FREE PRESS HOUST

ISSUE 105 | JULY 2009

SUMMER FEST SCHEDULE

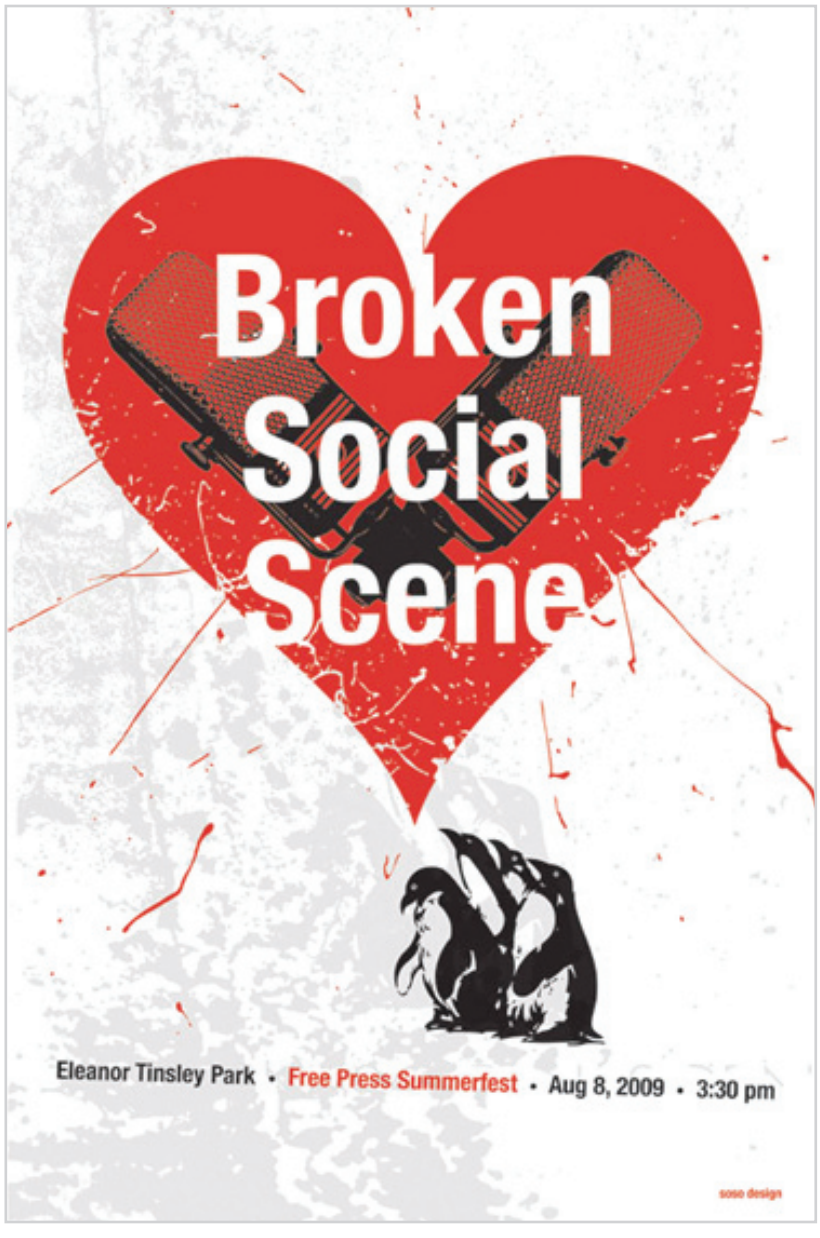
UNEASY RIDER

BIKE SAFETY ON HOUSTON'S STREETS

THAT SOTOMAYOR QUOTE

5 THINGS I WANT FROM THE NEXT MAYOR OF HOUSTON

INTERVIEW: GEOFFREY MUELLER


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- TDBZ
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- Brandon Silva
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Jul 10
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Jul 16
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Jul 17
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Jul 18
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EVENT CALENDAR

7/1 Dizzy Pilot, Barkus Sly and the Golden Egg, The Grasshopper, Lies Heavy Cavernous, Sohns

7/2 Afton

7/4 Ty Segall, Welfare Mothers,The Moonheart, Southern Backtones

7/7 Tax the Wolf

7/8 Perseph One

7/9 Young Mammals

7/10 News on the March, The Gills

7/11 Buxton 7" Release

7/12 Coathangers, Dozal Brothers

7/15 Neil Hamburger, Jacob Calle

7/16 Inner Lights

7/18 Fired for Walking, LP4

7/24 CeePlus Bad Knives

7/25 Shake Some Action Dance Party

7/22 So Many Dynamos, Cast Spells, Woozy Helmet

7/26 PTERODACTYL, Dinosaurs, Cop Warmth, MuhhamidAli, Motion Turns it On

7/30 Drag Prom! w / The Manichean, Mystery Flavor

7/31 Orents Stirner

8/3 PLF

8/14 Mutating Meltdown, The Wiggins

8/15 The McKenzies

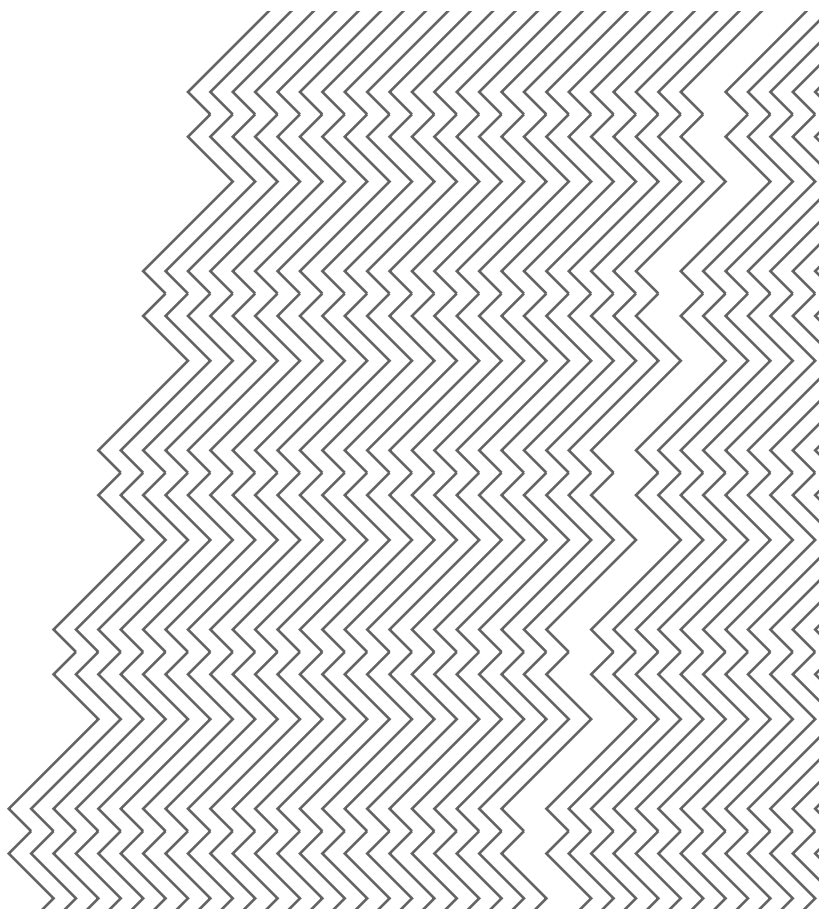
8/20 O Pioneers!!, Andrew Jackson Jihad, Molotov Compromise

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EDITOR'S LETTER
FEEL FREE TO TAKE US SERIOUSLY

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

SOME PEOPLE GET RUBBED THE WRONG WAY WHEN YOU MAKE MENTION OF ANY POTENTIAL RESPONSIBILITY WE HAVE TO THE SOULS AROUND US. DO WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO THOSE IN OUR COMMUNITY? I DON'T MEAN THIS IN ANY SILLY, POLITICAL OR SOCIAL CONTEXT. I AM SPECIFICALLY TRYING TO SCRATCH AT THE IDEA OF WHETHER WE OWE DEBT OF LOVE TO THE PEOPLE WE SEE EVERYDAY WHO ARE NOT OUR CLOSE FRIENDS AND FAMILY. IT IS EASY AND SELFISH TO DOLE OUT OUR AFFECTIONS TO THOSE WHO WE CARE FOR. BUT WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO WE COULD OR SHOULD CARE FOR? SOUND SILLY? WELL, IT'S NOT AT ALL. SOMETIMES, THE PEOPLE WE ARE LEAST CLOSE TO CAN HAVE THE MOST PROFOUND EFFECT ON OUR LIVES. FRIENDLY ACQUAINTANCES CAN OFTEN BE MORE OBJECTIVE AND HAVE LESS PRE-TENSE THAN THOSE CLOSEST TO US. WHEN YOU CAN HAVE THOSE SIMPLE CONVERSATIONS VOID OF INHIBITIONS AND CUT STRAIGHT TO THE HEART OF THINGS. PARTICULARLY WHEN YOU SEE SOMEONE HEADING DOWN A DARK PATH. MAYBE YOU EXCHANGE PLEASANTRIES WITH THIS PERSON RATHER OFTEN. BUT WE OWE THEM MORE. LOCAL ARTIST AND MUSICIAN DAVE RASK WAS THIS PERSON TO ME. I SAW, SPOKE, AND 'HUNG' WITH THIS TALENTED SOUL LITERALLY HUNDREDS OF TIMES OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS. HE WAS THE GUY ALWAYS LACKING A TERSE WORD DESPITE BEING AROUND SCORES OF BIG MOUTHS AND BIGGER EGOS. NEVER HEARD HIM UTTER A SPITEFUL WORD AND NEVER HEARD HIM GO ON A NEGATIVE RANT. BUT WE COULD CLEARLY SEE SOMETHING ON THE HORIZON. NO ONE COULD HAVE IMAGINED HIS TRAGIC, UNTIMELY DEATH BUT I HAVE TO ASK MYSELF IF THIS IS A FAILURE ON THE COMMUNITY'S PART. I HAVE TO CONCLUDE IT IS. NOT BECAUSE ANYTHING COULD HAVE BEEN DONE, BUT BECAUSE NOTHING WAS DONE. I KNOW, SOUNDS NEBULOUS. BUT LITTLE THINGS OFTEN MAKE GIANT DIFFERENCES. SO MAKE SURE AND TELL ALL THOSE AROUND YOU LOVING AFFECTIONATE THINGS AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE. I AM AS GUILTY AS ANYONE FOR NOT DOING SO.



DEBRIS

MORE THAN ENOUGH TO SHAKE A STICK AT

BUFFALO SEAN



AFTER A SUGAR HIGH COMES THE INEVITABLE CRASH. IT'S A LESSON SELDOM LEARNED BY CHILDREN, BUT APROPOS OF ALL SORTS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE THAT KID WILL ENCOUNTER.

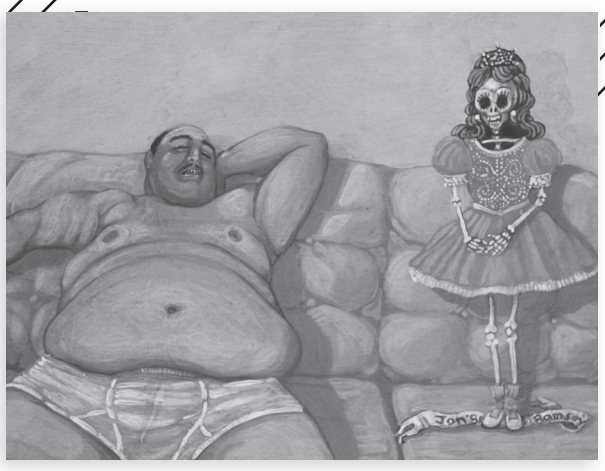
A SPRING FULL OF AMAZING EXHIBITS this year has left me nowhere to go but down, and I have appropriately become irritable, sleepy and withdrawn. I'm scanning the horizon with bloodshot eyes as my hands start to shake and my brain feels tortured with anguish. Where will my next fix come from?

I've been to the Contemporary Arts Museum, but the Torsten Slama show makes me want to kick puppies. Seriously, the "What the fuck is this shit" quotient has to be exceedingly high for this exhibit; the plaintive landscapes with wonky Modernist buildings in anal-retentive exactitude and man-boy seduction scenes in pencil are so barren of emotion I was waiting for a warehouse fire or a rape scene. At the Blaffer Gallery, *Existed: Leonardo Drew* mashes both Robert Ryman-inspired exactitude and Bob Rauschenberg-style accumulations of detritus into dreary claptrap. Whatever cultural context Drew professes to illuminate is buried in the same sand that his head is in. Brent Steen's drawings at Inman Gallery can't even give enough to the viewer to be as dreary as Drew's instead they come off as both lazy and uninspiring. Marlene Dumas' massive show at the Menil Collection may have merit as postmodern portraiture, but unless you really get into it, they're only going to make you depressed about South African racism, exploitation of women, heartbreak and dead babies.

Carlos Cruz-Diez's installation of painted crosswalks is terribly pleasant to walk across, but the one-off nature of his project- confined to the street directly in front the Museum of Fine Arts- leaves me thinking that unless he went big and painted a whole neighborhood in them its just a navel-gazing exercise magnified by all the press this paint on the street has gotten. The *Texas Sculpture Roundup* at the Art Car Museum suffers from the opposite problem; the whole place is stuffed with large sculpture, but the presence of bad work with the good drags the whole show down. Where will it all end?!? I may jump in the bayou if this doesn't get any better. Maybe the summer will kill me off; I'll just lie in the sun all day, drinking salt water, slathered in baby oil, next to a pile of burning tires. **FPH**

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7-17 Maria de Negro - El Tlazho
7-18 Avenger - D-Fyant - Floppy & Akward
7-24 Dr. Rick & The Burners-BayouMonster
7-25 Chango Man-Los Guerreros de la Musica
7-31 The Distracted-Possum Attack-3Colored Bananas

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FROM WOODSTOCK SUMMER OF LOVE TO CONSUMER WINTER OF DISCONTENT IN 40 YEARS

BY MICHAEL BERGERON



YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT TAKES ON A WHOLE NEW PARADIGM WITH THE DOCUMENTARY FOOD, INC. SOME FACETS OF FAST FOOD NATION ARE REINTRODUCED WHILE THE BULK OF THE FILM CHARTS THE MODERN TRANSFORMATION OF THE FARM AND THAT EFFECT ON AMERICAN CULTURE.

FOOD, INC.

Towards the end was a slight pedantic tone to the message but overall the docu reverberates with facts that cannot be denied.

The food we eat has been transformed by pesticides, additives and preservatives, and also genetically modified to the point that it's not the same sustenance that nurtured people before the WWII era. Statistics on the number of items in grocery stores are simply mind-boggling. The film touches on the Montsanto effect of genetically altered corn and the resulting legal battles that have ensued. I felt that this point alone was so dense with information that it begged for a separate documentary only on that subject.

The agrarian America imagery used to sell food doesn't really exist anymore. According to Food, Inc. in the 1970s the top five beef packers accounted for 25% of the product while today the top four beef packers control over 80% of the market. The typical hamburger you eat may be composed from over 1000 cows plus whatever chemicals have been used to purify the hamburger meat. Similarly through applied science the same acreage that bore 20 bushels of corn a couple of generations ago now yields 200 bushels.

Here's a list of items that contain corn: high fructose corn sugar, cellulose, calcium stearate, ethyl lactate, maltodextrin, saccharin, xanthan gum, sorbital, gluten, sucrose, ethel acetate, citrus cloud emulsion, citric acid, absorbic acid, baking powder, di-glycerides, starch, there are others. I'm not even sure what this all means but the graphics in Food, Inc. give the corn byproducts prominent contrast.

Food, Inc. is an indictment of the food industry and its methods. Who needs to eat green tomatoes sprayed with ethylene gas so they will ripen while being shipped to market? Tomatoes can be ripened naturally by placing them next to bananas that give off ethylene. So who's to say at what point harm enters the equation?

The film bounces back and forth from clever evidence to not so clever facts. The contrast between a corporate chicken farm and a free-range chicken operation could be Food, Inc.'s most eloquent allegory. But showing a poor family grappling over whether to spend a dollar on a stalk of broccoli or a fast food hamburger only panders to stereotypes. Another incident concerning a mother whose child died due to e-coli poisoning brings more personal feeling to the fore.

For the most part Food, Inc. separates the wheat from the chaff. Food, Inc. doesn't advocate becoming a vegetarian for instance. When showing sensible methods of food production side by side with despicable quality control from corporate behemoths this film by Robert Kenner makes its best case. The food industry will ultimately have to change but as Food, Inc. implies so must the consumer.

WOODSTOCK REDUX

Next month celebrates the 40th anniversary of the Woodstock music festival an event that left an indelible mark. Three bright days of love and peace may have dimmed with the current reality of what the 60s really entailed (assassination on a scale never seen before or after, a protracted unpopular war) but rock concerts have never been the same. Later this summer an Ang Lee film, Taking Woodstock, presents its own version of the festival although centering on characters in the nearby town and not the actual concert. Some of the magic still hovers in the air.

Warner Brothers won't be re-releasing the 1970 concert film theatrically but it's safe bet that a three-hour documentary would go unnoticed by today's short attention span theater crowd. Fortunately however Woodstock has been released on DVD in a director's cut that runs just under four hours. An extras disc with a couple hours of bonus concert footage is available with the deluxe edition.

If you've seen the original Woodstock you be pleasantly surprised at a few of the changes director Michael Wadleigh introduces. The film still captures the event like a true documentary alternating between wandering footage of the crowd with straight-on music performances. Much of the film is seen in tri-panel imagery. The biggest difference occurs in the last hour with previously unseen footage of Janis Joplin. Joplin was not included in the original film and her presence electrifies the screen. The original film ended with Hendrix playing "The Star Spangled Banner" but that's gone replaced by an even longer Jimi Hendrix closing sequence featuring familiar songs as well as a lengthy solo jam.

The extras disc contains over two hours of concert footage from other artists that for reasons involving rights or time was left on the proverbial cutting room floor. Some of the filmmakers who worked with Wadleigh (and also seen in interview snippets) include assistant director Martin Scorsese and assistant director and editor Thelma Schoonmaker.

Wadleigh and associate producer Dale Bell provide background stories on everything from hijacking the negative from Warner Brothers after they found that Technicolor was making a duplicate negative for the studio to the methods they used for getting some of the



best cameramen of that era to essentially work for food. Another extra and it's a hoot features an interview with 1970s era Wadleigh (looking every inch the cosmic cowboy he was) on the Playboy After Dark show.

The extra concert footage delivers 18 songs from 13 bands. Among them Mountain, Creedence Clearwater Revival (Fogerty was so vital then), an alternative edit of The Who songs seen in the feature, Johnny Winter, and an amazing 30-plus minute "Turn On Your Love Light" from The Grateful Dead (fearlessly psychedelic). The Who, when seen in the feature version play "We're Not Going To Take It" in triple screen close-ups, which is followed by Townsend smashing his guitar and tossing it to the audience. On the extras we get single frame takes of the song, adjusted to allow more medium shots of the band. Plus the Gibson destruction actually occurs at the end of "My Generation" also seen in its entirety.

No doubt many reading this article weren't alive when the festival went down and this 40th anniversary edition sets the record straight as entertainment and as a vital document.

PLASTIC ONO REVISITED

The year 1969 was also the release of Abbey Road, the last Beatles LP and the first appearance of solo Beatle John Lennon with the Plastic Ono Band. Seemingly on a lark Lennon along with Yoko Ono, and Klaus Voorman, Eric Clapton and Alan White boarded a plane from London to Toronto to play in a festival that revolved around 50s rock icons. Only then Bo Diddley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard and Chuck Berry weren't legends so much as overlooked musicians having a second coming.

The resulting film, shot by D. A. Pennebaker, was the only footage of Lennon with this band. (Beatle acolytes know that Alan White was used by George Martin to replace Ringo Starr on an early Beatles single.) After brief segments featuring the revival bands Lennon and the Plastic Ono band take the stage with a raw intensity.

Lennon rips through songs like "Yer Blues" and debuts "Cold Turkey." The band is tight even when Yoko emerges from a black bag and begins vocal chanting over the rock and roll. The stage is small and the coverage is in your face, which fits the electric mood precisely.

Lennon hadn't played live in three years and was obviously ready to bust loose. John Lennon & The Plastic Ono Band Live in Toronto '69 on a single DVD released by Shout! Factory captures that magic and energy in its manic glory. FPH





HOW COULD I BE DEAD, HE SAID, WHEN I STANDING WEARING THIS BAD LOOKING HAT

KWAME ANDERSON M.

THE OTHER DAY I WAS WATCHING A WILCO DVD WITH MY DAUGHTER AND I REALIZED, "I FORGOT TO TURN THE WATER OFF!" THE WATER BILL WAS HIGH LAST MONTH. IT'S A CONCERN. DOMESTIC LIFE.

IT IS HOT AS FUCK OUTSIDE. Not that all fucks are hot, unless "fuck" is used more like an adjective than a verb, or unless it is to say that, as a verb, the act of fucking is HOT… Anyway, the weather. I hate walking to the mailbox, or the car, or from my car to an establishment—the heat is my disabler. I never look forward to the summer; it's like you need to save all spring to pay for your summer energy bill. Domestic life.

Tortoise recently released an album called Beacons of Ancestorship on Thrill Jockey Records. In celebration of this event, I called a member of the band, John Herndon (who apparently pumps gas during a hail storm), to discuss the latest Tortoise album and the current state of the music industry. However, since I did not have questions, per se (it was more of a casual conversation), I thought I'd just make up questions that may or may not relate to the answers and present it as the intentional piece. [Writer's note: This is not our actual conversation, verbatim. The quotes are real, but since I know John, this is sort of culled from our conversation… which did indeed pertain to the album.]

FP_ How's the weather in Chicago? Are you enjoying the pre-summer days?

JOHN H._I'm watching this storm front underneath this overpass and it's got some hail that's the size of golf balls.

FP_ Your album is fabulous.

JH_ Thanks a lot. Are you calling to interview me?

FP_I think it's cool how the album is available in multiple formats, other than illegally downloaded. I noticed that this record is like Tortoise's return to beats…

JH_ It wasn't premeditated. We didn't really talk about, like, "Let's get back to beats." It just seemed like it was where a lot of people's heads were at. A lot of it, for me, was like trying to discover where people like (hip hop producer, genius) Jay Dee were at, and Madlib, and I think Jeff (Parker) and I have been listening to Jay Dee stuff a lot, but I think everybody wanted to make something that was reflective of what was happening in our own spaces…

FP_ When you bring a song to the band, before it is complete to be illegally downloaded, how does that work in terns of the democracy of the band? How are each member's song ideas incorporated into the bouillabaisse that is a Tortoise album?

JH_ Are you asking how a band member presents a song to Tortoise and has everybody agree to work on it? Well, I just kind of collect stuff. I'm really good at starting shit, but I ain't great at finishing it, so I have like a bazillion little scraps of ideas on my computer, or on the MP (360, a sampler beat machine thingy), and I'll just bring in everything. Like everything. I'll play 27 beats that I have and just sort of wait until something catches people's ear, and then it's obvious that we'll work on that. On the other hand, you might play something and see glassy eyed stares, people starting to look away, and awkward silence, and you'll be like "Oh, well, let's play the next one…"

FP_I like the length between the records, it gives the fans a long time to make sure it's sunk in. Like your last album—It's All Around You—took five years to sink in.

JH_I don't know why it takes us so long. We never have the intention of waiting so long between records. If someone had told me it was going to be five years between the last record and this one's release, I would have said you're shitting me. I'd like to start working on a new record now, and have it come out next year, but I don't think that that's going to happen. I don't know why it is, but we work very slowly. We all have things we like to do as much as Tortoise—we put a lot of energy into other projects. With this record, I could say that my oldest son just turned five, so that might have something to do with it.

FP_ The other day I downloaded the new Liberace album. It was OK. Lil' Wayne has a verse on it.

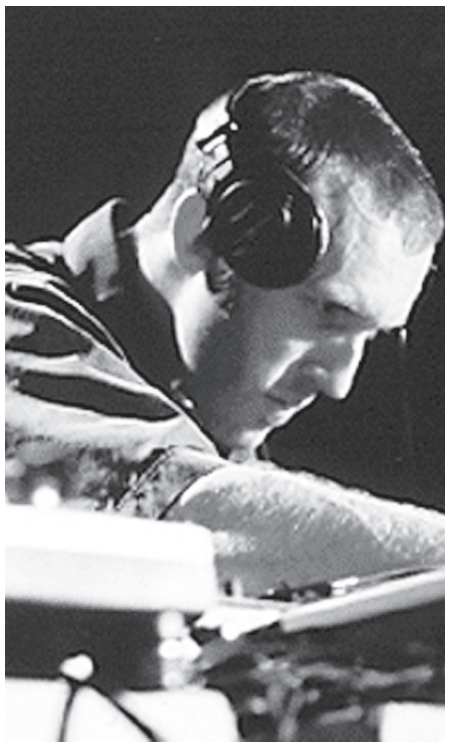
JH_ That's where things are at; people are not buying records. I'm curious to see…I downloaded Beacons Of Ancestorship a month ago. I was looking around to see if it was anywhere, and I found this blog site, and they had a Rapidshare address. I went there, <click>, <download>, and I downloaded the whole thing.

FP_ Mos Def's new album is being sold on a t-

MIC SKILLS
7/3 | THE MINK



RJD2
7/4 | TEXAS HEAT MUSIC FEST



NEWS ON THE MARCH
7/10 | MANGO'S



ELECTRIC TOUCH
7/10 | WAREHOUSE LIVE





shirt with a download code on the tag and the songs on the back of the shirt. I'm thinking of doing the same thing with toilet paper, but putting the download code on the cardboard roll: Wipe yo' ass while you jam my shit!

JH_ It's almost like people don't even have a CD player anymore. If you're a nerd or something, you have a record player. Downloads and vinyl are where things are going now—and most people don't even have a record player—so there's a few people who will buy a CD, a few people who will buy the vinyl, but most people are just downloading it.

FP_ But look on the bright side, people rob other people during a recession. They don't pay, so you can't get paid…but they think you're awesome.

JH_ Yeah, it's interesting. I don't expect anybody to buy a record really, but hopefully we'll play some shows. We're going to be busy through the summer and hopefully that will help me make a living.

FP_ Making a living…

JH_ But whatever, I don't wanna poo poo this shit, and beat (Beat into the ground!) this "making a living" shit, because the bottom line is, regardless of whether I'm making a living or not, music is going to be my priority! And if that means I have to supplement my income doing something else, then I'll just do that.

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SHOWS

A TRAK_7/11/09_Warehouse Live

ASHER ROTH_KID CUDI_88 KEYS_7/31/09_Warehouse Live

SHELVES

WILCO_WILCO_Nonesuch

YPPAH_I KNOW WHAT GHOST KNOW_Ninja Tune

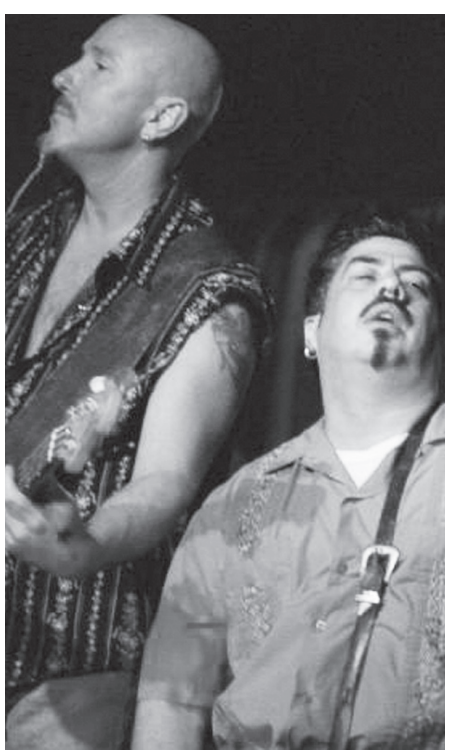
JOAN OF ARC_FLOWERS_Polyvinyl

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SNEAK PEEK

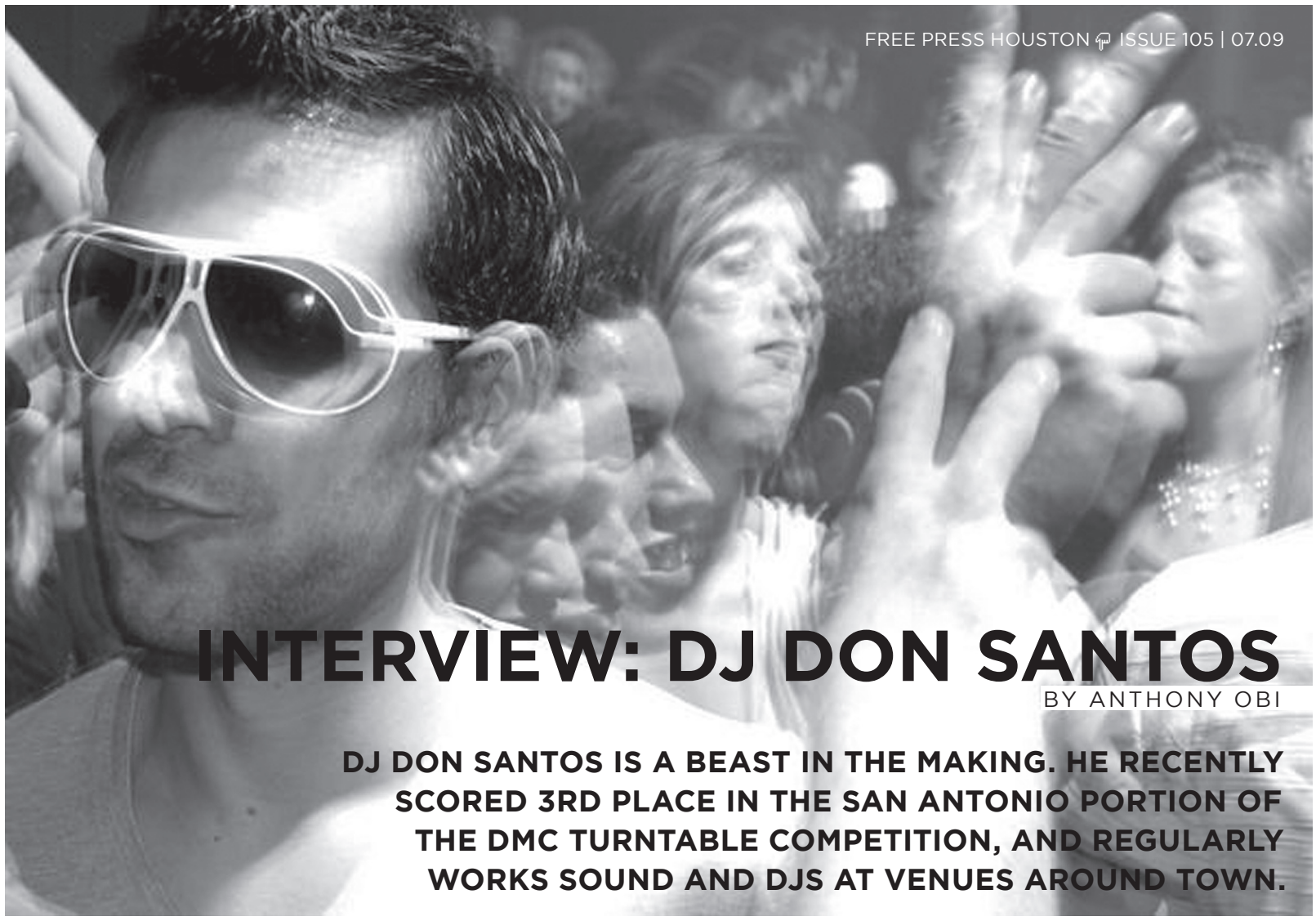


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INTERVIEW: DJ DON SANTOS

BY ANTHONY OBI

DJ DON SANTOS IS A BEAST IN THE MAKING. HE RECENTLY SCORED 3RD PLACE IN THE SAN ANTONIO PORTION OF THE DMC TURNTABLE COMPETITION, AND REGULARLY WORKS SOUND AND DJS AT VENUES AROUND TOWN.

NOT A HOUSTON NATIVE, but this Portland born turntable champion has made the city of syrup his home. On a trip to Austin to play a show many moons ago I had the joy of rolling with the Don and being astounded at his love of Bass music (Booty bass, Miami bass, Ghettotech; pretty much anything fast paced, bass heavy, and calling for all "big booty hoes to get on the flo'" immediately). He had so much knowledge on the stuff I had to deem him the walking Wikipedia.

He played me a mix he created of Bass music that went pretty hard, but then he pulled out the CD that made me want to write him up in the first place. A mix of Prince Rogers Nelson Jr. music simply entitled "The Prince Project". Created for his girlfriend as a gift, the mix features some of the best Prince tracks from a good chunk of his 80's and 90's releases and to say the least, it fucking jammed. I was sold after hearing the "Computer Blue" bridge/solo blended into the beginning of "I Would Die 4 U" during the Purple Rain portion of his mix. Best thing is the Don's Prince and Bass mixes are available as free downloads on his website – www.thedonsantos.com

Who are you? Where are you from? ¶ Santos Pastrana aka The Don Santos. Turntablist extraordinaire, hailing form Portland, MAINE!!

What are you doing here in Houston ¶ I came here to build a resume in the music industry. I work as a freelance sound engineer and as a DJ.

Have you connected with any DJs or artists around Texas since you moved here? ¶ Yes, I first met DJ Dayta, he told me about Speakerboxx Thursdays [at The Mink Backroom] and introduced me to some peeps. It eventually led to me meeting up with all kinds of DJ's & artists like iLL Faded Productions who I work with on the regular now.

What inspired your Prince mix? ¶ I've always liked Prince... when I was in school in Toronto a classmate gave me all Princes music that was out to date. I tossed around the idea of an all Prince mix tape, but it was not until my lady friend Elizabeth requested I make it for her birthday present that I began recording it.

Where does your love of Bass music stem from? ¶ DJ Craze! I saw him in Toronto one time, he's from Miami, man he threw the Bass down HARD!! I fell in love with it then. I've always loved old school hip hop, and allot of that Bass stuff has the old school flavor to it. I also love those booty shaking beats!!

What do you find the most pleasure in: turntablism competitions, creating mixes, DJing parties, or backing Rap artists? ¶ DJ Battles for sure!! It's always been a dream of mine to do damage in the battle scene. I have entered the DMC a few times before with not much success, but I always get respect. This year on the other hand I finally placed in a DMC regional, 3rd place got my street cred up! By the way several people think I should have won it, no joke. I got another chance this July 10 in New Orleans. I am determined to make it at least to the National finals in this life. I also like DJing for rap shows.

What projects are you presently preparing? ¶ Mike Ro's album "Undisputed" is dropping this summer, I got a bunch of scratching on it. A bunch of mixtapes with iLL Faded including artists like Mike Ro, Chief, Dee Rail, GT Garza, Fame City, V-Zilla, D-Mo, Qua tha Skit & Hazel, Coache Johnson, and more.

How many crimes did you commit to be certified as a "Don", Mr. Don Santos, sir? If your memory is hazy, then a simple guesstimate will do. ¶ Well I've not been a saint all my life... Uh, I plee the 5th.

Do you dabble in production and remixing? ¶ Only a little right now, I plan on diving into that down the road. I stay busy scratching.

What DJs (past & present) inspire you? Who are your turntable heroes? ¶ Inspirational DJ's would be Total Eclipse, Roc Raider, Craze, A-Trak, Super Dave, Klever, D-Styles, Shub, T-Lo... but my absolute heroes are definitely Craze, A-Trak, and D-Styles!

Do you have any plans of taking your talent on the road? What are your dream places to play? ¶ Well I would like to get good enough to compete in the world DMC in London. Definitely want to tour nationally and internationally. I would like to tour Europe. Anywhere and EVERYWHERE!! **FPH**



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JULY BAND LISTINGS

WEDNESDAYS
July 1 - Steven Chadwick
July 8 - Strange Brew
July 15 - Texas TNT
July 22 - One Night Stand
July 29 - Matchstick

FRIDAYS
July 3 - Electric Bite
July 10 - Mambo Jazz Kings
July 17 - Echoz
(Funk and Dance Band)
July 24 - Mr. Hand's Revenge
July 31 - MODOC

SATURDAYS
July 4 - Happy 4th Of July
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July 11 - Destroyer
(Kiss Tribute Band)
July 18 - Sabbath Judas Sabbath
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INTERVIEW: GEOFFREY MUELLER

BY OMAR AFRA | PHOTO BY CECILIA JOHNSON

GEOFFREY MUELLER IS A MUSICAL CHAMELEON HAVING MASTERED SEVERAL INSTRUMENTS SUCH AS BANJO, GUITAR, BASS, SAW, VOICE, AND WHATEVER ELSE YOU STICK IN HIS HANDS. PLAYING IN SUCH NOTABLE BANDS AS SIDESHOW TRAMPS, I AM MESMER, GRANDFATHER CHILD, CHASE HAMBLIN'S BAND, PERFECT PENIS, AND MORE, MUELLER MANAGES TO BE EVERYWHERE YET NOT SPREAD HIMSELF THIN.

FRANKLY, IF YOU SPEND ANY NIGHT OF THE WEEK watching live music in this town then you are surely to run into this local musical treasure. In the 90's as an adolescent he was well known as an amazing pop-and-lock break-dancer and as the front man for local metal band Lower. The SceneWiki says "He's embarrassed about this so be sure to ask him about it." But Geoffrey is one of those rare hyper-talented performers that are just straight up nice guys. He brings smiles wherever he goes and we here at FPH are just smitten with him. He was also gracious enough to answer a few probing questions.

What motivated you to pick up the saw as an instrument? ¶ Like most things in my life it was pure impulse. I never heard a saw in person, but I knew they could be played, so I made a bow out of fishing line and a ruler, bought a saw from Southland and got to work. It took me a month of experimenting before I could get a good sound (this was pre youtube DIY days). Now it seems to be the instrument I'm most closely associated with. I love the saw. I still give free lessons to anyone interested in learning. Contact me here - cajunbanjo|gmail.com My goal is to create a full saw orchestra.

I am Mesmer is such a 'super-group'. Tell us how that came to fruition. ¶ Ha ha ha, that's funny, yeah, I've heard that term thrown around a few times. It's like the "We are the World" USA for Africa group of Montrose with Kelly Doyle and Whitebread as Hall and Oates, Robert Ellis as Lionel Richie, and Jo Bird as Cindy Lauper. I'll let you fill in the rest, Omar, well, except for Lukas Aberer, he's obviously Dan Akroyd.

I don't know how we formed really, It's not like I woke up one day and said "I think I want to put together a 9 piece string band to play insanely fast apocalyptic gypsy music right here in Houston, Texas," but it happened and I'm glad it did. We just all found our way to that first rehearsal, and now everyone is a vital member. The line up is Kirk Suddreath, Hilary Sloan, Young Will, Mike Whitebread, Lukas Aberer, Jo Bird, Robert Ellis, Kelly Doyle, and myself. These are some deeply original and talented musicians, I'm happy to be the weakest link in the group.

Is there anything you can't do? ¶ Tell Karen Carpenter how much I love her music. Besides that, the list is far too long to mention.

When you are alone at home in front of the mirror, do you ever catch yourself practicing your old break-dance moves or zipping through some rhymes? ¶ My moves are too powerful; I won't even let the mirror watch. As for rhymes, I composed a new routine for I am Mesmer. It's really just an excuse to get Jo Bird and Hilary Sloan to rip on the mic.

What local musicians 'flabbergast' you? ¶ My biggest influences have all been from Houston. I love Little Joe Washington. He absolutely rips on the guitar, charms any crowd in the first ten seconds, passes the hat, and takes off on a little girl's bicycle. When I see him at gigs he's always encouraging and usually drops some Yoda like wisdom on me about playing music. I like Greg Harbor and the Gypsies. Kelly Lancaster, Ferrence, Richard, Vladymir, Julia, and all the rest. A while ago, Greg had triple bypass surgery or something of that caliber. I saw him the next week throwing back cocktails at a tango event. There's also Kelly Doyle - Everything I know about guitar I stole from him. Doug Kosmo, Rodney Elliot, and all of J.W. Americana - The most entertaining band in recent Houston history. Two Star Symphony, Sabra Laval, Clouseaux, Space City Gamelan, Hilary Sloan, Bill Miller, Nick Gaitan, Robert Rodriguez and that whole crew, Wayne "The Animal" Turner, Blarin' Aaron. Pretty much anyone I'm playing with or have played with over the years. This list could get very long very fast, so I'll just say I love the musicians in this town. I'm also very impressed with the new bands of late: The Ton Tons, Buxton, Wild Moccasins, NOTM, etc. Looking forward to what they'll all do.

What instrument is next? ¶ The Cajun Accordion. I've always wanted to play one with the Sideshow Tramps. I bought one in Dallas a few months ago, named it Yves Dupree after my Mom's Dad.

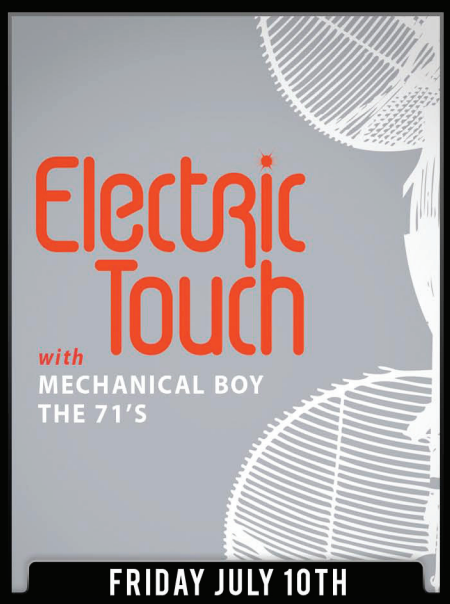
Are there any festivals on August 8th and 9th at Eleanor Tinsley Park that you are looking forward to? ¶ Funny you should ask that. I was just sitting in my favorite vegetarian restaurant **Mango's**, drinking a **Robert Ellis**, when I saw an ad in my favorite monthly publication the **Free Press** for that very festival and all my favorite bands are playing you shameless self-promoting bastard. Too bad I have to work those days.

I love you Geoff, Do you love me? ¶ Yes. Sorry if I don't always show it, I'm just slightly autistic. **FPH**

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FRIDAY JULY 10TH



SATURDAY JULY 11TH



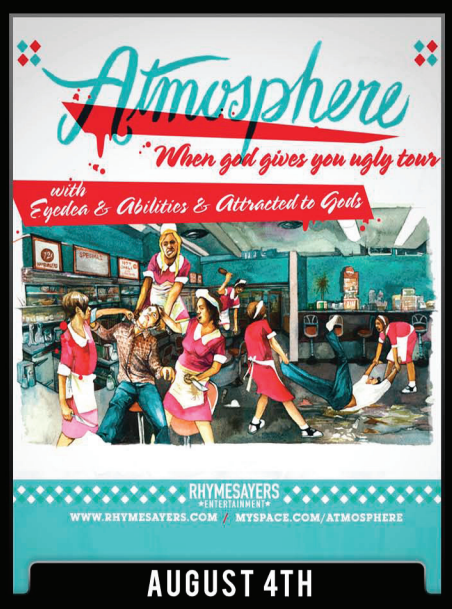
SATURDAY JULY 11TH



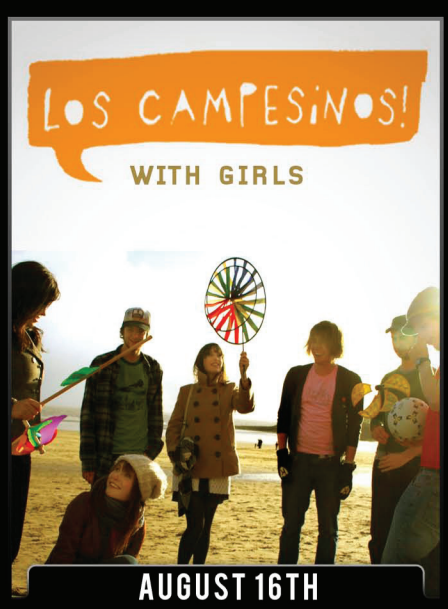
SATURDAY JULY 25TH



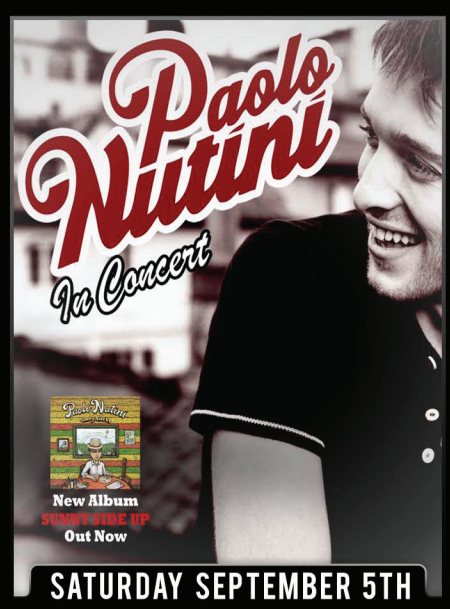
JULY 27TH



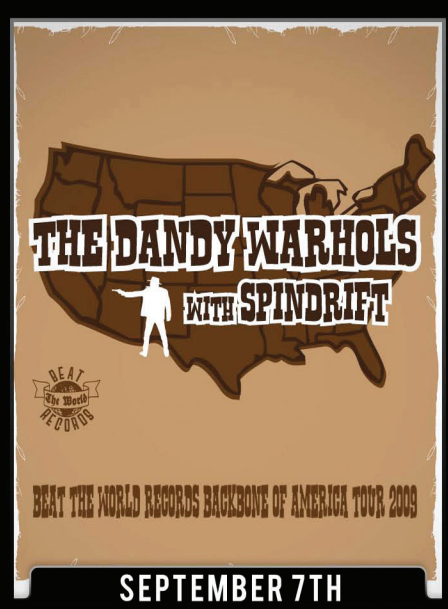
AUGUST 4TH



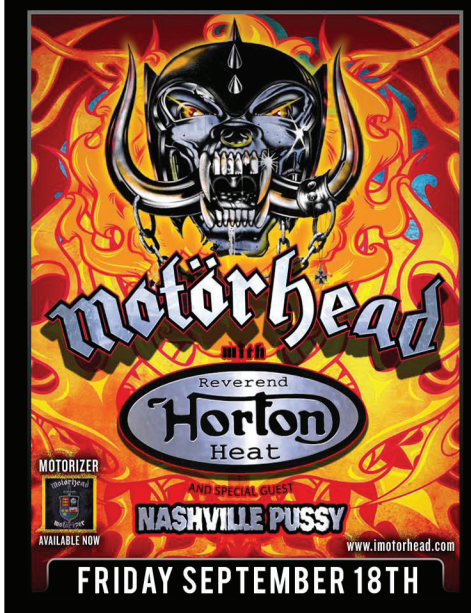
AUGUST 16TH



SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 5TH



SEPTEMBER 7TH



FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 18TH



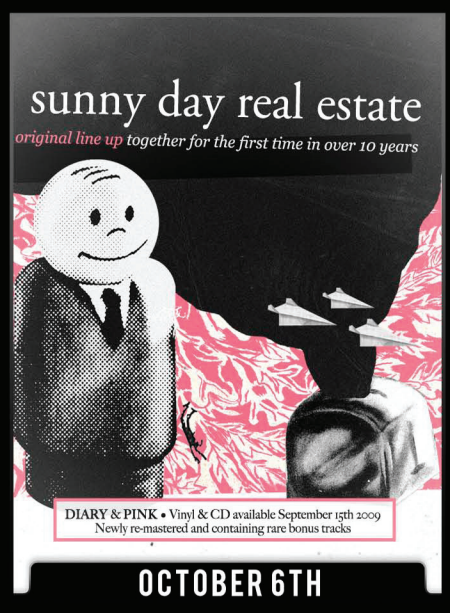
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FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 25TH



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DAVE RASK TRIBUTE

PRELUDE BY MILLS MCCOIN | PHOTO BY ANTHONY RATHBUN

DAVID DOUGLAS RASK WAS AN ARTIST AND MUSICIAN MAKING HIS WAY IN MONTROSE UNTIL HIS UNTIMELY PASSING ON JUNE 18, 2009. HE WAS 26. "HIPPIE DAVE", AS SOME REFERRED TO HIM, IS SURVIVED BY HIS MUSIC, HIS ART, AND THE FOND MEMORIES THAT WE'LL HAVE FOREVER.

THERE'S NO ARGUMENT concerning how precious a human being Dave Rask was. He was as gentle as can be. He was polite, well-mannered, and open to your perspective. He welcomed the peaceful company of a wordless conversation just as much as the benefits of an insightful discussion.

I was fortunate enough to experience the soul of Dave Rask on a late summer night in 2008. Long after the bars had closed, we returned to my apartment for closing shenanigans and calm musings. I shared this moment with Josh Moore and Ferrick. Dave was plucking away a lighthearted melody on the guitar when Ferrick interrupted him and asked him to play "To Ramona" by Bob Dylan. After a slight pause, Dave began playing the song and singing every lyric as though he had written it himself, which few people do when they play Dylan.

Ramona, come closer,
Shut softly your watery eyes.
The pangs of your sadness
Shall pass as your senses will rise.

Earlier I said that "I was fortunate enough to experience" his soul. And I did. After the first verse (of which there are five), I was no longer in my apartment. I was in church, when I ought not to have been. But the honesty and respect with which Dave sang such words gave the moment a hallowed feel. Though he wasn't reading from the Bible, Dave's song from the pulpit served in equal capacity.

I can tell you, if you don't already know, that the soul of Dave Rask was classic and rare. He was unaffected by the silly little rat race we all find ourselves in. Every time I saw him was like a little vacation from my own vanities. These are the things that I will remember about Dave. And that smile he shot at you from underneath some tiny glasses and a mustache anytime you walked into the shed where he was painting.

The following pieces are re-counting and remembrances of Dave Rask by some of his close friends.

FERRICK HALLORON

I can't really sum everything up right now because my mind is so confused and torn about everything. I loved him like a brother and I can't stop thinking about living at his house and taking walks down to the lake to talk about our lives and our futures, rigging up a turntable to my car so we could listen to records there at the lake, or the night we both discovered Bob Dylan together, smoking a whole pack of cigarettes listening to his greatest hits twice in a row...We shared everything together for so long, and now that he's gone, I'm more confused than ever. He was my best friend who knew everything about me and wasn't the one to say or judge me for any of it.

The first time I played music with him when it was just him and I, he started to sing through the humbuckers on his guitar. I was just 17 and it blew my mind that the two of us were on a real stage, at a church, by ourselves—and we didn't stop playing for two hours. Dave was around for every single meaningful first in my life and he always had my back. No matter what. He was meant to be in my life, and I have no doubt that he is still with me right now as I write this.

CASSIE LEE

David Douglas Rask was my best friend for the better part of my life. We met when I was 13—he was playing some "cool" rock and roll and handing out pixie sticks. We clicked immediately. He had the BIGGEST smile I had ever seen and an even bigger heart. He loved everyone so unconditionally, he saw past flaws and drama, and just wanted to be everyone's friend. Every time I had a trial in my life, Dave was there: to hug me, to make me laugh, to hold me, to sing for me. He was an amazing musician. My favorite of his songs is "23 Years Old," where he sings:

I'm not good at being brave, and
I'm not really sure that anyone should be.

David Rask was my best friend, my favorite karaoke partner, the craziest dancer, and someone who'd always cheer me up, no matter what kind of day I'd had. I don't know how my life will be now, without him here. There is a hole, that is for sure; I don't think it will ever be filled. I am just glad that Dave left behind his love and his music, so at least I can hear his voice and know he's still playing and laughing wherever he is. And I hope there is someone there to heckle him with a rubber ducky.

I love you Dave, Cassie
President of the DDRC since 99

SHELBY HOHL

Dave was one of the most unique and beautiful human beings I have ever met, hands down. When I was by myself screen-printing behind a friends house for hours on end, I could always count on this cat to come through with the positive vibes and good company. He would just sit and paint and paint and paint and paint, and more than anything, just hang out with you and get to know you. This is the guy that rushed you to his car to hear new demos of his music projects. This is the guy who would call you up just to ask if you wanted to ride around with him and talk about art. This is the guy that Houston will never be the same without. Wherever you are now brother, I hope there are plenty of long boards and Gibson SGs.

Love Shelby FPH





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1:30 I am Mesmer
2:05 Los Skarnales
2:35 Young Mammals
3:05 Fat Tony
3:30 H.I.S.D
3:50 DJ Cee Plus/ Grrl Parts
4:35 Octopus Project
5:40 The Sword
6:55 Broken Social Scene
8:20 Explosions in The Sky

Stage 2

12:20 JuzCoz
12:50 Perseph One
1:15 The Watermarks
1:45 Muhamadali
2:20 Ryan Scroggins
2:50 Blackie VS Copwarmth
3:20 O Pioneers!
3:50 Riff Tiffs
4:20 The Fucking Transmissions

*schedules subject to change and tomfoolery

Day Two

Stage 1

12:05 The McKenzies
12:35 Chase Hamblin
1:05 The Small Sounds
1:40 News on The March
2:10 Sky Blue 72
2:40 Grand Father Child
3:15 Eastern Sea
3:45 Sideshow Tramps
4:15 Wild Moccasins
4:50 Prince Paul
5:40 Voxtrot
6:30 What Made Milwaukee Famous
7:20 Devin The Dude
8:15 Of Montreal

Stage 2

12:15 Come See My Dead Person
12:45 Elaine Greer
1:15 The Hates
1:50 Rocky Moon & Bolt
2:20 Southern Backtones
2:50 The Manichaen
3:25 Hearts of Animals
3:55 Buxton
4:25 UME
5:00 The Riverboat Gamblers

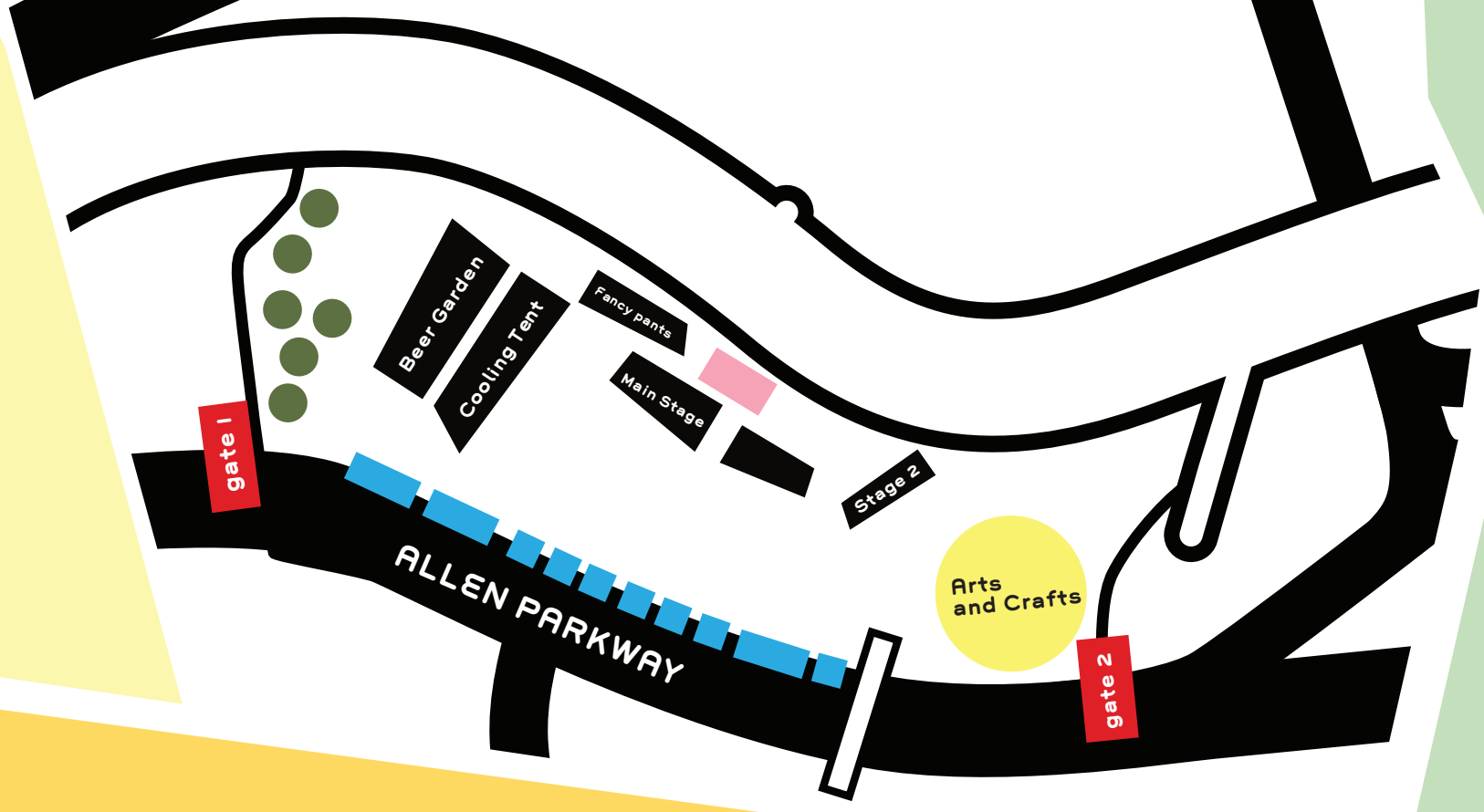
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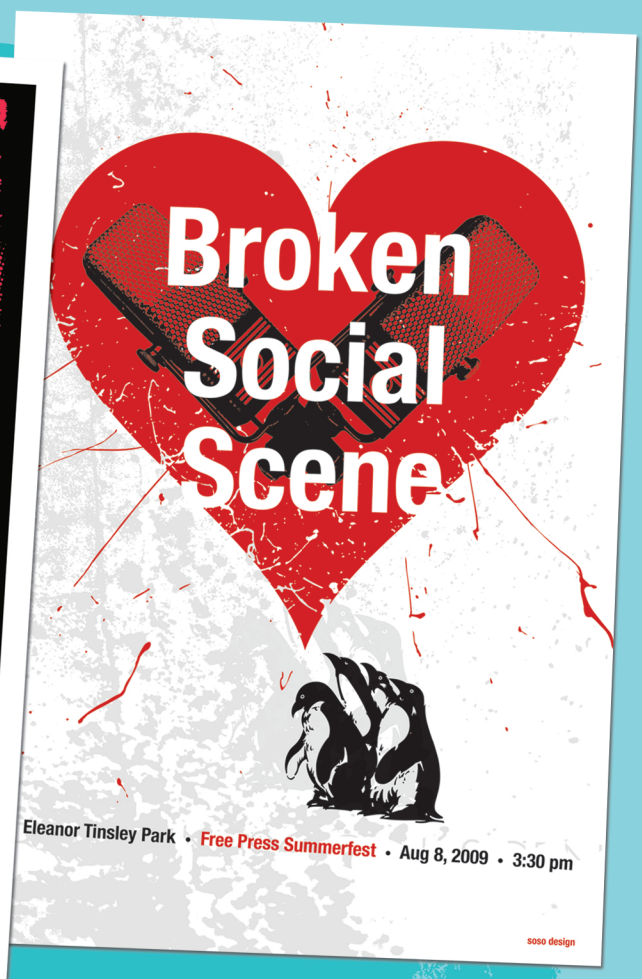
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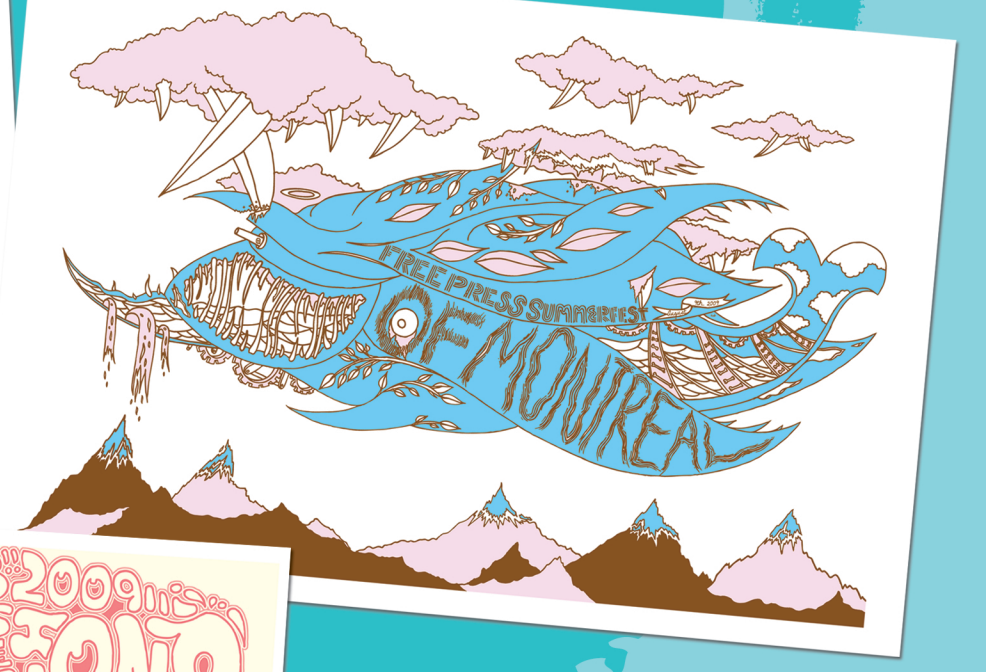
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UNEASY RIDER

BICYCLIST SAFETY IN HOUSTON

BY SHIRAZ AHMED | IMAGE BY MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ

WHEN I WAS A BOY OF EIGHT, I JUMPED IN THE CAGE AND JOINED THE ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP. AT THE AGE OF 12, MY PARENTS HAD TO CALL SECURITY BECAUSE THEY DISCOVERED I HAD CLIMBED INTO A PIT WITH EIGHT LIVE TIGERS; BY THE TIME THE GUARDS GOT THERE ONLY I WAS ALIVE. I FREQUENTLY ENJOY THE COMPANY OF EL SALVADORIAN MS-13.

YOU COULD SAY I'm a bit of a thrill-seeker so much so that the lure of escaping Death's cold, bony hands gives me a rush drugs can't mimic. But recently I undertook a challenge that I'm afraid might be too much for even me to handle: I threw down for a bicycle and took it for a spin in our fair town. I've never really appreciated the value of life until I was run off the road by the SUV on my tail.

It's no secret that Houston is notorious for being a dangerous place for any vehicle not running on diesel. While cycling has been viewed by those whose eyes are hooked on their speedometers as a mere past time or pleasure, growing numbers of commuters and day-to-day cyclists have said "no!" to the gas pump and flooded the narrow bike lanes painted on the sides of streets. Now 1,200 cyclists commute to the Texas Medical Center everyday. Between 1998 and 2000, over a fourth of Texas's bicycle crashes occurred in and around Houston. Growing numbers of riders on two-wheels indicates a need for the right infrastructure to support them and the right legislation to protect them.

It took me a while to root out the problem, but I finally did it while buying my first ever bicycle from City Planner for the Energy Corridor and bike aficionado Clark Martinson. "The streets were designed to move cars, [the system's] autocentric," said Martinson, who in fact cycles the ten mile commute to work every day. Rather than undergo the entire revamping of the whole system, Martinson suggested a couple of baby steps. Driver's Education would be the first and most important step to make Houston safe for bicyclists. The hostile attitude that motorists show cyclists is caused by motor-vehicle drivers not knowing the extent of a cyclists' rights. Little known fact: Bicycles are regarded in the eyes of the law as any other vehicle on the road. Face it; my Schwinn equals your Hummer. Cyclists have a right to use the regular traffic lanes and are entitled to be treated as any auto-dwelling motorist as long as they signal appropriately and obey all lights and signs. "I'm a driver of a vehicle that behaves just like a car," said Martinson, and as such should be treated in the same regard.

Locally owned Blue Line Bike Lab is another supporter of "taking your lane." As stated on their website, "It's not a privilege to ride your bike in the street, it's your right. In fact, it's the law. The area near the curb is where all of the water and road debris collects, and in many more progressive places it's what is known as 'the gutter.'" So goes Houston's bike lanes on the sides of streets, a classic example of a solution being the cause of more problems. "I would clean the gutter," Martinson said as the first step for improving infrastructure, "so you have as much as that curb lane as possible."

I took a weekend visit to Washington D.C recently and witnessed a cyclist's wet dream. Full traffic lanes were dedicated to non-motor vehicles and some lengths were even protected from normal traffic by barriers. Movement towards this standard would end a great deal of the problems surrounding the issue, but in Houston it seems we value our traffic lanes as much as our first-born males. Until steps are taken to widen the bike lanes and make them safe for cyclists, there is no alternative but traffic lanes.

Recently two measures to help out all non-motor vehicles in Texas were passed in the last session of Congress, both authored by avid cyclist and Houston's own Senator Rodney Ellis. The first, which is crucial though, under-publicized, requires questions on the Texas Driver's License Test about motor vehicles' responsibilities in regards to cyclists. This is a great step in driver's education and prevention of potential accidents and attitudes. The second bill, which gained much publicity with Senator Dan Patrick's (R-Houston) objection to it, is the infamous Safe Passing Bill. It required a minimum of three feet passing distance for any non-motor vehicle as well as penalties for throwing objects at them. Senator Patrick objected to two specifics of this bill which were ultimately removed to gain his vote:

1. The penalties for throwing objects at non-motor vehicles were removed because Senator Patrick felt it unnecessary, being covered by existing assault laws. All right, fair enough.

2. In the original wording of the bill it was made illegal to cut off non-motor vehicles forcing them to brake instantly or swerve right, commonly called a right hook and what Martinson refers to as "a real danger on our streets." Countless cyclists can attest to the dangers of being cut off by an object weighing 2000+ lbs more than them. While helmets and pads are useful protection in actual collisions, they do little to prevent the collision, which should be the main focus of our legislators.

In an interview with FPH, representatives of Senator Patrick stated, "The issue becomes a judgment issue. It's a problem with interpretation." When one person feels like as if he has been cut off, the other feels as if he were simply merging and the cyclist must not have been looking properly. Bickering ensues. Senator Patrick was advised by a council that this aspect of the bill would create what is known as a "cause of action," a reason that one person might sue another. "We don't want to create another cause of action, another reason to sue," said Senator Patrick's office. One might argue though, that the purpose of any traffic law is to prevent situations where accidents could occur. Since the nature of a right hook is harmful to a cyclist's safety, creating a cause of action might be necessary to discourage them. No one likes going to the courts, but it's necessary. I would speed all the time if I knew that the judicial branch would never bother to call me in and make me pay my ticket. I'll withhold complete contempt for Senator Patrick's positions

BIKE FACTS FOREVER MAY YE RIDE

The 2002 National Survey of Pedestrian and Bicyclist Attitudes and Behaviors showed that approximately 57 million people in America ride bicycles.

According to Pedaling Revolution by Jeff Mapes, 40 percent of U.S trips are two miles or less; yet cars count for two-thirds of those under-two-miles trips.

According to the Houston Bikeway Plan, Houston offers a 345-mile interconnected bikeway network spanning across 500 square miles of the city.

About 1% of the countries transportation budget goes to bike lanes, sidewalks and pedestrian trails.

50 years ago roughly 75% of students walked to school, now it's dropped to roughly 25%.

Texas is ranked 36th out of 50 states in terms of Bicycle Friendliness by the League of American Bicyclists.

regarding this bill though, for there are better reasons out there to dislike him.

The conspiracy isn't confined to our fair, polluted, majestic city. Just the other day Minority Leader John Boehner (R-OH) and Republican Whip Eric Cantor (R-VA) submitted a letter to President Barack Obama that proposed, among other things, ending all federal funding for bike projects. This would include the Transportation Enhancement Program, meant to grant funding to non-motorized transportation projects, and the Safe Routes to School Programs, which according to the website is "designed to decrease traffic and pollution and increase the health of children and the community." The idea is to redirect this funding to expansion of highways, although the programs were created because America put so much money in to creating highways. I commend Representatives Boehner and Cantor in wanting to cut these programs, because what America needs now is more highways, higher pollution, and fatter children.

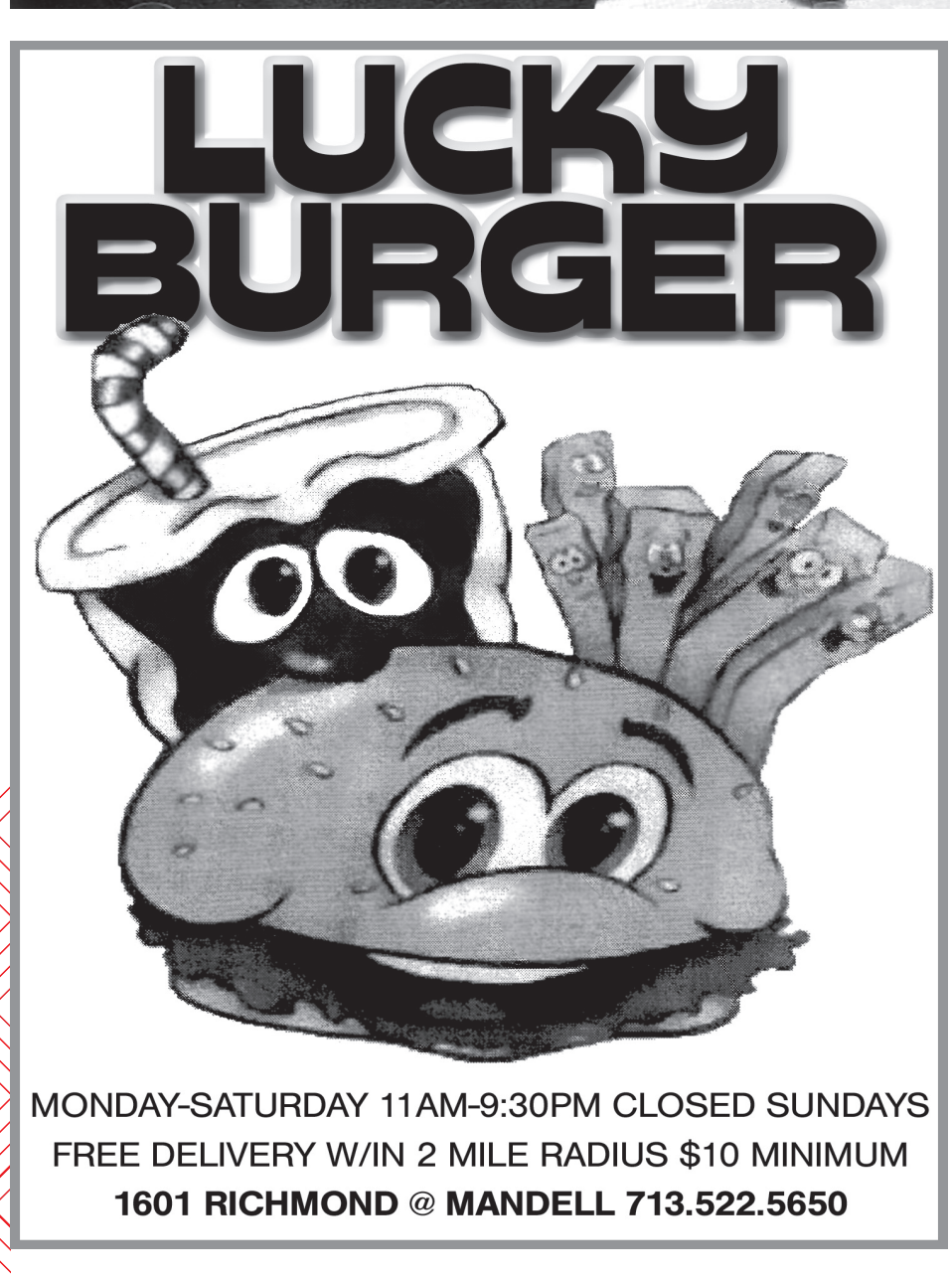
I won't pretend that I'm any experienced cyclist. I really rode a bike for the first time a year ago, and didn't buy a bike of my own until a week ago. Yet in my short time cycling, I have nearly been run down on the street once, and I have run out of sidewalk forcing me to ride into a ditch. I have seen a sobbing woman pray for my friend whom she nearly ran over while about to make a right turn. Everyone present shared a group hug. And even so, it's bad, but it's not unbearable. Houston's a great town to bike in. There's so much to explore, so many streets to venture. Even in the hottest parts of the day it's nice. "It's better than it ever was before," said Martinson, a cyclist in Houston since the 80s who has frequently lobbied for safer regulations and a better infrastructure.

I'll end this with a vision of the future. The wide lanes for cyclists weren't all that were available in D.C. The city has the nation's first public bike rental system, SmartBikeDC; and they poured $600,000 in to a radio and transit ad campaign aimed to educate the population on cyclists. This and more designated D.C. as a Bronze Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists, not the highest qualification but still a reasonable goal for the future. Houston does not have to create an entire separate system for cyclists. A small change in the attitude with which people look at cyclists is all that is required, and although we have a long way to go, we're making slow and steady progress. The Houston Bikeways Program, headed by the first Houston Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator Dan Raine, is aimed at increasing ridership and more off-the-road bikeways. As of now the step that everyone can take to improve Houston as a biking community is to simply break out the old bicycle and go for a roll, or buy a bicycle if your old one isn't suitable. Soon we'll all have bicycles and we'll overtake the streets! Bicycles aren't a cure all for the problems of congestion, pollution, obesity, and high traffic accident numbers. But they can't hurt. **FPH**

According to Bicycle Energy by David Lawyer bikes are 2/3 more efficient than cars even after factoring in the energy to produce the extra food the cyclist requires.

The energy and resources needed to build one medium-sized car could produce 100 bicycles.





5 THINGS I WANT FROM THE NEXT MAYOR OF HOUSTON

ON NOVEMBER 3, 2009, YOU WILL VOTE FOR YOUR PICK FOR THE NEXT MAYOR OF HOUSTON. THIS PERSON WILL GUIDE THE CITY FOR THE NEXT TWO TO SIX CRUCIAL YEARS IN OUR REGION'S DEVELOPMENT INTO A MAJOR GLOBAL METROPOLITAN REGION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY.

BECAUSE OUR CITY IS SO YOUNG, we have the opportunity to do many things right, to build a city of the future as we grow instead of retrofitting the city of the past. Also, as Dr. Stephen Klineberg at Rice University so eloquently says, we are a microcosm of what America will look like at the middle of the 21st Century, a racial and ethnic (and sexual and political) melting pot. He believes that how we learn to live together and to prosper from our diversity will be a test bed of how the nation changes over the coming decades.

Many are calling the national, global, and local crises we face today a perfect storm of economic collapse and rapid change, deteriorating climate, and radical demographic and political changes. It is the blessing of the millennial generation to be born into times of unthinkable challenges at every possible level of endeavor. We have no time to waste. Houston must come to terms with the long awaited free market reforms that will happen some time during the Obama administration to properly account for environmental damages within the market system. Houston must learn to flesh itself out in a world of declining dependence on fossil fuels and the end of the subsidized suburban home and commute.

The next Mayor of Houston must at least understand these changing forces and be excited about leading us – all the crazy different parts of us – into a greener, cleaner, and fairer future while working for a more accessible and robust economy at the same time. The next mayor must fix, defend, and empower METRO so that we can get on with it and build the nation's most efficient light rail system, and then work with our neighbors on a regional transit system that makes sense. The next mayor must allow and encourage the development of dense urban areas that give the option of living a low-carbon lifestyle throughout the city while respecting existing neighborhoods and empowering communities to participate in guiding growth in their areas.

So, basically, whether its going to be Annise, Gene, Peter, Roy, or even the recently rumored to be joining the race, Sylvester, the next Mayor of Houston is going to have a tremendous amount on his or her plate at a pivotal time in the development of our young metropolis. And while they're at it, they're going to have to collaborate with the rest of the growing urban areas of Texas that are all part of the emerging global power, the Texas Triangle Megaregion, to build high speed rail to connect Houston to Austin, San Antonio, and Dallas, plan for water and agricultural resources to support the megaregion forever, and find more efficient ways to move stuff around from the Port of Houston.

To help the next Mayor of Houston out, the Houston Area Table (H.A.T.) – of which I am on the steering committee – will be hosting a mayoral forum in August and an event to precede this forum in July for progressives from all over the city to gather and talk about what we want the next mayor to do. To get things started, here's a list of five things I want the next mayor to get going right away. I look forward to hearing your five requests and hope that together we can better inform this mayoral race of what Houstonians want for their future.

1. BETTER TRANSPORTATION PLANNING. Currently, City of Houston transportation planning – the most significant planning for our future – is done by the Department of Public Works and Engineering and this isn't right. PW&E employees do a terrific job of engineering, but they are not planners. Other cities across the country have realized this mistake and have moved the transportation, mobility, and access planning function back into their Planning Department, while leaving the solutions about how to get the job done up to the engineers, and that needs to be done here.

2. EMPHASIS ON SIDEWALKS. The City of Houston has done a poor job of establishing a safe pedestrian space throughout the city for all our citizens – notably for our elderly, children, and handicapped, but also for all Houstonians who need real walkable options just to not be so darned fat (myself included). While the City accepts its role in providing mobility to those choosing to drive, how can it deny such service to the 40% of Houstonians who don't have a car? I don't know what mechanisms will best begin to improve walkability, but the next mayor needs to make it a priority to figure it out.

3. RETURN GENERAL MOBILITY FUNDING TO METRO. A majority of Houstonians, as shown in Dr. Klineberg's Houston Area Survey (houstonareasurvey.org) believe that improving transit is the most important way to deal with our congestion problems and believe that rail is a key component of our future transit system. One-fourth of the money that Houston voters devoted to transit at the creation of METRO was taken away by Mayor Bob Lanier and every year is handed to the cities within METRO's service area, to do with as they please. Minister Robert Muhammad has estimated that this transfer has cost the Houston region $5 billion worth of transit funding, more than the total estimated cost of the 2012 light rail system we are building right now. Whether or not METRO was a corrupt, wasteful agency at that time deserving of attack is a subject for the history buffs. Our growing metropolis cannot stand another year of the silly, outdated, abusive view of our transit agency, and step #1 is to return the missing 25 cents of our sales tax money to transit, instead of using it to plug holes in city budgets or reduce property taxes for some.

4. RSS FEEDS. The city has a huge website but none of it seems to have the power of RSS feeds. Suppose you are interested in reading the mayor's press releases. Say you want to read the City Council agenda before the meeting. Or maybe you're interested in the sustainable growth committee and want to know when they have a meeting and what's on the agenda. All these things are added regularly to the website and they should all have RSS feeds. It should be easy for citizens to follow basic things happening with the city to effectively participate, and RSS is a simple, cheap step in that direction that allows citizens to follow those things they find important.

5. THE MAYOR NEEDS TO READ THE FREE PRESS HOUSTON. And the River Oaks Examiner and houston.indymedia.org, bloghouston.net, swamplot.com, handsuphouston, houstontomorrow.org and whatever underground news source reflects the Vietnamese community? Or bike activists? Or the transgender community? Houston is a dynamically changing and growing city with many diverse subcultures and thriving youth cultures. The next mayor needs to meet these people and understand what they want from their city and what they plan to give of themselves for their city. Of course, by "the mayor needs to read," I mean an intern needs to read these things. **FPH**

Jay Blazek Crossley does program development and research at Houston Tomorrow, a charitable nonpartisan nonprofit dedicated to improving the quality of life in the Houston region. For more information and to sign up for our weekly email newsletter, please see houstontomorrow.org.

Please join us at Mango's (403 Westheimer Rd) on Tuesday, July 14, 2009 from 6 to 9 pm for a progressive happy hour to discuss what you want from the next Mayor of Houston. Also, please add your list of 5 things you want from the next Mayor of Houston in the comments.



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THAT SOTOMAYOR QUOTE

BY NICK COOPER, NICKCOOPER.COM

THE QUOTE ABOUT RACE FROM SUPREME COURT NOMINEE SONIA SOTOMAYOR HAS BEEN A RALLYING POINT FOR THE RIGHT.

SHE SAID "I would hope that a wise Latina woman with the richness of her experiences would, more often than not, reach a better conclusion than a white male who hasn't lived that life." Even when taken out of context, the quote isn't racist in that it does not compare an average Latina with an average white, but a wise Latina with experiences to an average white. Furthermore, the quote was a single line in a long speech about the inequalities of our system. Just as James Brown's 'Say it loud, I'm black and I'm proud' had a different meaning than a white band singing about white pride, Sotomayor's quote should be categorized as an assertion of worth in response to oppression rather than as a statement of racial superiority.

In the U.S., one out of seven of us are Latino. On the Supreme Court, zero justices out of nine have ever been Latino. So an unspoken statement of the appointment process is that white people make better judges than Latinos. If an official said so publicly, it would be scandalous, but there is no need to say it or even think about it, the statement is built into the system. Sotomayor's quote apparently has some Americans concerned that she could tip the scales of justice towards decisions which discriminate against whites, but that would take quite a bit of tipping. The Supreme Court may be totally lacking in Latinos, but our prisons aren't. Twenty percent of prisoners are Latino. There are huge racial disparities in the treatment of different races committing the same offenses in how often each is pulled over, written a ticket, given a harsher penalty, or given the death penalty. Police, wardens, prosecutors, judges, and elected officials never have to put into words the underlying logic that whites are more deserving of leniency than blacks and Latinos.

This all fits into a larger picture of how our society can be oppressive without the words of oppressors. When Hitler went to war, he spoke in language that matched the aggression of his armed forces: "Our strength lies in our quickness and in our brutality... I have given the command and I shall shoot everyone who utters one word of criticism, for the goal to be obtained in the war is not that of reaching certain lines but of physically demolishing the opponent." This type of language is the antithesis of Obama's. He says things like: "We are not in Afghanistan to control that country or to dictate its future. We are in Afghanistan to confront a common enemy that threatens the United States, our friends and allies, and the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan who have suffered the most at the hands of violent extremists."

When our bombs blow up children in Afghanistan, it doesn't matter to the mothers that our President has called them friends. The fact that U.S. politicians rarely openly expresses ideas of empire is of little consolation to those on the other sides of our weapons. The fact that politicians don't say out loud that Latinos and blacks deserve to be incarcerated more than whites doesn't matter to those in the prisons. No officials say out loud that Latinos don't generally make it onto the Supreme Court is because whites are wiser and make better judges than Latinos. But this unspoken rule is even more powerful for not being said aloud. Sotomayor's quote did not arrive into in a post-racial America, but inside a system in which our institutions have the luxury of being unaware of their tendencies towards empire, racism, and white-supremacy. FPH



Notice of Designation as a Texas State Archeological Landmark

Application for Texas State Archeological Landmark

Nomination: Archeological Site

Property information: Archery Range of Memorial Park Houston, Harris County

USGS Quadrangle: Houston Heights; Location: Approximately 34 plus acres in the southwest corner of Memorial Park, south of Woodway Drive, west of South Loop West (610), west and north of Buffalo Bayou; being in the southeast corner of the James Wharton Survey, Houston, Harris County, Texas;
Property Owner: City of Houston Parks and Recreation Dept.

Criteria: The site has the potential to contribute to a better understanding of the prehistory and/or history of Texas by the addition of new and important information; The site's archeological deposits and the artifacts within the site are preserved and intact, thereby supporting the research potential or reservation interests of the site; The high likelihood that vandalism and relic collecting has occurred or could occur, and official landmark designation is needed to insure maximum legal protection, or alternatively further investigations are needed to mitigate the effects of vandalism and relic collecting when the site cannot be protected.

Nomination by:
Janet K. Wagner, P O Box 7985 Houston, Texas 77270-7985

Notice of Designation as a Texas State Archeological Landmark

Application for Texas State Archeological Landmark

Nomination: Archeological Site: Frost Town Addition, Houston, Harris County

USGS Quadrangle: Settegast; Location: Approximately 6 plus acres in the southeast corner of The John Austin Survey, a subdivision of lots and block, south of Buffalo Bayou, west of the John Austin Survey line, east of McKee Street and north of Runnels. Being in the southeast corner of the John Austin Survey, Houston, Harris County, Texas;

Property Owners: City of Houston Public Works Dept. Ownership of lots and tracts associated with street rights of way within Frost Town Addition: Property Owner: Texas Dept. of Transportation, lots in block G,F& E, associated with rights of way for U.S.59, Property Owner: Art & Environmental Architecture, Inc. lots and tracts block H,G,F along freeway edge. Part of block A on the bayou, parts of B & C adjacent to Race St.

Property Owner: Harris County, Parts of Block A & B amounting to 1.43 acres along McKee St.

Criteria: The site has the potential to contribute to a better understanding of the prehistory and/or history of Texas by the addition of new and important information; The site's archeological deposits and the artifacts within the site are preserved and intact, thereby supporting the research potential or reservation interests of the site; The high likelihood that vandalism and relic collecting has occurred or could occur, and official landmark designation is needed to insure maximum legal protection, or alternatively further investigations are needed to mitigate the effects of vandalism and relic collecting when the site cannot be protected.

Nomination by: Art & Environmental Architecture, Inc.
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TAGORE FEST JULY 10TH AND 11TH

BY SARAH COOK

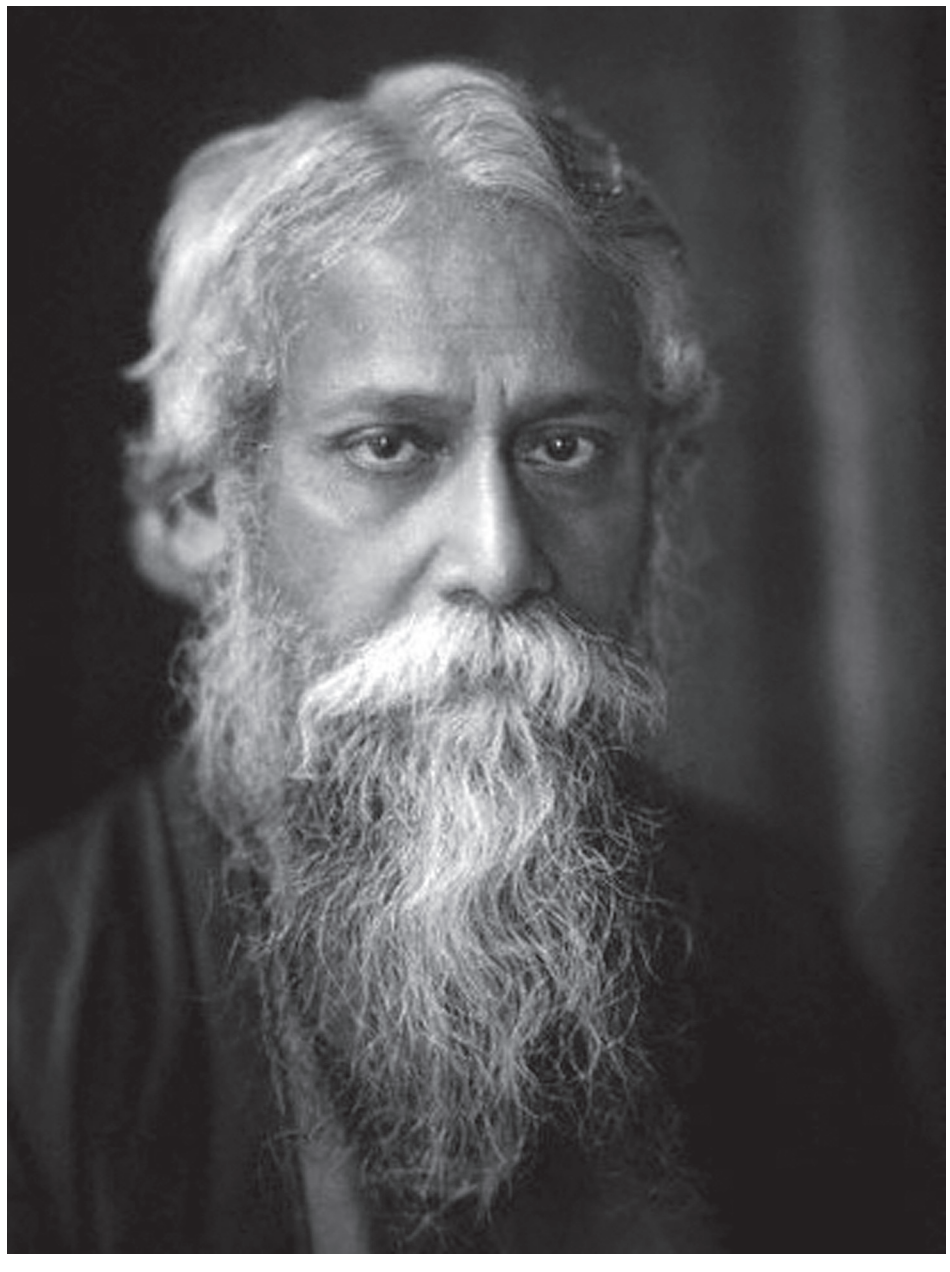
A FEW HOURS AGO, I HAD NO IDEA WHO TAGORE WAS. OR, ACTUALLY WHAT TAGORE WAS. I GUESSED (CORRECTLY) THAT IT WAS A NOUN. HOWEVER, TURNS OUT IT'S NOT A FOOD OR A PLACE (MY FIRST TWO GUESSES).

IT'S THE NAME OF one of the most versatile and prolific intellectuals of the 20th century, Rabindranath Tagore . He was a poet, novelist, playwright, philosopher, visual artist, social activist, and still managed to maintain a kick ass beard. All of these (okay probably not the beard) made him one of the most important influences on Bengali and Indian culture ever.

This guy was Asia's first Nobel laureate, wrote about 2,230 songs, spent time with Gandhi and Einstein, and rejected knighthood from the British crown in protest against the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. This incredible life inspired the Tagore Society of Houston to form in 1974. Since then, they have worked to spread Tagore's teachings to all ages, faiths and backgrounds.

To spread awareness about Tagore and his message of "a Borderless World", The Tagore Society of Houston will throw **Barnali '09,** their **Second Annual Tagore Fest** on **July 10th and 11th** . The festival will host well known artists and musicians from Bangladesh and India. Rezwana Chowdhury, a Rabindra Sangeet singer who is immensely popular in Bangladesh, will be the featured musician. She will provide her own interpretations of some of Tagore's most popular songs. Jhinook Mukherjee, Bhoomi and Rathna Kuma will also provide artistic interpretations of Tagore's work. To showcase local talent, the festival will also include Rathna Kumar and the Anjali School of Dance and an Art Music Recital of Tagore Poems by Prof. Karim Al-Zand from Rice University. There will also be an Arts and Craft show to showcase paintings, photographs and articrafts by local artists. If that's not enough to get you there, there's a delicious food fest both nights. **FPH**

*The festival will take place at **Durga Bari Auditorium**, located at 13944 Schiller Road. Tickets for the show are $25/per person for each day, $40/per person for both days, $100+ /per person for VIP seating on both days. Students tickets are $15/day.For details contact: Raja Banga: 281-627-2533, Partha Sen: 713-839-1904, Surajit Dasgupta: 281-265-4105. Or visit tagoresociety.org for event updates.*



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THOUGHTS ON IRAN ELECTION PROTEST COVERAGE

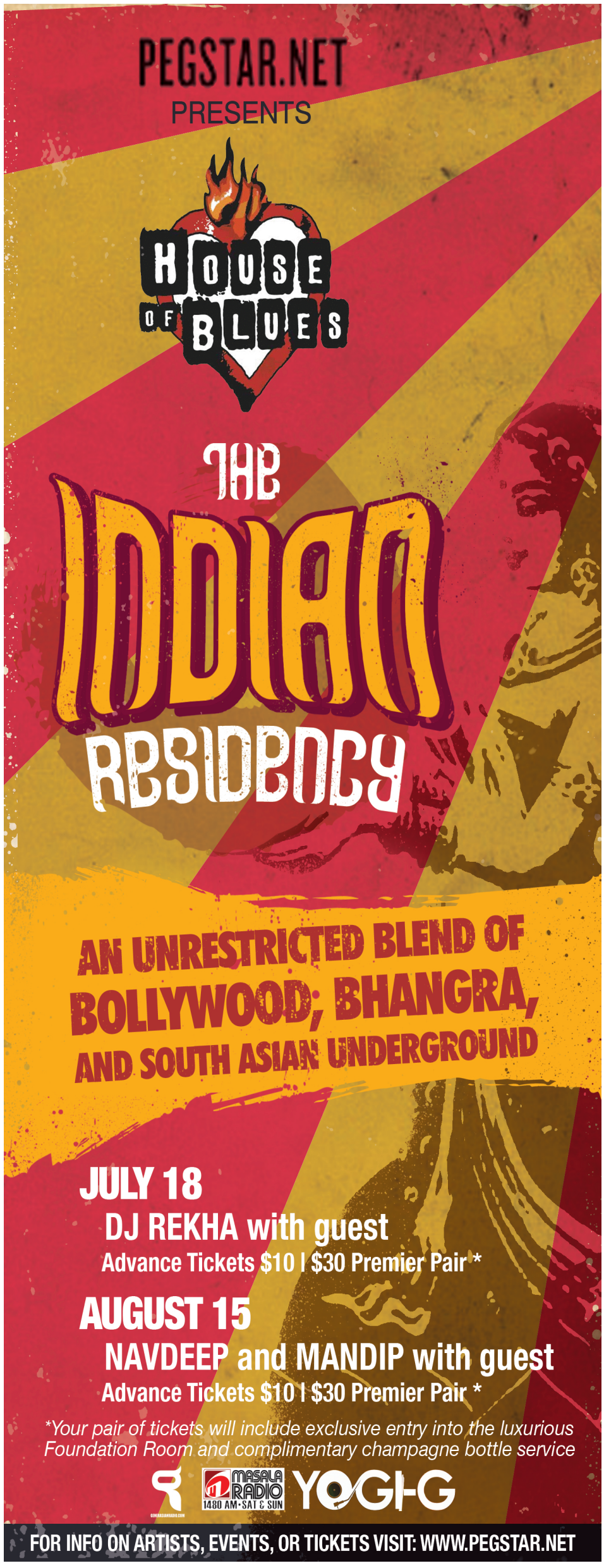
BY NICK COOPER, NICKCOOPER.COM

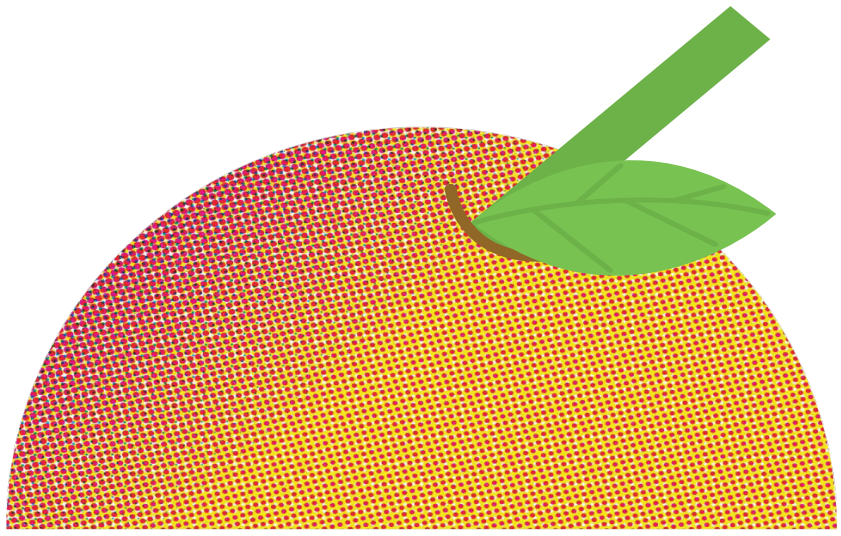
WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND Iran's current events in a vacuum – the essential background includes the U.S. role there in the coup to remove Iran's Prime Minister in 1953, support for the Shah (a brutal dictator), and after the revolution, Reagan spending billions to fund Saddam's war against Iran. Compared to other equivalent sized protests around the world, the current protests and election in Iran are receiving highly disproportionate coverage from our news media and commentary from our politicians. It is in the interests of our system to present a narrative in which the protesters not only want "democracy" but also are "pro-Western." The news uses the story to reaffirm the idea that the U.S. is the force for democratizing the world and the people desperately want what we want for them despite their authoritarian government.

Iran is not a democracy but neither is the U.S. We are both countries have corrupt systems in which all of the political parties use the word "democracy" to mean something it does not. You can not have democracy where the true people holding power are unelected, where secret police are above the law, where there are no international observers of the elections, where it requires massive funding to be a candidate, where entire demographics are disenfranchised, where there are no instant run-off elections, where the system is winner take all, where politicians once elected can ignore their promises during the campaign and go against what the majority want.

Whatever plays out in Iran, we should focus on our own lack of democracy instead of theirs. FPH







NEWS ON THE MARCH GRAND FATHER CHILD THE GILLS (FLORIDA) ROBERT ELLIS

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6/4 Hunger Strike organizer Rama Cary Assaulted in detention prior to visit by Amnesty International

International Human Rights group, Amnesty International, met with Rama Carty, an outspoken detainee at the Department of Homeland Security/Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Port Isabel Detention Center (PIDC). The morning of June 3rd, 2009, at around 5:35am, Amnesty attempted to visit with Carty for a second time, but Carty has not been able to meet with them; instead, he was beaten by facility guards and "taken away". DHS/ICE is illegally being transferred to Louisiana to be deported to Haiti.

Another detainee was witness to the attack by the guards, and called Anayanse Garza of the Southwest Workers Union immediately afterwards. He told Garza that Carty was talking about meeting with Amnesty this morning, when a number of guards at the facility punched and kicked him, informed him that he would not be meeting with Amnesty, and then proceeded to "take him away".

Rama Carty is a known leader and participant in a hunger strike that has been going on at the PIDC since late April of this year. Hunger strike demands include the right to due process, *real *medical attention for all detainees, access to legal resources, and end to physical and verbal abuses by guards at the facility. Carty was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and has lived in the United States for over 38 years; he is 39 years old. He has been detained by DHS/ICE for over thirteen months now for a drug conviction he has already served time for.

5/25 Texas Two sentenced to four and two years in prison

Bradley Crowder was sentenced to 24 months and David McKay was sentenced to 48 months for constructing Molotov cocktails with the help and inducement of snitch Brandon Darby, which were then left in a basement and never used.

After his first federal trial ended in a hung jury, Texan David McKay pled guilty in a second trial rather than letting his friend from Austin and co-defendant, Bradley Crowder, be manipulated into testifying against him.

The FBI and local prosecutors have been counting on the press and public's RNC fatigue to be able to continue to present a clearly exaggerated, domestic security threat—a facade which nearly collapsed at McKay's first trial. At the conclusion of the first trial, a jury of McKay's peers could not agree to convict him—because it had become clear to several jurors that the scene they were being asked to watch had been staged for months by law enforcement.



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6/11 Department Of Justice: Harris County Jail fails to meet minimum constitutional standards

A new findings letter from the US Justice Department criticizing the Harris County Jail dramatically ups the ante regarding the overcrowded facility's continuing problems. The letter from DOJ's Civil Rights Division hit all the high points, declaring straight-up that the jail in Houston "fails to provide detainees with adequate: (1) medical care; (2) mental health care; (3) protection from serious physical harm; and (4) protection from life safety hazards." DOJ said in many ways, the jail functions fairly well, but "in a number of critical areas, the Jail lacks necessary systems to ensure compliance with constitutional standards."

Unconstitutionally Poor Healthcare: According to the letter, "Because of crowding, administrative weaknesses, and resource limits, the Jail does not provide constitutionally adequate care to meet the serious medical needs of detainees with chronic illness." In particular:

We found specific deficiencies in the Jail's provision of chronic care and follow-up treatment. These deficiencies in themselves and when combined with problems in medical record keeping and quality assurance ... are serious enough to place detainees at an unacceptable risk of death or injury.

6/10 Human Rights Activists Present Letter to Consul General of Peru

Three human rights activists representing Friends of Brad Will, Houston Indymedia, and Houston Food Not Bombs met with The Consul General at the Peruvian Consulate in Houston. Hear a discussion about the meeting.

Ellie Sequeira, Rachel Clarke, and Nick Cooper expressed concerns and delivered a letter about the role of the Peruvian government, oil corporations and free trade in the deaths of dozens of indigenous Peruvians. The Consul, Carlos R. Polo, expressed the government position that unarmed police were attacked by indigenous when trying to re-open roads that were keeping essential supplies from the poor in those regions. Nick Cooper, representing Friends of Brad Will, responded that while many facts of what happened on June 5th will continue to be disputed, that the violence against indigenous groups is not something that happens only at gunpoint -- indigenous people die and lose their land and ways of life whenever petroleum is extracted, sometimes with bullets, sometimes with toxins, etc. Rachel Clarke from Houston Indymedia encouraged the Consul to visit the website Amazon Watch to see the horrible photos of the indigenous victims. The meeting was respectful with all parties having the opportunity to express their thoughts and finished with a photo and an agreement to continue the dialogue.

Hours later, the Houston activists held a press conference on the steps of the Petroleum Club where, last year, a Shapibo indigenous leader interrupted an auction of indigenous lands to oil developers, respectfully telling the bidders about the devastating toxic effects of 35 years of petroleum development on indigenous territories. Houston also hosted two Achuar leaders visited Houston to discuss oil drilling in the Amazon in 2006.

UH Students for Fair Trade house protest for Aramark wages

On Saturday morning June 6, 2009 the University of Houston Students for Fair Trade (SFT) did a house protest at Emily Messa's house in Clear Lake, TX which is a suburb of Houston. Messa is the Assistant Vice President for University Services, but another title she goes under is the asst. VP for finance and administration. This means she facilitates all the contracts at the university. About 20 people, mostly students, gathered to speak truth to power. At one point there were seven police cars. The police did not do anything though because we had a sound permit and were just exercising our first amendment rights.

Recently we've asked the administration to make our campus an all fair trade campus. That means as many as possible products such as sugar, fruit, coffee, tea and others sold on our campus should be certified fair trade by third party independent Transfair USA.

Our other request is that they pay the Aramark food service workers on our campus $10 to $11 an hour to come in line with the City of Houston 2008 contract with its 13,000 employees.

WEST FEST REVISITED

HOUSTON PHOTOGRAPHER RELEASES BOOK CHRONICLING THE HISTORIC HOUSTON FESTIVAL

BY SHIRAZ AHMED | PHOTOS BY CHARLES TATUM

A COMPLETE, UNBIASED ACCOUNT OF THE HISTORY OF OUR CITY CANNOT BE WRITTEN WITH OUT THE INCLUSION OF WEST FEST, OR ITS' LATEST INCARNATION, THE WESTHEIMER BLOCK PARTY.

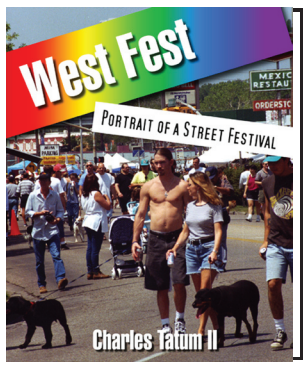
THE INFAMOUS MUSIC-AND-ART STREET FESTIVAL that dominated Montrose twice a year began as an offshoot of the diverse-bohemian-alternative community that called the neighborhood home in the early 70's, and evolved in to what can only be called one of the largest, most exciting street festivals to have ever occurred in Houston. Local, self-taught photographer Charles Tatum II began attending and chronicling West Fest in the mid-nineties and continued through today capturing images at the most recent Westheimer Block Party. Last month he released his first solo-book project, "West Fest: Portrait of a Street Festival," containing over 400 full-color photos featuring the wildness and quirkiness that makes up Westheimer.

"West Fest is a great people-watching event, and four days a year (originally) and two days a year now, folks can come out and see their neighbors," commented Tatum. "It's a big party, a big celebration." The book certainly shows the spirit of Montrose and the wilder days of the festival, what Tatum refers to as the "vintage" West Fest photos. Flipping through, these images stand as hallmarks of the old days: a drag queen dressed as Tina Turner, a Pee Wee Herman impersonator, a man balancing a flaming chair on top of his head. "I wanted to create something to bring some of that wild Montrose spirit back to the fore - when high-dollar town homes started moving in, Montrose became a little more bland. I want to see more chicks in leopard-skin clothes. I want to see more spiked green hair."

The book is a testimony to Tatum's own talent as much as it is to the festival. Published through Blurb Publishers, Tatum was in complete control of every aspect of the book start to finish. "Everything you see in the book – the cover design, the commentaries, the layouts, the type selection, reviews of hundreds of photos, everything – all that is my work." The evolution of Tatum's book from film to final print is to be admired as an artist forging his own path in the world. The collection started out as just "a bunch of photos I took because I was having fun capturing all this wild, wacky color on film." Long before Facebook and Myspace existed, amateur artists had to find other ways to release their art to the community. Tatum created his own website and then approached neighborhood hangouts to feature his work: Dietrich's Coffee, Southmore House, 11th Street Café. Eventually, Tatum discovered Blurb Publishers at SXSW, a company that does on-demand publishing where the creation of the book is done entirely online. "I saw samples at their booth at the SXSW trade show and was blown away. I figured, let's do this. It's been much easier and freeing to control every aspect of the book myself. Why should I deal with sleazy hangers-on?"

The topsy-turvy tale of West Fest is well known throughout Montrose. "West Fest: Portrait of a Street Festival," depicts the rise through community support, the fall due to tighter City control and property owner complaints, and the eventual triumphant resurrection as the Westheimer Block Party by Free Press Houston. The book also serves as a calling to bring the festival back to its former glory. "I guess the thing I've noticed about West Fest since its incarnation as the Block Party is that it's not as wild as it was during the 90's when I went. No drag queens. Almost no guys walking around shirtless. No reptiles. What happened to all that?" The book can be previewed and bought online at blurb.com for $94.95. Although the asking price may seem steep, 95% of it goes in to the printing of the actual book, and increased support of the book could lead to wider release. Maybe another small way to support the community and pay tribute to the past? "It's kind of like this: imagine I've taken all these cool photos and put them in a photo album. I give you the photo album to leaf through and you say you really like it. Then I tell you that you can keep the album. That's what this book is; it's a kind of neighborhood photo album covering a very special event." FPH







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