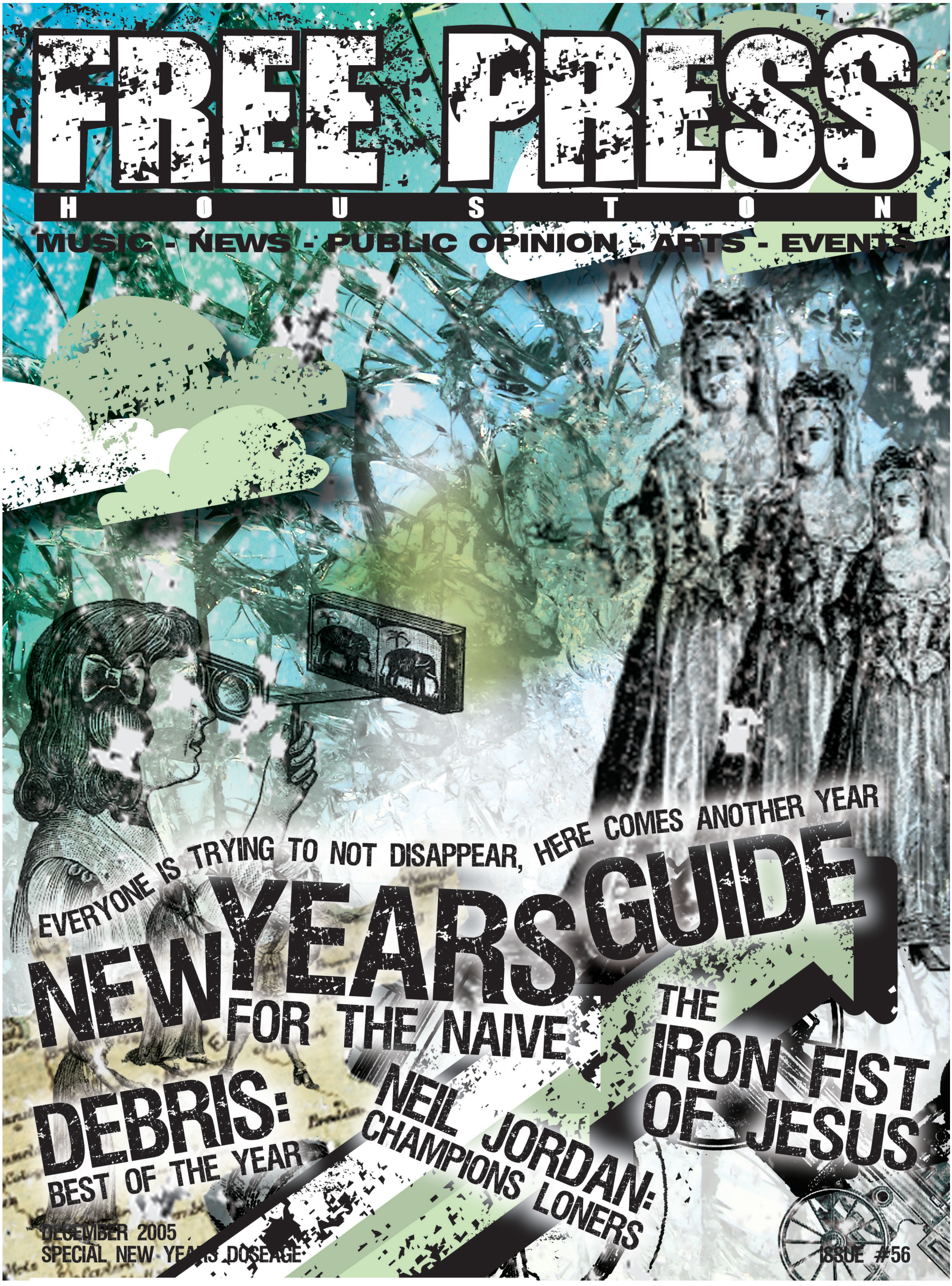
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EVERYONE IS TRYING TO NOT DISAPPEAR, HERE COMES ANOTHER YEAR

NEW YEARS GUIDE

FOR THE NAIVE

THE IRON FIST OF JESUS

DEBRIS: BEST OF THE YEAR

NEIL JORDAN: CHAMPIONS LONERS

DECEMBER 2005
SPECIAL NEW YEARS DOSEAGE

ISSUE #56

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ALTERNATIVE WEEKLY NETWORK

Feel FREE to take us Seriously.



As the legend goes- Yellow Cab offers free cab rides to anyone who is too faded (drunk) to drive. Frankly, I have not yet done the research as to whether this is myth or fact yet I urge you to call in: 713 236 1111. Even if you are not drunk or not have been drinking, give it a go. Make sure to check the New Year's guide on the center spread this issue. Also, fear not; the arts section has been temporarily moved to just before the center as to add a tad of color. Arts editor Buffalo Sean brings you the best of 2005 and tells you what he thinks mattered in the last 12 months. He is a bad person.

Lastly- keep your eye out for January's special 'Worst of Houston' issue. The general public is encouraged to write in and let us know exactly what you think are the worst places, people, events, businesses, and anything else you feel comfortable griping about. No holds barred. Don't bite your lip. No walking on eggshells. Just be a total shithead.

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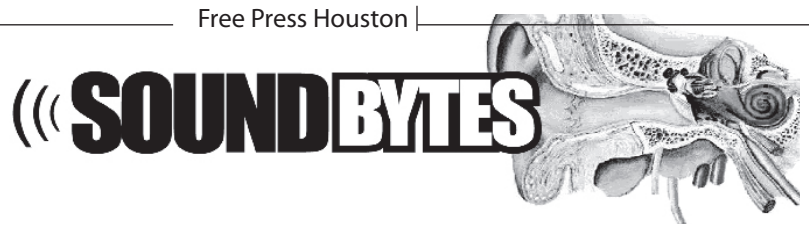
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EVERYBODY'S TRYING NOT TO DISAPPEAR, HERE COMES ANOTHER YEAR

Kwame M. Anderson

So now it may be time to do the end of the year thing—what a bleeping year huh? After a year or so of war with man, this year we were at war with nature (or maybe that war has gone on since the dawn of man, who knows? War, it's a popular word). Hurricanes, hurricanes, a friend of mine got really drunk on hurricanes, those things mean something.

So what do I have to say about the year? Not much. Last year was pretty bad and this year has been better than last year, with the exception of the death of Grandmother. But hey, I'm here and you're here, we're all here, it's about attendance and drive, young people. Just show up and do your best. Here goes a feeble attempt at my best for the next hour or so.

I just heard about the thing in the last issue, all that shit's somewhat true, "America The Beautiful" was sung to me 7,786 times by a choir of minority children with very little reading skill and no understanding of "America" or "beautiful." The tortured look on their faces stabbed at me like a thing stabbing at you would—it drove me a crazy. I'm barely recovering. You know, George Bush is hilarious, he may be one of the funniest presidents ever. The dude's a bleeping idiot! That shit is hilarious, how he's fucking up the country and all that, people dying, messed up economy, he's hilarious!

All right, enough of that. As Juelz Santana would say: "I'm baaaaack." It's time for my list article, and I love lists (there's a band called Book Of Lists, that's just something that occurred to me, or that crossed my mind, whatever).

Best Albums I Heard This Year

(I'm against numerical order)

- **Animal Collective,** ***Feels*** (Fat Cat)
  —space is a place.
- **The Howling Hex,** ***All-Night Fox*** (Drag City)
  —soul for the soulless.
- **Young Jeezy,** ***Let's Get It: Thug Motivation 101*** (Def Jam)
  —he's an opportunist.
- **Deerhoof,** ***The Runners Four*** (5 Rue Christine)
  —beyond here or there.
- **The Howling Hex,** ***You Can't Beat Tomorrow*** (Drag City)
  —crack your teenage window pane.
- **The Curtains**,***Vehicles Of Travel*** (Frenetic)
  —beautiful like beautiful is.
- **M.I.A.,** ***Arular*** (XL Recordings)
- **Man Man,** ***The Man in a Blue Turban With a Face*** (Ace Fu)
  —it's creaks, it howls, it's sweet, be afraid.
- **System Of A Down,** ***Mezmerize/Hypnotize*** (American)
  —yay for the Armenians.
- **Stephen Malkmus and The Jicks**, ***Face the Truth*** (Matador)
  —It's about time.

Albums That I Liked, But Wish I Liked More:

- **Juelz Santana,** ***What The Game's Been Missing!*** (Def Jam
  —it's good, but you know, it could be better.
- **Kanye West**, ***The College Dropout*** (Roc-A-Fella)
  —sure he might win some Grammys, sure he thinks it's a masterpiece, sure he thinks Bush hates black people, sure he has horns and strings, sure other things about the record. It was good—until the third listen. But it's a classic record, sure it is.

Albums I Would Have Listed But Had Not Heard By Press Time:

- **Lil Wayne,** ***The Carter, Vol. 2*** (Cash Money)
  —Weezy F Baby please say the baby, may be one of the coldest rappers out now.



Albums I Discovered This

•Fleetwwod Mac, *Tusk* (Warner Bros.)

—The perfect album. It's poppy, it's strange, there's great songwriting, Mick Fleetwood is a monster on the drums, Lindsey Buckingham is one of my favorite guitarist/singers. Stevie Nicks a chanteuse, a magic woman, her songs give me estrogen (that's the same thing as strength, right?). Christine McVie was meant to sing songs I would eventually hear. This album gets played at least twice a week, sometimes four times. "I'm not a a child anymore, I'm tall enough to reach fro the door, I'm old enough to love you from afar." It's poetry, folks (wipes away the tears and applauds).

Albums I'm Most Excited About For Next Year:

•TV on the Radio

—The first album with the entire lineup, unlike the oh-so-magnificent Desperate Youth, Blood Thirsty Babes, will feature the band as the band, and not the band adjusting to songs that were present beforehand. The work is no longer in progress, in a sense. You really can't describe the band as one thing, but brilliant, so let's all wait together, then we can simultaneously rejoice.

•Calexico

—We've all listened to a Calexico album, sitting on the hood of our car staring off into a darkening day dreaming of a time when we could hunt down credit card company employees and force them to ruin their credit, with their 30 percent interest rating…wait a minute—Calexico has, is, and probably always will be one of the best rock bands that exist at the present. It's been a while since their last album, reason enough for me to be psyched.

•Cam'ron

—They shot him in the arm in a supposed carjacking, and he didn't cooperate with the police, or give up the car. He's referred to sex as a "hymen grind." The dude wore a pink fur coat once, and he's completely serious. And his slow flow, seemingly nonsensical rhyme pattern makes him one of the most unique, authentic rappers in the game now.

•Man Man

—The follow-up to their last album. If you don't know, you need to find out real quick.

Best Show Moment This

•Man Man @ Walters On Washington, 11/20

—Some things remind you why you ever got into looking at people play music in public; we all need a re-affirmation. That's what Man Man is (was) for me. It reminded me of why I even do this, and by "this" I mean go to shows and stuff, I mean, I write about bands because you can get free stuff and women love men who write about bands no one knows.

Worst Show Moment:

Okay. I'll skip this one…

R.I.P.

Clara Anderson
Richard Pryor
Michael Dahlquist
Luther Vandross
Don Norton (this is forever, it always just happened)
Marquita Anderson (forever and always)

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23 FILM 45

Neil Jordan champions loners

by Michael Bergeron

To watch films by Neil Jordan is to be immersed in a world of outcasts. Notably *The Crying Game* seems linked to *Breakfast on Pluto* as a study in characters on the fringe, but it's a theme that runs through several of Jordan's films including *Interview With the Vampire, Mona Lisa, Butcher Boy,* and *The Good Thief.*



"I'm interested in characters who drift in and out of life," Jordan tells Free Press Houston in an exclusive phone interview. "I'm fascinated by losers, people on the edge."

For *Breakfast on Pluto* (opening in Houston December 23) Jordan follows the episodic journey of transvestite Patrick Kitten Brady (Cillian Murphy) across the landscape of 1960s and 70s Ireland and London. It's a world where terrorism and bombs are common but so are the seeds of change.

Along the way Kitten gets kicked out of school (look for source author Patrick McCabe as a teacher), hangs out with an Irish rockabilly band whose leader fronts guns for the IRA, flees to London, becomes the assistant to a stage magician, and even hangs out in the park with a Womble (Brendan Gleeson).

Wombles were an English 60s oddity, "a group of people who went about dressed like strange misshapen elves," explains Jordan. Much of McCabe's book has found its way into Jordan's film. Things like Kitten's fondness for Mitzi Gaynor, or the use of the Bobby Goldsboro song "Honey."

Jordan cast Murphy, an actor he feels "approaches his character from the inside." In addition to support performances from Liam Neeson, Stephen Rea, and Ian Hart, *Breakfast on Pluto* also features musicians like Gavin Friday, and a really perverse sneering Bryan Ferry effective as Mr. Silky String. "This was a part I originally was going to cast with a Ralph Fiennes or Jeremy Irons. Then Ferry came along. Rock and roll performers can be really good actors," maintained Jordan.

Also known as a writer, Jordan most recently penned Shade (2004), a novel where the ghost of a woman investigates her murder. "I grew up in an Ireland without a film industry, so I've always considered myself a writer first," notes Neil.

As to why it is that directors like Jordan or Stephen Frears or Alan Parker always seem to be the go-to directors Hollywood approaches when they want a film about lower middle class and poor families (Angela's Ashes,) Jordan mused: "Hollywood always has been a fantasy factory, kind of an airbrushed reality."

SHORT TAKES

Where does it say that movies released on Christmas Day have to be good? Accordingly, the light and frothy *Casanova* pulls out the stops to make its absurd sex humor seem relevant when actually the farcical style of Lasse Hallstrom's (a helmer who occasionally makes a great film) direction constantly grinds *Casanova* to a halt. Don't even get me started on how much I hated the thin stage bound version of *The Producers*. I'm gagging but natch, everyone else at the screening thought it was great.

At least *King Kong* delivers. About an hour in we witness a full-on Brontosaurus stampede that has some of the flavor of the highway sequence from the second *Matrix*. At this point in Kong you know Peter Jackson is giving you your money's worth of big screen thrills.

The last week of this year alone has three films from major directors: Steven Speilberg's *Munich*, Terrence Malick's *The New World*, and from Woody Allen *Match Point*.

Also look for the Jim Carrey vehicle *Fun With Dick and Jane* (Dec. 21), *Rumor Has It* (Dec. 25) a riff on characters from *The Graduate*, and the long gestating adaptation of *Memoirs of a Geisha* (Dec. 23).

Go For Zucker (First Run Features)

Many German films try to sell themselves to American auds as straight up comedies. Films like T*he Edukators*, or *Goodbye Lenin* are more drama laden with comedic elements. But *Go For Zucker* flat out delivers solid laughs from start to finish.

Two brothers who haven't spoken in years are forced to spend time together in order to inherit their mother's assets. Each has a wacky family, each member with stereotypic but real dilemmas. One man considers himself a reunification loser although his pool skills remind of Paul Newman in *The Huslter* while his brother is Orthodox Jewish. Shivah they must, while you will shiver with giggles.

Eventually the characters speak to each other with honesty rather than snidely and the result is rewarding for them and filmgoers. Alles auf Zucker racked up several German Film Awards this year and is currently unspooling at the Angelika Film Center.

The Family Stone (20th Century Fox)

An engaging ensemble cast doing their darnest goes a long way in overcoming some of the plot stretches in this family dinner on Christmas Day dramedy. The part I had a problem with was the oldest son deciding to dump his fiancée for her sister the first time he meets her.

Regardless, the emotions and situations of real life are handled in a recognizable way. The humor evolves naturally rather than being forced. Luke Wilson, Diane Keaton, Rachel McAdams, Craig T. Nelson, Sarah Jessica Parker, Dermot Mulroney, and Claire Danes share duties. All have quirks that make *The Family Stone* worthwhile. Why are they the family Stone? Yes that's their last name, but if you blink you miss the pot references in this PG-13 dramedy.

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Best of 2005

by Michael Bergeron

Filmwise this year will be remembered as a transformative time. An era when studios realized they should sell titles on DVD the same day they are released in theaters.

It's an economic move that will transform the way audiences expect to see movies, and as far as the history of movies it's as significant a change as the transition from silent to sound. Theater owners will put up a fight but whenever the studios decide to go day and date with simultaneous DVD and theatrical release it will mark the beginning of a new era.

Steven Soderbergh will roll out his new film *Bubble* at the end of January in theaters, on disc, and on cable, all at the same time. To a current generation who've been raised on digital downloads and video I-Pods this is not thinking outside of the box office (to steal a line from Wired Magazine) but the natural evolution of entertainment.

Meanwhile back at the ranch, we (that is the royal we) still enjoy images on the big screen. Forthwith here is my best of list with what I consider to be the films you can't wait to see a second time.

- *Layer Cake* – Daniel Craig will be Bond next year but those who have followed his career in films like The Mother and Enduring Love know why he was chosen as the new 007. Layer Cake was a perfect English crime meller with equal parts violence, laughs, and scene stealing action.

- *The Wedding Crashers* – In years to come this will be the go-to comedy to explain what this crazy new millennium society was all about.

- *Good Night, and Good Luck* – As well paced and absorbing as any period drama in recent memory, and with killer set design and black-and-white photography that never even ventured outside the CBS building.

- *The New World* – Terrence Malick makes films that are like a three-lane superhighway. In one lane is the music, in another beautiful silent images, and in the third voice-over narration. Sometimes each lane is traveling at different speeds, and then they all combine together for an overwhelming movie experience. Malick would be a genius in the silent era with his grand sense of the frame. As it is we have to twiddle our thumbs for years between projects, but the wait is worthy.

- *Enron: the Smartest Guys in the Room* – Shot on film and meticulously researched this documentary fleshes out the facts behind one of the biggest scams of all time.

- Best Hair: Charlize Theron in *Aeon Flux*.

- Best Thesps: Felicity Huffman in *Transamerica* and Heath Ledger in *Brokeback Mountain*.

- Best Director: Woody Allen is set for a comeback to a generation that never knew him with two films released in 2005, *Match Point* and *Melinda & Melinda*. For fans of cinema he never really left.

Also worth noting: *The Upside of Anger, Kiss Kiss Bang Bang, Cavite, Downfall, A History of Violence, Off the Map, Melinda & Melinda, The Interpreter, Bright Leaves, Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, Howl's Moving Castle, Land of the Dead, The Aristocrats, Me and You and Everyone I Know, Last Days, The Constant Gardener, My Date With Drew, Grizzly Man, 2046, Lord of War, In Her Shoes, El Crimen Perfecto, Thumbsucker, Old Boy, Oliver Twist, Hustle & Flo, The Squid and the Whale, Brokeback Mountain, Pride and Prejudice, Mrs. Henderson Presents, Transamerica, Syriana, Cronicas.*



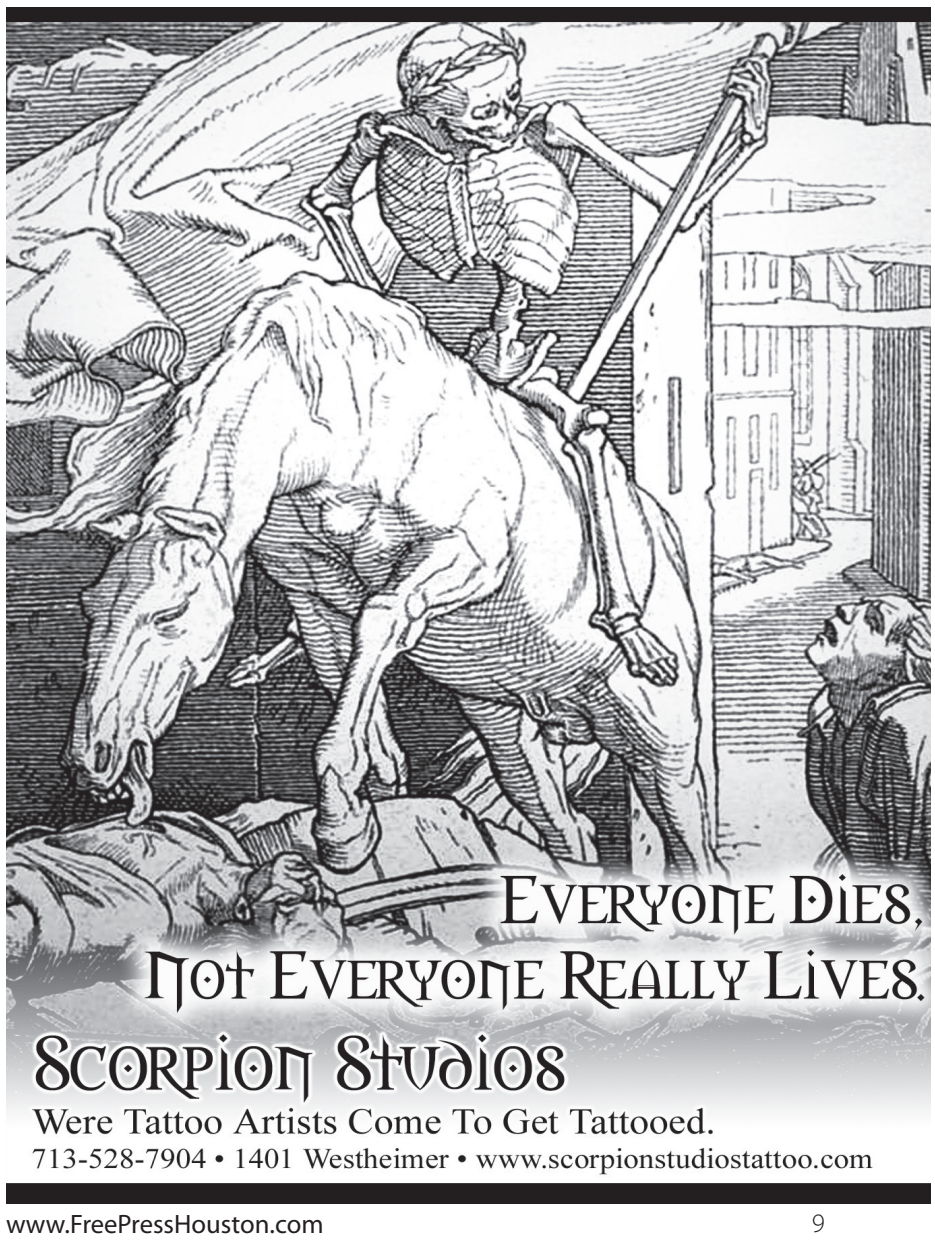
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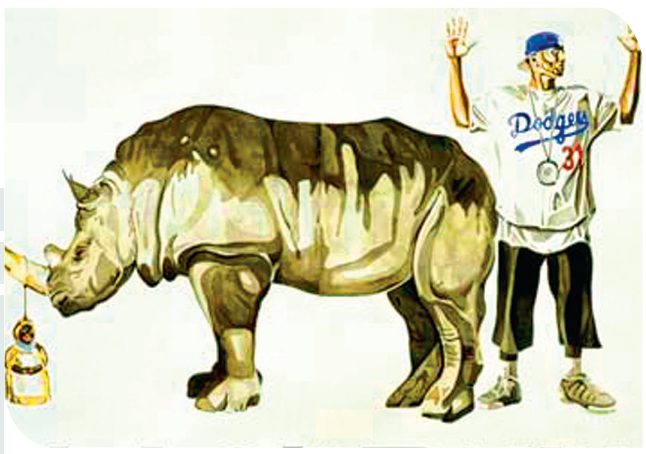
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Dregs: Best of the Year

By Kris Fox



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Toy Story
Anya Tish Gallery (4411 Montrose blvd)
Through January 7, 2006. (713) 524-2299



Cerealart & installation by J.Hill
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Eve Sussman 's *89 Seconds at Alcázar* came to Houston at the Rice University Art Gallery, their reputation for mind-bending installations did not dissapoint. As an obsessive look at Velasquez's *Las Meninas* it was beautiful. As an experiment with the purpose and format of film it was developmental rebellion. January 20 - February 27 **Rice Art Gallery**

Project Row Houses opened *Round 22*, featuring **Roten Balva** digging a hole through a row house floor, **Peter Simensky** brewing bio-diesel from the YOU BUY WE FRY down the street, **Ike Okafur-Newsom** evoking Santaria in the dark, and **Hana Hillorova** tracing and painting dozens of kids running everywhere getting blue and yellow on everything. Every work in the show successfully tackled the space by destroying or concealing nearly the entire space, and breeding fantasies. April 16 – September ? – **Project Row Houses**



The Orgies Mysteries Theatre opened the same night in April; the first American museum show for this Vienna Actionist had it's most bizzare moment as a sober, bundled, Austrian granddad smiled warmly outside his exhibit strewn with blood and guts (real and imitation) at The Station surrounded by a street party of bright Texans. I doubt he had ever heard tejano before, and I doubt we could do as much stupid and/or bizarre shit in art if it wasn't for **Hermann Nitsch**. April 16 - July 2 – **The Station**

***Lepanto**, the winner of the 2001 Venice Bienalle, filled the main hall of the Museum of Fine Arts with vigor as well as the recent parties during Basquiat shows fill it with people. Cy Twombly had a flurry of shows in Houston simultaneously this May, opening at the Menil as well. This suite of paintings full of violence and drama was epic and loose; more Ancient than American; it pinned spoken histories onto canvas.* May 27 - September 11 – **Museum of Fine Arts**



A little edgier than most, this exhibit is one in a long line of shows curated the world over to beat the dead horse of pop art and it's ever-present echoes. *Populance at the University of Houston Blaffer Gallery spread the word with* **Polly Apfelbaum**, **Jeff Koons**, **Takashi Murakami**, and **Fred Tomaselli**. The sophistic extravagance of a cookie cutter show aside, the gallery reached with long LA fingers to bring extravagant 80s, minimal 90s, and today's baroque together smartly. June 25-August 27 – **Blaffer Gallery**

"Isn't Garfunkel sexy?" Video artist **Paper Rad** hosted/exhibited a whirlwind of short films injected with commentary and technical glitches that played like one solid self-aware performance. He kept the crowd laughing and drinking while he beat-matched music videos together; at one point pontificating on the special fondness one may feel for Art Garfunkel watching old videos and realizing he was the hot one. Behind **Mixture Gallery** early in the summer.

What can you do when people ask you why is that art? Show them why that's a dumb question. For months driving down Montrose meant seeing *Inversion*, the best reason to rubberneck in Houston. A deconstructed home, the vortex of white wood slats that became **Dan Havel and Dean Ruck**'s creation melded populist and academic, a real spectacle that should be looked upon as what public art really should do. July ? – October ? - **The Art League**

Merely on merit. **Francesca Fuchs'** *MOM* is a show meant for the OBVIOUS label- an exemplary exercise in appreciation of environment. Compositionally perfect. Formally engaging. Conceptualized fleeting paintings to be appreciated for the short time they exist. Oh, and her huge wall drawings make it impossible to avoid staring into a breast anywhere you look. September 6 - October 1 - **Texas Gallery**

Devastating. **Angela Fraliegh** at Inman Gallery really gave me the feeling of being a shmuck in New York City; slack-jawed and wide-eyed. *forever is not enough* is as sexual as a Shirley Bassey James Bond theme, beautifully rendered, sampling from culture at will. Between this show and Eve Sussmann Baroque cannot really be dead. Ongoing -**Inman Gallery**

Really want to fuck with people? Open with a dead man's will. A sick sense of timing pervades **Robert Gober**: *the Meat Wagon*, starting and ending with John deMenil's candid and frankly funny last words. Gober's innovative curation of the show in four rooms at the Menil enbraces the viewer, breaking up movement as one continually turns around, examines, and walks into, around, and over works. A Rembrant on the floor? Really? Ongoing – **The Menil**

Cool Aesthetics: Basquiat and Rock n' Roll

Vanessa Voss

Out of my way, art-world, I've got a thirst for drinking and dancing! Ambling in designer jeans through the gallery disinterested, noticing the detail in works, knowing all about them, but I never care for such facts. To care is to err; to emote is to miss the aesthetics of *cool*.

Enter **Basquiat** at the **Museum of Fine Arts, Houston**; following baseball and football and Star Wars. The whole town is buzzing about the show: who's going and where's the parties? Basquiat wanted to be cool, and his paintings are blanketed in such. What a success! **DJ Spooky** (video artist of my disenchanted dreams) plays a mix of vintage dance music and none of his own more ethereal work (we must please the crowd as it waits for the most important aspect of the show- booze).

Dance music and haircuts askew:
oh Basquiat, your artwork bathes us in cool.

The aesthetic experience was for Kant, for stuffshirts who never danced on tables. We want nothing of enlightened art, or the emotive art of those elitist expressionists! Give us action painting standing still- give us cool action- to emote is fault- to miss out on the after-party. Paint your own Basquiat on a computer, he doesn't mind, because as long as you get paid, you should be *cool* about it. Don't get mad: anger makes make-up smudge.

Across the street, a hip show challenges Basquiat's monopoly on *cool*: **It's Only Rock and Roll** includes pictures of Basquiat of course (can't be totally opposed, that would not be chill). Spend an hour impressing you friends by accurately identifying the lead singer of the New York Dolls and wondering who that old woman is (it's Edith Piaf- not rock n' roll, but a sublime goddess of a vintage-cool, we'll keep her). Not an art-show, but a show-off. Not a place to meaner in awe and aesthetic relaxation, but a bombastic hyper-image show (the walls are neon, more-color-than-color; the walls are full, negative space is space not spent!)

Somehow, the Basquiat show is the same show as the Rock n' Roll show.

So this is the way to keep the art-world alive, to keep the public interested: to neglect the aesthetic in favor of popularity, not even popularity but *coolness* and '*scene-ness*'. The aesthetic is dying, and for life support we have had to nourish it on a high-caloric regimen of pop music, popular culture and fashion. Where once we gave art such things in comical jest or critique, now the dialectic seems done, worn-out, unhip. It was in dialect that the aesthetic lived- via popular culture. Now, *cool* is the essence of art: popular cool. Dialect and dissent are lame ducks.

Don't say a word, it might be out of fashion!
Even Warhol would be distressed…



Jean Michel Basquiat



NEW YEAR'S EVE

guide for the naive

Celebrex! I mean, Celebrate! Are you one of the many Houstonians whose last year's resolution was not to have as sucky a New Year's as last year?

Were you refused access to a shindig that you prepaid? Did your lady friend/little brother put the hurt down on your car seats with vomit a-plenty by 10 pm?

Then if you are one of the 10,000 literate Houstonians, read below and make your way to swilly drunk heaven. Just please don't drink and drive. Or wear a stupid hat. Or start the countdown four minutes early. "Ten, nine, eight, seven..."

Rudyard's J.W. Americana
· *Vespa, Texas Guinness Lovers*
· $8 champagne toast at midnight
· 2010 Waugh St.
· (713) 521-0521

Scott Gertner's SkyBar 2005 New Year's Eve Celebration
· 3400 Montrose Blvd.
· (713) 520-9688
· 9 pm - 2 am

The Mercury Room New Year's Eve Bash
· 1008 Prairie St.
· (713) 225-6372
· 8 pm

M Bar On Main Biggest New Year's Eve Party Downtown
· 402 Main St.
· (713) 222-1022

Red Lion Pub "Royal Treatment" New Year's Eve Party
· 2316 South Shepherd Dr.
· (713) 782-3030
· 8 pm

Numbers
· *DJ Wes Wallace*
· 300 Westheimer Rd.
· (713) 526-8338
· 9 pm


J.W. Americana @ Rudyard's


New Year's Noise @ Super Happy Funland

Flying Saucer Draught Emporium New Year's Eve at the Flying Saucer
· 705 Main St.
· (713) 228-7468

Star Fleet Marina New Year's Eve Cruise
· 280 Grove Rd., Kemah
· (281) 364-6323
· 9 pm - 12:30 am

Children's Museum of Houston New Year's Noon: Countdown to Noon!
· 1500 Binz St.
· (713) 522-1138
· 9 am - 3 pm

Helios
· *Lunara, Helicopter Jones*

· 411 Westheimer
· 9 pm
· (713) 526-4648

Meridian The Big Mix 2006
· *77002.com, Boys & Girls Club Houston, Disco Productions present Green Velvet/*


Wes Wallace @ Numbers



Cajmere, Craze, Steve Porter, Matt Safer (The Rapture) Sean Carnahan, Boys and Girls Club, Brad Slack, Henry Chow
· 1503 Chartres St.
· (713) 225-1717

Boaka Bar
· *DJ Cipher (Krackernuttz)*
· 1533 Chartes
· (281) 802-2656

713 Restaurant & Lounge
Le Femme Masquerade Soiree
· 10001 Westheimer St.
· (713) 244-0796

Dan Electros
· *Caroly Wonderland*
· 1031 East 24th St.
· (713) 862-8707

Reliant Park
· *The Isley Brothers*
· 1 Reliant Park
· (832) 667-1400

Super Happy Fun Land New Year's Noise
· 2610 Ashland
· (713) 880-2100

Last Concert Café
· *Hightailers*
· 1403 Nance
· (713) 226-8563

The Proletariat Proletariat New Year's Eve Party
· *Big Brown Truck, Constant Touch, Ume, The Red and The White*
· 903 Richmond Ave.
· (713) 523-1199

Rushwood
· 1225 Ravenwind
· 9 pm

Sherlocks West Gray
· 1997A West Gray
· 9:45 pm

Renaissance Houston Hotel ClubMonkey, The Rod Ryan Show, & 94.5 The Buzz present
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· (713) 629-1200





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Wed Dec. 14th:
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Thursday Dec. 15th:
Movie Screening
THE END OF SUBURBIA

Fri Dec. 16th:
Atari Matt
Panda 84
The Guns Of Detroit
Riff Tiffs
The Mysterious H

Sat Dec. 17th:
Rock

Thur Dec. 22nd:
Stephanie Briggs
Luke Leverett

Wed Dec. 28th:
The Mad Scientists (Denton)
Afrayer

Thurs Dec. 29th:
Winter Wondergland
with Dead Roses

Fri Dec. 30th:
Voluntary Mother Earth (Denton)

Sat Dec 31st:
New Years Noise 2005
Pedestrian Deposit (California)
A Fail Association (Fort Worth)
TEF, The Annoysters
Muzak John, Habeeb (Dallas)

Sun Jan 1st:
Hangover Party 2006 with AYIN
Almost There
Aristeia

Mon Jan 2nd:
Working Girls
Undoing of David Wright
Attractive and Popular

Tue Jan 3rd:
Totally Michael
Chim Charoo

Wed Jan 4th:
Movie screening TBA
presented by World Can't Wait

Thur Jan 5th:
Video Hippos
Blood Baby

Fri Jan 6th:
Blinking Light Productions

Sun Jan 8th:
The Sacred Dice
Driftwood

Mon Jan 9th:
Bark Bark
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Thur Jan 12th:
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832-328-4663

8104 SW Fwy.
(Corner of Beechnut & 59)
713-541-4552

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(45 & Wayside behind Wings & More)
713-921-6461

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Diane Wilson Detained During Cheney Speech

Dec 5th, as Republicans gathered in the Galleria to raise money for the GOP, and a large protest filled up Westheimer in front of the Galleria, Diane WIlson, cofounder of Code Pink and author of An Unreasonable Woman infiltrated their ranks. Wilson, who has done work around issues such as the Bhopal disaster and against the Iraq war, got on Delay's RSVP list by donating $50 to his campaign. After speeches by the chairman of the Republican Party and a rousing rendition of "God Bless the USA"



Tom Delay himself took the stage. Delay referenced the protesters outside, citing the Socialists and the Progressive Workers parties. Then Cheney himself took the stage. Wilson was about 15 to 20 feet away from the VP when she opened up her black velvet wrap to reveal a banner which read "Corporate Greed Kills-From Bhopal to Baghdad". Conservative moralists nearby grabbed WIlson as she chanted "Corporate Greed Kills, and Iraq kills too!" One GOP member called Wilson a bitch and a whore. Police dragged Wilson out.

A Slave Has a Moral Obligation to Escape: Day of solidarity with Political Prisoners



As part of the International Day of Solidarity with Political Prisoners, Robert King Wilkerson of the Angola Three spoke at the Station Museum on December 3, 2005.
Citing what he called the "irrelevance" of his own experiences while being incarcerated in solitary confinement for over 30 years on false charges, King's talk dealt primarily with his assertion that we are all--both the ruling classes and those under their thumbs--in his mind, "political prisoners" of a sort.
“If somebody dehumanizes you,” he said, “they have to dehumanize themselves, first.”
A particularly touching moment was the uncontrolled fit of laughter that accompanied King's recollection of the hours he spent in solitary confinement concocting (and executing!) escape attempts. His eyes sort of glazed over as he apparently traveled back to that wretched cell, and the audience shared his palpable sense of hope mixed with deep despair as King attempted to regain his train of thought and control his laughter (which seemed to teeter on the verge of sobbing), until he finally declared, "A slave has the moral obligation to escape!" and the room erupted in applause.
Filmmaker Jimmy O'Halligan showed a preview of his upcoming documentary Three Black Panthers and The Last Slave Plantation. This event was organized by Houston Anarchist Black Cross.

Candlelight Vigil for 15 Year-old Slain by Sheriff Deputy

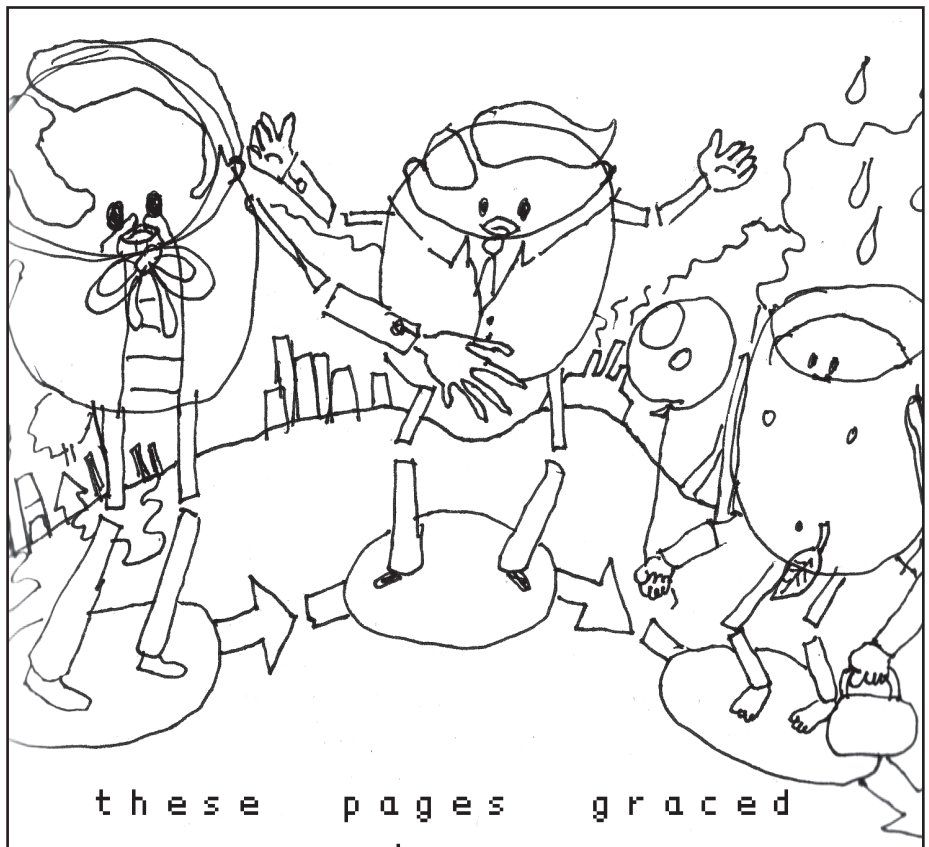
15 year old Anthony Johnson, who was shot in the back by a Harris County Deputy spent a month in a coma and has now died. Harris county has still not identified the name of the Deputy. Wednesday November 23rd, the community and his family held a vigil.

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WORLD VIEW

The Iron Fist of Jesus

by Jason Miller



How much damage will men like George Bush, James Dobson, Pat Robertson, Sam Brownback, Ralph Reed, and Rick Santorum inflict before reason prevails and they are unmasked as the twisted, malevolent charlatans that they are? Fundamentalist Christians, adherents to a nauseating perversion of Christianity (conjured from their twisted imaginations and their distorted interpretations of the Bible) wield a significant amount of power in the United States, socially and politically. Fund-raising, promotional, and organizational skills have enabled these Corpora-Fascist Capitalists masquerading as practitioners of the Christian faith to gain pervasive influence over the Republican Party. Despite recent blows, Republicans still control the Executive and Legislative branches of government, and are well on their way to dominating the Judicial branch by appointing judges who zealously rule in ways which promote the Social Darwinism, elitism, bigotry, property rights, and corporate power the Christo-Fascist Fundamentalist Christians crave.

God Bless America? Surely You Jest

One of the rationalizations for the illegal occupation of Iraq (and the murders of over one hundred thousand innocent Iraqi civilians) is that the United States is engaged in a struggle of "good versus evil". In spite of repeated heinous acts committed for years by the United States in the Middle East, including state terrorism resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians, installation and/or support of ruthless dictators (i.e. Saddam Hussein, the Shah of Iran), and enabling the Israelis to commit genocide against the Palestinians, these pseudo-Christians have managed to convince many Americans that the US is "good" and the "terrorists" (i.e. the Resistance to US occupation in Iraq) are "evil". As the US government continues to rape the Middle East, Christo-Fascists slap "God Bless America" bumper stickers on their gas-guzzling SUV's actually believing that the Father, the Son, and/or the Holy Spirit would bless a nation governed by murderers, thieves and thugs.

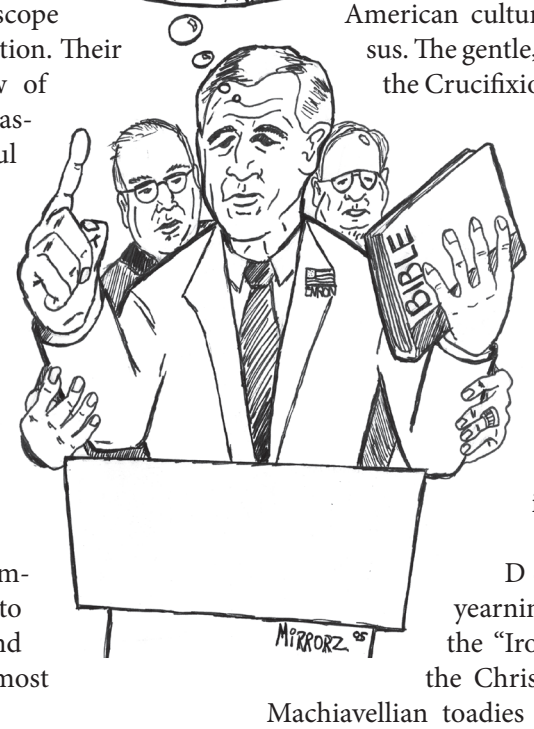
Yes, I can visualize a Christian God sitting on his throne in the kingdom of heaven gazing down upon humankind. As he surveys humanity, he "wisely and judiciously" decides to answer Jane Morgan's prayer for a 2005 Hummer to replace her two year old Navigator. After all, he can't have Jane driving a "jalopy" to worship him on Sundays, now can he? Spying eight year old Mahmoud, a Palestinian in Gaza, God decides to let him die of malnutrition because he is not a Christian, and in fact is an "evil" Muslim who could become "terrorist" someday. Jerry Falwell, who does not appear to be struggling with malnutrition, would be most pleased with his Maker.

Not the Jesus I "Knew" When I was Younger

Growing up Methodist, my indoctrination into the Christian faith was rather moderate. I do not recall our ministers preaching fire, brimstone, or eternal damnation. Somehow I missed the interpretation of Revelations in which the Christo-Fascists have determined that Christ will return to Earth to "judge and make war". For those of you not fortunate enough to be blessed with the knowledge that Jesus will smite you down "with a rod of iron" (or do much worse) if you are deemed unworthy, click on this link to learn of your fate:

(http://www.christiancourier.com/archives/righteousWarrior.htm)

Powerful leaders of the Fundamentalist movement in America have devoted a great deal of time and energy toward their goal of convincing their loyal "Christian" soldiers that they will be saved in the "impending apocalypse" while "non-believers" will suffer beyond the scope of human imagination. Their dichotomous view of Christ as a compassionate and merciful champion of society's victims returning as a vengeful warrior bent on inflicting misery on his "enemies" reflects their psychologically impaired tendency to employ black and white thinking almost continuously.



the Lamb making way for the Lion.

In April of 2004 (in the New York Times) David Kirkpatrick wrote:

Writers and artists have been imagining the Second Coming of Jesus for 2,000 years, but few have portrayed him wreaking more carnage on the unbelieving world than Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins.

In their new apocalyptic novel, "Glorious Appearing," based on Dr. LaHaye's interpretation of Biblical prophecies about the Second Coming, their Jesus appears from the clouds on a white horse with a "conviction like a flame of fire" in his eyes. With all the gruesome detail of a Hollywood horror movie, Jesus eviscerates the flesh of millions of unbelievers merely by speaking.

"Men and women soldiers and horses seemed to explode where they stood," Dr. LaHaye and Mr. Jenkins write. "It was as if the very words of the Lord had superheated their blood, causing it to burst through their veins and skin." The authors add, "Even as they struggled, their own flesh dissolved, their eyes melted and their tongues disintegrated."

Dr. LaHaye and Mr. Jenkins did not invent fire and brimstone. But some scholars who study religion say that the phenomenal popularity of their "Left Behind" series of apocalyptic thrillers - now the best-selling adult novels in the United States - are part of a shift in American culture's image of Jesus. The gentle, pacifist Jesus of the Crucifixion is sharing the spotlight with a more muscular warrior Jesus of the Second Coming, the Lamb making way for the Lion.

Match Made in "Heaven"

Desperately yearning to rule with the "Iron Fist of Jesus", the Christo-Fascists and Machiavellian toadies like Karl Rove were instrumental in thrusting a grossly inept George Bush into the office of the President to do their malevolent bidding. While Bush has certainly made decisions which have displeased the masters of the Christo-Fascists, and has at times distanced himself from them, "God's Favorites" could not have conjured up a more desirable denizen of the Oval Office, even in their most gratifying wet dreams.

Under Bush (who believes he is fulfilling a divine mission), America's regime continues its ongoing military, economic, and social assault on the Arab world, which according to the Christo-Fascists, is populated by "evil" Muslims ready to slice the white, Christian throats of "good" Americans if given the chance. They point to the handful of beheadings of Western hostages by extremist Muslims as "evidence" of this "fact". The US continues its complicity in committing genocide against the Palestinians to clear the way for Jewish inhabitation of the "Holy Land", the necessity of which is woven into Christo-Fascist mythology. Legislative and judicial actions continue to chip away at the gains made for social justice here in the US throughout the Twentieth Century. Christo-Fascists have their coveted religious war to set the stage for the coming of the War-

rior Christ and their regressive social movement to crush the threats to their mythical beliefs (i.e. critical thinking, science, freedom of religion, separation of church and state). Consummating the marriage made in the Christo-Faschists' horrifying version of heaven (one man's heaven is another man's hell, eh?), the corporations and politicians comprising the military industrial complex reap the huge financial benefits of perpetual war, a significant percentage of the American public to support their perpetual war (who do you think is still showing up in the polls as supporting the war?), and loyal voters to help keep them in office.

In the Land of Oz, Science and Reality Cease to Exist

Living in Kansas and having a child in a Kansas public school, I have been following the farcical actions of the six Christo-Fascists who represent the majority on the Kansas State School Board. They recently decided it was time to rewrite the definition of science so that it is no longer "limited to" searching for natural explanations of phenomena. The board is also implementing new standards which will open the door for the introduction of the so-called "theory" of intelligent design into science classes.

As an aside, I will say that as a Deist (or a reasonable facsimile thereof), I believe in an intelligent designer, but that in no way diminishes my acceptance in the Theory of Evolution, which is supported by evidence and has withstood the tests of time and scientific scrutiny. Evolution is by no means complete, but there is no true theory of which I am aware that rivals Evolution, and until one emerges, I want my child learning Evolution. Comparing intelligent design and Evolution is absurd. ID is a theological argument based on one simple premise while Evolution is a legitimate scientific theory which has much more to say about the progressions and history of life on Earth than about the possible identity of its Creator or Initiator. I embrace both the notion of intelligent design and the Theory of Evolution simultaneously. However, intelligent design is a spiritual concept and does not belong in a science class.

Thankfully, rational thinkers came up with an appropriate response to the school board's insanity. The University of Kansas recently announced it would offer a religious studies course which would include intelligent design in the curriculum. Unfortunately, Fundamentalist Pseudo-Christians discovered that Professor Paul Mirecki, the faculty member assigned to teach the course, wrote highly derogatory remarks on the Internet about them. The Christo-Fascist response? Several of their members who have infiltrated the Kansas State Legislature are calling for an investigation into the use of public funds at KU. On 12/5, Dr. Mirecki literally felt the Iron Fist of Jesus as two "Christian soldiers" attacked and beat him in retaliation for his remarks about their dogma. Much to the delight of "God's Warriors", KU has cancelled the religious studies course.

Tell me to Have a Merry Christmas, or Else!

Recently, the Christo-Fascists have been wringing their hands over the "liberal attacks" on Christmas. Even their faithful Evangelical champion at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue has forsaken them. Bush's sin? He dared to send out cards that said "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas". This has created a significant uproar amongst the "Goodly Christian Fundamentalists". Besides attacking their beloved president, they are threatening to boycott retailers (like Target) which do not include "Merry Christmas" in their marketing or store displays. The American occupation of Iraq has caused the deaths of over 100,000 Iraqis, 2,000 plus American soldiers have died in Iraq, at least 1,000 Americans died (and hundreds of thousands lost virtually everything they owned) in Hurricane Katrina due to the federal government's abdication of its responsibility to "promote the general Welfare", 45 million Americans are without health insurance, over a million Americans are homeless, the CIA and US military regularly engage in abuse and torture, the Patriot Act has seriously eroded the Bill of Rights, and the US continues its neocolonial practices to economically rape nations around the globe. Christo-Fascist voters, leaders, and politicians bear a great deal of responsibility for these tragedies as they have supported, shaped and orchestrated the malevolent US government policies behind these violations of international law and human rights, war crimes, and instances of criminal neglect. Yet they have the hypocrisy to raise a significant issue over "Merry Christmas"? It is simply mind-boggling.

I do not believe that Warrior Jesus will one day ride down from heaven on a

Frankly, I do not care if someone



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says "Merry Christmas" or "Happy Holidays" to me. As a non-Christian, I celebrate Christmas as a time for giving, family, and to place a particular emphasis on peace and goodwill. The Prince of Peace would have wanted it that way. While I do not worship him as the son of God, I do hold Jesus Christ in high esteem for his teachings, principals and act of martyrdom. I do not believe that Warrior Jesus will one day ride down from heaven on a white steed with eyes blazing as he prepares to ram a sword down my throat and obliterate my flesh with his devastating voice. However, I am convinced that were he alive today, he would be sickened by the greed, gluttony, commercialization, and over-consumption that comprise much of Christmas in the United States. Many of the Christo-Fascists are the first to shove their snouts into the trough to get their share of Christmas goodies. Since my spiritual awakening about twelve years ago, I have been doing a lot more giving than receiving, including to charities. In fact, donations to Oxfam (on my behalf) sit atop my very short wish list this year. The Christo-Fascist Jesus would pummel me to a bloody mass of unrecognizable flesh with his "Iron Fist" for not doing my part to support America by stimulating the economy. Somehow though, it seems far more reasonable to me to envision Jesus tending to the poor and down-trodden rather than preying on them like America's Social Darwinists do.

Terrorism, US Style

When the Higher Power set the universe in motion, they planned for the evolution of Christo-Fascists to lend balance to the universe. America has Pat Robertson, who has called for the assasination of Hugo Chavez, a leader dedicated to improving the lives of the impoverished in his nation. The Bush regime will probably answer Robertson's call. The US capitalist aristocracy (built by stealing Native American land and resources, enslaving Africans, seriously exploiting American workers, and imposing neocolonialism and imperialism disguised as democracy and free market economics) can ill afford for a leader of one of its South American fiefdoms to threaten the prevalence of their exploitive system by rallying the serfs against them. For each Osama bin Laden in the fundamentalist Muslim world, there is a Pat Robertson in the Christo-Fascist world. The difference is that while the Pat Robertsons have the US government to perpetrate their acts of terror, the bin Ladens have little choice but to do their own dirty work.

Just How Does One Define a Christo-Fascist?

What qualities would one find in a Christo-Fascist? Greed, hubris, and self righteousness would probably top the list. Upon further inspection, one would find a streak of xenophobia, a significant amount of intolerance for those who do not fit the "traditional roles" of men and women and those who have not accepted Christ as their savior, and a passionate disdain for critical thinking. Lest I forget, Christo-Fascists are generally thin-skinned and highly hypocritical. A powerful persecution complex and an insatiable appetite for the revenge that they believe Warrior Jesus will one day perpetrate on their behalf arm them with conscience-blunting self-justifications for their mean-spirited actions. Hatred and bigotry gnaw at their malnourished souls like crows picking at the remains of a fallen soldier in the war for religious supremacy. Christo-Fascists wield their knowledge of scripture (and the commonly held Western belief that the Bible is sacrosanct) while performing unbelievable mental gymnastics to ensure they prevail in polemical discourse and successfully proselytize the weak and vulnerable. Narcissism and self hatred lie at the core of the personalities of the Fundamentalist Faithful. For a specific example of how the qualities of a Christo-Fascist manifest themselves, consider the Fundamentalist Christians' support of the illegal imperial Iraqi occupation involving the murders of tens of thousands of indigenous people, the deaths of over 2,000 American military personnel, the destruction of much of the nation's infrastructure, and the waste of hundreds of billions of federal tax dollars while US citizens suffer at home due to inadequately funded domestic programs. Iron Fist Jesus would approve!

In short, Fundamentalist Christians are the people whom the real Jesus would have hammered with his Iron Fist, if he had had one, and if he had been inclined to use it. Fortunately for them, Warrior Jesus is simply a myth the Christo-Fascist masters use to keep their minions in line. Unfortunately for the rest of us, America's religious extremists are as dangerous as those in the Middle East and around the globe.

Just in case there is an Iron Fisted Jesus and an impending Rapture, I am signing off by wishing you a Merry

white steed with eyes blazing as he prepares to ram a sword down my throat

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Success, at last!

We, the people of Houston, Harris County, Texas lead the world in glorious drug war success. We send ten times more blacks to prison than did the nation of South Africa under racial apartheid. We pride ourselves on being a civilized society, even though we have a crime lab that is an international scandal, a jail that is massively overcrowded, disease-ridden and a school for violent behavior.

We are all responsible for this madness, this sanctified mayhem. The representatives, the senators, the attorneys general. The County Judge, commissioners, mayor, council, sheriff, police chief and a district attorney without compassion, without conscience. Mostly, though it is we, the people who sit and watch and allow this abomination to unfold without the blinking of an eye, without reservation, without a clue.

This drug war began, and continues to this day as an unconstitutional affront to our dignity, our rights as free people. Offered the false hope that professional opinions and supervision over what we should put into our bodies would bring us health and prosperity, the American people succumbed to the pressure to accept the dictates/mandates of the Harrison Act, forgoing our basic, God-given and basic American rights in hopes of a better tomorrow as promised by the pharmaceutical houses, the pontificating politicians and the bleating hearts of law enforcement.

We send ten times more blacks to prison than did the nation of South Africa under racial apartheid

Today, the Drug Czar in DC has determined that not even doctors can be trusted to make medical decisions for the citizenry. Bands of gypsy snitches now roam the countryside, pretending to be in pain, begging good doctors for pills to alleviate their suffering, only to appear in court, fit as fiddles and thus "exposing" the good doctors intentions as evil, their prescriptions as willful violations of law and their practice to be trafficking in drugs.

The drug war has been handed down, from generation to generation, from one group of elected officials to the next. Nobody bothers to investigate the racial bigotry involved, the lack of substantive data, the ever-escalating costs.

Nobody wants to appear soft on crime, so the drug war continues, forever.

The drug war is in and of itself, perhaps the greatest crime of all time, and yet it continues day after day. Why? Because of public ignorance and truthfully because of wide-spread, deeply ingrained racial bigotry and fear.

I try each day to face down the lions, to expose the fraud, I try to buy, bribe, cajole, beg, whimper and cry out that this abomination exists and needs correction, to no avail.

How could everyone be out of step, but me? You must help me realize that constitutional safeguards are a thing of the past that human rights are no longer necessary and that leading the world in the incarceration of our own people is a good and positive thing.

I have been left out of that comfort zone by my own deviant beliefs. Surely you are in a good place, a place wide enough and comfortable enough that you can find room for me to hide with you.

It's damned cold here where I am.

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STICK IT TO THE MAN

Expiring Gift Cards or "Inactivity Fees"

by Devin C. McNulty

Editor's Note: The information in this column is not legal advice. It is merely intended to illustrate general information about the law by using hypothetical examples. If you have a legal issue, including one that resembles the situation described below, you should consult with an attorney regarding the circumstances of your particular problem.

It's the holiday season and I'm giving and getting gift cards from various stores and merchants. I've noticed that several of the gift cards "expire" if I don't use them within a certain time. Other cards charge me a fee if I don't use them. I paid cash for the gift cards and it seems like I'm being cheated if the gift cards expire. *Is that legal?*

Yes. In Texas gift cards may expire after a certain amount of time and inactivity fees can be charged if the cards are not used. If you get a gift card, do not think of it as cash because (in Texas at least) it is not. You need to read the fine print and become aware of the card's expiration date and any possible inactivity fees. You should also plan on using a gift card within a few months of receiving it. Almost 60% of Americans will either get or give a gift card this holiday season and approximately 10% of the value of gift cards goes unused as people forget about them, lose them or let them expire.

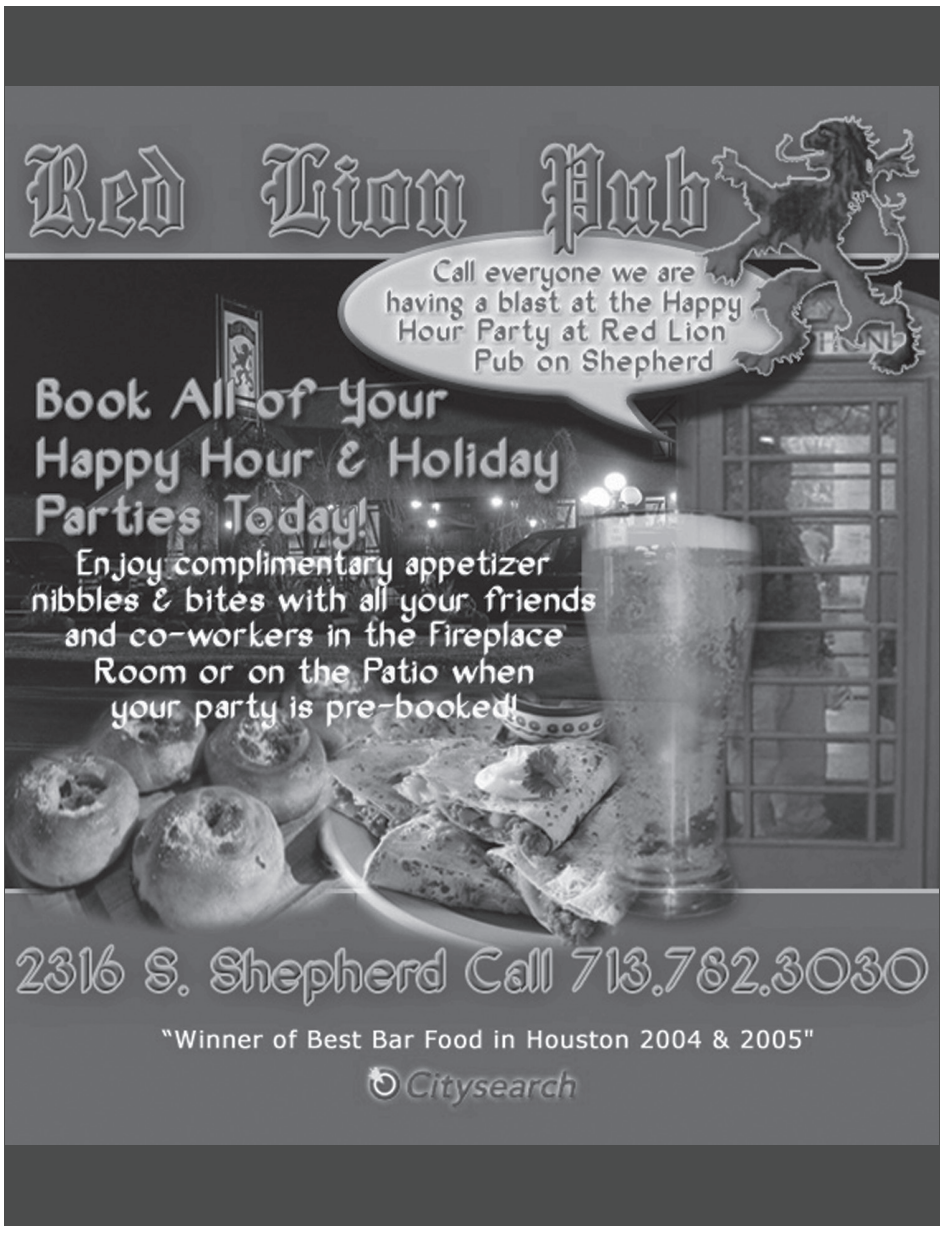
Gift cards will typically expire after 12 or 24 months and the inactivity or "dormant" fees can range from $1 to $5 per month that the card is not used. Both of actions are perfectly legal in Texas. These fees and expirations constitute classic consumer rip-offs. After all, if you paid cash for the card, the card should carry the legal equivalency of cash and be usable at any time. Merchants treat gift cards like cash when it is convenient for them: such as when you lose the gift card, it is just like losing cash. A gift card is "bearer" paper meaning that possession of it is crucial. If you lose a gift card you cannot go back to the merchant and request a new one without being charged for it all over again. Groups such as the National Retail Federation lobbies against the ban on expiration dates and claims that retailers are essentially entitled to the card amounts reverting back to them because of the cost of "maintaining" gift card programs (whatever that means). This argument seems very weak because merchants receive a financial windfall if the cards expire with *any* balance on them. The buyer of the card bought a useless piece of plastic and nothing more.

Other states have stronger consumer protection laws than Texas and make it illegal for gift cards to expire or to charge inactivity fees. California was the first state to outlaw expiring gift cards and inactivity fees. A few states such as Hawaii, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, New York, South Carolina and Vermont do not allow the cards to expire, but do allow fees after a certain amount of time, generally from one year at the shortest to seven years at the longest, or if the card balance falls to a certain amount. Other states have blanket bans on expirations and inactivity fees. These states, Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Washington make it illegal for gift cards to expire or to have inactivity fees.

Gift cards are extremely popular and are pushed by merchants and retailer more than ever. Consumers can often purchase gift cards in supermarkets for a huge variety of different retailers. The use of gift cards has exploded in popularity recently and even California's strict law on expiring cards and inactivity fees did not come around until 1996. Some estimates put gift card purchases at around $50 billion dollars. Starbucks gift cards came around in 2001 and now 10% of all of Starbucks' sales are paid for with gift cards. Several large chains such as Starbucks, Container Store, Bed, Bath & Beyond, and The Home Depot do not have any expiration dates or inactivity fees. Shopping at retailers and merchants that do not have expirations or inactivity fees will hopefully cause the retailers that rip off consumers to change their policies.

To recap: Gift cards can expire. Gift cards values can be deducted for inactivity. Both are legal in Texas. When you get a gift card try and use it within a few months of getting it because otherwise the amount can go down or the cards can expire. If you receive a gift card check out the fine print. If you give a gift card, do the recipient a favor and give them a heads up about the card's expiration if it has one.

Devin C. McNulty, a former prosecutor, is engaged in the private practice of law in Houston, Texas. He can be reached at devin_mcnulty@hotmail.com with any questions or comments.







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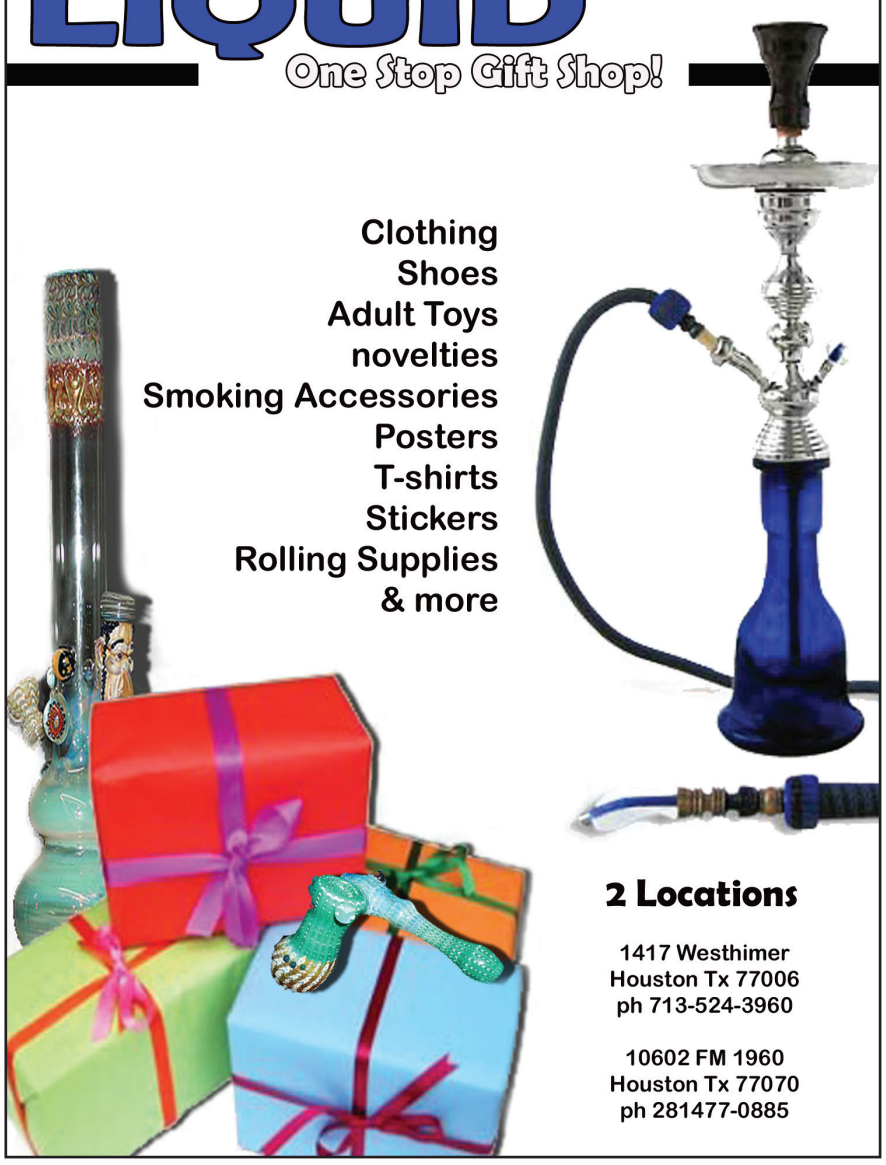
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Procrastinators' GIFT Guide

compiled by Andrea Afra



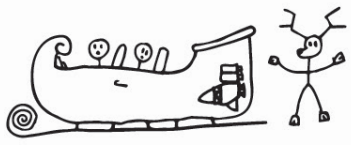
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