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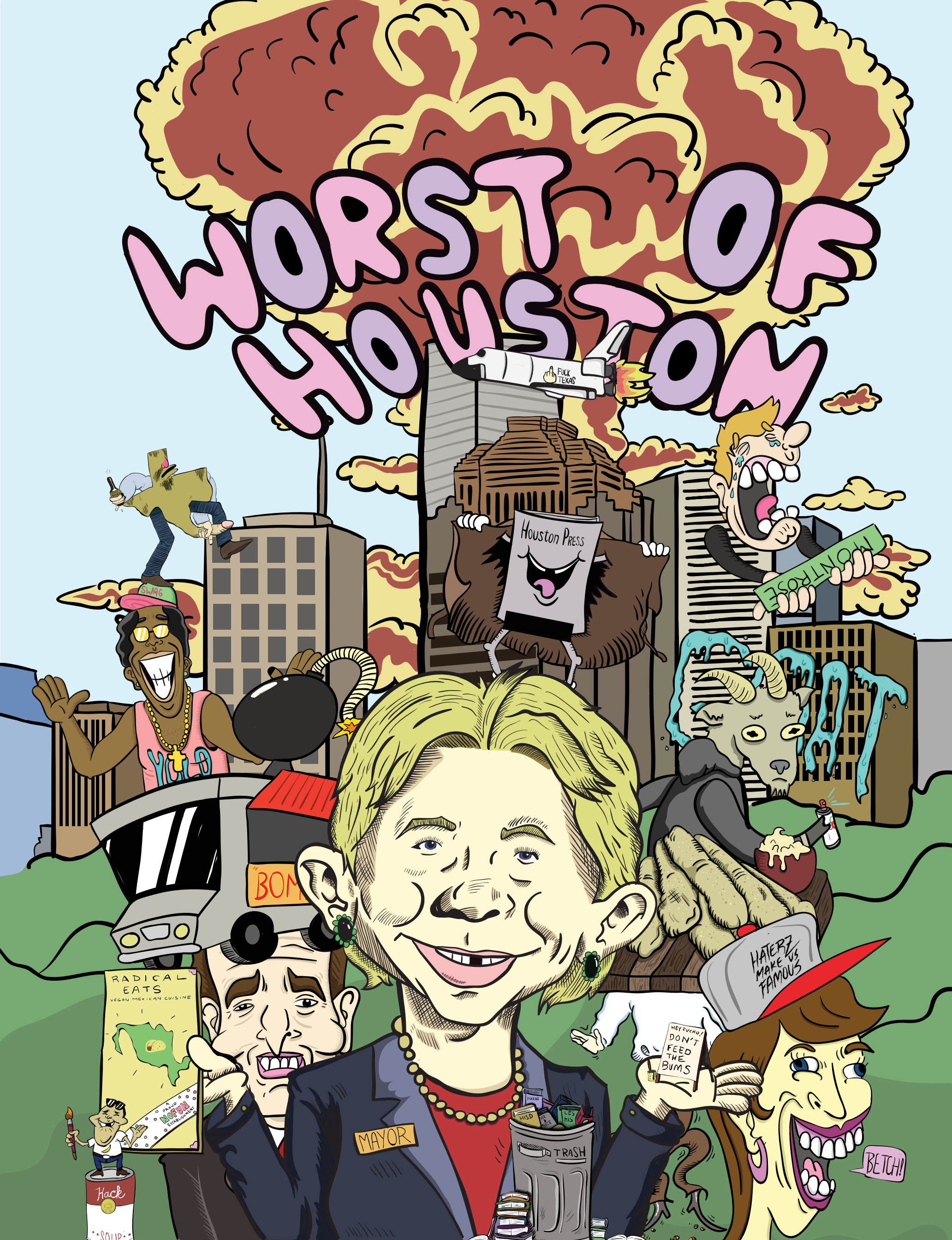

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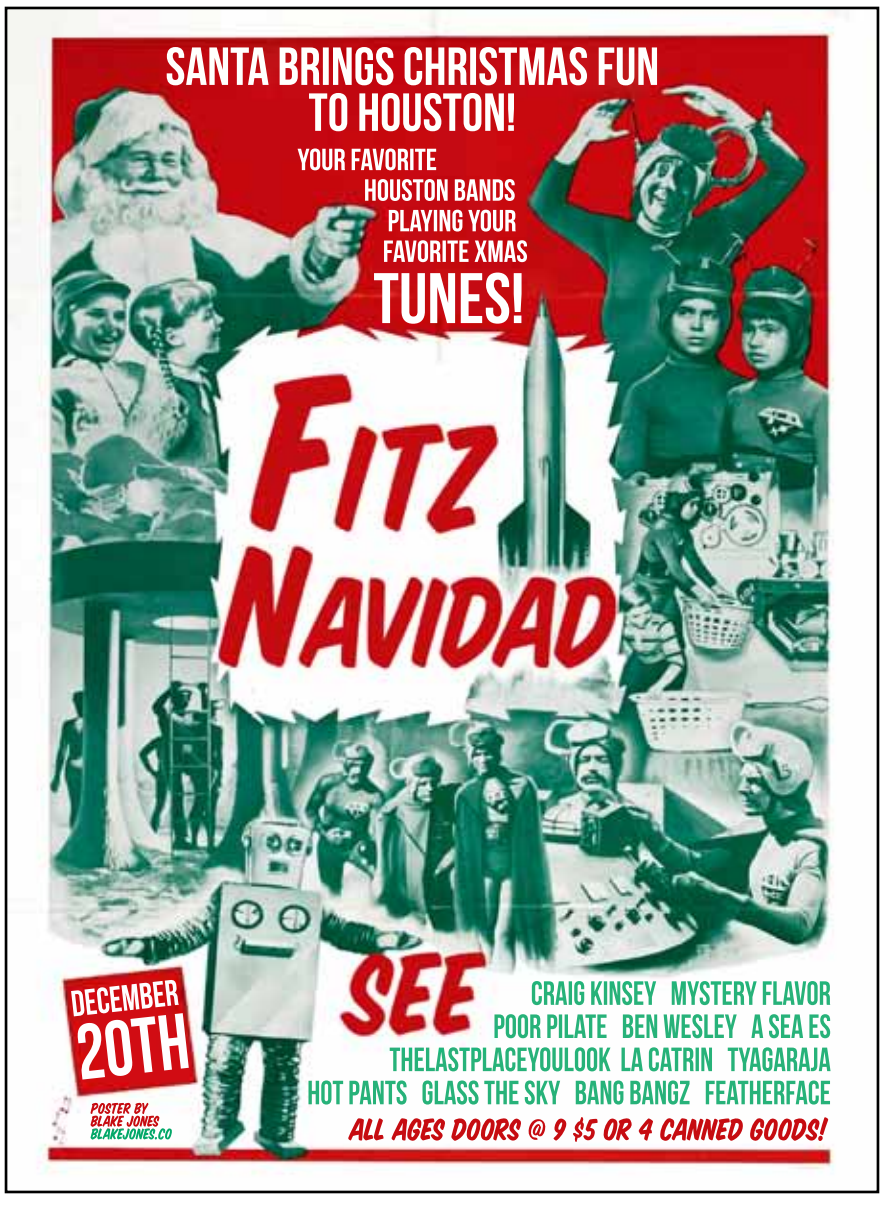
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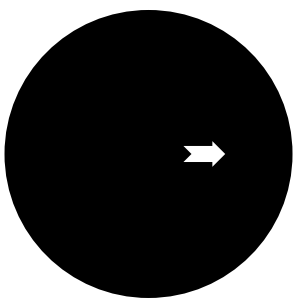

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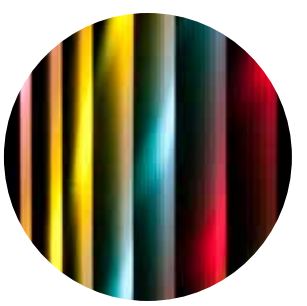

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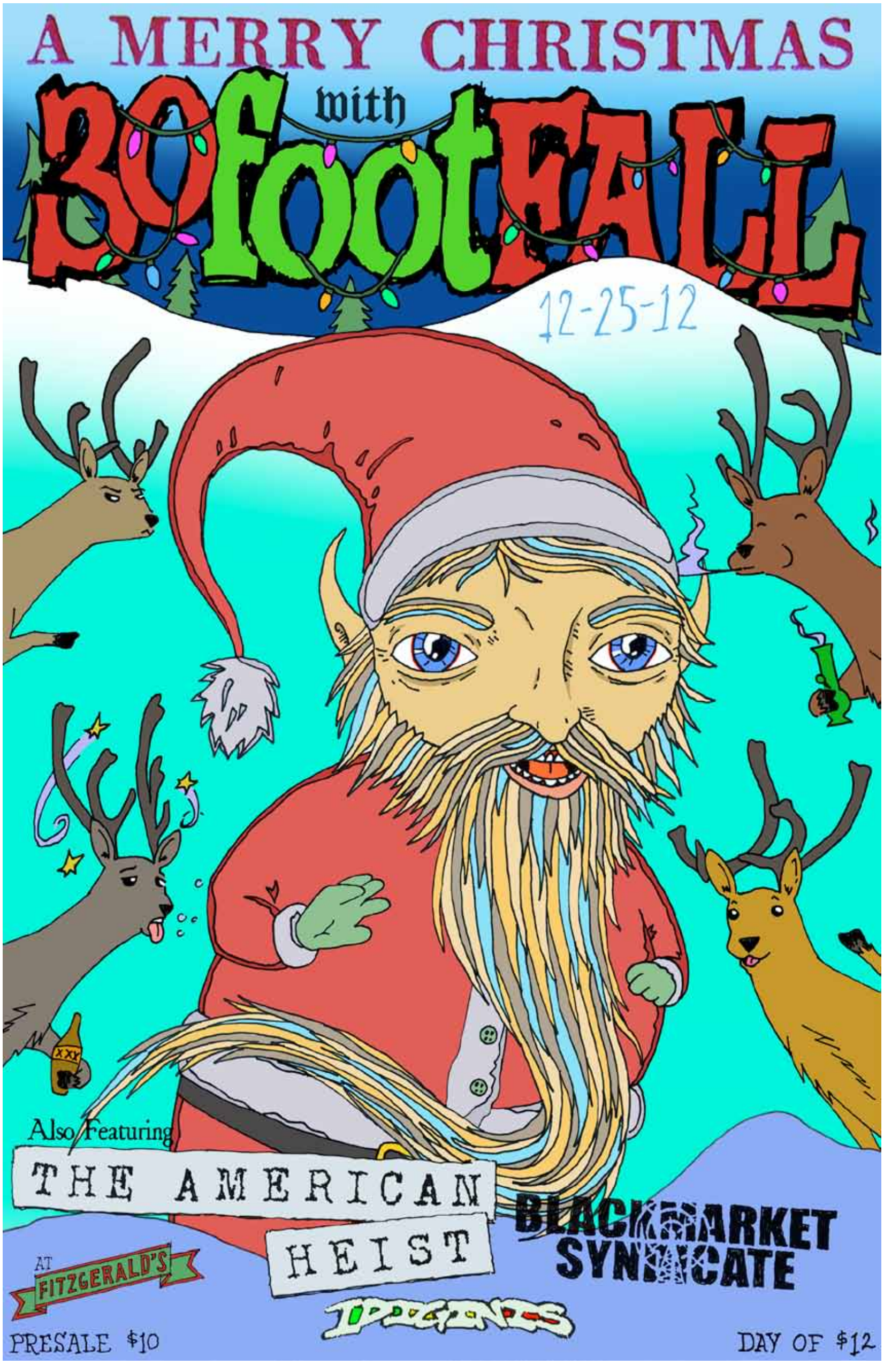
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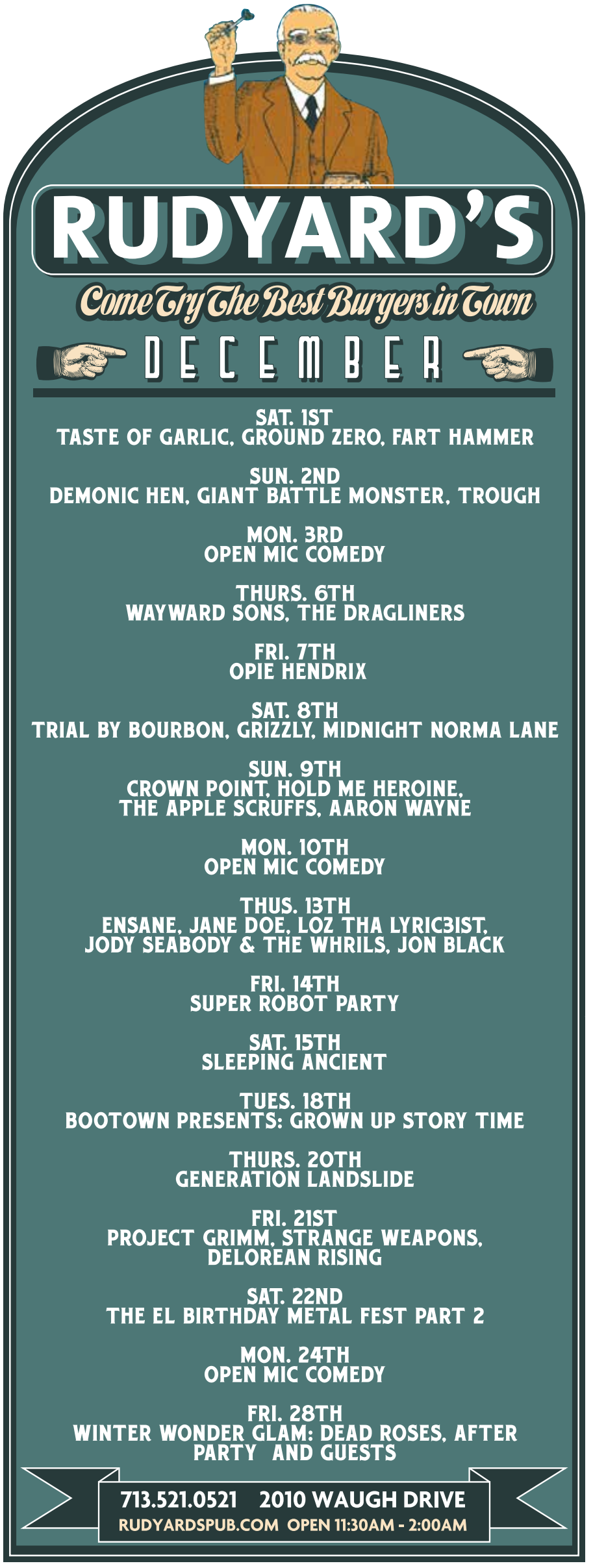
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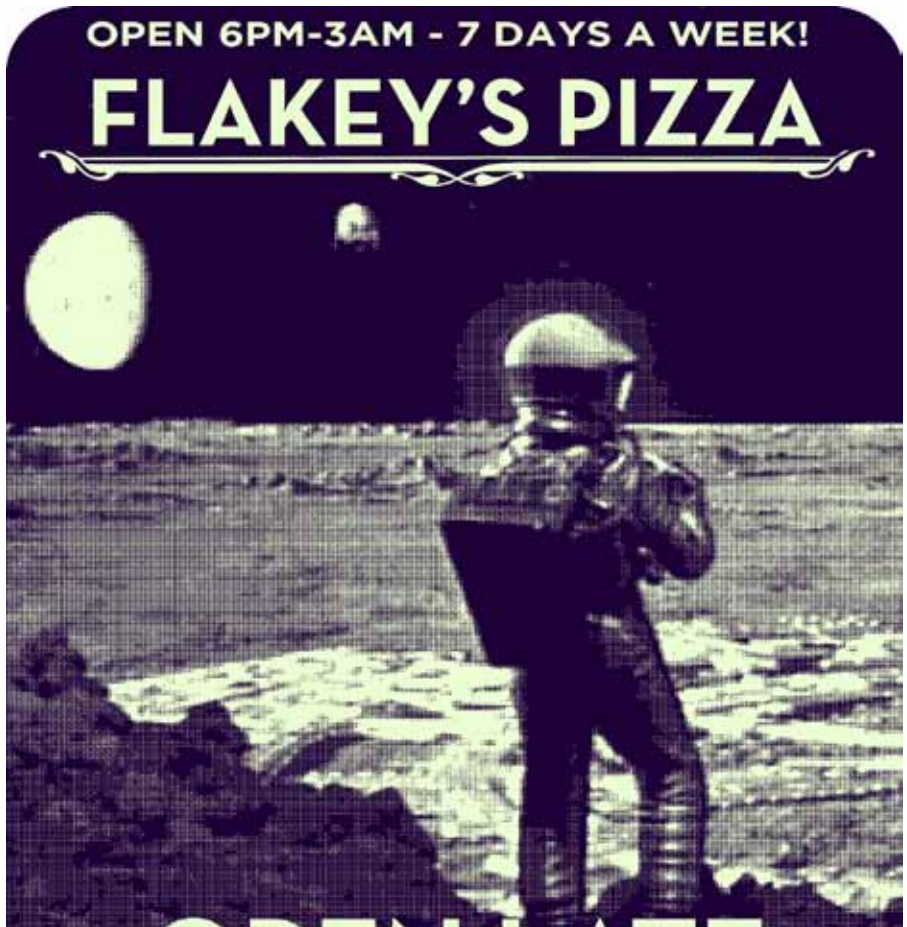

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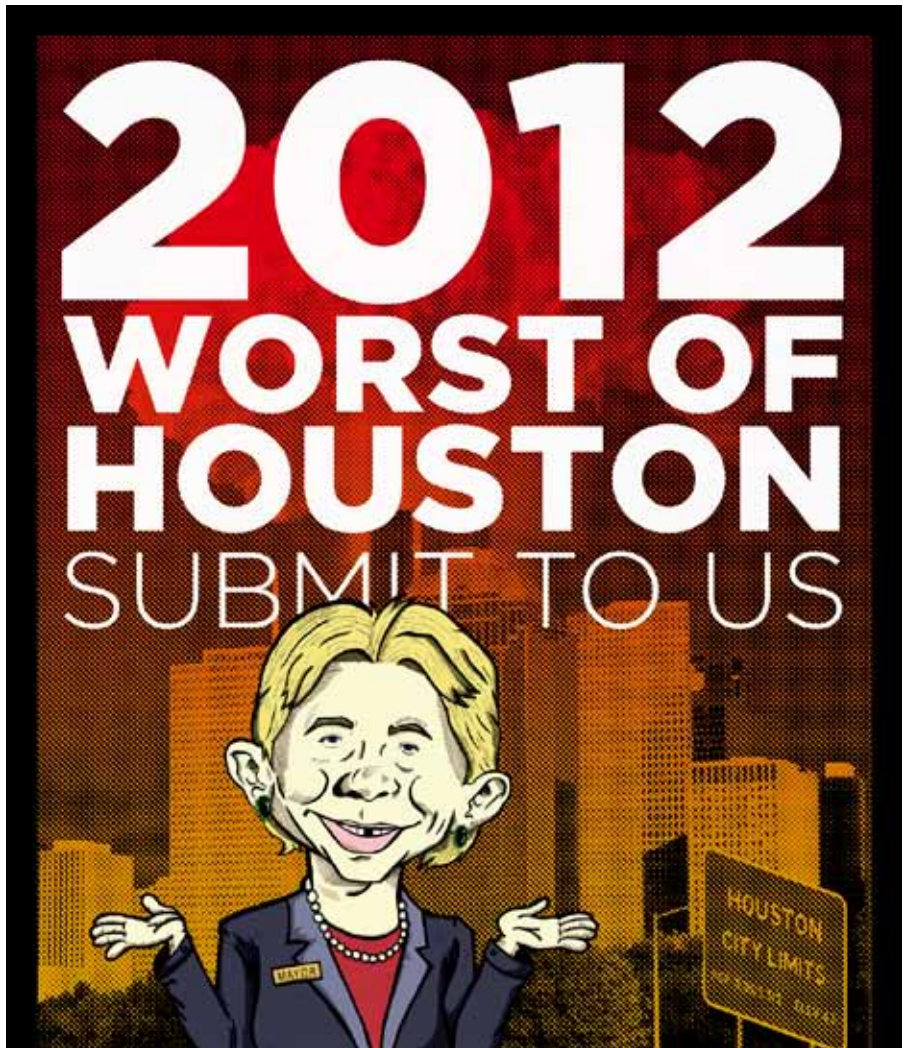

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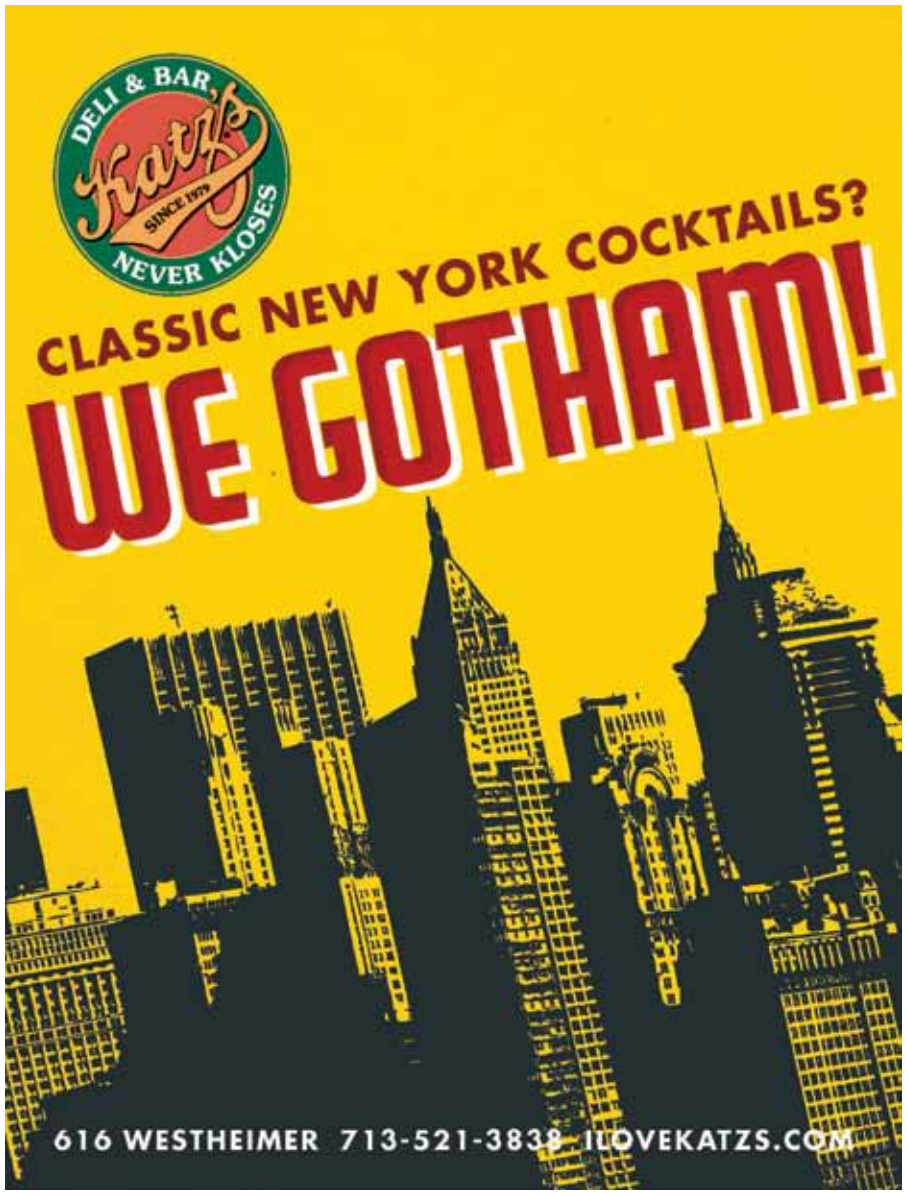
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On the Road, Again

BY MICHAEL BERGERON

film
FPH
01.13

THE ROAD MOVIE is a genre unto itself. The novel On the Road by Jack Kerouac was published in 1957 (completed in the early '50s) long after road movies appeared (think They Drive by Night or Detour) as part of the film noir era and yet itself has never been made into a movie--until now. While there have been movies made featuring Kerouac as a character, such as the 1980 film Heart Beat, the actual source novel languished in movie development literally since it was published.

Free Press Houston talked to director Walter Salles under whose hand On the Road was finally made. On the Road opens at the Sundance Cinemas Houston on January 18, 2013. "Francis Ford Coppola has had the rights to On the Road since 1979, and there've been seven or eight attempts to launch the film with Coppola, his son Roman, and writer Barry Gifford," explains Salles. "My own film The Motorcycle Diaries [2004] was inspired by On the Road, and after a festival screening I met a producer from Coppola's company Zoetrope. I proposed an iconic treatment of On the Road and spent the next six years working on it, crisscrossing America, and talking to poets of the Kerouac generation. It was a very cautious manner of research." Salles is also known for the 1999 Brazilian film Central Station, which garnered Academy Award nominations for Best Actress and Best Foreign Film.

In the film as in the book, Kerouac and his friends are renamed with Kerouac becoming Sal (Sam Riley), Neal Cassady becoming Dean Moriarty (Garrett Hedlund), Neal's femme doppelganger LuAnne Henderson becoming Marylou (Kristen Stewart), and Allen Ginsberg becoming Carlo Marx (Tom Sturridge). Other real life personalities like William S. Burroughs also appear, here as Old Bull Lee (Viggo Mortensen). Amy Adams, Alice Braga, Elisabeth Moss, Terrence Howard, Steve Buscemi, Michael Sarrazin, and Kirsten Dunst co-star.

"I discovered the book in the mid-'70s," says Salles. "In Brazil, at that time there was censorship in all art forms. The book was about seeking freedom, something you couldn't grasp in our part of the world." Salles stays true to the spirit and structure of Kerouac's novel, at times veering off the highway and into jazz dens of iniquity. "When Kerouac was at Columbia University in 1941 his roommate Jerry Newman taught him the importance of the jazz scene. Kerouac would've experienced the scene in Harlem years before bebop jazz appeared in the Village," notes Salles. "These characters live every moment as if it is their last."

After his success with Central Station, Salles was courted by Hollywood and made the film Dark Water, a remake of a Japanese horror film, for Disney through their Touchstone banner. "I keep my passport close to my body," laughs Salles. "Dark Water was my investigation of the studio system and I was interested in the project because of that film's mother-daughter relationship." Subsequent to that, Salles returned to low-budget films made in his native Brazil, including the 2008 Linha de Passe, which won the Best Actress award at that year's Cannes Film Festival for Sandra Corveloni.

On the Road undulates from large sets and production design to minimalist views of American landscapes. At times, Salles would use a typical movie crew of 60 to 70 people for a city exterior and then scale back to a handful of crewmembers for the road sequences. A recreation of post-WWII downtown New York was lensed in Quebec and the design is exquisite, featuring multiple views of storefronts and movie posters. "I wanted to portray them going to films that reflected the political climate of the time," adds Salles about the marquee that announces The Best Years of Our Lives, along with a Sherlock Holmes film and a couple of film noir titles. Other locations feature vintage cars cruising through New Orleans and rural parts of Louisiana, Arizona, and Mexico. " During the production we were shooting in sun and rain and snow. The temperatures ranged from 120 degrees to 20 degrees below zero," Salles says matter-of-factly.

"I wanted to catch a sense of the American Dream and how it collided with the malaise of the era. We see that transformation of society in the film," says Salles. "These are characters that wanted to redefine their time and transcend the meaning of their future."

On the Road will be remembered as a landmark film although its initial rollout will be small and not supported by big advertising dollars as the film opens in a small number of theaters, distributed by IFC. The relationship between Sal and Dean is typical of so many other movies and stories that have twin lead characters who are the archetypal of each other (think The Master). Even as the film ends and we witness Sal and Dean leaving a trail of broken hearts (both male and female), they are also broken themselves by the system they tried so poetically to subvert. **FPH**

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WITH GUEST TALL FIRS ⁞ JAN 21ST ⁞ THE CULLEN THEATER AT WORTHAM CENTER

The Mayans Were Wrong

BY WILLIAM GUESS

IF YOU'RE READING THIS, it means the Mayans were wrong and we're all still stuck here on Earth. The world hasn't ended just yet, and another failed prophecy has passed us by. In some ways, I'm disappointed. Every generation thinks they're going to see end of the world, and most of us look forward to it. Who doesn't want to be there to see it all go up in flames? I am, however, excited that we're all still here, because we have some great shows coming up for the month of January. Southern metal overlords, a disappearing act returns, and a band says farewell to their fans.

Down

January 11 / Warehouse Live

The closest thing to seeing Pantera live since the loss of Dimebag Darrell is coming to town in early January to destroy Warehouse Live. While Down doesn't necessarily carry the same fury as Pantera, the signature vocals of Phil Anselmo are there, making me feel nostalgic about the times I spent waking up early in high school to drive around in my car listening to The Great Southern Trendkill while smoking cigarettes. Hey, I thought I was cool. If the members of Black Sabbath were born in New Orleans, I'd imagine this is what they might sound like. Down brings a unique sound to metal music that's deeply rooted in their Southern upbringing, which puts them a tier above the rest. Frontman Phil Anselmo is known for his hilarious and sometimes incoherent onstage ramblings. Keep your ears open for some gems from one of the gods of metal.

Jeff Mangum

January 21 / Cullen Theater

After almost a 10-year hiatus, Neutral Milk Hotel frontman and cult music legend Jeff Mangum is finally returning for a full-scale tour. Mangum has been playing sporadically since '08, but until now, he hasn't hit the road in full form. Of course, everyone knows Mangum as the frontman for Neutral Milk Hotel, creator of the now classic In The Aeroplane Over the Sea. I, however, am more of a fan of his work with The Olivia Tremor Control, and hope that he'll pull out at least one song of theirs to perform. Mangum is one of those weird, quirky characters who everyone loves to follow, but who doesn't reveal too much about himself. Forever a mystery after pulling a Dave Chappelle when he was at the height of his popularity, his return will definitely be something to watch. Will he come back stronger than ever? Or will the wheels fall off the wagon giving us a rockstar mental breakdown? Either way, I'll be there to watch.

Underoath

January 23 / House of Blues

Ignoring that this show is coming to town would be ignoring a good chunk of recent heavy music history. Like them or not, Underoath were at the forefront of the metal core surge in the early 2000s. They're Only Chasing Safety became a classic in that genre and has remained one of the landmark albums for heavy music of that time period. After announcing their breakup earlier this year, the band set a final farewell tour for early 2013 and chose Houston as one of the final destinations to say goodbye. Seven years ago, Underoath appealed to a crowd that is now 21+. It's interesting to see young people still connecting with a band that is almost 15 years old. After the departure of their singer/drummer Aaron Gillespie, the band took on a heavier sound than their previous albums and still managed to continue their uphill surge in popularity. Now, at their peak and with no original members left, the band has decided to finally call it quits and go out on top. To top it all off, the band is bringing back mewithoutYou and As Cities Burn--two more bands to help you get that nostalgic feel.

B.B. King
January 11
House of Blues

Roky Moon & The Kiss Goodnight
January 12
Fitzgerald's

Ray Price
January 12
Stafford Centre

Led Zeppelin 2 (Led Zeppelin tribute)
January 17
House of Blues

What Made Milwaukee Famous & Grandfather Child
January 25
Fitzgerald's

Lady Gaga
January 31
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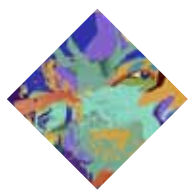
Reviews of What Were Once Called Records

BY K.M. ANDERSON



AZITA - Year (Drag City)

Randy Newman is a singer with an unconventional voice who sings pop songs centered by a narrative. Azita Youssefi is not similar to Randy Newman in sound, but a narrative runs through each of her songs. Her voice is not the type of voice, nor is her singing style, directly associated with what one would call conventional, as one could say of singers such as Nina Simone or maybe Lee Hazelwood. Year is her latest offering and it is filled with wonderful songwriting and beautiful piano playing. It follows what we have come to know of an Azita album. It is classic. It is organic. It is hard to describe in terms that wouldn't mislead or create an idea that may be dispelled by hearing the album. Why review an album you can't describe? Azita deserves a listen; let me be the catalyst.

T.I. - Trouble Man: Heavy Is The Head (Grand Hustle)

T.I. went to prison a few times for really silly shit, and then he made a lot of over-apologetic albums focused on trying to redeem himself for his lack of judgment. And then one of his best friends was killed right in front of him, all while he was attempting to craft a more marketable image parallel to his street credentials. That stated, he was one of the best, if not the best, trap rappers. Trouble Man is the album that returns him to the consistent (if not limited) criteria he used to establish himself. T.I. has a message: he's off probation; he's heard what you've been saying; he doesn't appreciate it; and he will beat your ass. "Trap Back Jumpin," "Addresses," "Can You Learn," and "Go Get It" personify the trouble. It is a good album, and if you don't agree he has more money and women than you, he will beat your ass.

Big Boi - Vicious Lies and Dangerous Rumors (Def Jam)

Big Boi is one hell of a rapper, and he also holds the burden of being one-half of one of the greatest rap groups ever. I will admit that his first official solo album, Sir Lucious Left Foot was way better than I expected. This album is what I expected the last one to be. There are good songs ("The Thickets," "In the A," "Thom Pettie") but then there are other songs ("Shoes for Running," "Objectum Sexuality," "CPU") that suffer from never being really good or really bad but just kind of being. This album is the sort of thing you could hear one time, sorta dig, and then opt never to listen to again.

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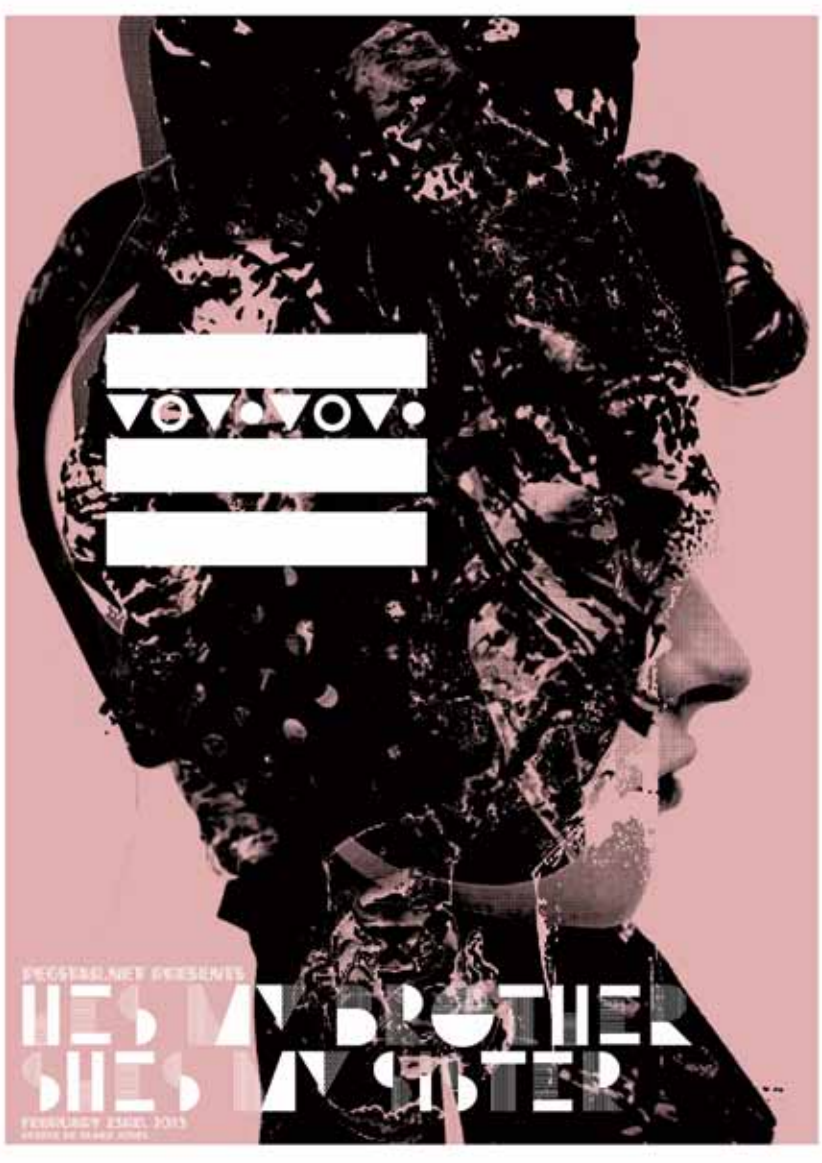
HE'S MY BROTHER
SHE'S MY SISTER

uld be on that list. Their upcoming album, Suave Creation of the Monolithic Other, crackles with a nervous, tripped-out energy that k
of bands you can find on labels like Goner or In the Red. Stephen Burton (vocals and rhythm) and Carl Von Rond (guitar) started the b
(keyboards), and Josh Blue (percussion) into their ranks. I entered their metal shed on the East End and it was apparent that they are c
sion about my invasion of that space.

omething so we wanted to find a friend who could wear a goat mask and she would sit in the middle and answer all of our questions as

e.

were recording it. [When Lou joined,] he really directed the songwriting because we were just flying by the seat of our pants.

nd we'd jammed with him a few times so we let him play a few shows with us--all largely unrehearsed so he has no idea what he is doin

always locked-on.

every loose end you ever have!"

ggie and Reggie are their dogs]

S ARE FANTASTIC!!

love with that girl…

red me. She remembered me when they were breaking down after their set. I was talking to her and I could tell (with a sly smile). I could tell she remembered me. She knew who I was. (laug

on and we add to it. When I joined, it was Carl and Stephen writing, then I started writing, and then Will and Josh joined. I've been trying to get everyone to contribute. Everyone has to wr

hing only to realize it's garbage?

really judgmental about songs…

I got some deep hate for some songs!

a see-through shirt so we can't take his opinion on too many things. You can see his nipples!

e [the album] ourselves and shop it around but what we really want is land.

Everyone has their own house and the last one would be a studio.

t a hotline soon. Someone is always here so if you wanna call the warehouse, you can just call us.

ke that. An answering machine might be cool.

hood, you can answer the phone anyways. "Hi, Infinite Apaches hotline. This is Lou. How may I help you?"

om the '70s! They're fantastic photos!

I mean if you're supposed to compliment porn on furniture, Dutch porn is the only porn!

lbum?

guy who helped produce this album–Kevin Skrla–he's a great musician. Me, him and Josh worked on it. The neighbor, Morgan, was trying to put together a studio and he had an 8-track, a
ot all this studio gear. He helped at the beginning but bowed out during the recording. His partner, Kevin Skrla, and I finished everything. We hope to have the record ready by March and v
job.

e and do this

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"Opinions are like nipples, everybody has one. Some have firm points, others are barely discernible through layers, and some are displayed at every opportunity regardless of whether the audience has stated, 'I am interested in your nipples' or not." ***- David Thorne***

WORST OF HOUSTON *twenty twelve*

Now, before you go getting all butthurt, please note that the opinions expressed in these next several pages are simply that: opinions. Everyone has got 'em and everyone is entitled to 'em. These statements are not meant to offend, rather they are meant to alert you to things you may not have known about and hopefully empower one or two of you to, ya know, DO something about your outrage. Bitching anonymously via an independent paper is one thing, but our goal is to be the catalyst for productive change. So please consider that whilst you read on. And if after reading all of this you still feel compelled to tell us where to shove it, you can drop us a line at *editors@freepresshouston.com.*

w/o

WORST TEA PARTY CRACKPOT WHO HAS TERRIFYING POWERS: DAN PATRICK

WORST NEWS FOR THE FUTURE OF HOUSTON AND TEXAS: THE DEMISE OF THE HISD LIBRARY SYSTEM

WORST HIGHWAY EXPANSION: GRAND PARKWAY SEGMENT E

-Jennifer Fox Bennett

Aside from running straight through the Katy Prairie, an endangered grassland that acts as a giant natural sponge to reduce downstream flooding in the asphalt-concrete covered City of Houston and habitat for tons of indigenous flora and fauna, TxDOT managed to create the alignment for Segment E over an ancient 9,000-year old burial site of a Paleo-Indian group (one of only five handfuls like it in the Americas) and the campsite of a group that lived there 2,000 years ago just to build a 400-ft wide highway that connects The Woodlands to Katy. The location of the burial site has been known about for over 15 years. Who cares that a state district judge originally told TxDOT that they could move the bones in the site without following the federally-mandated Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act's requirement of getting existing tribes involved in the planning process several years ago?

Urbanization has already caused the endangered Attwater's Prairie Chicken to be reduced to numbers in the hundreds whereas we killed off its related subspecies, the Katy Prairie Chicken, by covering its habitat with the Katy Mills Mall. Because what we really need is to create a third loop to attract more strip malls and mega churches and more sprawl. It's cool, though. Even though urban developers have already discovered that economic growth, productivity, and development are correlated to urban density, why would we want to do such things in Houston? While other cities have a bustling metropolitan public transportation system keeping more cars off the road and thus more greenhouse gases out of the air, we can proudly proclaim that we have the country's longest beltway, you know, to match the length of our belts.

WORST NEWS FOR THE FUTURE OF HOUSTON AND TEXAS: THE DEMISE OF THE HISD LIBRARY SYSTEM

-Sarah Wesely

Sorry little Houstonians, you're most likely going to grow up to be robots. The HISD library system is deteriorating, despite the allocation of $10 million to HISD libraries over the last three years. Houston Independent School District data reports 20 percent of the district's 289 schools don't have a functioning library, and more than 80 percent of HISD libraries don't meet the state guidelines for staffing and book collections.

Just this year, HISD reduced its number of librarians from 157 to 118, which means there are librarians on less than half of its campuses. Three elementary school library collections are more than 34 years old, and most libraries are generally becoming more and more outdated.

The money allocated to buy books was used to compensate for other areas of underfunding. While not all schools chose to undercut their library investment, they are regrettably the minority. Maybe the saddest fact of all is that out of the 10 schools with the lowest collection sizes, eight are elementary schools. If anyone needs to be encouraged to read, it's our little kids.

Learning new perspectives, developing analytical skills, building vocabulary, improving self-expression, using their imaginations—these are all reasons why kids need books. HISD is doing Houston a disservice by not providing an adequate amount of literature to schoolchildren. Especially when technology-based communication is largely abbreviated ideas and symbols. So when Houston parents start getting birthday cards with the inscription "U R doubleplus good. :) :) ;) !" we'll wish we would have spent the money on books.

WORST TEA PARTY CRACKPOT WHO HAS TERRIFYING POWERS: DAN PATRICK

-Amanda Hart

Dan Patrick was appointed to chair of the Senate Education Committee this past year and boy does he have some great ideas to really move this state forward. He plans on basically privatizing our public schools through implementing school vouchers. Ask your teacher friends how they feel about Mr. Patrick and his plans. They will be more than willing to give you an earful about what his evil schemes will do to our education system. Then ask them how you can help. Trust me, they are going to need our help to stop

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WORST SEX OFFENDER: HOUSTON PRESS

this sort of asinine legislation from barreling through this next legislative cycle.

WORST NEWSPAPER ENDORSEMENT:
THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE'S
ENDORSEMENT
OF TED CRUZ
-Shiraz Ahmed

When it comes to your politics, I generally like to believe it doesn't matter who you vote for but why you vote for them. In this respect, the Houston Chronicle fails miserably. In their endorsement for the U.S. Senate seat left open by Kay Bailey Hutchison, the Chron started off promising by listing all the admirable qualifications of Democratic candidate and former State House Rep. Paul Sadler. Said the Chron, "There's a lot we admire about Sadler, particularly his demonstrated ability to reach across the aisle and work productively with his political opponents for the good of Texas." Great! They recognize the need for sensible, committed leadership in the federal government today, looking to experience over campaign sound bites for their evidence. But, oh wait, they continue: "Sadler's candidacy is well-meaning, but an exercise in futility." So, to wit, they're fans of Sadler, but won't endorse him simply because they know he won't win in the general election.

While the logic of this is clear, the problem is it entirely defeats the point of a newspaper endorsement. Editorial boards across the state should ignore the politics of the campaign and instead focus on who would be better for the state and the nation, and then attempt to persuade readers to that point of view. In fact, the other four major Texas newspapers did do this and endorsed the Don Quixote-esque endeavor of Sadler's candidacy.

Adding insult to injury, the Chron goes on to describe why they are endorsing firebrand Ted Cruz. Or rather, in the absence of any qualifications to consider of Cruz's, they were forced to justify their endorsement by highlighting the effective tenure of Hutchison's, and then implore Cruz to hopefully, maybe, please be somewhat similar. Reading between the lines, the Chron is addressing Cruz head-on saying, "Hey! Be more like Sadler!" Thanks Chronicle editors, you've gone from being Houston's paper of record to that drunk friend on a Saturday night who you want to punch in the face for going on and on about the "realities" of power structures in America, and why it's all pointless, man.

WORST IDEA EVER IN
AMERICAN HISTORY:
THE KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE
-Los Capoques Bravos

Do you understand the concept of ecology? We ask, not to insult your intelligence, but because so many Houstonians seem oblivious to the idea. We are enraptured with on-screen spectacles, obsessed with hierarchies of social status, and anxious about sports teams, celebrities, and our own self-centered desires. Meanwhile, a bunch of super-rich oil and gas men are plotting to get even richer by destroying life on the planet Earth. These are the investors, board members, and executives of corporations such as Enbridge, TransCanada, Exxon, and Valero. These companies are planning to build and make use of pipelines for the dirtiest fuel known—oil derived from the Tar Sands of Alberta, Canada. They say it will be good for the economy. Slavery and war are good for the economy, too—that doesn't make them acceptable. A myopic focus on narrowly defined economic benefits is a perennial characteristic of ruling class ideology. We should all recognize that, in this instance at least, the short-term interests of the monied elite are directly opposed to our interests as creatures who enjoy things like breathing and living. Climate change is real. If we don't get this right—if we fail to stop this pipeline (and others)—we face catastrophic extinction on a massive scale. That's not good for anybody, not even Russ Girling, President and CEO of the TransCanada Corporation. Nobody gets rich if everybody's dead.

WORST ABUSE OF VOTER TRUST:
THE 2012 METRO REFERENDUM
-Amanda Wolfe

Not to sound like a broken record, but where do I begin with this thing? As readers of FPH know ("When No Means Yes," Free Press Houston, Nov. 2012), this deceptively worded, shadily negotiated, and just plain bad ballot item not only set Houston light rail back more than a decade, but did so by intentionally confusing voters who thought they were voting for MORE public transit. Unfortunately, most voters did not realize they were actually voting to divert 25 percent of transit sales tax in the Metro service area to roads and "related projects" to improve transit – money that could have, and should have, been used for light rail.

Despite a scrappy, grassroots pro-transit campaign by Houston Tomorrow and the Citizens' Transportation Coalition, many Houstonians learned, after the fact, that they'd voted to send their tax money to projects like repaving cul-de-sacs in unincorporated Harris County miles from any bus lines. The carnival of nonsense that was the pro-referendum campaign even included a television commercial featuring a woman driving alone in an SUV, headed down an empty highway, her smiling GPS informing her the fastest route to town was by voting "Yes" on the Metro prop. You just can't make this stuff up.

So, in 2025, when our sprawl and congestion has reached unbearable levels, and other cities are on to hover-buses and gondolas, maybe even public teleportation by that point, considering how far ahead of us they already are—we will finally be moving along on that University Line!

The story doesn't end there, though. After the FPH article went viral, outrage spread across social networks, blogs, and other outlets. The chorus of voices expressed anger at feeling tricked into throwing away their votes. Individuals, business owners, media personalities, and even the Houston Texans' Connor Barwin took it upon themselves to spread the word before Election Day. While that didn't happen in enough time to change the vote, it's clear that if a Metro item shows up on the ballot again, Houstonians are going to be examining it very carefully.

WORST HPD OFFICER:
OFFICER MATTHEW MARIN
-Anonymous

Houston Police can always be trusted to gin up controversy and put Houston on the map of generally outlandish behavior. So when we say Officer Matthew Marin is years ahead of the rest of the force in terms of innovating despicableness, you know shit's getting real. This past September, Marin and his partner were called to the East End Healing Hands personal care home to subdue wheelchair-bound, double amputee Brian Claunch who was apparently causing a ruckus because he wanted a soda and a cigarette. This story gets absurd pretty quickly, so bear with us. Marin was apparently trapped into a corner by the amputee, (how it's even possible to get trapped by a man with one arm and one leg is beyond us), who was wielding a pen threateningly. God forbid, a ballpoint pen. Marin, fearful for his life, unholstered his weapon and shot and killed Claunch, a schizophrenic, in what can be said to be one of the biggest WTF moments of the year. Marin was subsequently put on a three-day administrative leave and the FBI was brought in to investigate what happened. The real kicker? Marin was one of the three officers who were investigated for the assault of Marvin Driver Jr., the father of Green Bay Packers wide receiver Donald Driver, for which they were later cleared by an internal HPD investigation.

WORST SEX OFFENDER:
HOUSTON PRESS
-Amanda Hart

This is officially the third year running that we have called out the Houston Press for the trafficking and sale of women in their Backpage advertisements. Not much has changed and it does not appear that the Houston Press or Village Voice Media have any future plans to stop businesses and pimps from selling women in the back of their paper or website. Thanks to them, you can order a woman and have her delivered to your home faster than you could a pizza. Village Voice Media recently announced new stipulations in regards to their ad space guidelines just this month. It is debatable whether these new safeguards will actually do anything to stop the sale of women through their paper. Frankly, I appreciate that they cover so many events taking place in our community but would prefer that they find another means of profit that does not include selling the women in our community. Can't they just sell ad space for drug detox cleanses like a normal alternative paper? Sure it's not as lucrative but at least you won't spend all of eternity burning in a lake of fire.

WORST SARAH PALIN IMPRESSION:
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
-Harbeer Sandhu

Remember when Sarah Palin was all gung-ho about shooting helpless wolves from helicopters so there would be more moose for people to hunt? Well, on October 25 Texas Parks and Wildlife game wardens (i.e., officers whose job is to protect wildlife) were chasing a pickup truck they suspected was carrying drugs near the U.S./Mexico

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border. Why were game wardens doing the job of border patrol? Who knows.

In any case, when the truck didn't stop, they called in a DPS helicopter for backup. The helicopter was equipped with a thermal imaging device and an AR-10 sniper rifle. The thermal device should have made clear that the truck was carrying nine people, not drugs, but, in any case, the tarp that covered the illegal immigrants in back of the truck had flown off, exposing them to plain sight.

The truck, driven by a 14-year-old, still didn't stop, so the patrolman in the helicopter did what studies have repeatedly found most effective—ended the pursuit and watched the fugitives stop their vehicle and make a run for it on foot. No, wait, that's not what the trooper did—he fired at the moving vehicle from his helicopter to try to blow its tires out—which is really dangerous and hard to do, and ended up shooting three people. Two of them died—Guatemalan nationals Jose Leonardo Coj Cumar, 32, a father of three, and Marcos Antonio Castro Estrada, 29, a father of two with a third on the way.

Some of you will say, "Yeah, but they were breaking the law and the truck should have stopped." Of course, you are right, but at the moment they were shot, they were only suspects in a civil, not even a criminal, offense. That is no reason to shoot a human being.

No drugs were found in the vehicle, but the game wardens apparently had a good day hunting.

WORST HOUSTON SNUB:
THE SPACE SHUTTLE ENDEAVOUR
-Shiraz Ahmed

It would surprise some to realize that Houston, home to the Johnson Space Center, countless NASA scientists, and the famous "Houston, we have a problem," line, does not have an actual space shuttle to show off to envious residents of Dallas and Austin. This all could have changed earlier this year, when it was announced that the last remaining shuttles would be retired to museums across the country, with Texas and Florida as prime candidates to house them. Instead, the space shuttle Endeavour was strapped onto the back of a Boeing 747 and flown to L.A. to spend the rest of its days at the California Science Center. Why L.A.? The closest connection we could find, according to the Los Angeles Times, was that "Shuttle components were manufactured in Downey and assembled in Palmdale. That's not to mention that Southern California has been occasionally jarred by sonic booms from desert shuttle landings at Edwards Air Force Base." Fuck that. If California was the birthplace of the shuttle, Houston was the brain, the nerve center. Plus, after countless visiting relatives have forced Houstonians to undertake the hourlong drive to the Space Center, we've earned the reward of gawking at some sort of space debris.

WORST HIGH SCHOOL MASCOT:
THE LAMAR REDSKINS
-Los Capoques Bravos

Some of us Capoques went to St. John's School. Until 2004, we were known as the Rebels. Taken out of context, that sounds pretty good. As a general rule, we like rebels and support rebellion against oppressive social norms. This particular case, however, refers to the rebels of the Southern Confederacy—that is, the soldiers of a white supremacist, capitalist elite. In a nutshell, fuck that shit. Now, students of St. John's are called the Mavericks, which is an improvement, despite the kitschy, Go-Texan associations conjured up by that word. Across the street, we have another case to consider: the Redskins of Lamar High School. Mirabeau B. Lamar was an unapologetic racist whose first priority as president of the Texan Republic was the destruction of First Nations of this land. He waged relentless campaigns of ethnic cleansing against the Comanche and Cherokee. Isn't it about time for a gesture of reconciliation for this colossal offense against human dignity? Let's rename Lamar High School. How about Freedom Fighters of Crazy Horse High? Better, right?

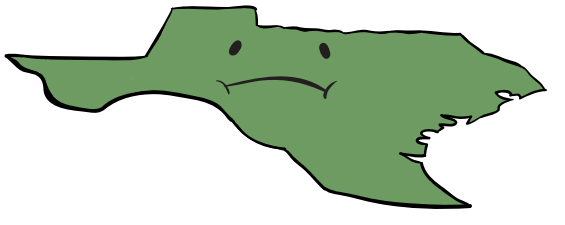
WORST FACT-CHECKED STORY:
THE MAYOR DIDN'T ACTUALLY LOWER
THE FINE FOR SHARING FOOD
-Nick Cooper

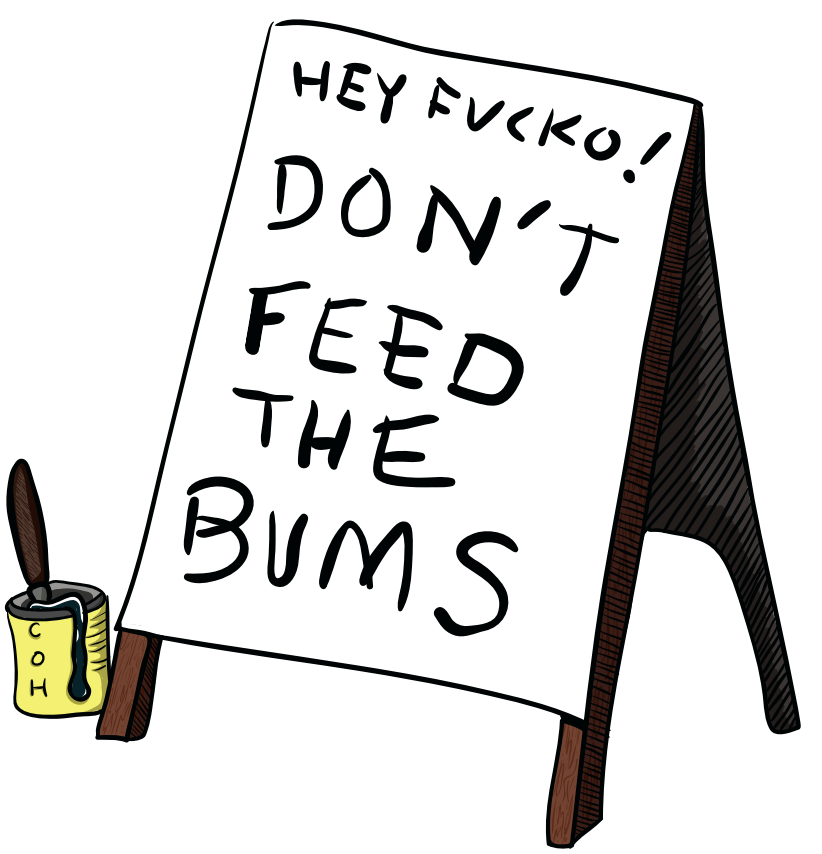
When the City passed a law against sharing food with more than five people in public without prior written permission from the city, it was widely reported that the Mayor had softened the penalties. The Chronicle, KUHF, KPRC, and dozens of other news sources and blogs reported that the maximum fine of $2,000 had been lowered to $500.

The only problem is that the maximum fine is still $2,000. The new set of rules can be found in Chapters 20-251 to 20-257 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances. It's true that the specified fine of $2,000 found in an earlier draft was edited out. However, no new maximum fine was put in. With no fine indicated, lawyers agree that the maximum fine would be determined by the general provisions of Chapter 20, found in Chapter 20-19, which specifies, "Any person who violates any provision of this article, or rule or regulation promulgated by the health officer, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine of not less than $50.00 nor more than $2,000.00. Each day a violation of this article continues shall constitute a separate offense."

No one is telling us where the misinformation originated. Maybe the Mayor sent out a press release, maybe she said something off the record; maybe she transmits misinformation to her obedient media telepathically. None of these media providers have corrected the error, and The Chronicle has continues to repeat it.

WORST HOUSTON SNUB: THE SPACE SHUTTLE ENDEAVOUR





**WORST FACT-CHECKED STORY:
THE MAYOR DIDN'T ACTUALLY LOWER THE FINE FOR SHARING FOOD**

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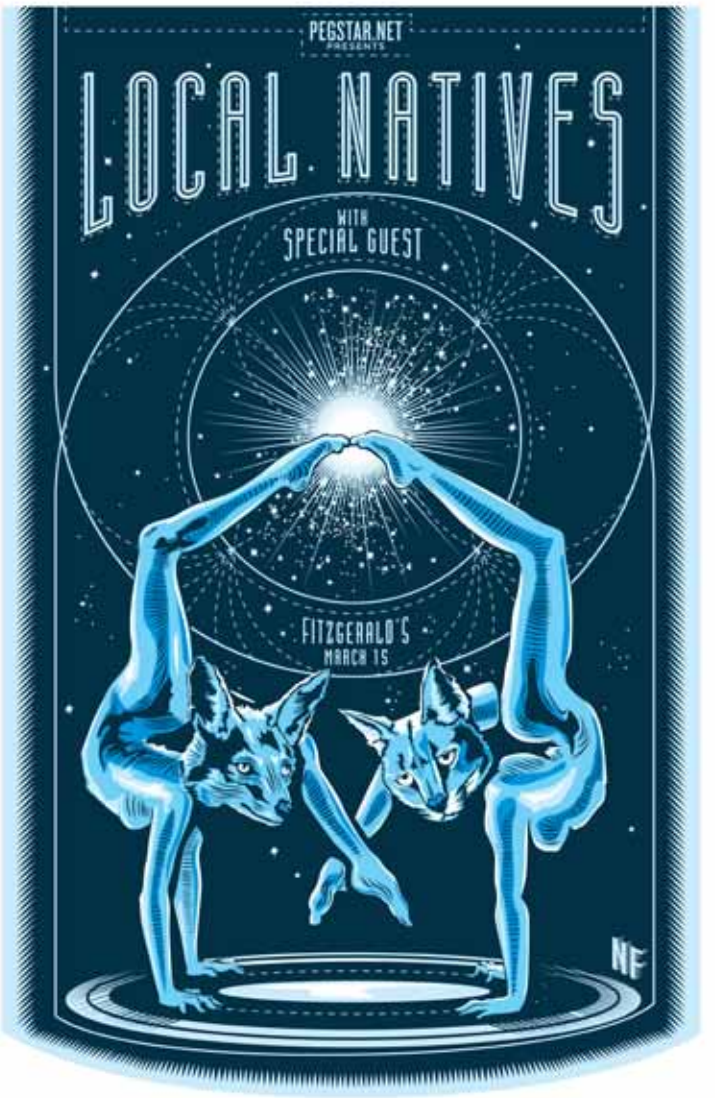
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WORST RESPONSE TO A LOCAL ISSUE: CITY COUNCIL MEMBER ANDREW BURKS'S REFERENCE TO FOOD TRUCKS AS POTENTIAL TERRORIST WEAPONS

-Anonymous

At a city council meeting several months ago, dozens of local food truck vendors, supporters, activists, and even Bun B came out in support of proposed changes to existing food truck legislation. Many individuals made impassioned speeches in favor of changes such as allowing food trucks to enter into downtown and the Medical Center areas, eliminating the current space requirement between each truck, and allowing food trucks to provide seating for their clientele. No big deal, right?

Well, according to many of your city council members, these proposed changes are a huge deal because food trucks are apparently all the rage for drug trafficking and terrorist plots. Yep.

At-Large City Council Member Andrew Burks was particularly concerned about the potential harm the 20-40 pound propane tanks that trucks are allowed to keep on board would pose to U.S. embassies. Why he's harping on this particular scenario, I have no idea. And apparently some of our dear council members, many of whom do great things for their respective districts, are opting to use scare tactics versus cold, hard facts to try to make decisions about the things that impact our local economy and small businesses.

I'll leave you with Burks's actual words as quoted in a Houston Press blog post. They really say it all:

"Anything catastrophic like that could be a real hard damage and hard time for Houston, Texas or anywhere," commented Burks. "And you know that in the times which we live in, I think this is totally outrageous. I'm outraged by that. Because the reason is that in these times when people get bombed in embassy attacks and we put this type of bomb directly here in front of us and we know we could be causing trouble..."

WORST HOUSING: EVERYWHERE

-Amanda Hart

What happened Houston? We used to have blocks and blocks of affordable housing a few years back. Recently, however, there seems to be a housing boom that consists of demolishing cute bungalows or fourplexes and replacing them with some rather hideous condominiums. Look, I understand that rich people do not enjoy living next to people like me and the feeling is mutual but they aren't just removing our homes, they are chucking out the character of our neighborhoods as well. Houston has a bizarre obsession with knocking down historic buildings and replacing them with stucco townhomes. It feels as though nothing in this city is more than a decade old. This was confirmed last month when I came across a historic Heights home tour brochure. The "historic" homes on the list to be viewed that month were cute bungalows that appeared to be built in the '20s and '30s but when you looked closer at the dates many of the homes had been built in 2011. They were on the list because they had been built to mimic the homes that would have been prevalent in the Heights eight decades ago. Hey developers, it's okay to repurpose a building to fit your client's needs. Update the shit out of it. But stop razing every fucking building in sight. And stop replacing it with tacky shit.

WORST GROCERY STORE IN MY HOOD: HEB

-Anastasia Vayner

I'll go ahead and blame everything on HEB. I was living a joyous life, doing my grocery shopping at Fiesta. Dancing down the canned goods aisles, rocking out to the best songs from the '60s, and buying Persian cucumbers (that they don't have at HEB) were some of my best memories of Fiesta. When they built HEB and Fiesta closed down, I didn't know how to react. Yet, I went ahead and started shopping at HEB. I believed that the HEB workers understood that many people were scarred when Fiesta disappeared so they began playing those same songs from the '60s. IT JUST WASN'T THE SAME. My rebellious and hurtful feelings led me to steal jelly beans and not pay for refills. And now, just a couple of months ago, HEB began playing their usual elevator music and they expect me to not notice that? How am I supposed to do my grocery shopping? I am done.

It's like that dude... Columbus... right? Montrose is the New World, and HEB is Columbus, and Fiesta is the Native Americans that all died off in the end. Ladies and gentlemen, we have just witnessed history - the modern version.

WORST RETAIL REINVENTION OF MONTROSE, PERIOD: MARY'S

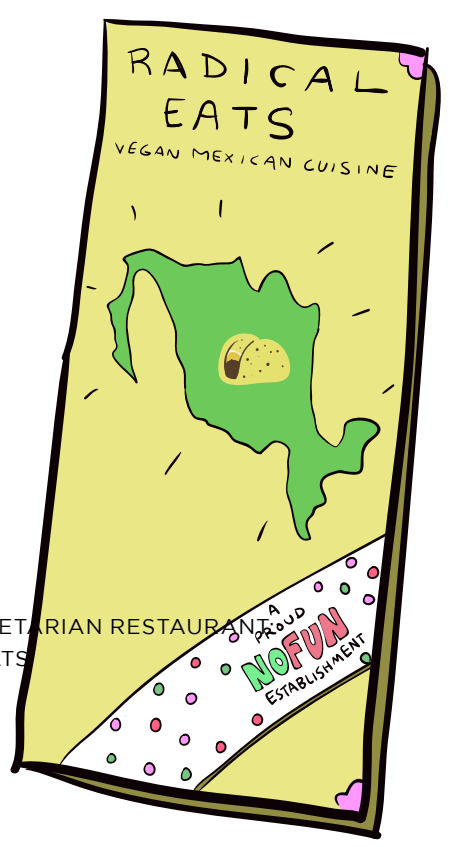
-M.Martin

It was bad enough when puritanical pinheads whitewashed away the classic leather queen mural on the side of Mary's. At least public-spirited volunteers could restore it for the Pride Parade. Now it's just gone—sandblasted out of existence to make very sure that not a single one of the douchebags now infesting lower Westheimer have even the slightest idea that the shiny new coffeehouse now taking shape is in any way connected to queer Montrose of old. Hopefully, at least for the sake of public health, the new owners are paying equal attention to sanitation of the nonvisual variety.

WORST VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT: RADICAL EATS

-Alice Newman

Why would I pick this as the city's worst vegetarian restaurant when according to Yelp, Houston Press, and Alison Cook this is the best thing to happen to Houston vegetarians since pre-sliced tempeh? Because I am not impressed. Tonight, I had a frozen Amy's meal I bought from Kroger and it was good. I enjoyed it. At first I thought I would actually put the food I had from Radical Eats on the same level as that Amy's meal, but after thinking about it I liked that frozen meal better. I can get Mexican food



WORST VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT: RADICAL EATS

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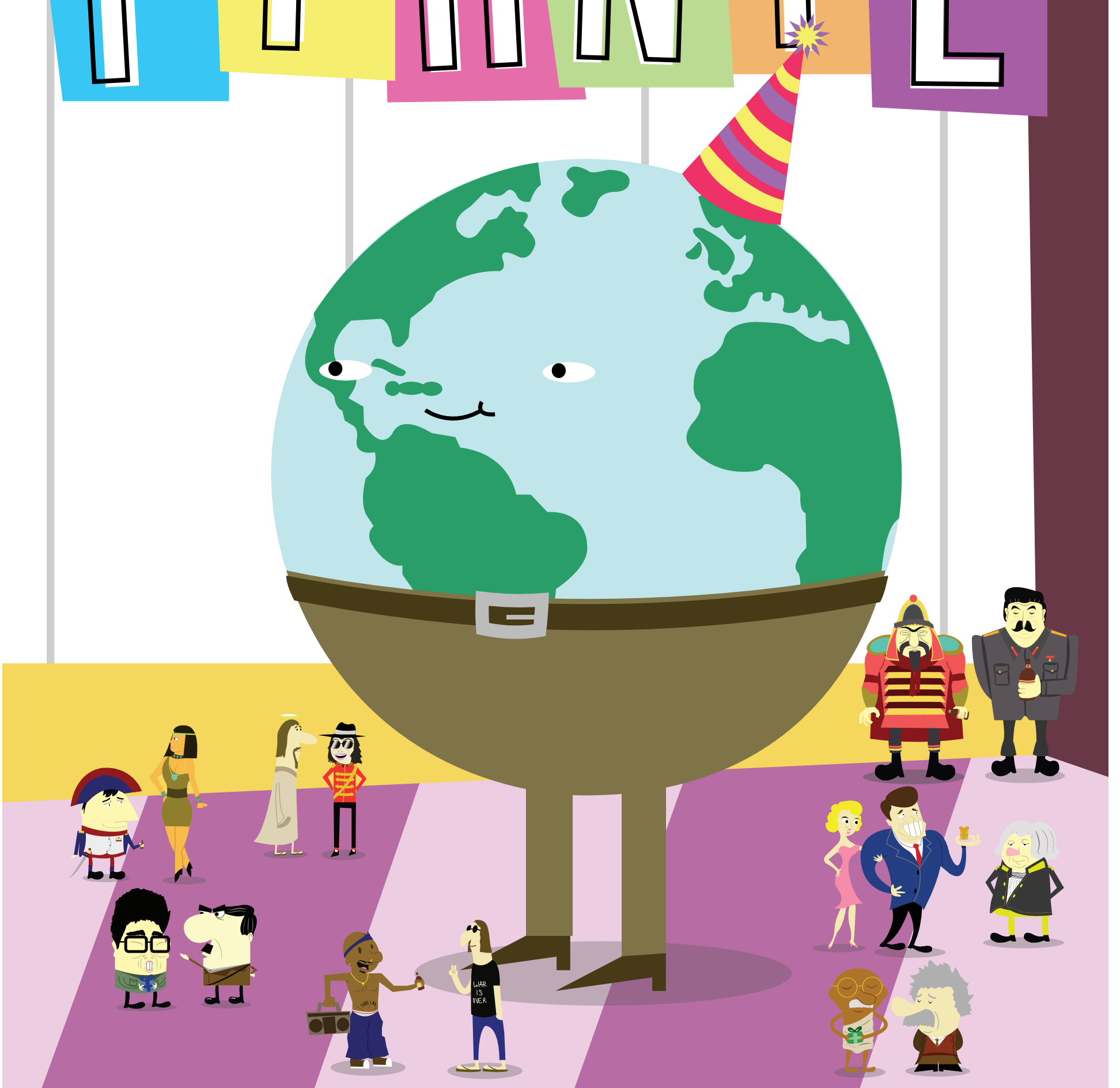

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just about anywhere in this town. With the amount of bean tacos I have eaten since I went meat-free I should be glad that I don't weigh about 500 pounds. Mexican restaurants are one of the easiest places to go to when dining with your meat-eating friends. Throw some rice, beans, and guac into a tortilla and you have an easy vegan meal at just about any taco truck or Tex-Mex joint in the city, WHY MAKE A VEGAN MEXICAN RESTAURANT? Give me something I haven't had in 13 years, not something I can get on every street corner in Texas. Give me something I never get to eat: vegan meatball subs, vegan milkshakes or a vegan chicken fried steak. Can someone please step up and give Houston vegetarians a little choice in this city? Don't even bother going to their website to check out their menu because that alone will make you want to punch someone.

WORST EXECUTION OF THE BEST IDEA: TWIN PEAKS

-The Giving Steve

I've always subscribed to the maxim: ANYTHING + BOOBS > ANYTHING. Any bit of marketing hinting that breasts might be involved immediately captures my attention as a surefire chance for a good time. The concept is flawless. If my dentist advertised that there was a possibility of cleavage during a visit, I'd currently be a model for Colgate. That's why I thought Twin Peaks, a Hooters knock-off franchise, was going to be such a great deal. I was sorely disappointed after my experience dining there.

The aptly named Twin Peaks franchise was started in Dallas in 2005. It has grown to over 24 locations in 10 states. It likes to market itself as a new "Hot Concept" dining experience, but really the "let's dress soon-to-be single moms in revealing garb and have them sling loaded baked potatoes to guys over thirty who still wear sports jerseys" shtick is hardly an original idea. Twin Peaks was hyped as having better food and bigger boobs than Hooters. It has neither. My waitress had braces. I'd grade this restaurant at a D, but I didn't see any. :(

WORST BUILDING CONVERSION: ADULT BOOKSTORE INTO L'OLIVIER RESTAURANT

-Omar Afra

As long as I can remember, there stood an adult bookstore just next door to Numbers Nightclub on Westheimer. Ahem. From what a fellow FPH staffer has told me, inside there were arcade jerk-off stalls armed with videos where men could 'take a jizz' when needed, like on their downtown lunch break or whatever. Eventually the Internet revolution rendered many of these thriving spots obsolete and this 'adult bookstore' took the plunge like so many others. After going out of business, the building sat vacant for years and the landlords tried their best to get someone to move in. But most people's memories of this location are 'stained' with visions of middle-aged men blowing their load in semi-privacy. Hence, finding tenants was surely a tough job. But who would ever have believed that a French restaurant would dare inhabit such an infamous spot? Considering cream, butter, and cheese are integral to French cuisine, you would think no self-respecting French restaurant would open up shop there. Then the fine folks of L'Olivier Restaurant and Bar opened their doors and we are luckily armed with a good jizz joke every time we drive by. Vous ne savez jamais vraiment ce qu'ils entendent par «crème fraîche».

WURST GOURMET WILD GAME HOT DOGS ON THE WURST PRETZEL BUNS WITH THE WURST CRAFT BEER SELECTION: THE MOON TOWER INN

-Harbeer Sandhu

Dear Moon Tower Inn: I hate you. Don't you know how much I love you? I'll fucking kill you. Won't you please come back to me, please? It's been long enough. Come back... SO I CAN KILL YOU for making me wait for so long.

Sure, you had your "Meat Wagon" food truck for a while there. But you can't gather around a bonfire at a food truck. You can't strike up a random conversation on the first of the month with a hobo who just cashed his SSI check at a food truck. You can't soak up some suds and dish the dirt with your favorite bartenders at a food truck. And then you took that away, too!

I particularly hate your sambal mayo. I want to kill it by pouring it down my throat. I want to slurp it through a straw. Then I'll kill your Cheech & Chong burger. Then I'll kill your Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik burger. Then I'll kill all your beer. So hurry back. We have a score to settle. Just you wait, Moon Tower Inn. If and when you ever come back, Imma eat yo lunch!

WORST LOOMING PRESENCE: HERITAGE PLAZA

-Amanda Hart

So, I will warn you now that once you identify Heritage Plaza, you will not be able to unsee it. It will follow you no matter where you are in Houston. You'll look up and out of nowhere there it will be, just creepin'. It's particularly intrusive on Allen Parkway. Take a quick look back through your FPSF photos. Trust me, you'll see it. It was the last building shat out during the skyscraper boom in the '80s and you really can tell. One has to assume that Heritage Plaza is what you get when you let cowboys on cocaine in the '80s design a city. What makes Heritage Plaza so "distinct" is the design at the very top of the 53-story skyscraper. The Houston architects that designed the building created it to resemble a Mayan temple AND an eagle spreading its wings. Never under any circumstance should you combine a Mayan temple with an eagle. Ever. It just isn't necessary. Also, what the hell does a Mayan temple or an eagle have to do with each other or Houston? Like I said, I blame the cocaine. And the '80s.

WORST PLACE TO RIDE A BIKE: BIKE LANES

-Alice Newman

Let me count the ways: gravel, glass, tire-eating potholes, low-hanging branches, large cracks, cars, busses, large puddles, piles of leaves, shopping carts...

WORST ROADSIDE ATTRACTION: BJ OLDIES ANTIQUE SHOP'S FLYING PIGS

-Erin Dyer

When driving past BJ Oldies on Westheimer, I am, admittedly, usually on my way to work, fighting the clock to make it to the office on time because I underestimated how long it would take me to get through my daily wake up-coffee-run-shower routine. The combination of Houston's notoriously dangerous drivers coupled with Westheimer's narrow lanes can create a rather stressful morning drive. Not to mention the sharp curve that the road makes directly in front of the store. With all these things in mind, I have to ask: must we really have a hundred small, metal sculptures in the shape of flying pigs strategically placed six inches or so from the street? These little guys don't make it any easier for me to maneuver down this narrow road when there are multicolored barn animals practically sticking their noses out into my lane. I am one little crushed piggy away from a panic attack and a popped tire. I mean, come on, BJ Oldies—can't you just move the pigs back, say, two feet? Let's not hog what little driving space we have here.

WORST INFRASTRUCTURE: OUR GODFORSAKEN ROADS

-Amanda Hart

I asked multiple people around town about what their worst complaint of Houston in 2012 would be and boy did I get a resounding response in regards to how shitty our roads are. Busted tires and bent rims seem to just be a part of what makes living in a city that was built on a swamp so glorious. But let's be honest, we bitch about the road construction just as much as we bitch about the sorry state of the roads.

WORST MUSEUM SECURITY: MENIL

-Omar Afra

I know what you are thinking: He is gonna call out Menil security for not catching Uriel Landros defacing a precious Picasso. Nope. Not the case. I think the HPD who guard the Menil area from the outside think they are above simple traffic laws. Living rather close and driving by every day, I constantly see these guys run the stop signs, stop their vehicles in the middle of a public street to make phone calls, and drive at whatever speed they please. Sure, the Menil owns much of the property in the area but that does not make them above regarding the safety of others and acting as good neighbors.

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TKNY, *Phantom Thought* (detail), white house paint on black wall, image courtesy of TKNY © TKNY. Photo by: Brandon Holley

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WORST GRAFFITI "ARTISTS": GOAT AND AGUA

WORST ART GALLERY: WAR'HOUS

WORST THREAT TO HOUSTON'S OLDEST TEENAGER: DOUBLE STROKES AND TONGUE CANCER

WORST GRAFFITI "ARTISTS": GOAT AND AGUA

-Blake Jones

2012 has been a huge year for our fair city's street art movement. Many of us caught a glimpse into the lives of some of Houston's hard hitters via Alex Luster's Stick 'Em Up documentary. However, inspiration comes in many forms and sprouts one of two things: a good or a bad. In this instance of bad, tags of GOAT and AGUA have tied for first on my list of worst graffiti in Houston. I mean, honestly, there are many, MANY more names that pop out but these two have a special place in my heart. First, we have GOAT who seems to have disappeared over the past few months or perhaps I've learned to subconsciously divert my attention to something more aesthetically appealing. From scrawls on street posts to damages made to thriving local businesses, this person's attempt at graffiti art is just the worst. A simple Google search already has the Houston Press crowning this person's "work" as "World's Lamest Tag." Take that fact in for a second. Also, man, if your identity can be mentioned in an article that is comparing you to an LL Cool J or Eminem song you're doing something really, really, really fucking wrong. As for AGUA, I've just seen this written all over Montrose and even on traffic barrels and road hazard signs and I just think it's lame.

WORST ART GALLERY: WAR'HOUS

-Harbeer Sandhu

If you like your art easy (both in execution and in content), decorative, vapid, and shallow, then this is the place for you. Nothing here will challenge you—nothing will make you think or feel in ways you'd never expected to; nothing will make you feel uncomfortable; nothing will challenge your preconceived notions. This is where beautiful people go to pose beside paintings of beautiful people. Sure, they put on shows to support charities sometimes, but I prefer the maxim "If there was justice there would be no need for charity." So rather than evoking pity in their audiences, I would encourage War'Hous and its artists to aim to inspire ACTION rather than a condescending pity in its patrons.

"Art is not a mirror to reflect reality," said Bertolt Brecht, "but a hammer with which to shape it."

Dandee Warhol, the gallery's proprietor, whose name is a rip-off of a lame '90s band whose name is a play on the name of a truly great conceptual artist, was voted "Houston's Best Artist" by readers of Houston Press in 2011. All that proves is the lameness of Houston Press readers (if there was ever any doubt). Still, if you have a penchant for oversized, two-dimensional, paint-by-numbers cartoon cels that some guy traced using an overhead projector, this is your place. Just be sure to wear your faux-hawk and your duck face. 29-95 recently ran a "review" of a War'Hous art opening that features 22 photographs of people posing but not one single image of art from the show. Don't believe me? Check it out for yourself: http://www.29-95.com/gallery/love-sick-or-sick-love-art-show

The worst part of this "Worst of" is that the nihilists at War'Hous, who are prone to repeat phrases such as "Haters make us famous," are going to love it. Some people have so little soul, they don't even know there's such a thing. Oh well.

WORST ATTEMPT AT AN EVIL LAIR: THE TUNNEL SYSTEM

-Amanda Hart

I just recently found out that the tunnel system is real. For the longest time I just thought that people were being smart asses or metaphorical or something when they would talk about the tunnel system. I am confused by this weird under layer of Houston that I am just not privy to. And then I went down there. Jesus Christ, what a mess. It was confusing and disorienting. Is it me or does the tunnel system just not seem very user-friendly? I am confused as to why we can have a tunnel system underground but not a subway system? It seems like such a waste of underground space.

WORST HOUSTON SPORTS RADIO TALK SHOW HOST: JOSH INNES, SPORTSRADIO 610

-Mills McCoin

This guy, Josh Innes, talks about himself, Josh Innes, incessantly on his rush hour radio show. Allegedly, it's supposed to be a talk show on the topic of sports. This is evidenced only by Josh Innes's co-host on the show, Rich Lord, longtime sports radio personality in Houston. Beyond the presence of Rich Lord, there's no content relating to sports. In fact, Lord spends the bulk of his time on the show apologizing to the listeners for Innes's outrageous narcissism. For a guy who praised the repossession of his own car by creditors, Innes should shut up... maybe watch a Texans game.

WORST THREAT TO HOUSTON'S OLDEST TEENAGER: DOUBLE STROKES AND TONGUE CANCER

-Nick Cooper

At 84, Harry Sheppard has been convincing audiences for decades that it is possible to remain young forever. Harry has played his vibraphones with Billie Holiday, Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, and Coleman Hawkins. Unlike all of them, he didn't die a long time ago.

In fact, so far, he's been so good at not dying or slowing down that some were beginning to speculate that Harry must have beat the devil in a vibes versus. violin showdown.

In addition to playing faster than musicians a quarter his age, Harry also believes he has discovered the cure for cancer and has been promoting it to cancer patients for years. It is a daily dosage of mini-lozenges made from ume plum and wild Japanese mountain yam (aka Jinenjo).

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In December, when Harry received a diagnosis of cancer, his doctors insisted that he begin radiation and chemotherapy, but Harry is willing to put his faith in ume to the test. If he's right, we will have not only the cure for cancer, but also Harry Sheppard and his full head of hair to entertain Houstonians for years to come.

As for his two strokes? Harry gets over his temporary partial paralysis and is back at his instrument within weeks. But just in case, go see him play ASAP!

WORST AERIAL FOE: THESE NUTS...
-Andrea Afra
Last year's drought left area trees with no other choice than to produce the most impressive crop of nuts these eyes have seen. They steadily rained from overhead for months, ricocheting off the roofs of cars and homes and into some poor fool's unsuspecting forehead. My back patio was covered in a dangerous layer of smooth brown acorns just waiting for a cartoon moment. Squirrels have enlisted other animals to help with the cleanup, like my dogs who gradually have developed a palate for the crunchy, sweet, and slightly astringent acorn meat. If you have a pecan tree on your property, you are probably suffering from PTSD. Godspeed.

WORST HEIGHTS ADDITION:
FUCKING WALMART
-Amanda Hart
Thanks Mayor Parker. I truly appreciate your part in helping to reduce my quality of life by a few pegs during this year. Let me tell you all the wonderful things I experience now that I have to live by a Walmart. For starters, the traffic congestion on Yale and Heights Blvd. has been nothing but pleasurable since your big box store opened its doors. Getting trapped at the light for 40 minutes really just puts a spring in my step every time it happens. The complete development of those few blocks has just been so beneficial to the Heights. I mean, how did we ever survive without a Starbucks and Chipotle on every block? I completely agree with the idea that what the community in the Heights needed more than anything was more fucking concrete everywhere. It sure does wonders for drainage every time it rains. We all know how well concrete soaks up water and all. I agree; grass is so overrated. I'm sure all the local businesses in the Heights adore having a big box shop right around the corner. Especially one that makes everything in factories overseas and pays people in our community an unlivable wage to keep them entrapped in programs like welfare and food assistance. Oh, and are you waiting on the Yale St. Bridge to collapse before you fix it? You can only reroute the 18-wheelers around it for so long.

WORST WHOLESALE REINVENTION OF
MONTROSE SINCE THE GODDAMN HEB:
1300 RICHMOND
-M. Martin
The classic, classy garden apartment complex at 1300 Richmond, along with a handful of sketchier complexes in the immediate vicinity, was recently demolished. For fans of gentrification, this is great news. For anyone capable of connecting the dots between affordable housing, an indigenous artist/musician/general bohemian population, and what's left of Montrose's dwindling cultural cache, it's just the latest of many "there goes the neighborhood" moments.

WORST LOCAL NEWS REPORTER
OFFICE LOCATION: THE PHILIPPINES
-Nick Cooper
In June, This American Life reported that The Houston Chronicle was outsourcing local news reporting to Journatic, a company that data mines sheriff's reports, obituaries, marriage licenses, school enrollment, sports scores, real estate transfers, and even holiday trash pickup schedules to generate stories. People and even computer algorithms edit the collected data, as potential stories begin to coalesce. Writers in the U.S. get $12 to $14 per story to fix up first drafts by Filipinos receiving $0.35 to $0.40 per story. The finished draft is attributed to an American-sounding alias.

Journatic is used extensively by some of the largest media providers in the U.S. including The Hearst Corporation that owns the Houston Chronicle and 16 other papers, and the Tribune Company that owns the Chicago Tribune and eight or more other papers.

WORST PARK: SAN JACINTO MONUMENT
-Amanda Hart
Jesus Christ. I traveled down Independence Highway to the monument last month because I hadn't been since I was a kid. Holy crap, what an awful, awful place. I don't know what I was expecting from a monument located in Pasadena but I couldn't believe my eyes when I arrived. It is noted as being the location of the world's largest monument column but what they don't tell you is that it might also be the world's most polluted park. Even the trees (which there were very few of) were deformed; deformed in a way that caused them to tilt away from the five area chemical plants that surround the park. Even the reflective pool has been gated off with heavy chain-link fences so as to keep people from getting near the water. Just this year, the state was forced to put up warning signs instructing patrons that wading, swimming, fishing, crabbing, or collecting oysters was not allowed. This is due to the extremely high levels of dioxin and furan found in the San Jacinto River. I'm bothered by the 40,000 area school children that visit there each year. If I was a parent, that is one field trip permission slip I would not sign.

WORST ENTRANCE: FPSF 2012
-Omar Afra
The bright side is FPSF had a record turnout, the shows were fantastic, and people came from all around the state and country to enjoy a festival in Houston. As a result, the shit side meant that we were underprepared to ensure that folks were getting through the gates quickly enough on that Saturday. We have resolved this issue and

WORST AERIAL FOE: THESE NUTS...

WORST WHOLESALE REINVENTION OF
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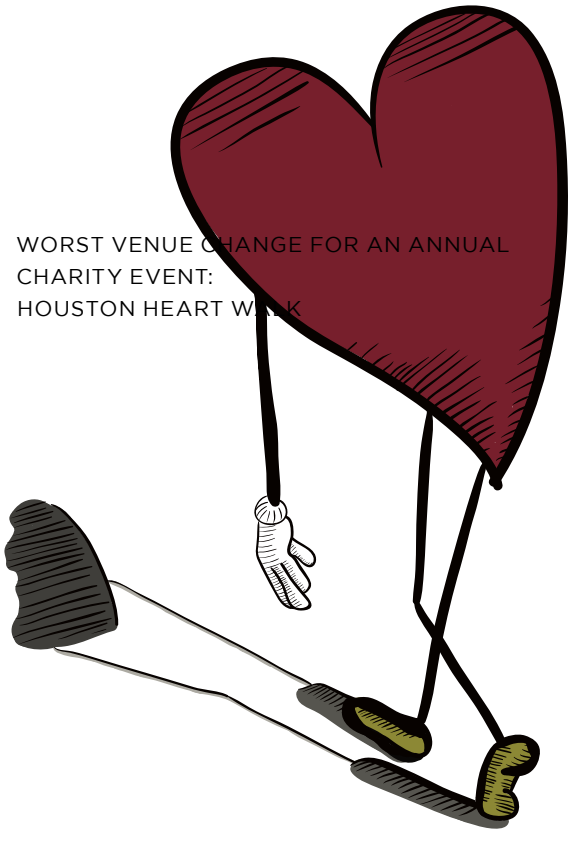


WORST VENUE CHANGE FOR AN ANNUAL CHARITY EVENT: HOUSTON HEART WALK

WORST KEEPERS OF TEXAS'S REPUTATION AS A "REBELLIOUS" STATE: THE TEXAS GOP

are going above and beyond to avoid this pain in the ass for the future.

WORST VENUE CHANGE FOR AN ANNUAL CHARITY EVENT: HOUSTON HEART WALK

-M. Martin

I'm sure there is a perfectly sound business case for changing the annual Houston Heart Walk from a pleasant stroll up and down Allen Parkway into a death march-like circumambulation of the Reliant Stadium parking lot, but I am equally certain that I do not care. Granted, most Houstonians never walk any farther than the distance from couch to fridge and therefore would not know a pleasant walk from a blowjob or a hole in the ground...and therefore it does not matter. But it would still be nice to be able to WALK someplace for a bevvie and a bit of brunch after doing my part to encourage cardiovascular health.

WORST FRACKING LOSERS: HALLIBURTON

-Harbeer Sandhu

The formerly Houston-based oil and gas services corporation Halliburton lost a 7-inch radioactive rod they use in natural gas "fracking" operations. The 7-inch radioactive rod apparently fell off the back of a truck and was missing for one full month before it was found on the side of a road in West Texas. If Halliburton is having such a hard time hanging on to its 7-inch radioactive rod, I have a suggestion for where they can stick it for safekeeping (and no, I'm not thinking of BP's Macondo oil well where Halliburton used faulty cement which might have caused its explosion).

WORST OMEN: EXXONMOBIL MOVING HEADQUARTERS TO THE WOODLANDS

-Amanda Hart

Regardless of how the mayor tries to spin this, the reality is that this move is bad news bears, my friends. We do not want businesses abandoning office space downtown and moving their headquarters to the 'burbs. They aren't just taking their headquarters elsewhere, they are also taking their employees and our tax base with them. No one is going to commute from downtown to the Woodlands. ExxonMobil is expected to have 3.9 million square feet of office space built in the Woodlands by 2015. And sure they are planning to move employees from Virginia and Ohio along with a mass amount of workers from Houston, but this does nothing for our in-the-loop economy. Currently 90 percent of new office development in Houston is happening in the Woodlands or in Western submarkets. If you want a blueprint for ways to cause the collapse of a major American city, this is fucking it. Don't believe me? Ask Detroit.

WORST KEEPERS OF TEXAS'S REPUTATION AS A "REBELLIOUS" STATE: THE TEXAS GOP

-Harbeer Sandhu

Why is it that the people who claim to be the most rebellious are always the most authoritarian? This is a direct quote from page 20 of the official 2012 Texas Republican Party Platform, "We oppose the teaching of Higher Order Thinking Skills...critical thinking skills and similar programs that...have the purpose of challenging the student's fixed beliefs and undermining parental authority." Nuff said.

WORST FORM OF PRIDE: TEXAS FLAG

-Amanda Hart

I recently did some traveling and on my journey I was repeatedly met with a laugh or roll of the eyes when I told people I was from Texas. Apparently, people either hate us or find us amusing in a non-cute sort of way. We really should lay off the state pride thing for a bit. I mean, it's cool to be proud of where you came from but we have been known to take things a bit too far. Very intelligent people have told me that they think the Texas flag is the only state flag allowed to be flown at the same height as the American flag. Nothing about that statement is true. Did you know that every day our children in school pledge allegiance to the Texas flag at the end of their morning announcements? This is not the case in other states. Also, Republicans, just to be clear, you do not, in fact, have to wear the Texas flag on your person when you travel beyond state lines. It is not a requirement to get back in. Feel free to retire your shirts made out of Texas flags or your Texas flag mud flaps. It's cool. We get it. You love Texas. So do I. But I show it by trying to make my community a better place. Not by adorning my yard with seven Texas flags and a pool built in the shape of Texas.

WORST KPFT INTERVIEW: DR. ROBERT SANBORN WITH THE MAYOR

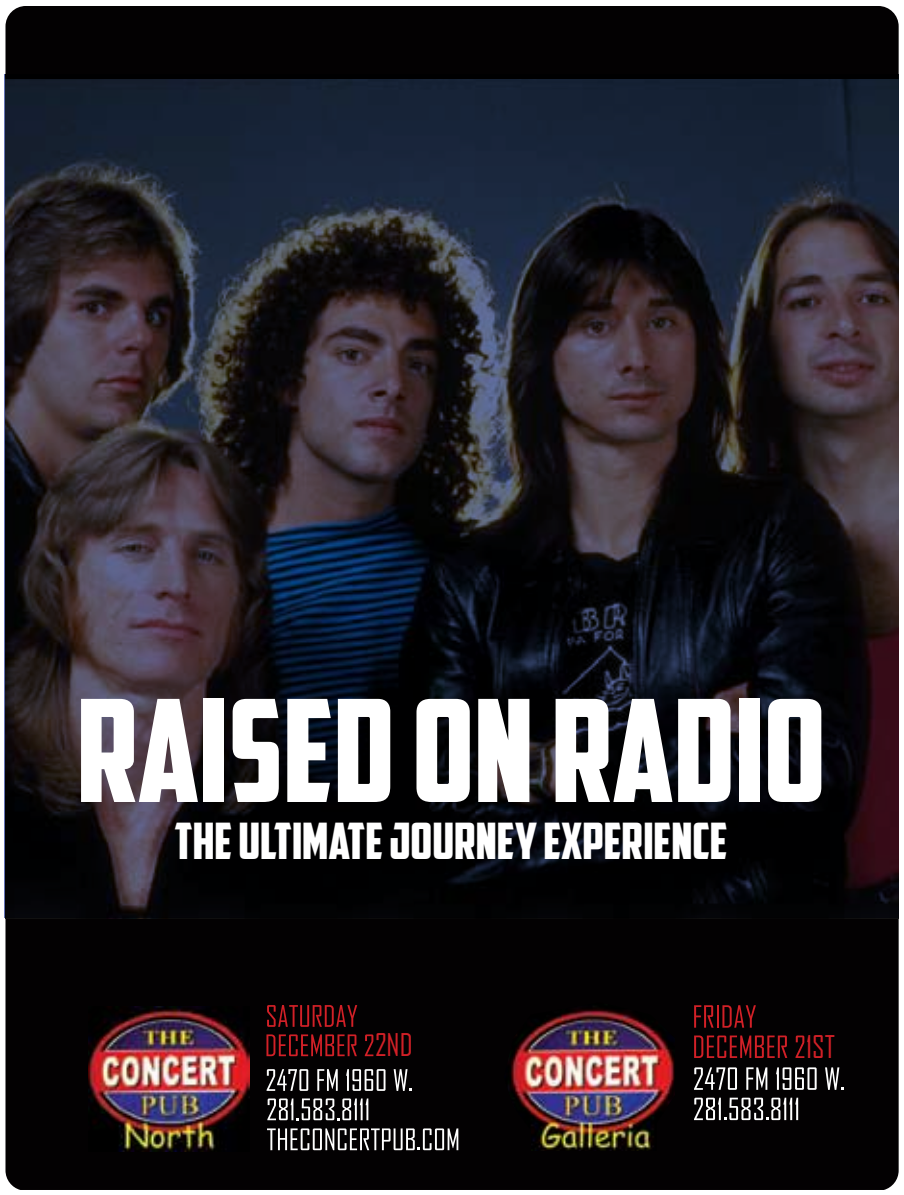
-Nick Cooper

On October 29, when Mayor Parker appeared on the KPFT program Growing Up In America, several people called in to complain about her law punishing those who share food with the homeless. Instead of allowing them to ask their questions directly, or accurately summarizing their concerns, host Dr, Robert Sanborn asked Parker, "Mayor, I don't want to bang this question to death, but we're getting a lot of people calling in on this. The whole feeding of homeless children. I mean, what is that all about? I mean, why are people giving you so much grief around that issue?"

The Mayor responded with her usual talking points about the new law. Dr. Sanborn responded: "Mayor, and I think if people knew you like some of us know you, the commitment you have to children and the commitment you have to making the city better for children... I mean... it would be pretty hard to have a bigger commitment than you have, I think. That's such an important thing."

The Mayor, and now her buddy Bob Sanborn, seem to categorize any criticism of this terrible law as a personal attack. Dr. Sanborn let Houstonians down by dismissing the legitimate concerns of his listeners.

WORST PLACE NEAR HOUSTON: THE WOODLANDS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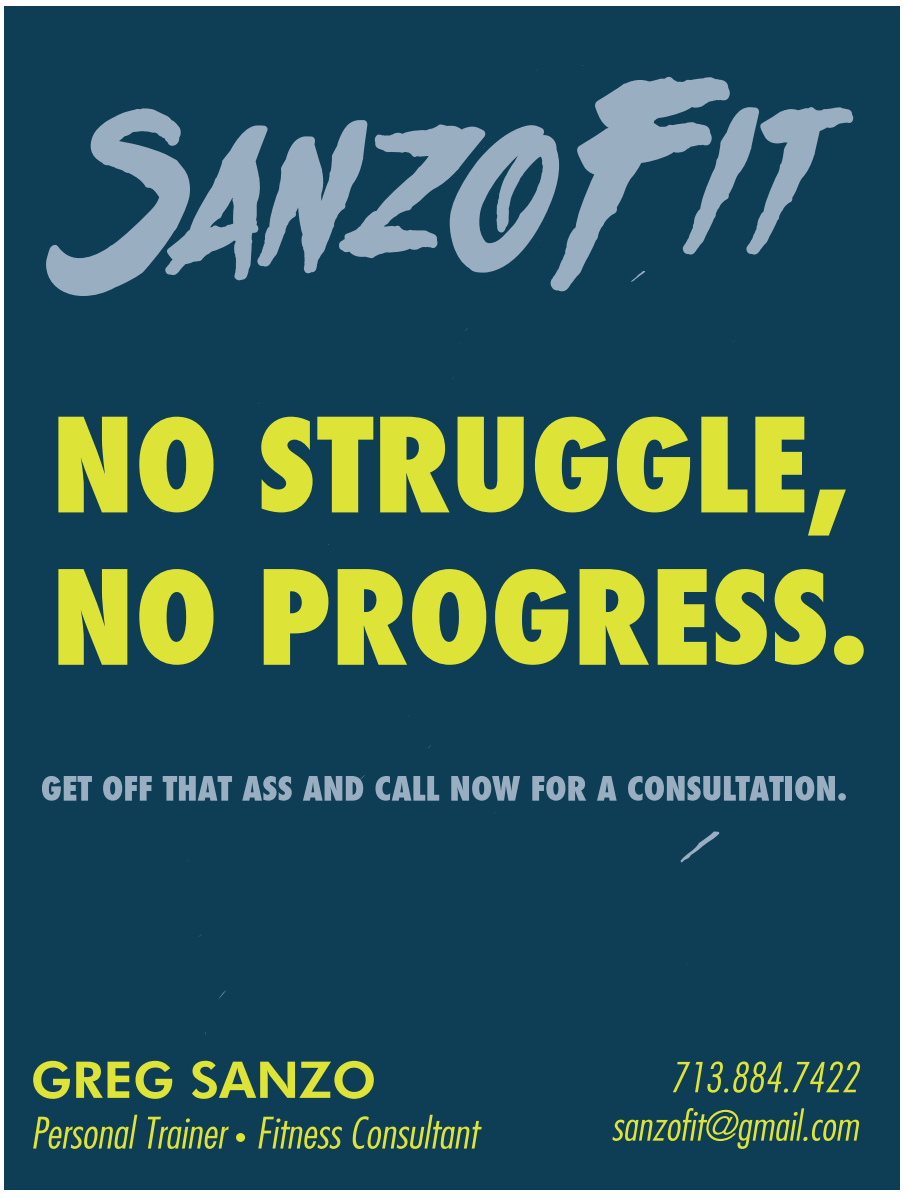
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-Amanda Hart

Seriously, fuck that place. You know something evil is brewing up there but with no real way to prove it. There is just something terrifying about a place that was a master plan community created and built by the Anadarko Petroleum Corporation. Anadarko literally built a community around their headquarters. I am also a little weirded out by the 91 percent of white people that make up the demographics of the Woodlands. I don't know why, but a mass collective of rich white people in one place makes me really anxious. I know in the past scientists have considered building a dome around Houston but I think the Woodlands might be where this plan could actually be implemented in our lifetime. It's only a matter of time before they decide to build a border to keep us out.

WORST ABBREVIATIONS: 'CRAY,' 'RIDIC,' 'YOLO,' 'TOTES,' 'WHATEV,' & THE LIKE

-Omar Afra

These abbrevs (abbreviations) have reached a cray' (crazy) peak of prev' (prevalence) in our lex (lexicon) this year. Have we become so lay (lazy) that we have forced ourselves to shorten two syl (syllable) words? Many people would attr (attribute) the demise of our langy lang (language) to the digi' (digital) rev (revolution). This shit is simply det-y (detrimental) to our ability to comsy (communicate). Oh well, HTSWENY (Hopefully this shit will end next year).

WORST CLICHE:
"HATERS MAKE US FAMOUS"

-Harbeer Sandhu

That is the stupidest, most vapid, most shallow, most nihilistic cliché anybody could think to adopt. I blame the likes of Jerry Springer and "reality" TV, which has convinced idiots that all kinds of attention—from admiration to jeering—are equal. This is the kind of thinking that has given rise to the idiot who spray painted the Picasso at the Menil, the opportunistic jackass who gave that idiot his own art show, and, when taken to its extreme, the kinds of losers who go on mass shooting sprees.

While I am the first to agree that if you never inspire controversy, you are probably not challenging yourself or anybody around you—but is fame really something to strive for? And if it is, is "hate" the way to achieve it? What happened to achieving fame through consistent, humble hard work and positive contributions to your community? Actually, what am I talking about? Fuck fame.

WORST SELLING OUT OF HER FAVORITE CAUSE: WANDA ADAMS

-Nick Cooper

She dressed down and slept in the streets in a cardboard box to learn what it was like to be homeless. She declared that helping the homeless was a personal and key issue for her. She even wrote in an editorial, "We must never seek to criminalize, or penalize, efforts that in their most basic forms are a response to a widespread human need." However, when it came time for her to vote on doing just that, Adams caved in to pressure from the Mayor. We can speculate about why, but it's probably safe to conclude that power corrupts.

WORST RUIN: ASTRODOME

-Amanda Hart

Ahhhh, the childhood memories. Has anyone been in there lately? She really has let herself go in her later years. For being affectionately labeled the eighth wonder of the world at one point, it now looks like an apocalyptic mess. One has to ask why do we keep her around? A reminder of better times? Or a reminder of what is to come? I vote we turn her into a gigantic community garden. Or a dog park. Astroturf is totally pet friendly. I think no one in city government wants to be labeled the person who destroyed the Astrodome. That's fair. I wouldn't want that title either. However, how great would it be if instead we could label one of our elected officials as the person who turned the dome into a tomato garden? Surely someone in this city would give a grant to write that proposal. Here's looking at you, Urban Harvest.

WORST EXEMPLARS OF PATRIOTISM: SECESSIONISTS

-Harbeer Sandhu

I don't get it. The same people who said stuff like "Love it or leave it!" when some of us criticized Bush are, now that their guy lost again, neither loving nor leaving, but... attempting to leave whilst taking it with them? Confused yet? Me too. Just remember, you can't spell "patriot" without "riot."

WORST DOGS: MINE

-Omar Afra

My two rescue dogs, Annie and Najis, (the Arabic word for 'ritually impure') have earned the prestigious title of Houston's worst dogs. Despite saving both of them from a miserable existence and showing them nothing but affection, these two dogs hate me. They will not come within three feet of me unless I lie on the ground as if I am dying. And even then they only seem like they are rejoicing in my demise. They sleep, eat, shit, and piss wherever they like. They run away once every 48 hours. They look at me with disdainful glares and talk shit about me when I leave the room. Despite all this, I still adore them, sing songs to them, and cater to their every need. What must I do to gain their love? **FPH**

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ND RICH
SIGHT?

HERE WE GO WITH ANOTHER RIDICULOUS

FPH FOLD-IN

Infinite possibilities exist when the soul seeks to create words, images, and sounds that inspire and evoke genuine sentiment. The human spirit longs to find beauty amongst the banal and when tasked with creation, our imagination exceeds all expectation.

FOLD PAGE OVER

A ▶

◀ B FOLD BACK SO "A" MEETS "B"

MENTION OF AN ABSTRACT SPACE/TIME PORTAL DEFENSIBLY STIRS UP INTERESTING FACTS

Fold-in by
Arthur Bates

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