaking of some truly shattering event in American affairs? Perhaps the imprisonment and torture of thousands of innocent people? Perhaps the lack of democratic legitimacy in his own coming to power?

No, what Bush was describing is a version of the American national anthem in Spanish - *Nuestro Himno* (Our Anthem) - which was played on American Hispanic radio and television stations recently.

Now, in many countries with multi-ethnic populations, most people would see this as charming and flattering. Canada's anthem has two official versions, French and English, and were a group of immigrants to offer it in Ukrainian or Mandarin, most Canadians would be tickled. It would undoubtedly be featured on CBC.

But in America, the broadcast of a Spanish version of *The Star Spangled Banner* has aroused a somewhat different response. Charles Key, great great grandson of Francis Scott, offered the immortal words, "I think it's despicable thing that someone is going into our society from another country and changing our national anthem."

"This is evoking spirited revulsion on the part of fair-minded Americans," offered John Teeley, representative of one of innumerable private propaganda mills in Washington commonly dignified as *think-tanks*. Mr. Teeley continued, "You are talking about something sacred and iconic in the American culture. Just as we wouldn't expect people to change the colors of the national flag, we wouldn't expect people to fundamentally change the anthem and rewrite it in a foreign language."

A foreign language? There are roughly thirty-million Spanish speakers in the United States. The analysis here is interesting: an immigrant singing an anthem in his own language resembles someone changing the national flag. This argument does, perhaps unintentionally, reveal the real concern: Hispanics are changing our country, and we don't like it.

So it is not surprising that the American low-life constituency's political and moral hero, George Bush, should declare: "I think the national anthem ought to be sung in English, and I think people who want to be a citizen of this country ought to learn English and they ought to learn to sing the national anthem in English."

> the English language came from another land, and it grew out of centuries of change

Never mind that the American Constitution says nothing about language. Never mind that waves of immigrants from Europe about a hundred years ago founded countless private schools and cultural institutions in the United States where German or Italian or Hebrew were the languages used and promoted. Never mind that after a generation or two, minority immigrants always end up adopting the language of the majority, something which is close to an economic necessity. And never mind that xenophobia in a land of immigrants should have no place.

An entertaining historical note here is that Francis Scott Key did not write the important part of *The Star Spangled Banner*, its music. Key wrote a breast-swelling amateurish poem whose words were fitted to an existing song. The existing song, as few Americans know, was an English song, *To Anachreon in Heaven*, a reference to a Greek poet whose works concern amour and wine. *The Star Spangled Banner*, in any version, only began playing a really prominent role in America during my lifetime, that is, with the onset of the Cold War. In Chicago public schools during the early 1950s, we sang *My Country, 'Tis of Thee,* another breast-sweller, written not many years after Key's, by another amateur poet, Samuel Smith, sung to the music of the British national anthem, *God Save the King*.

It shouldn't be necessary to remind anyone in an advanced country that things change, and they change at increasing rates. Even in the remote possibility, a century or two from now, Spanish or some blend of Spanish and English were to become the dominant language of the United States, what would it matter to today's angry and intolerant people? After all, the English language came from another land, and it grew out of centuries of change from Latin to early versions of German and French layered onto the language of Celtic people.

Throughout history, fascism is closely associated with xenophobia, but then we find many other unpleasant aspects of fascism - from illegal spying to recording what people read in libraries, from torture to illegal invasion - feature in George Bush's America.

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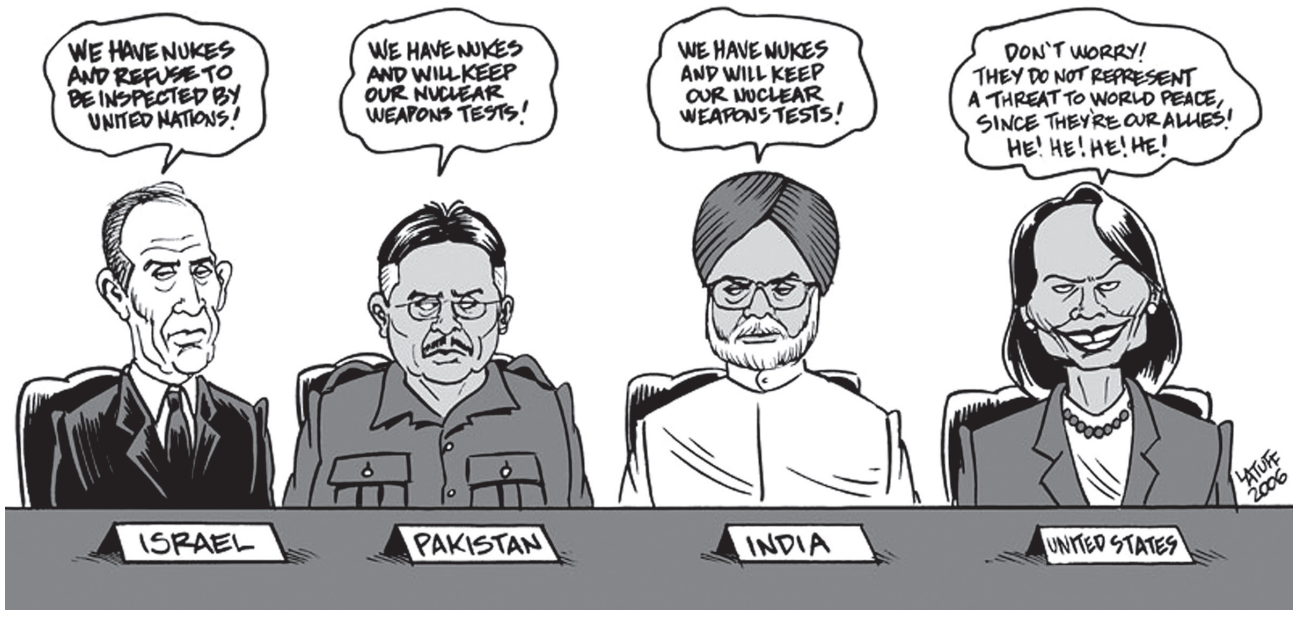
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IRAN IS **NO** THREAT

By George Reiter



It seems the Bush administration is planning to threaten Iran with bombing attacks on its nuclear research and development facilities, painting the possibility of the Iranian regime.

Developing a nuclear weapon in the next 5 to 10 years(opinions differ) as the most serious threat to the US security in the world today. This threat is taken to be the possibility that the Iranians will ship such a bomb to "terrorists" who will find some means of delivering it to the US and exploding it. Sound familiar. As the propaganda machinery cranks up to scare the people of the US into supporting a manifestly illegal and thoroughly irrational action once again, it's worth examining the doctrine of mutually assured destruction, and the role it played in the 50 years of cold war between the Russians and the US. This was a time when there was no question of the existence of nuclear weapons on the other side, and no doubt about the intention of each side to use them, at least in so far as formal policy options were concerned. And yet they were not used, as each side recognized that to do so would, under the best of for-seeable circumstances, lead to their own destruction, even if a surprise attack were launched first. There is no such symmetry between the US and Iran. The US has the capacity to destroy Iran utterly, and is threatening to use it. The Iranians, even if they developed a bomb, could not use it first against the US, even by terrorist proxies. They could not be sure that the origin of the weapon given to terrorists would be unknown. They would be committing suicide as a nation. To do so just for the privilege of killing a lot of Americans would be irrational. In order to justify implementing their policy of preemptive war, it will be essential for the Bush administration to define the Iranian leadership as insane. And while they may point to statements denying the holocaust or other rhetorical excesses by the Iranian regime to make their point, in this context, the meaning of insanity is that the Iranians will not give their survival and that of their nation the highest priority. There is a much more realistic interpretation of Iranian mindset and intentions, assuming that the Bush administration claim that the Iranians intend to develop a bomb is true. This was made clear by a memo from Donald Rumsfeld circulated to the cabinet shortly after the year 2000 election.

"The collapse of the Soviet Union has produced centrifugal forces in the world that have created new regional powers. Several of these are intensely hostile to the United States and are arming to deter us from bringing our conventional or nuclear power to bear in a regional crisis."

In other words, the threat from Iran is that it would use a nuclear bomb to deter an attack on themselves. And indeed they might. If they had such a weapon they might get it hidden somehow in a US city, (they can fit in a large suitcase) announce to the world that it was there, and that they would no longer accede to US threats. And while this would be far from the force balance of the Cold War, it should suffice to protect them from threats of bombing in a cause that very few Americans would agree was worth the loss of a US city. This is the situation that the Bush regime describes as "nuclear blackmail". That is, the Iranians asserting the right to self defense in an effective way. In the Cold War, it was called stability.

A bomb would have to be tested, and it takes a great deal of time and equipment to make the material for even a simple one. Even given Bush administration policy of denying the Iranians an effective defense against attack, it is not clear why, with an occupation going badly in Iraq and with the certainty of inflaming public opinion against them even further in the Muslim world, it is in such a hurry to attack Iran. Could it be an effort to return to the glory days of popularity after 9/11 when their bellicose policies intimidated the world and played well at home? Could it be to install a client regime in Iran more friendly to US exploitation of their oil? Could it be to complete the encirclement of Russia, which still retains the power to destroy the US at the push of a button, and has a population that may be suspected of preferring some version of the previous system, with all its ills, to the capitalist kleptocracy they have now? Hard to say what the Bush administration hopes to accomplish. Its certainly not protecting the US from another non-existent threat from a relatively powerless country. Could it be the Bushites that are insane?

| Could it be an effort to return to the glory days of popularity after 9/11 |



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RIDIN' DIRTY

Ten Tips on Staying Clean When Your Tags are Not

by Omar Afra

I am not a lawyer nor have I ever made out with one. It is funny how a sticker can end you up in jail or with exuberant fines. I loved stickers when I was a kid. Racecars, smiley faces, sailboats. Whatever. When you're a child, stickers are a friendly thing and a cause to celebrate. But before you know it, they morph into something feared. Something that haunts your sleep and waking hours the same. That's right infidels—I am talking about registration and inspection stickers. Driving without such credentials is a fine science and should be done with the utmost care and concentration. Just follow these 10 simple rules when doing so.

RIGHT HAND LANE

Stay your ass in the right hand lane. This gives you the option to pull over in the nearest place of business or residence if you see a cop. Also, cops usually stay in the fast lane as the majority of tickets are given from the lane.

BUDDY SYSTEM

If you are heading somewhere with some friends and you must drive, have them stay flush behind you as you cannot get pulled over like such. Nonetheless, beware of recent Gestapo-like tactics the HPD has been using lately with officers standing in the road pulling folks over with hand signals. Call them what they are: Checkpoints.

NIGHT MOVES

Drive at night. It is harder to see expired tags with halogen bulbs shining in your face. Take advantage of this weakness now because in a few years technology will make it possible for cop car computers to remotely access such data. Just think EZ tag.

CROSS-TOWN TRAFFIC

Cops hate traffic. You will often see cop cars posted up at IHOP or Denny's come peak traffic hours. This also allows for the precious buffer zone that commuters put behind you.

ALIBI

Always be prepared to lie to law enforcement. I just bought the car yesterday. I am on the way back from the shop. I work for an alternator shop and this one needs a rebuild stat! The transmission has been busted on this thing for nine months and I just got it back this morning. I had Lasik surgery last week to restore my vision and this car sat in my carport for 18 months. Just be creative. Cops hate generic excuses.

PARK IT LIKE IT'S HOT

See a cop. Find a parking lot and sit. Call a friend. Be late to wherever your going because it is much better than owing fines or some douche bag making the arbitrary decision that he should take your freedom from you because you don't have the right stickers.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Theoretically, you could get from Highway 6 to Midtown by cutting through neighborhoods spare to great obstacles: Beltway 8 and the 610 loop. Do so in traffic and you will be golden. Nonetheless, many outer-lying suburban neighborhoods host lurking "Constables" who are notorious for being bored and anxious.

FIND THE SLOW POKE

I usually look for the blue haired old ladies and post up right in front of them. The double reward on there is that they are usually in the right hand lane anyways.

COUNT THE COPS

It's simple. You're playing a numbers game. There are only X amount of cops per square mile. Wait before leaving a high visibility location and keep your eye out for law dogs. If one passes, take the route least likely to come in contact with the route taken by the cop.

LAST RESORT: PARKING LOT COMMUTING

You would be surprised how far you can travel by driving through adjacent parking lots and crossing over to next through the street only when need be. Legend has it that Alex Wukman drove from Sugarland to Pasadena in 45 minutes applying the Fibonacci sequence to this technique.

We hope this has been helpful. Driving in Houston is treacherous, as we have to beware of not only HPD but also Metro Police, Harris County, DPS, various Constables, and even the occasional over-zealous HISD cops seeking to write some truancy tickets. Oh yeah, and NEVER NEVER NEVER drive through Bellaire.



"Excuse me ma'am, your tags expired in 1915."

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MAY 1: Thousands of Houstonians got out of work and joined protests today to memorialize May 1st, International Workers day, and oppose repressive immigration legislation. Many Rallied in Memorial Park and marched to Senator John Cornyn's office. This past week the US Senate trimmed 1.9 billion dollars from the Iraq war and Katrina relief to buy new equipment for border "security." The Chronicle reports that Police believed this march to be larger that the April 10th demonstration for Immigrant Justice. There was at least one confirmed arrest of a cyclist who was participating in the march. There were also Rallies at University of Houston and at a Park at Hillcroft and Bissonet in Southwest Houston

APRIL 10: According to The Houston Chronicle, more than 50,000 people marched through downtown Houston in favor of socially just immigration reform. With demonstrators carrying US flags and chanting "USA! USA!" some participants remarked that it looked like the Fourth of July. Houston Indymedia had breaking news coverage throughout the day.

Meanwhile there was a protest organized by Lee High School Students that took place after the school day. 100 students and supporters attended including Councilman Khan [see photos and report] It seems that organizers from the April 10th Coalition deliberately tried to exclude the very students who have been at the forefront of this spontaneous movement.



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Local artists and activists read from Howard Zinn's *Voices of a People's History of the United States*. Artists include Paula Anicete, Hitaji Aziz, Jacquelyn Battise, Duane Bradley, the Community Builders' Cadre members Colbe Beavers & Khefren Savannah, Council Member Ada Edwards, Chuck Jackson, Autumn Knight, Lee High School's Irma Estrada & Chris Nevarez, Vivek Mittal, John Pluecker, Sehba Sarwar, and Anita Wadhwa.

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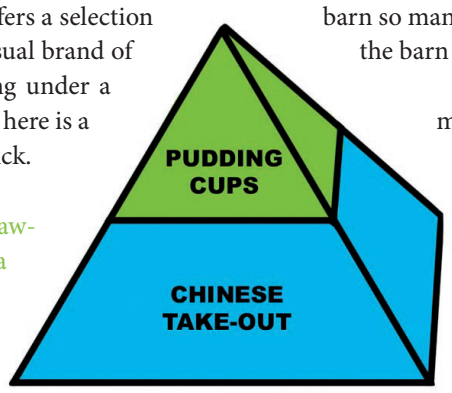
Deelicious

BY TISH OCHOA

Natalie Dee is just a normal girl living in Columbus, Ohio. But over the past several years, her website natalieedee.com has attracted an audience of thousands. Natalie is a web based artist, and like Craigslist and Myspace, she's become quite popular in that internet kind of way. I first heard of Natalie a few years ago when a friend emailed me a drawing of hers. Now nearly everyone I know reads Natalie. Not only does she put up a new drawing every single day, she also writes a pretty amusing advice column and offers a selection of merchandise that features her unusual brand of humor. Just in case you've been living under a rock (a rock with no internet access), here is a little preview of what makes Natalie tick.



Tish: When did you start drawing? Have your drawings always had a similar aesthetic as they do now? Or did using photoshop to create them change your work a lot.



Natalie: I started drawing when I was really really young, and took a lot of art classes starting when I was around 7. I think the style I draw in now began to makes itself apparent 10 or 11 years ago, after I got into comic books, and started realizing that the kind of art my teachers taught wasn't really the kind of art I was interested in doing. You can only have someone stand behind you and have them tell you how THEY want you to draw the barn so many times before you don't want to draw the barn at all, you know?

I don't think Photoshop has changed my drawing style too much, aside from just being able to erase stuff without having to start over from scratch. I really don't use the program to the full extent of its capabilities, to say the least. I just draw on a Wacom tab, like I would on a piece of paper.

Tish: Where do you fit into the art world? Do you consider your place on the net only, or do you ever exhibit your paintings publicly? Do you aspire to show your work in public

Natalie: I kind of divorced myself from the art world a long time ago. There is a definite kind of person who rolls with art scenes, and I've never really got along with those kind of people. A little too much pretense, a little too much snottiness and attitude, and hardly anyone has anything to back up all the artifice.

I've shown paintings at shows before, but I don't think I will be pursuing those avenues in the future. I haven't been working on large format works in a long time, because I get bored with them. I identify more with illustrators than any other group, and have been working more on that kind of stuff for the past couple years.

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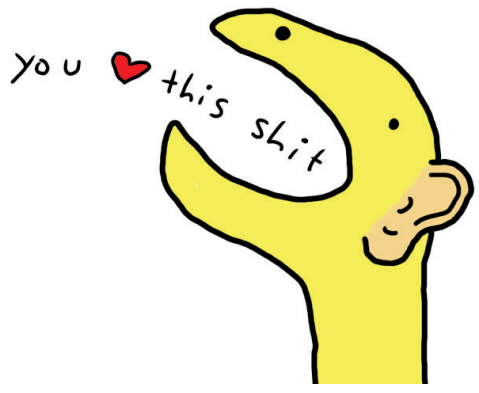
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Tish: Who are your favorite artists?

As far as fine art, I really like Jeff Koons and Ray Johnson.

Comics-wise, I'm into Evan Dorkin and Pete Bagge. Internet comics-wise, the only one I ever look at (aside from checking on my site, my husband's site, and the site we run together) is Achewood. Pretty good stuff.

Tish: Are you into the whole blog thing? I know there are a few sites I visit on a daily basis. Anyone out there that you read regularly?

Natalie: Not really. Ever since the whole blog thing started, these bloggers think that they can go and shit up the whole internet. I mean, how many blogs do you click on and see the same 10 recycled links to news stories, and the same predictable complainers, before you just quit? Whine whine whine, complain complain complain, link the new iPod, link the Threadless sale, check Boing Boing and repost all their links, repeat. I'm not going to lie, though. I do check The Sneeze regularly. Steve, the guy who runs it, is really nice, and his blog is funny and interesting and never the same thing as everyone else's blog.

Tish: Do you spend a lot of time on the internet in general?

Natalie: Kind of. I am tied to my computer most of the day, doing interviews like this one, checking e-mails, processing orders and whatnot. Plus I do all my art on the computer, so I tend to keep the internet open at the same time I am doing pictures, just to make sure I don't stay on task TOO much. I don't get on the Instant Chatterbox, though, or post on message boards or anything, but I work on the internet, so I can't get too far from it.

Tish: What is a day in the life of nataliedee like?

Natalie: I get up at around 10, do e-mails while I have breakfast... Three times a week we pack orders in the early afternoon, and on alternate days we go to the post office in the early afternoon. Then I go out to lunch, come home, and work on stuff for the afternoon and evening. I'll work on drawings, or on Married to the Sea stuff, or I will go into my sewing room and sew or I'll just chill out. That's pretty much it. Not too interesting.

Tish: It's pretty awesome that you put a new drawing up every single day. Do you make 1 drawing a day usually? Or is it the kind of thing where you might get inspired and make a whole lot of them at once?

> Internet comics-wise, the only one I ever look at is Achewood. Pretty good stuff.

I always do them in batches. I'll draw 3-5 in a sitting a few times a week. Usually one drawing will give me another idea for a different drawing, and other times I will already have a list of ideas. I just sit down and do it, and get a nice backlog. That way, I don't have to update every single day, I can update for a month at a time and just let it take care of itself that way.

Tish: Your Ask Natalie column cracks me up. When did you start doing that? What's the strangest question you've been asked?

I started doing Ask Natalie back in 2003. I did it on a fairly regular basis on my site until 2005, when I started doing it weekly for the Columbus Alive. I left due to contractual disputes after the paper was sold to the main newspaper in town, and since then I have been taking a little time off from it, letting good questions accumulate so I can get it back the way it used to be. When I was just writing it when I felt like it, I was more able to pick and choose and make sure I always had new, different, and interesting questions. Having to do the column every week meant slimmer pickins, and I got a little burnt out answering dumb boyfriend questions all the time. I'll probably bring it back in the spring.

The strangest question I ever get is MY BOYFRIEND DISRESPECTS ME AND TREATS ME LIKE I AM A STUPID CHILD. WHAT SHOULD I DO?? It is strange because you would think that anyone with two brain cells to rub together would know the answer to that. But they don't, and I think that is a huge problem. Maybe guys would stop treating girls badly if girls stopped letting guys treat them badly. Maybe if any guys had to face repercussions for being a dick, they would quit being dicks. Just a hunch.

Tish: marriedtothesea.com is your new collaboration site with your husband Drew (of toothpastefordinner.com). Is that an idea you guys have been kicking around a while? Is it difficult to work together, or is it pretty easy?

Natalie: Nah, ideas don't tend to get kicked around too much in our household. Most ideas either get acted on pretty much immediately, or immediately get dismissed. We made a few of the comics and realized they were totally hilarious, and thought we would put them up. So we did. We don't really "work together" on the site. We both just do the comics on our own, and pile them together under the Married to the Sea umbrella.

Tish: I think the coolest part of the new site is that it is mainly text based, but your individual styles are still all over it. Do you guys take turns doing the daily update or do you work on each comic together?

Natalie: We just work on the comics on our own, and put them up in no particular order. I think you can tell who does which ones, though, since we have different styles. This comic lets us do a lot of things we wouldn't necessarily do on our own respective sites, though.

Tish: When you are making new drawings, are you creating for an audience or do you mainly just draw stuff that cracks you up?

Natalie: I just draw what I think is funny, and my audience creates itself. Its a lot easier to just please yourself rather than trying to figure out the formula for the one joke that is going to make everyone laugh. That's when your comics get totally boring.

Tish: Have you ever been to Texas? What is the coolest place you've ever traveled to?

I have been to Texas, but only once, and it was just overnight in some Holiday Inn in Abiline when we were driving home from vacation a year and a half ago. Texas is pretty big, huh? It takes a long time to drive across. We drove across Canada a few years ago, and that was pretty awesome. It was interesting. A lot of Canada is empty, and something about that appeals to me. I'm a little misanthropic.

For your daily fix of Natalie Dee, visit her at natalieedee.com and marriedtothesea.com

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7640 Airline Dr. North of W. Little York 281.931.3773	17504 N.W Freeway Corner of Jones and 290 713-466-3242	8000 Gulf Fwy 45 and Broadway 713.645.8808	4610 FM 1960 West of Veterans Memorial 281.895.9400

**Rates exclude taxes & Sprint Fees (including USF charge of up to 2.27% that varies quarterly, cost recovery fees up to $2.83 per line, & state/local fees that vary by area). Sprint Fees are not taxes or gov't-req'd charges.
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