FPH

FREE PRESS **HOUSTON**



* *Top Ten Houston*

SPEED-TRAPS

Also:

- *Copyright Culture*
- *The Ton Tons*
- *Elaine Greer*

MARCH 2008 | ISSUE 89

The Illuminati hid my wallet

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NEW-MUSIC GROUP SŌ PERCUSSION IN TWO HOUSTON PERFORMANCES

Da Camera of Houston and Houston Chamber Choir present

Exiles in Paris: Part 2

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Friday, March 14, 2008, 8:00 PM
Cullen Theater, Wortham Theater Center

Stravinsky *Les Noces*
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Concerto for two pianos

Antheil *Ballet Mécanique*

Houston Chamber Choir, Robert Simpson, artistic director;
Alan Feinberg, Timothy Hester, Pedja Muzijevic, Sarah Rothenberg, pianos;
Sō Percussion (Josh Quillen, Adam Sliwinski, Jason Treuting, Lawson White);
Richard Brown, Craig Hauschildt, Matthew Strauss, percussion;
Reinbert de Leeuw, conductor

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DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway

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MARCH BAND LISTINGS

FRIDAYS
2/29 - Kosmic Latte
3/7 - Love Of Peace
3/14 - Pilots in Play
3/21 - Kosmic Latte
3/28 - Mr. Hand's Revenge
4/4 - JD's Throwdown

SATURDAYS
3/1 - Sabbath Judas Sabbath
(Black Sabbath/Judas Priest Tribute)
3/8 - Blaze Of Glory
(Bon Jovi Tribute
3/15 - Satisfaction
(Rolling Stones Tribute)
3/22 - Chili Peckers
(Red Hot Chili Peppers Tribute)
3/29 - Abbey Rode/Already Gone
(Beatles/Eagles Tribute)
4/5 - Fireball
(Deep Purple Tribute)

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this issue MARCH



MUSIC, page 10

You Want the Scars...



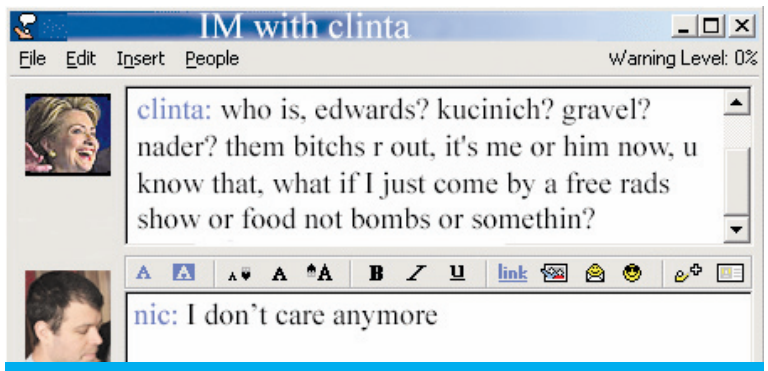
MUSIC, page 16

Elain Greer



WORLD, page 26

4 Reasons 4 Obama



WORLD, page 34

Hillary on my Buddylist

Also:

- **pg 4:** Editors, Feel free to take us seriously
- **pg 6:** Art, Debris: I needed to believe
- **pg 8:** Film, George Romero still Zombie
- **pg 12:** Music, You can always get what you want
- **pg 14:** Music, The Ton Tons' E.P.
- **pg 20:** Games, Burnout: Paradise reivew
- **pg 22:** World, Top Ten Speed Traps
- **pg 24:** World, Copyright Culture

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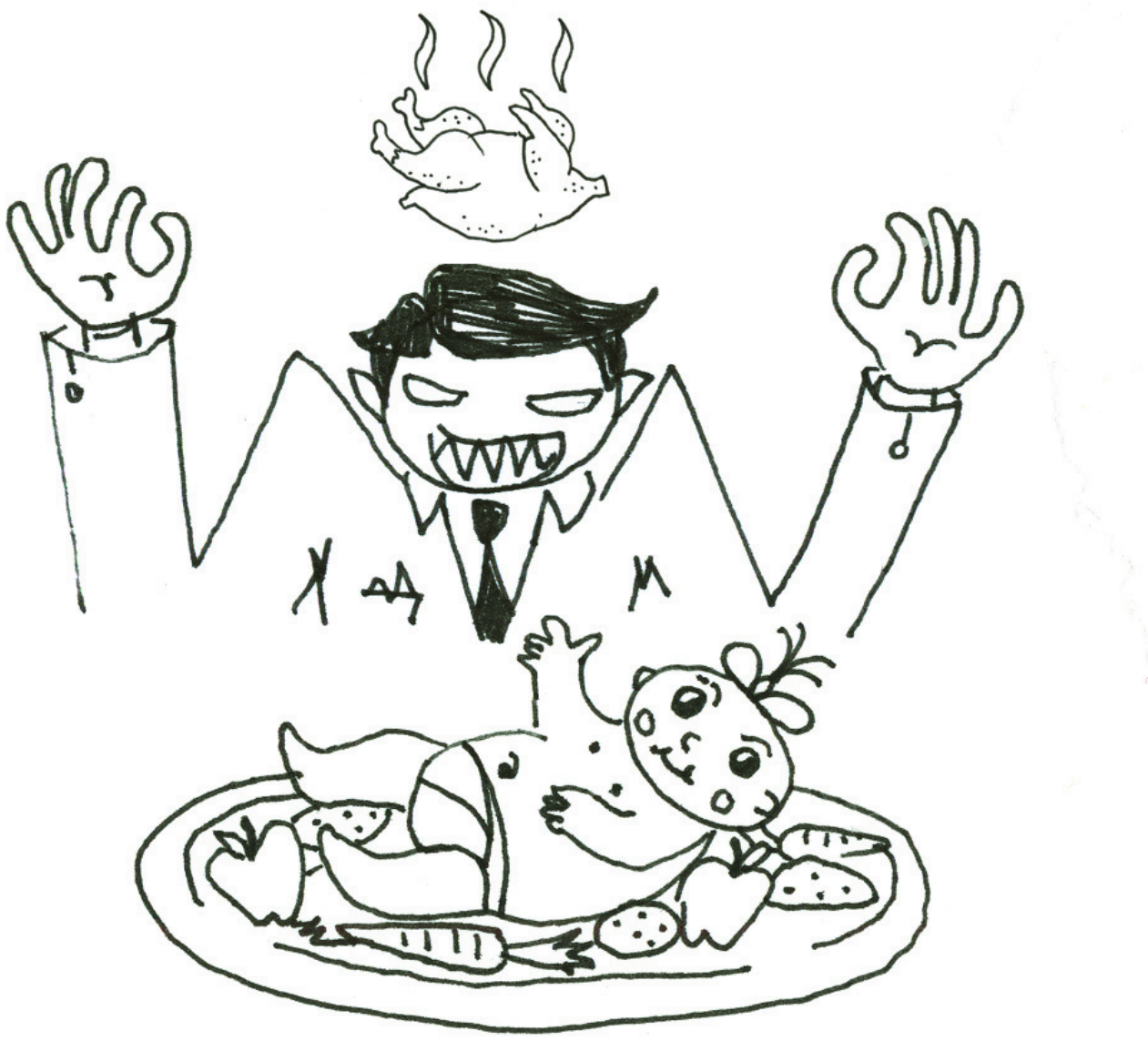
Cover Art:
Artwork by Jeff Soto
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editors

FEEL FREE TO TAKE US SERIOUSLY



'The perfect are the enemy of the good'

IS IT OK TO VOTE for Obama just because I think Hillary drinks the blood of infants? I have spent so much of life looking at the world through the prism of it be dominated by small powerful groups that rig everything and set-up this Shakespearian drama that we call history. However, I have come to the realization that if the world is indeed run by a dark hand that manipulates every facet of our lives, it won't hurt to vote for some candidate that offers a glimmer of hope albeit faint and elusive. On the contrary, it is a far greater evil to abstain from participation when the potential leader is not a total sham because of fear that he/she is another faker. KnowwhatImean? Ultimately, the malevolent leviathan wants us to not participate and to become disenchanted. I know in my heart that there are those who wish to pull the strings and those with evil intentions have calculated much of our future. I will not, however, rest on my laurels and consign myself to viewing everything with futility. On a pragmatic level, despite all of Obama's inadequacies, the world will see us differently and we will be forced to confront many social paradigms here at home if an African American with an Arab middle name is elected leader of the free world. Some may retort that such an opportunity is present with Hillary Clinton as she would be the first female leader. I frankly do not think that a white-millionaire ex-president's wife being elected is breaking down any social barriers. You see, I can say Fuck Obama and vote for him in the same breath because maybe we can hold his feet to the fire if elected. Hillary has already proven herself to be spooky. The Clintons managed to kill more Iraqis, via sanctions, than the two Bushes combined. That's right kiddos: You can kill more people by refusing to let milk powder or penicillin into a country than you can with bombs and bullets. The pen is truly mightier than the sword. FPH

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Mar 15 Sunburned, Hand of the Man, Citay, Listen Listen

Mar 16 Why?, Cryptacize, Samara Lublaki

Mar 17 Magic Christian

Mar 19 TBA

Mar 21 Baroness, Young Widows

Mar 23 People Noise, Pale

Mar 26 TBA

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Hillary York/ The 3 Fantastics

Mar 1 2008 11:30P
My Milky Way Arms

Mar 5 2008 9:00P
Open mic poetry

Mar 6 2008 10:00P
Nosaprise/Free Radicals, I and I

Mar 8 2008 10:00P
Hip Hop Show

Mar 12 2008 9:00P
Open mic poetry

Mar 12 2008 11:00P
The Valley Arena

Mar 13 2008 10:30P
Television Skies/Free Radicals

Mar 14 2008 10:00P
Tiger Piss(from NY)

Mar 15 2008
Make a Rising *9:00P*

The DEFENESTRATION UNIT(fun jazz) *10:00P*

Mar 16 2008 9:00P
The Pasties(from Olympia)

Mar 17 2008 10:00P
The Coma Lilies

Mar 18 2008 10:00P
Alone and Legendary

Mar 20 2008 10:30P
Raj Pickens/Free Radicals

Mar 24 2008 10:00P
The Tanks (from Iowa)

Mar 25 2008 9:30P
Snarky Puppy(10 piece jazz from North Texas State)

Mar 27 2008 10:15P
Ozeal/Free Radicals

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DEBRIS
I Needed To Believe
Buffalo Sean



China is not fading away anytime soon, and the red flag with the piss-stain stars will be hoisted above the city of Houston throughout the month of March. Seriously- there will be *114 art openings.* More cheap wine than Paul Bunyan could drink. Enough cheese to build several giant busts of recent presidents. Traffic jams, valets in the street and drunks wandering the halls of galleries and museums. Get out and play!

THE BEST OF THE CHINESE EXHIBITS:

Liu Ren
Rice University Media Center
6100 Main St., Entrance 8
Monday, March 10, 6-8p.m.

Western China, 1934 - 1939
One Allen Center 500 Dallas
Opening Reception; Monday,
March 10, 6-8p.m.

Zhuang Xueben, the ethnographic and anthropological documenter of far western China and Tibetan regions.

The Northern Front,
The Anti-Japanese War, 1937 - 1946
Two Allen Center 1200 Smith

Sha Fei, 1937 - 1949: The Communist Party in the early years of military formation and during the Japanese occupation of China made to disseminate images of the Communist military in northeast China. Despite continued Japanese harassment, Sha Fei recruited and trained a generation of photographers of political propaganda for the Communist government that flourished in the 1950s.

The Cultural Revolution, 1965 - 1975
Three Allen Center 333 Clay Street

Weng Naiqiang, Ziao Zhuang, and Weihong Shilong. Documentary photography; one of the principal tools of political propaganda used by Communist artists working for newspapers.

Contemporary Photography
Winter Street Studios 2101 Winter Street
Opening Monday, March 17, 7-9p.m.

Contemporary Chinese photo-based work shown outside China has tended to focus on flashy color conceptual, mixed-media work, but the tradition of black and white documentary photography continues to be a highly respected and ubiquitous part of Chinese photographic practice. Wu Jialin: the older generation, working in the classical tradition of black and white social documentary work in Yunnan province. Lu Nan: the middle generation, documents institutions for the mentally ill and Catholic sects in China. Li Lang: the younger generation, focuses on the Yi People, a once isolated ethnic community in China.

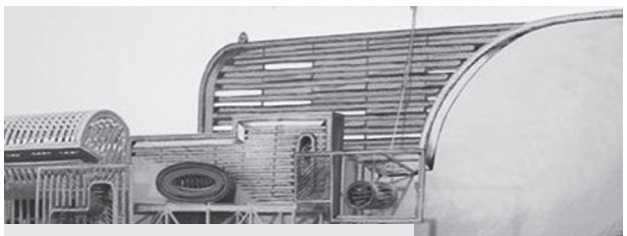
Contemporary Conceptual and Staged Photography
FotoFest Headquarters
1113 Vine Street
Opening: Friday, March 7, 8p.m.

Midnight. An artist-led inter-disciplinary art initiative, current modernist and post-modernist photo-based art work by 16 artists from different disciplines is curated by Zhang Li. Using collaboration between photographers, painters, sculptors, architects, performance, and installation artists in Beijing, this is the first presentation of this show outside China.

Current Perspectives 1999-2008
Williams Tower Gallery 2800 Post Oak

A series of 11 one-person presentations of leading contemporary Chinese artists, these photo-based works reflect major issues in Chinese art and society today: memory, interpretation, conception of self, urbanization, and questions of gender. Predominantly color, large-scale, staged and digitally produced photographs, they also include sculpture, installation, and video.

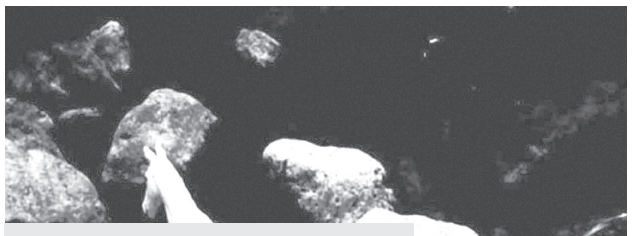
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Jeff Chien-Hsing Liao: Habitat 7
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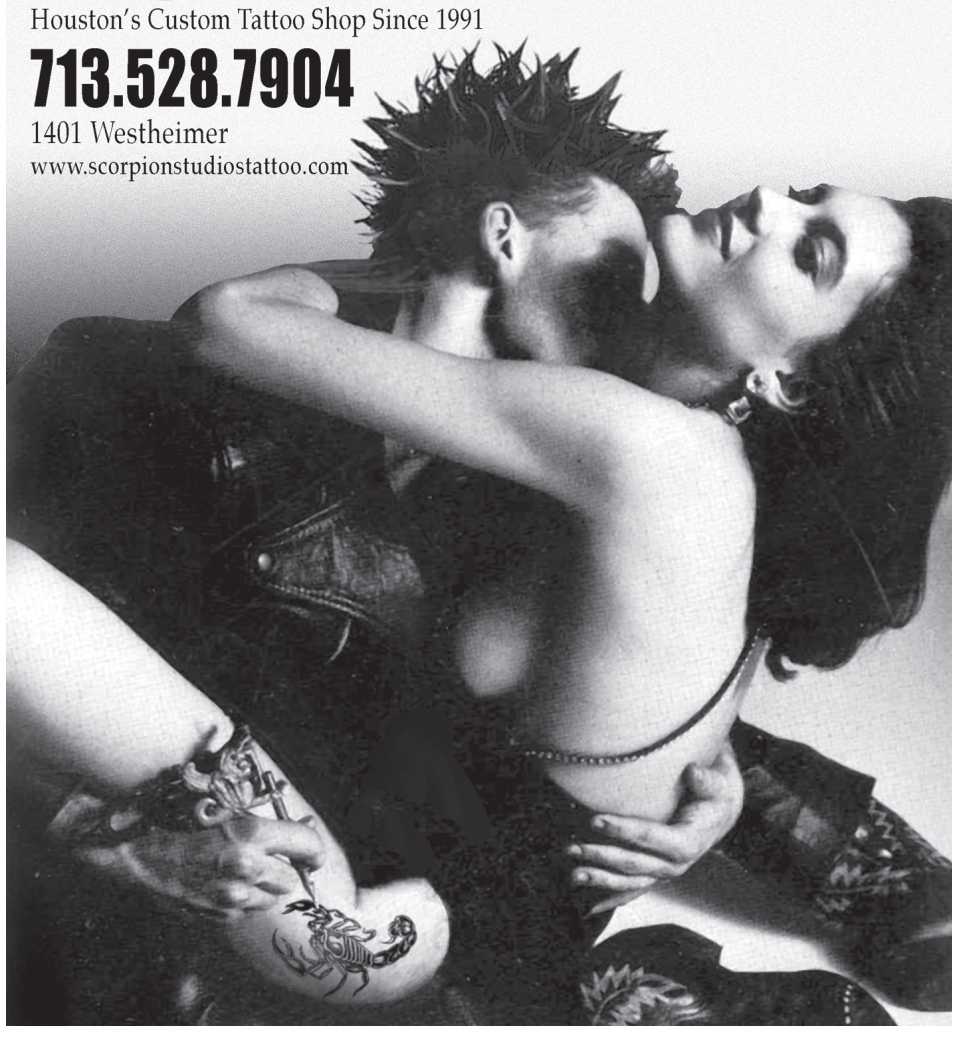
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GEORGE ROMERO

Still zombie after all these years

By Michael Bergeron | Photo by Chris Garcia



The world is a nicer place to live with Night of the Living Dead established as a classic horror film, just as the world spins smoother with works like Mary Shelley's Frankenstein or Bram Stoker's Dracula as literary anecdotes to ward off the onset of ennui in its various forms.

All the imitators can come and go, and maybe some of them leave a mark, but George Romero's Night of the Living Dead has never been surpassed as a zombie flick unless it was Romero doing the overtaking.

Night of the Living Dead was not the first zombie movie. In the 1940s there were titles like Zombies Over Broadway and I Walked With A Zombie. "Don't forget White Zombie," reminds Romero about the 1932 Bela Lugosi movie. "Classic films are the ones that hold up." Speaking to Free Press Houston by phone Romero provided insight into his latest film Diary of the Dead.

"It's a parallel story happening at the same time," offers Romero, calling the storyline "a new beginning." Actually Diary of the Dead plays like a spot-on re-imagining of Night only in the internet age. When the dead start to eat the living it's captured on TV. In a matter of hours amateurs are downloading their own sightings on MySpace and YouTube. "Today all the world is a camera," says Romero. Years ago Romero had his own website.

"Other people took it over," says Romero meaning bloggers. "It was like some friends come over to your house and next thing you know they've taken over and you're not even the guest." Romero admits to using the web to check email and maybe a search engine scroll but otherwise he avoids it.

A group of students from the University of Pittsburgh are making a horror film when they catch wind of the zombie phenomenon. They decide to film the melee in a film-within-a-film called The Death of Death. With their teacher the sole oldster, the group embarks in an RV for a house in the wilderness hoping to avoid the carnage going on around them. Through the night various obstacles challenge the group.

Romero's films have always excelled in horrific effects. Likewise his direction has a flair that shines in all his films. Diary of the Dead continues in that mode with a tight pacing that allows for laughs (the Amish scene) in the midst of danger. And as the story has adapted the precedents of handheld camera first person style narrative so has CGI been added to compliment the stunt work.

"We had to use CGI for the acid gag," states Romero about a scene where hydrochloric acid dissolves a zombies face. But another action piece combines both old school effects with digitally enhanced props. The sequence involves a somebody's brother turned zombie who gets taken out by a high velocity bow and arrow. The actor was the son of the stunt coordinator and was hooked up to a harness that slung him backward against a wall. At the same moment a CGI arrow slams through his head and impales him on said wall.

Romero has previously made four other zombie films in addition to other genres including such unlikely action dramas as Knightriders, a 1981 film about motorcycle jousters that starred Ed Harris.

Hollywood has no use for Romero's brand of genius yet they continue to remake his films. A Day of the Dead remake opens in April and The Crazies is listed on imdb for 2009. "The Crazies has been on the books for years, Paramount was going to do it at one point, you never know," warns Romero. This is the guy who practically created the current horror atmosphere and yet Zach Snyder's remake of Dawn of the Dead busts a new record while the same studio (Universal) can't sell Romero's Land of the Dead (fourth in the series) to save their soul. If you want Romero's opinion Land of the Dead was perhaps a tad too Hollywood. And in 28 Days Later a film clearly influenced by American zombie epics "they're not zombies, they're not dead, they're infected."

Romero made the Hitchcock type cameo in his films up to Dawn of the Dead, but stayed completely behind the camera in the 80s and 90s. Dairy of the Dead finds him back with a one-liner as a police chief. Fans know that Romero turned up in a crucial scene in Silence of the Lambs, shot in his then hometown. "There were always films being shot in the Burgh. I had known Demme for years and he called me up when he got into town."

JUMPER IS THE NEW HIGHLANDER. That is to say that you could easily make a couple of sequels followed by a Fox television series.

Someone asked me if this is a time travel movie. My first impulse would be to say no, Jumper is more of a space continuum movie. A quick look on the internet reveals this gem if physics: "It is well known that the space/time continuum is curved. The curvature occurs as a result of the influence of mass against movement in time. Recently, it has been possible to detect this curvature. As three-dimensional beings, we perceive time only as a result of memory."

You know what, maybe Jumper is a time travel movie. Only the time is here and now. Hayden Christensen as David Rice (no relation to the songwriter) learns he has the abil-



ity to space shift and constantly goes for his me time on the head of the Great Sphinx. Rice found out about his abnormal powers during high school in a sequence right out of the ice pond from It's A Wonderful Life. Highlander was also mentioned, namely because Jumper spends most of the film establishing a mythology of Jumpers, much as Highlander laid out the groundwork for what eventually followed in that franchise. Much to director Doug Liman's credit he never has a scene where some character actually explains to another character what it means to be a Jumper. You just have to watch the film and get it. This isn't Mr. & Mrs. Smith kind of action on display, it's more thought provoking sci-fi with outbursts of kinetic excitement. The best scene has Rice and another Jumper racing a Mercedes through downtown London. "If it movies I can jump it."

Samuel L. Jackson plays Roland a white haired freaky dude who may or may not be with a secret government agency and who hunts Jumpers with the intent to kill. Diane Lane briefly comes to Rice's aid and may serve a larger role should Jumper spawn sequels. Rachel Bilson (The O.C.) and Jamie Bell (Billy Elliot) are welcome allies to Rice. Jumper won't replace The Matrix, but it will keep you occupied until something does. **FPH**

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YOU WANT THE SCARS, BUT YOU DON'T WANT THE WAR

By Kwame M. Anderson



Barack Obama. There, an endorsement from a babbling sycophant. Not me, of course. I am never a babbler. I am more of an opponent to the subject. We fight each other, we race, and we play simulated games of Battleship. It is daunting the dance we've developed. And yet, here I am again, fighting the subject which is music played live from the alive or at a moment during their living, to which I usually a yay, vary rarely a nay.

And the cycle continues…So, here it goes the first a few Houston music sections of a paper, but somehow, we're all writing about the same thing. Well, this month I have a doozy in the band SINGER from Chicago, but more on that later, let now begin the commencement…

BANDS PLAYING

BEACH HOUSE

3.6.08 Walter's On Washington

Beach House's newest album Devotion is likely to be a candidate for Album of the Year. It's a lush, beautiful, with touches of other sensibilities, and its sweeps past you like a cool wind. Well, now the chance has risen to see the band do their thing without the limitations, or enhancements, of your stereo. "You Came to me" will be exciting to see in any capacity, but live I'm sure it would be more mystic and haunting. This is something you should do on this night. The band spent a nice amount of time touring with Grizzly Bear, and one listen Beach House, and you can imagine what a superb bill that must've been. Let's all get together and do some holy dances.

CRYPTACIZE

3.16.08 Rudyard's Pub

Is it weird that I write about two bands the last issue and by the next issue they come to town, it's the magic of the written word. Cryptacize, in case you didn't read the last article is comprised of Nedelle, Chris Cohen, and Michael Carreira. They're music is an adventure of tales, ideas, melodies, shanties if you will, stories. Chris Cohen's guitar sounds broken, but beautiful, the harmonies, the interplay between the musicians. Percussionist Carreira spoke with me by phone not long ago. Lots of times it seems bands should be better than their records, but it's a toss up, an album is completely different form playing live, and especially after playing a song a few times…

"….you know like playing the same set form our first little tour in October/November, playing the first same set, which is basically the whole record, we got so much better at the songs and worked out a lit of little details…just our chemistry together, and how we've worked on the songs has come

shows in Houston



Napalm Death
3/8 | Meridian



The Black Hollies
3/9 | Rudyard's



The Slits
3/10 | Numbers

a long way since the album." The live beast is one to tame but it is the glory of the battle, victory or defeat that makes the warrior fight. "The songs don't change much (live vs. the record), as much as the parts, we feel like, we're supposed to play, like a lot of the songs could really fall fate, like if we just don't have the right dynamic that day or, or sometimes, you know, we're just not playing that well…but for me, the performance is the main thing, that's the fun of every night trying to play the same song, and the play the, well almost , the same thing and it could fall flat or it could be great."

BANDS PLAYED THIS WHILST LIVING

SINGER
Unhistories (*Drag City*)

Singer features Adam Vida, Rob Lowe, Ben Vida, and Todd Rittman playing soul, psychedelic funk um, let me take the last part back, funk rarely has a good footnote. Hmmm, it's like Parliament or like the more rocking George Clinton shit, it has a groove but it still lingers near the door almost all the way out there. Four part harmonies, think like the Beach Boys, but not really, like you know all sunny and shit, but it's not dark, it's kind of like…there's a part of "Divining" that's like Prince, then it's like, jazz, then it's like Zeppelin, but I mean the song is barely four minutes, so this happen pretty quickly. It's a singular thing, there are no others populating this style. Singer spent part of last year opening for Battles, and in the way that band (may) redefined (how some) think of the "sound" Singer goes far and beyond the call of duty. "Oh Dusty" is the smooth it could've been done by Barry White. There's a song called "Best Of My Love," it's a r and b song, but this song has soul, and then it has a stupendous guitar solo followed by a drum break, a fucking drum break, you don't hear that shit that often. "Party Lessons" is a mess wrapped in an incredible bass line, the guitar breakdown is golden, of it, and these words don't do it justice. Now, I would mention the lineage of the band, but that's not important, because right now it doesn't even matter. Singer, don't be an idiot, hear this band. **FPH**



The Meat Puppets
3/3 | Warehouse Live



Kimya Dawson
3/16 | Super Happy Fun Land



Make a Rising
3/15 | Notsuoht

SMELLY MENACE RECORDS

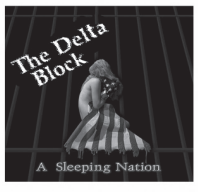
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YOU *CAN* ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT

By Brigitte B. Zabak | Photo by Carlos T.



Ah…March, how we lovers of music adore you so. No other time of the year brings with it such a glittering array of musical options. Although the number of quality shows that have passed through town since the New Year is nothing to scoff at, nothing beats the March Madness of Music in Texas.

From South by Southwest in Austin to RodeoHouston, music fans will have what they always yearn for and rarely get around these parts, and that, my dear friends, is prime selection. It's the only time of year when you get to choose between a Mesa Boogie and a Marshall and regardless of which you choose, you will always come out a winner.

From old school rap to indie rock, the most appealing thing about this month's lineup is its diversity. The very first of the month brings Snoop Dogg and his infectious brand of hip-hop musings. Though his music has transformed over the years into something a little more commercial and melodic, he has always managed to keep things interesting. Snoop Dogg will be blazing up the stage at Warehouse Live on March 1st. Don't fret, though. If starting off the month with laidback rhymes from the West Coast isn't something you're down for, maybe a refreshing twist on old classics will provide a more suitable musical experience. Adorably charming and with a voice that croons to the moon and back, Michael Buble will be performing right down the road at Toyota Center. Though Buble's music does up the cheese factor a bit, his sultry voice has a way of transforming old classics like Willie Nelson's "Always on My Mind" and Dean Martin's "Sway" into something that can be enjoyed by young and old. Check out shows at The Mink, Rudyard's and Notsuoh if you are looking for something a little more indie and experimental in nature.

If you aren't too worn out from the night before, head over to Walter's on Washington on March 2nd for an early show with The JonBenet, Bitter End and Seeker. Make sure you aren't hung-over though, because these bands are lusciously loud and not for the faint of heart. They might be the perfect precursor to a night filled with the pseudo-scariness of Marilyn Manson, who will be performing at the Verizon Wireless Theater later that night or the actual creepiness of bands like Rotting Christ who will be performing over at The Meridian.

For something a little more subdued and rich with influence, check out Built to Spill and The Meat Puppets on March 3rd at Warehouse Live. Built to Spill is an indie rock brood from Idaho with a sound that is all rock with moments of blues, folk, and pop thrown into the mix. The Meat Puppets have been around a long time, first signing with Greg Ginn's label SST Records as a punk band back in the early eighties. Their sound has evolved by leaps and bounds since those early recordings and their style is a blend of rock and roll that still breathes with the energy of their earlier punk influences. If you can't afford to make it out for this show, The Black Swans will be infusing their folky rock melodies into the walls of The Backroom at the Mink that same night. The Black Swans' songs involve elaborate stories with intriguing characters that are brought to life by soothing folk-inspired sounds and lead vocals that drip like molasses and drone on in epic Eeyore-like tones.

Look! It's only a few days into the month and already there is more music than we can handle. RodeoHouston starts this month, so if you are into popular country or want to see Fergie from the Black-Eyed Peas make sure to get your tickets soon. In addition to RodeoHouston, the SXSW festival will be taking place in Austin in mid-March. Though most of us won't be lucky enough to attend this musical orgy, many of the bands performing at the festival are more willing to stop off in Houston and throw us a bone around this time. Feel free to enjoy one, two or all of the following shows making their way around the city: They Might Be Giants with Oppenheimer at the Meridian on March 6th (TMBG's speak for themselves, but you have to check out Oppenheimer. They are an indie-pop band from Belfast, Ireland with a really groovy, infectious sound.), Wilco will be performing with John Doe at Verizon Wireless on March 7th, Bone Thugs-n-Harmony will be at Warehouse Live on March 9, My Morning Jacket will be performing with Yo La Tengo at Verizon Wireless on March 10th (This is probably one of the best deals you could ever get for your money. MMJ's sound is so beautifully woven and translates impeccably in a live setting. This show is a real must-see!) , The Slits at Numbers on March 10th (Don't worry though – they are also playing a show on March 11th with Peelander-Z, so you can still catch them and MMJ. Phew!), Sia with Har Mar Superstar at Warehouse Live on March 12 (Another must-see show. Sia's new album *Some People Have Real Problems* is incredible.), Birds of Avalon with Sharks and Sailors at the Mink on March 17th, Gogol Bordello at the Meridian on March 18th (GB is an NYC band whose sound is best described as "Gypsy-Punk." Any band that includes an accordion and isn't playing Polka music gets my thumbs up.), Les Claypool with Time Fite at Warehouse Live on March 28 (It's. Les. Claypool. There is really nothing more to say. Go.), and you can round out the month with Tokyo Police Club at The Meridian on March 31st.

These shows just skim the surface of the musical offerings for this month. Don't be overwhelmed! Whether you go with an old favorite or take a chance on something new, at least you had the uncommon luxury of overabundant opportunity. FPH

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MARCH

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Mar 15 -New Monsoon! Double Show Fri & Sat
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Mar 18 -Sirens of SXSW - Tori Sparks w/ Paula Maya $7 Scott McDaniels at 11
Mar 20 -The Hightailers~!!!!!
Mar 21 -Wino Vino (Austin TX)
Mar 22 -Praia Urbana
Mar 28 -Cowjazz (early) then Fahl & Folk
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THE TONTONS
SEA AND STARS E.P.
Aesthetic Noise Records
By Omar Afra | Photo by Gilbert McGilbert



This shit is awesome. However, I have to be honest. The EP sat on my desk for a few weeks with the myriad others that usually end-up in the graveyard of emo and singer songwriter crapola that we receive so much of.

I was frankly surprised by the five impassioned and haunting songs that *The Tontons* served up on their debut EP *Sea and Stars*. I hate to say nice things about local bands. Dammit. The band combines a tasteful mix of Asli Omar's hyper-soulful vocals, and the bands Hendrix ala' Garage aesthetic. Imagine a diffuse amalgamation of the Sugarcubes, Hendrix, Nina Simone, and a touch of punk rock sensibility. Pardon the shitty, half-priced pun, but the sticky-sweet song *Syrup* is an irresistible track laden with violins and call and response backing vocals. Atlas is also a bright spot where the band gets a touch ballsier without losing its edge and subtle nuances of Asli's voice. Their guitar players Hendrix-infused-style is rife with all the things you enjoyed about Jimi but absolutely hate about his copycats. The tones and soundscapes on this record are solid and minimal. Though it could really use some creative production and arrangement, Steve Christensen at Sugar Hill did a great job of recording this EP without creating a contrived sound that is so often heard in recording today. You know what I mean: Either way too polished or overly eager to sound low rent. The Tontons are certainly a band to watch and relish in their growth. I was lucky enough to sit in a café in Budapest with lead singer Asli Omar.

She was kind enough to answer my silly, cliché questions:



Where does the name 'The Tontons' come from?

The name *the Tontons* actually came from the second star wars movie(I think) it was the animal that Luke hid in when he got lost in the wilderness. The band actually came up with the name right after I left for school so I had no say in it. However, I think its very fitting. We were a band for a year before we had a name so it was such a relief to finally have a permanent title.

Who did you pretend to be while singing as a child?

I listen to a lot of jazz so I would have to say that my biggest influences are female jazz vocalists like Billie Holiday and Nina Simone, other then that I really like Lauren Hill and Karen O. I have respect for any female in the music industry because I feel like much of the time we are over looked or not taken seriously enough, I can't tell you how many times people have asked me if I was the girl friend of one of the band members. I never really pretended to be other singers though. My friend Zelene used to write songs for me and I would sing hers and my own a lot. I tried out or my first band when I was 14 and sang an original song.

Tell me what you loved/hated about the recording process for the EP?

I can't say that there was any thing that I hated about recording the e.p. We did everything in one take because of our lack of funding so everything went by quickly. The entire experience was amazing. We are all really close in the band and hang out a lot so it was pretty much just us cracking jokes and playing music. The most rewarding part of the whole experience was when we finished and we got the demo. It was really fulfilling to finally hear all of our hard work. We just sat in the car in front of the studios and listened to the songs on repeat. We were all really proud.

Who is the song 'Syrup' about? Nothing to do with Pimp C, huh?

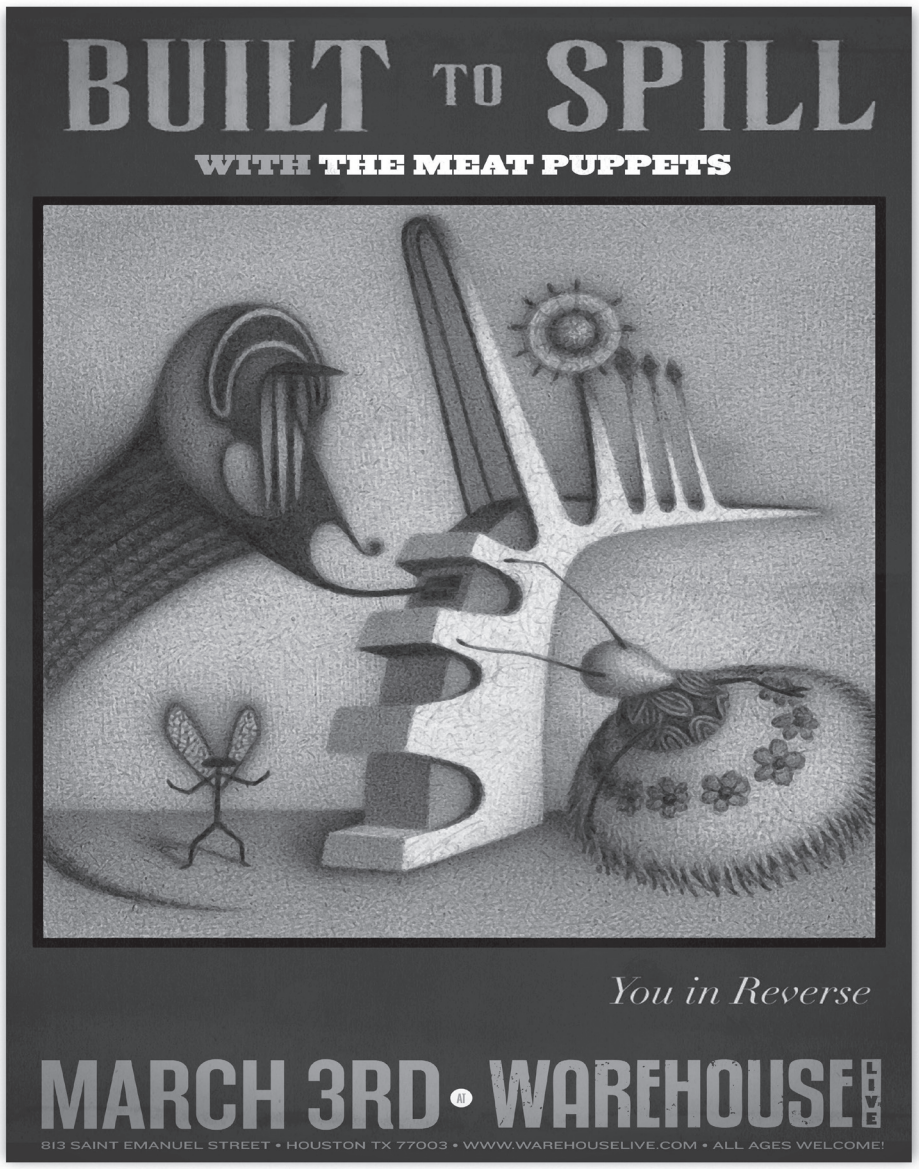
Every song I write is like a biography. They all tell a story about someone who influenced my life in some way or another. I like to think that if the song is about you and you hear it you'll be able to tell because I usually make references to things that were said or done. Syrup is about a really wonderful guy who I didn't deserve and I hurt. It's meant to be an apology to him but it would have been really cool if I had written a song influenced by Pimp C. Maybe my next song will be.

What do we expect next from The Tontons?

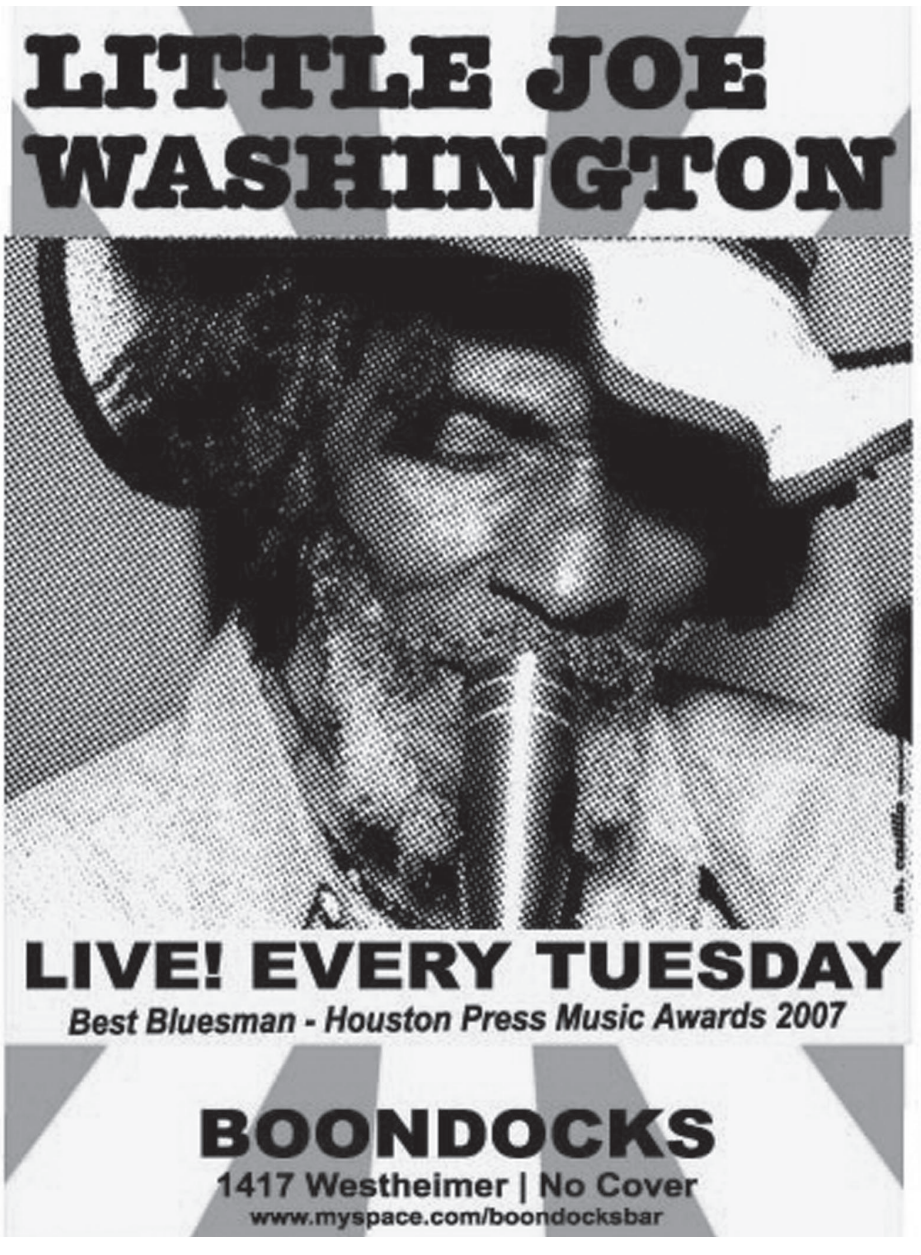
We are currently in the process of recording an album, and we are going to be playing South by Southwest in March. We are also going on tour this summer. It's crazy because a year ago I don't think that any of us had any idea that we would have any of the amazing opportunities we have now.

The Tontons will be playing Warehouse Live March 21st.
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ELAINE GREER

By Ramon Medina | Photo by John Van



There is a very exciting point in a musician's career when, after a long time of working on their craft, they realize what they do has a value outside of their own bedroom. If you were at the Proletariat and saw Elaine Greer perform to a packed crowd last month opening for the Fiery Furnaces, you couldn't help but feel the giddiness of a musician at that stage. Standing on stage behind her Telecaster, you could almost hear her take a deep breath before diving in.

Greer's songs drip with sweet and simple melodies that hum inside your head long after you first hear them. In her home recordings, the songs are intimate and have an understated beauty but that night, with a full band (The Holly Hall), the songs ripped with confidence and endless possibilities. Zahira Gutierrez's lovely harmonies and Guitarist Nick Cody's clean and melodic guitar lines played elegantly against Greer's vocals while JD Tucker and Grant Hickey's drum and bass added some limber rhythmic muscle to the songs - the crowd ate up every note. The wonderful thing is, be it solo or as a member of The Holly Hall, Greer is still at a point where she has only just touched the needle down onto the record's groove.

Greer began playing piano at 5. "I was jealous of my sister taking lessons so, when the piano teacher came over to give her a lesson, I ran upstairs, locked myself in the room with the piano, and started banging on it to show them how great I was - it worked!" Eventually, like many kids, she grew to dislike the lessons and quit. "Well," says Greer sheepishly, "until recital! When recital came up I'd beg my mom to be back in the class just to do the recital. That would drive her crazy." She also had a fixation with Broadway no doubt inspired by her father's love of Andrew Lloyd Weber's *Phantom of the Opera*. "He'd play it all the time and my sister and I would fight over who would be the girl but she'd always get stuck with being the guy." Then, thinking about it, she laughs with a tinge of guilt, "I'm sure she still has bitter memories of that." By age fourteen, she started writing songs but was too scared to show them to people. When she did work up the courage at around sixteen or seventeen she would do so only in the relative safety of her room and only while facing the wall.

Greer eventually did put aside her fears and joined The Bluebirds: "The songs were pretty raw and I wasn't a very good singer yet, but Super Happy Fun Land let us play." About a year after that first band's dissolution, Greer teamed up with guitarist Nick Cody as an acoustic duo which lasted until last fall's Westheimer Block Party. "We decided to add drums and bass just for the occasion. You know," she says with glee, "It'll be loud!" A few twists and turns later and that band coalesced into the band heard at the Fiery Furnaces show.

"We all had fun playing together, but from the beginning there was some turmoil within the band," says Greer, "Nick and the others wanted to do their own things but at that point were still playing only my songs." The solution was that Elaine Greer, the solo artist, and The Holly Hall, the band, had to become different entities. The Holly Hall would be more of a collaborative effort while Greer would be able to exert full control as a solo artist. In fact, Greer plans to release a solo EP later this year which will feature members of the Papermoons as well as other musicians. "It's really exciting and I don't want to sound like a control freak but I know how I want things to sound."

When I ask her if this means she's found her ideal voice as an artist she replies, "I don't feel like I've found the perfect 'Elaine Greer' voice but I think musicians and artists are always looking for their voice or what they are trying to convey...I think it's something that probably changes throughout life as a person has more experiences and different things become more or less important."

So how does it feel to have moved from her bedroom to the stage? "It's a good feeling to get that audience feedback – knowing people are enjoying it. It's my favorite thing in the world so I like the idea that it makes someone happy. There is a satisfaction in playing alone in a room to myself - it's extremely enjoyable and that's how I write everything - but," she adds with a gracious modesty, "I never expected people to like it."

Look for the Elaine Greer EP as well a release by the Holly Hall later this year. Elaine Greer will be performing March 12th at the Westheimer Block Party. The Holly Hall will be performing March 31st at The Mink with Teenage Kicks, Erin Tobey, and The Pink Razorblades. FPH

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KALENDER DU MARCH

by Shelby Hohl









3/02 Rudz Bike Bonanza: Bikes, Beer and Bands feat. Bright Men of Learning, Bring Back the Guns, Spain Colored Orange - Rudyards

3/05 Blitzen Trapper w/ Fleet Foxes - Walter's

3/06 They Might Be Giants - Meridian

3/08 Napalm Death w/ Walls of Jericho - Meridian

3/09 Gunther & The Sunshine Girls - Meridian

3/10 Municipal Waste - Meridian

3/11 Parts and Labor w/ Ecstatic Sunshine - The Mink

3/12 Digitalism - Engine Room



















3/15 Reverend Butter w/ Downfall2012 - Fitzgeralds

3/16 Black Mountain - Meridian

3/18 Gogol Bordello - Meridian

3/21 2008 Orange Show Season Opening FREE! - Orange Show

3/22 Finn Nygaard - Museum of Printing History

3/27 Fu Manchu w/ Burning Brides - Meridian







3/13 An Albatross w/ The Apes - The Mink

Philadelphia's *An Albatross* haven't played in Houston in quite some time and it might be for good reason. For one, there very well may not be a stage thats ready to have a rain dance beaten into it over 300bpm metal and soul licks. We were lucky enough to catch these guys last year at SXSW and all we can say is SLAYERS. These dudes, within 5 minutes of being on stage, were up in the rafters, like, kicking holes in the ceiling and not missing a fucking note. If you want to look back at your life and be truly happy with yourself, you'll make it to this show. We have a feeling The Mink is not ready for intensity on these levels. Were talking Metaclorean counts in GIGATONS.

CDF's Cradle to Prison Pipeline TEXAS SUMMIT - U of H Krost Hall

A Black male born in 2001 has a 1 in 3 chance of going to prison in his lifetime, and a Latino male born in 2001 has a 1 in 6 risk of the same fate. Last year the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) released its report called the Cradle to Prison Pipeline® and initiated a campaign with the same name to generate a national effort to stop the funneling of tens of thousands of youth, predominantly minorities, down life paths that lead to arrest, conviction, incarceration and sometimes death. CDF President Marian Wright Edelman will deliver the keynote address at the event. Discussion topics will include Mobilizing Public Demand and Political Will, Finding Ways to Communicate with Young Males and Prevent Violence, Youth and Parent Perspectives on the Foster Care and Juvenile Justice System Experience, and A Call to Action: Next Steps to Dismantle the Pipeline.

3/28 Defending "Terrorists" in Federal Court

Jeanne Baker, defense counsel to Adham Amin Hassoun, a co-defendant of Jose Padilla, will give a first-hand account of her experience. The case went to the U.S. Supreme Court, which issued a ruling that was a land-mark in the legal effort to end the Bush Administration's subversion of liberty in the name of combating terrorism. Baker is a former federal public defender and currently an ACLU appellate attorney. 12:30-1:30 p.m. (lunch provided) at South Texas College of Law, 1303 San Jacinto. For more information, including the location, and to reserve a place, contact Mike Driver, mike@buss-driver.com.

3/29 Bret Michaels Rock of Love #2 Tour - Meridian

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BURNOUT PARADISE REVIEWED

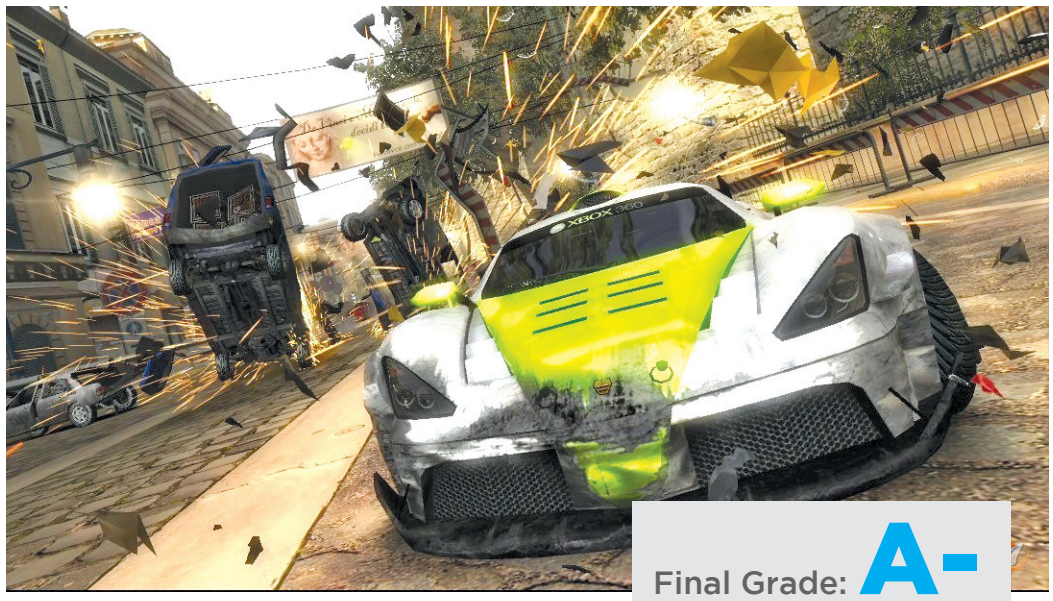
The art of the car wreck

By Tyler Barber



Buyer beware: If you have the Arcade Xbox 360 (lacking a Hard Drive), you won't be able to play online what-so-ever. Ouch, that's gotta hurt.

Console: PlayStation 3 & Xbox 360 | **ESRB:** Everyon 10+
Developer: Criterion | **Players:** 1-8



Final Grade: A-

It's too bad most gamers don't use their console's USB camera, because my favorite extra in Burnout Paradise, Mugshots, doesn't get the mileage it deserves: your camera will take snapshots of your victorious moments while racing against your friends, or feral strangers, online.

But the main draw here isn't flicking-off someone online, but the seamless integration of the single and multiplayer modes. With a tap of the d-pad you'll instantly hook up to race against, or just mess around with your online friends. Not just a great way to race either, there's plenty of stat keeping on each street that updates who's ahead of who for everything in Paradise City. In order to get all those people online, however, it takes a arcade approach to racing that may have some sim-gearheads wanting a bit more.

While the most talked about feature in Paradise may be the online stuff, offline there's still plenty of racer to go around. Each intersection acts as a starting point to one of several game modes. Of which, Marked Man, and Road Rage are definitely my favorite, and are noticeably absent from the online racing. Marked man is a one man race where your opponents aren't gunning for first place, but are trying to total your ride before you cross the finish line. In Road Rage there's no finish line, and your goal is totakedown a certain number of cars before times run out. These modes had me the most hype, jumping out of my seat with holy-shit phrases cheering the amount of destruction each crash rendered. And glorious these crashes are. Each crash looks straight out of a Hollywood action flick.

Racing across the open-city can be overwhelming at first. I lost several races where I was in the first-place position, but veering off the main path sent me into no-man's-land. Even in the losses though, Paradise's open world is forgiving enough that you'll almost never feel too slighted for losing a race. Mainly, I wish there was a quick retry option on the Burning Route races where you earn advanced models of each vehicle. Burning Route races are held at very specific locations, and trudging back all the way to the start when you lost near the finish is a chore.

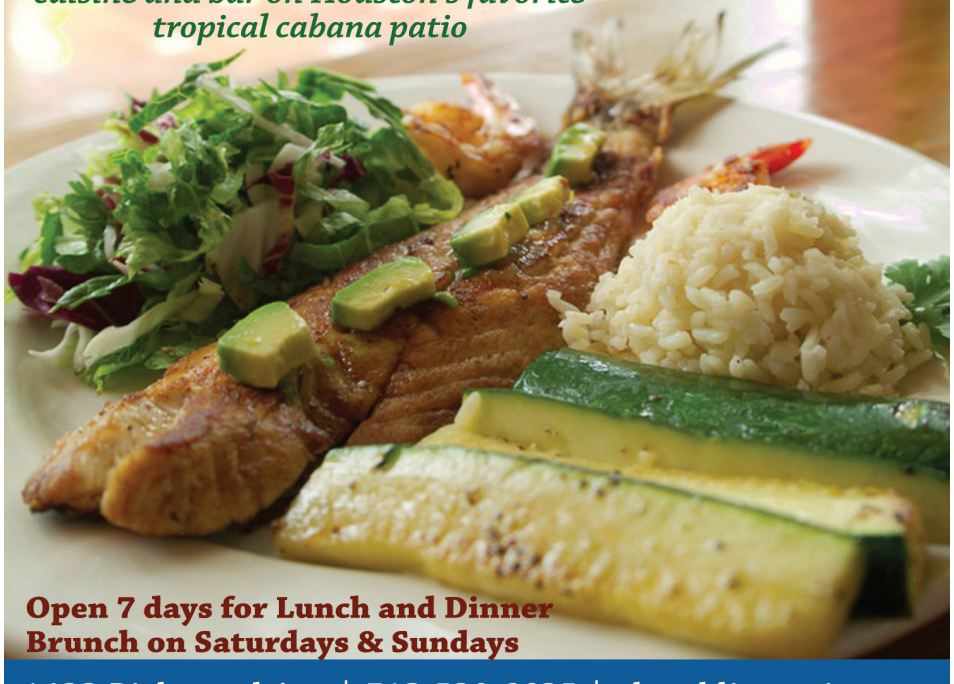
Another side-step is the gimmicky Showtime mode that replaces the popular Crash Mode of previous Burnouts. Before you actually felt like you caused this massive domino-like-collision, whereas now you hop along the road like a fish-out-of-water aiming for oncoming traffic. With luck, we'll get to download the classic Crash Mode in the near future.

Burnout Paradise does an excellent job at ushering the arcade racer into the realm of next-gen gameplay. The forward-thinking online integration alone could have a ripple effect on other genres' multiplayer plans. Even if you're not into racing games much, give Burnout Paradise a try, if just for the crashes. My biggest challenge with Burnout Paradise, though, is prying my friends from their Call of Duty 4 multiplayer addiction to join me online. FPH

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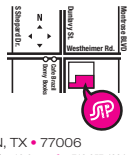
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TOP TEN SPEEDTRAPS

Compiled by Belligerent Me with help from myspace.com and Speed trap exchange



Sometimes, It is hard to tell the difference between a speed trap and the de-facto 'checkpoints' that are all over what we call 'the developing world'. The law is very specific as to not let local law enforcement set-up a checkpoint, but the huge number of speed traps smells a whole lot like New World Order.

Do your fellow man a favor and flash your lights if you know someone is getting ready to drive through one. Though you could get popped for this, wouldn't you want someone else to d the same? Well, we here at the Free Press are trying to do our part by spreading the word where many of these speed traps are and help keep you out of traffic court and put a small dent in the New World Order's plan for total Martial Law. Do I sound paranoid? Good..

Chartres at Capitol

This trap makes lots of money and is in downtown when your going NE on Chartres Street. They have three spots where they hide. If your traveling downtown during morning rush hour, the police like to hide behind this restaurant on the right side of Chartres Street on Walker Street. In the afternoons I have seen the police on the left side of Chartes under the freeway bridge on both Rusk and Capitol Street. A main police parking lot is right between these streets so they don't have to travel far to get there. The police are usually here between 7:30AM to 9ish in the morning and from 1:00PM to 4:00PM in the afternoons.

Interstate 45 North

Watch your ass. On the feeder and just after the Almeda-Genoa cross-street, some police offices will park next to an apartment complex and pull over unsuspecting drivers onto a side street for speeding.

610 at Bellaire blvd

Going north towards the US59 and the Galleria, Bellaire cops are hiding behind the wall of the on ramp and you can't see their radar gun until you are a few meters away. Be careful, because Bellaire cops are ruthless.

Bingle at West Little York

Right before West Little York on Bingle, there is a church and a Sonic Drive In and on the Corner a CVS. The speed changes quickly from 45 to 30. They sit sometimes 3 and 4 at a time in the hidden driveway and just flag you in. They do this every morning and every evening.

I-10

As you ride over bridge approaching I-10, police sit on either side of the street waiting on the bottom of the hill and catch those go over the speed limit. they also sit on the Shepherd as drivers exit I-10 and sit in the parking lot on the left.

Allen parkway at Bagby

After exiting the Dallas/ Bagby exit, you will go over the hill and get popped for doing 42 when the speed limit is 40mph

Washington at Studemont

Washington Avenue, a 4 lane road with center turn lane, is 35 mph. Enforcement varies. Occassionally, they'll setup in groups of 3 with a shooter and two people who wave over cars and write tickets. I see this mostly near downtown - not far in between Sawyer and Houston Avenue. They also frequently patrol with cars. I see people pulled over almost every day of the week.

Houston Ave at White Oak

Watch out for radar trap along Houston Avenue between White Oak and downtown. It is under near constant radar surveillance with a lower than necessary limit of about 30 or 35.

Weslayan at 59

There will be a few HPD parked there and a couple of them shooting radar directing people to pullover if they were caught. Mostly between 10am and 2pm is when they are out there.

West Bellfort at Hillcroft

There is a precinct constable hiding in the median turn arounds between Chimney Rock and Hillcroft on W.Bellfort. They seem to be there quite frequently and are hidden from view by the high shrubbery on the median.

FPH

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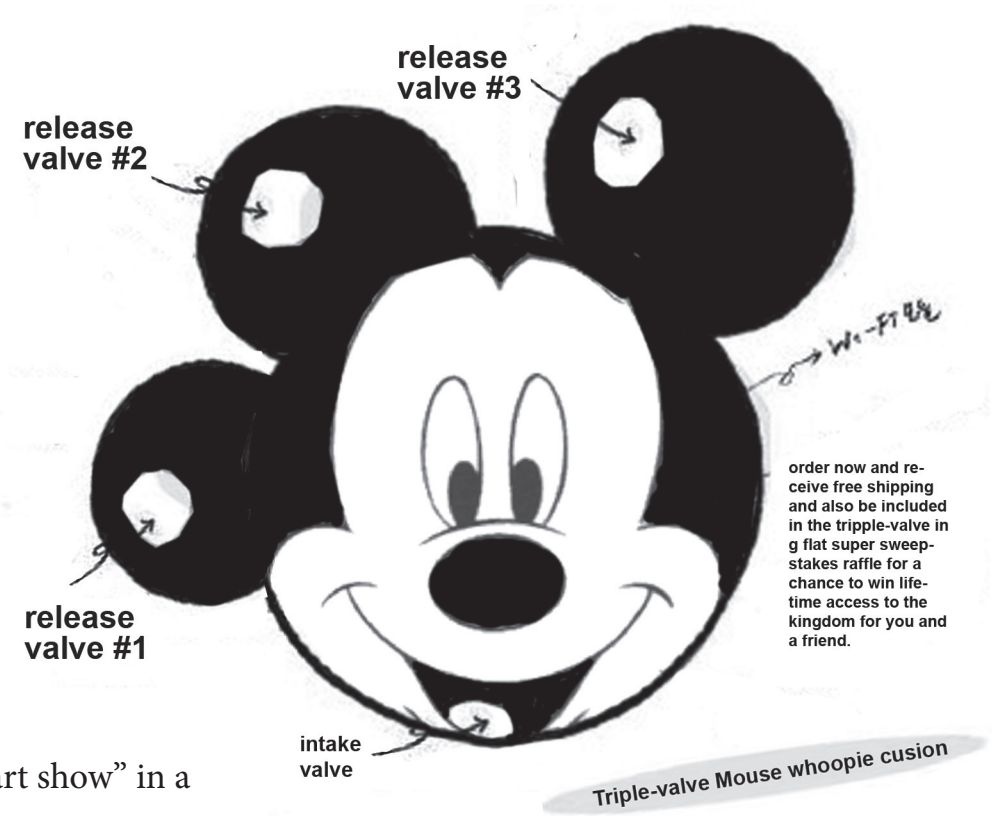


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COPYRIGHT CULTURE

This Land is *Not* Your Land

By Mike Kirby



This fall I was installing an "art show" in a local coffee bar, and a customer got upset with me because the stuff I was going to hang required taking down the stuff that was up. He didn't think my stuff (culture jamming posters) was art, and the other stuff (abstract Pollack-like paintings on canvas) was art.

I rebuffed him by saying something along the lines of, "You're going to tell me what's art?" and then laughed out loud. After the show was up for a few weeks one of the culture jamming posters was purchased by a dancer for a nominal fee. It had the words "I am not an object" written below the well-known Playboy logo. I am not sure if this is art. It's probably not; it's probably social activism. Whatever it is, it meant something to someone. There are many ways to be an artist and to be an activist.

Believe it or not, culture jamming plays a part in creating culture, albeit a very small but important one. In general, the Playboy example makes a social statement presumably for the public good, in a public place, and for profit (a couple of beers.) The question is should Hugh Heffner have the right to demand a fee, or file a cease and desist order for unauthorized use of the Playboy bunny? Artists should have their rights protected, and corporations too, but how much control is too much? One of the ways giant media corporations are fencing in creativity and freedom of expression is through Copyright law.

Copyright, as written in the US Constitution, is to "promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times.... exclusive right to their own writings and discoveries." Original copyright protection lasted fourteen years, renewable once. The idea was to promote economic and social progress in a way that wouldn't alienate individual citizens – or blind them into submission.

Over the last forty years Congress has extended Copyright laws eleven times. I am not against Copyright law, but how much is too much? In 1998, Congress passed the Sonny Bono Copyright term extension act. That's right, Congressman Sonny Bono. This law extends the length of copyright protection to the "life of artist plus 70 years." That's about five generations! Basically, every time the Copyright for Mickey Mouse is set to expire, Disney Corporation sends in their lawyers and "fixes" the law. Maybe it has something to do with national security; but however it's done, the fixed image of Mickey is here to stay. At the same time, the Disney Juggernaut practically guarantees other works never see the light of day.

For your information, Mickey Mouse was born in 1928. If you have ever had an offhand thought about making a for-profit, triple-ear Mickey Mouse whoopee cushion as an act of civil disobedience against the latest copyright extension, forget about it, or get a lawyer because you could lose your %#@$. At this rate the little mouse is "fixed" and will never be part of the public domain.

While Disney's Mickey Mouse Copyright protection is forever extending, media ownership regulations (who owns what and for what purpose) are being dismantled. This means more and more Mickey Mouse everywhere you turn. Over the last twenty five years the number of media companies dominating US mainstream media has been concentrated into the hands of a handful of the world's most powerful corporate interests. Disney Corporation is one of them.

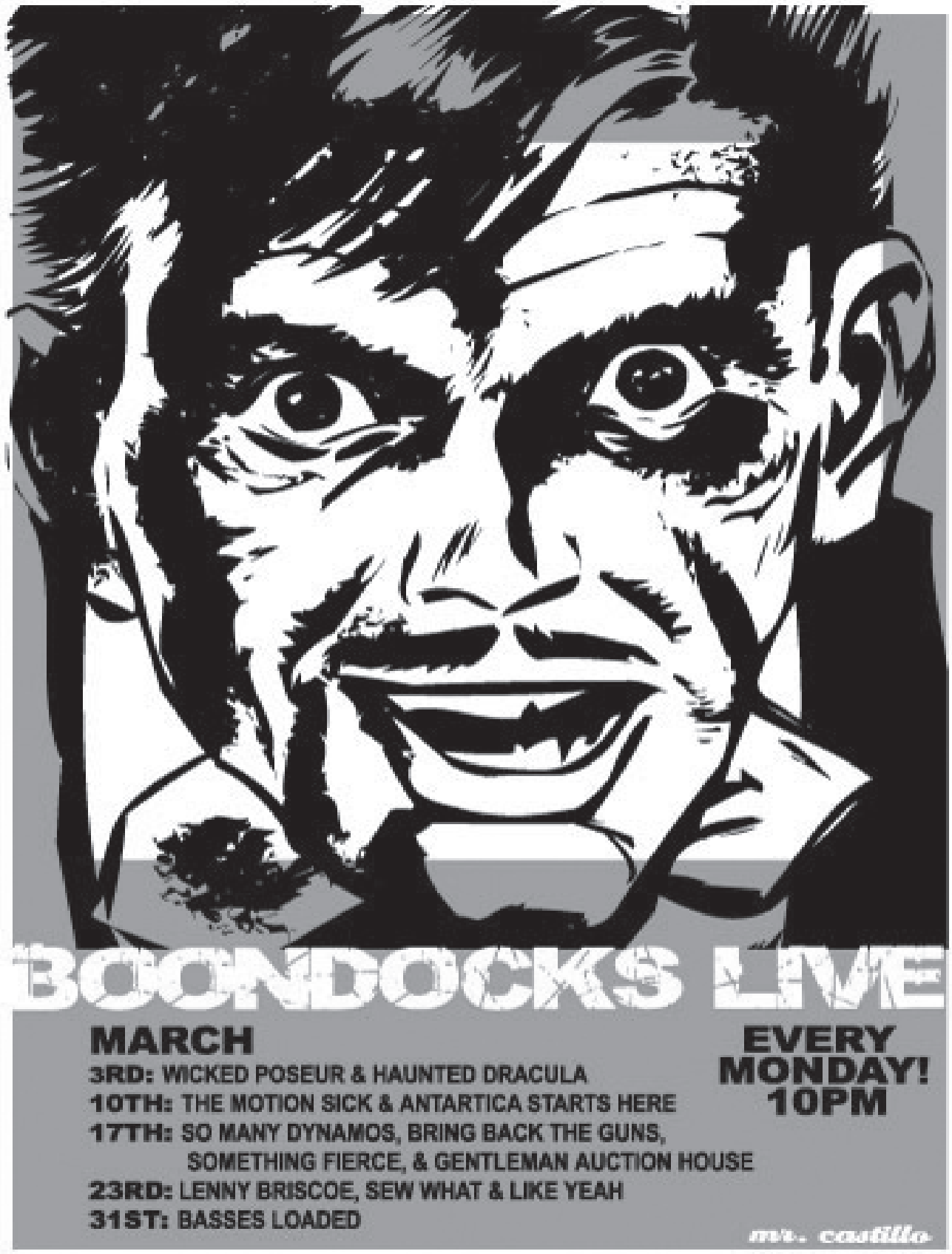
- **1983 = 5**0 mainstream media corporations
- **2005 = 5** mainstream media corporations

Today, five interrelated corporations control, manufacture, and operate the keys of the culture industry. They are the gatekeepers. The cultural commons is increasingly controlled, sanitized and stupefied by the urges of five mass media corporations who are more concerned about the bottom line than the public good. The main concern is to push consumption by selling audiences to advertisers. How much privatization is too much for the public good? Maybe a better question would be, is there a public good? The irony is today it's done under the banner of the first amendment and Freedom of Expression.

As John Berger says, the art of the past has lost its authority and has been replaced by a language of images. Today, visual images surround us like language, and they can be reproduced and repurposed in infinite ways. Visual images don't have intrinsic meaning, but the mental image or message they deliver can be symbolic. Visual images of mega brands (like Coca-Cola) have become sacred symbols, out of proportion to their significance. The image of the Coca-Cola logo is always positioned in a positive and upbeat manner, as in the 70's jingle, "I'd like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony." This is great stuff from a marketing point of view, but has very little to do with cutthroat corporate objectives. Furthermore, try to find the Coca-Cola logo next to any of the following:

- Hard News
- Health issues (Obesity)
- Drugs (Prescription or Illegal)
- Sex related issues
- Poverty

continued pg. 26





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8- TEXAS METAL FEST
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9- GUNTHER &
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10- MUNICIPAL WASTE, Iron Lung

12- AIRBOURNE, Endeverafter, Stone Rider, Mercury Down

13- GEORGE THOROGOOD
Monkey Beat

14- NILE, Suicide Silence, The Faceless, Nachtmystium

15- THE HOTEL CAFE TOUR 2008
Sara Bareilles, Cary Brothers, Ingrid Michaelson, Joshua Radin, Greg Laswell

16- BLACK MOUNTAIN

18- GOGOL BORDELLO

19- BLUE OCTOBER

20- GRANDMASTER FLASH

21- RED ROOM: SUBVERSA CD RELEASE PARTY
Rowe, Celebro
MAIN ROOM/VIP: TOMMY LEE (MOTLEY CRUE) & DJ AERO

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These realities don't add value to brand positioning. Visual images have become part of the mainstream, but the cultural commons is increasingly an empire of visuals that is off limits. To paraphrase Humpty Dumpty, "When I use the Coca-Cola visual image, it means exactly what I mean it to say, neither more or less!" Do as I say, not as I do. Look and enjoy, but don't get any funny ideas. Slogans. It's so easy a caveman could do it. I'm lovin' it. Priceless. I'm overdrawn, I'm overweight, I am a Homo erectus.

While the public airwaves have been privatized, culture jamming makes fun of excessive copyright and the ultra propertization of culture. It's natural to borrow and rework culture. Co-option is not bad. It is a natural part of being alive. Has there ever been a work of art that wasn't in some part derived from another? Disney itself was built on works from the public domain. Going back, many of their stories and fairytales are recreations of older works. (But, you can't co-opt theirs!)

The founding purpose of Copyright is to promote cultural freedom and creative expression, not, suppress it. It makes no sense to allow a handful of people to suppress culture and sing of freedom. How much deregulation and copyright extension is too much?

Along those lines, as a (serious) prank, Kimbrew McLeod, a college professor, applied for and now owns a US trademark for the slogan "Freedom of Expression," and he wrote a book about it. Our highest ideal is a trademarked slogan – a victory for freedom of expression. Authenticity, individuality, difference, and rebellion; it's all there, neatly packaged and protected. In the book *Freedom of Expression* (available through the Media Education Foundation, and selected stores near you), it is pointed out that Donald Trump not only has a trademark for "You're fired," but also a trademark for the human gesture he uses to say, "You're fired." So, if some kids put together some theater, sell tickets, and use *that* expression with *that* human gesture, they can be sued or made to pay a licensing fee.

This next sentence is a direct quote from the book (along with a reproduction of the Trademark certificate.) "As culture increasingly becomes fenced off and privatized, it becomes all the more important for us to be able to comment on the images, ideas, and words that saturate us on a daily basis—without worrying about an expensive, though meritless, lawsuit."

This Land is *Not* Your Land. The interests of the cultural commons and the public good are increasingly at odds with obsessive and unwarranted privatization. Excessive copyright culture is at odds with the technology of the future. The idea of "fair use" which protects the unlicensed reproduction of media for the purposes of criticism, commentary, and education, should be changed to "free use." This is obvious: too much single-minded media control stifles perspective and cultural progress – it leads to narrow mindedness like the kind you might find hanging around your local coffee bar. FPH



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Sunday 16, $10
NIGHT ERS, The Monocles

Tuesday 18, 21+ $8/-21 $10
SCENES & SIRENS, States of Nature, Thee Armada, Great American Actors

Thursday 20, $8
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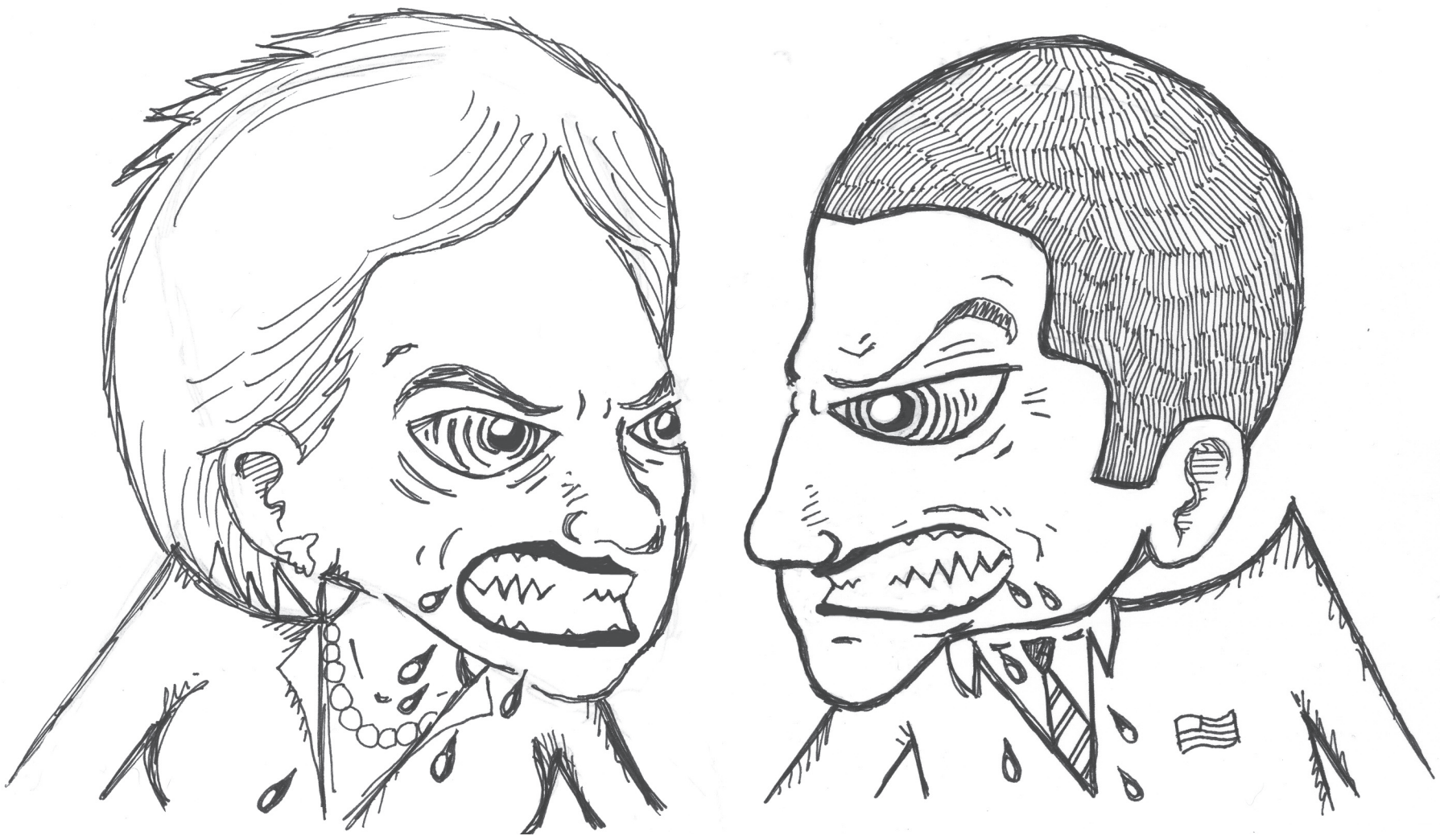
Friday 21, $5
EASTERN SEAS

Saturday 22 $8 adv/$10
DAVID DONDERO, Mitch Vegas

Sunday 23, $8 adv/ $10
TIME AGAIN, Los De Verdad, The Tag Alongs, Molotov Compromise

4 REASONS 4 OBAMA

By M. Martin | Illustration by Tim Dorsey



The Texas Democratic Primary on March 4th offers a rare opportunity for progressively-inclined voters to have an impact. Under ordinary circumstances, if you vote in Texas and you AREN'T a gibbering jingoistic retard, your vote doesn't count....because you're surrounded by people who are. This time around, things are a little different. Texas and Ohio are positioned to confirm Barack Obama as the Democratic Party's candidate for President. If Obama gets the nomination, the odds of him going on to win the White House are extremely good. If it happens, he'll make history.

I'm both voting and caucusing for Obama. Here's why:

one

Inclusion

Obama has a proven track record for creating a broad electoral coalition and being able to reach across partisan divisions to work in legislative consensus with Republicans and Independents. Both are essential for this country to effectively turn the page after George Bush. In presenting her credentials, Hillary Clinton never fails to reference her capacity for taking on Republicans in a fight. She has also never once demonstrated a capacity for transcending those fights. Recently, it has become increasingly obvious that Clinton combativeness is by no means limited to Republican adversaries. Were Clinton to gain the nomination, it would be by way of a process that could not fail to alienate roughly half of the Democratic Party. The fact that this possibility fails to alarm her offers little comfort for the rest of us.

However much Mrs. Clinton may see fit to disparage the stadium-size crowds that have shown up to see her opponent speak, those crowds are indicative of more than just Obama's oratory skills. They are indicative of a grassroots-level organization that has spent the last year working to get out a message and build an sense of participation....in other words, a movement.

America and the world need a fundamental break from the practices and policies that resulted in and are exemplified by George W. Bush.

two

Accountability

Obama has consistently pushed for greater transparency in government. His proposals include a "Google for Government" that would make the entire federal budget searchable from a web browser. He has aggressively pursued lobbying reforms, and been one of the current administration's harshest critics on the issue of government secrecy. By contrast, a principal reason why Hillary Clinton failed as her husband's 'health care czar' is that she insisted on formulating her plan behind closed doors--up to the point of excluding members of congress within her own party from deliberations.

The Clintons refuse to release their tax returns or make public the documentary evidence of Hillary's supposed 'experience' gained during her husband's presidency. One of the most troubling aspects of George Bush's presidency has been the degree to which he has made secret what goes on in the White House. There is no evidence to suggest that a second Clinton presidency would reverse this trend.

three

Electability

With the exception of Arkansas and New York, every contest that Hillary Clinton has won in the current primary season has been by a thin margin based on the Democratic Party's core constituency. Every one of the primaries and caucuses that Barack Obama has won has been a landslide victory. Hillary Clinton enters the general election race with the highest name recognition and highest negatives of any politician in America. Short of improbable landslide victories in every remaining Democratic contest for the nomination, it is impossible for Hillary Clinton to win her party's nomination on the strength of electoral contests alone.

If she wins at all, it is at the end of a process that drags out over a period of months that cuts into her party's ability to organize effectively for the general election, that alienates independent voters, and terminates with a back-room deal so repulsive to the new voters Obama has drawn that they will either stay home in disgust or start campaigning for Ralph Nader.

In a general election contest against John McCain, Barack Obama brings independents and disenchanted republicans to the table, and brings a clear and unequivocal contrast in policy and philosophy to the warmongering xenophobia so dear to the GOP's heart. Hillary Clinton only brings her argument of "experience" against a 71 year old senator and former soldier--and the record of having voted to authorize the same war she now claims she will work to end.

four

Change

It isn't just a campaign slogan. The day that a brown-skinned man with an African surname and an Arabic middle name takes an oath to "...execute the Office of President of the United States, and ... preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States..." the perception of America changes utterly--both in the World's eyes and to America itself. While electing a woman president would also be a landmark event, the implications are not as great--particularly not on the world stage, particularly not with regard to this woman.

America and the world need a fundamental break from the practices and policies that resulted in and are exemplified by George W. Bush. Barack Obama would be this country's first truly 21st century president, someone with the multicultural background and broad understanding to heal the many divisions that exist between America and the rest of the world, as well as those within America itself.

Hillary Clinton voted to authorize and has failed to show the slightest shred of remorse for what she continues to call "George Bush's War." That inability to admit error and failure to show judgment that surpasses political expediency squarely places her along side George Bush--stuck in a "post 9/11 mindset" that cannot possibly transcend the promises and failures of the 20th Century.

America and the world have an absolute need for moral and political leadership that will lead us forward... and that's why I'm voting for Barack Hussein Obama. FPH

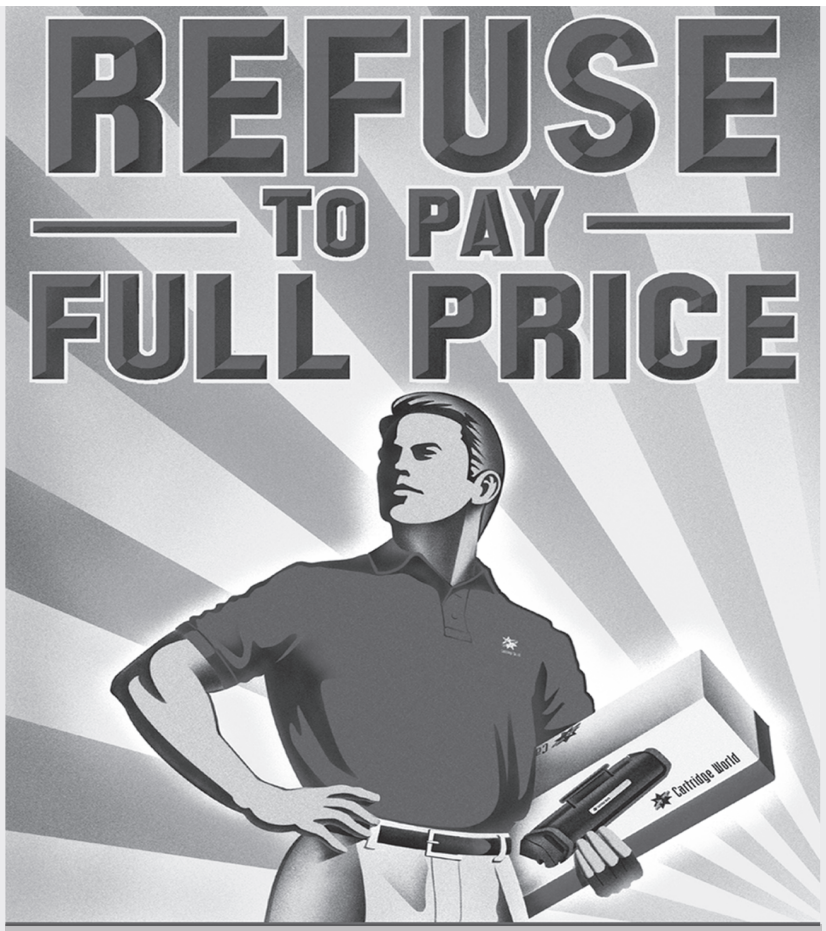
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2/14 Valentines Day Anti-Sweatshop Rally at UH

On Valentine's day the U of Houston Students Against Sweatshops ("SAS") rallied and marched to the president / chancellor's office. SAS goal is for the University to affiliate with the Worker Rights Consortium a third party independent labor monitoring organization and to sign on to the Designated Supplier Program (DSP) a system for sourcing university logo clothes from sweatshop free manufacturers.

About 30 students marched and chanted pro worker slogans. The rally ended in chancellor Renu Khator's office where they delivered a huge Valentine which said "Dr. Khator show some love to the worker's, sign the DSP." Dr. Khator was out of town but her chief of staff took the Valentine on her behalf.

Dr. Khator, the UH President, has refused to meet with the students or address the issue even though the student government association unanimously passed a bill to affiliate with the WRC and to sign the DSP.





2/12Peruvian Indigenous in Houston to Defend the Amazon

On Friday, at the Petroleum Club of Houston, PerúPetro showcased new lots available for exploration in Peru. A Shapibo indigenous leader and a couple of people involved in these issues interupted the event to bring attention to the concerns of indigenous people in the region affected by oil expropiation. Here is their press release:

Dear Friends, The Achuar, Quichua and Urarinas peoples in the Corrientes river basin in the Peruvian Amazon urgently need your solidarity and support. For over a week now, the Achuar have been peacefully blockading oil production facilities on their ancestral territory, which are operated by the Argentine company Pluspetrol and built by Los Angeles-based Occidental Petroleum. The situation has become tense and just today, an additional 150 counterinsurgency police have been reportedly dispatched to the region. more: http: //houston.indymedia.org/news/2008/02/63007.php

2/11 The Government Jails Babies

On Saturday February 9th, MECA and Grassroots Leadership hosted a screening of Hutto: Americas Family Prison. Along with the film, community supporters heard personal testimony and learned about the ongoing campaign to shut down the T. Don Hutto immigrant detention facility.

Denia, a Honduran immigrant detained at the facility shared the terrible conditions she experienced at Hutto. Her main source of stress was the fact that the food served at Hutto wasn't providing her children a nutritious meal. Her children were not allowed to have toys in their cell, received only one hour of school but no meaningful education, and were forced to sit quietly the remainder of the day.

At the time, Denia was also pregnant and received no prenatal care or extra food from the facility. She worried about her unborn baby's health and feared that he was getting sick. To make matters worse, Denia's mom Maria had heard that another woman detained had had a miscarriage inside the facility due to lack of care. Maria visited Denia and her children frequently at Hutto and tried to leave them with enough money to buy phone cards so they could keep in touch with her. Denia never got the money her mom left her, just some chips and one phone card.

2/5 Privatized Prisons for Immigrants: The Expansion Continues

from the open publishing newswire: Last year I wrote several posts about the current prison-industrial complex and the increasing number of privatized prisons being used to house thousands of detained immigrants. The rise of the prison-industrial complex is one the most disturbing things going on in this country. According to a recent report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics - released on June 30, 2006 and revised in July 2007 - there are over 2 million people behind bars in the United States.

At the time of the report, there were about 180,000 in federal custody, 1.2 million in state custody, and 760,000 in local jails. The BJS statistics also reported there were over 90,000 immigrants (both documented and undocumented) who were held over 12 months by three jurisdictions: the Federal system housed 33,701; California housed 15,849; and Texas housed 9,227.

In a recent "year in review" report, the Department of Homeland Security announced that the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) had rounded up more than 30,000 immigrants - doubling the number from last year. According to Detention Watch Network, a D.C. based advocacy group, more than 186,600 immigrants were deported in 2006. However, more disturbingly, in 2007, ICE had detained more than 300,000 immigrants. These frightening statistics only confirm this country's commitment to lock up an insurmountable amount of people; and the reality of it all, this is an integral part of the globalization of capital.

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Protesters Greet Calderon

by Sofia Jarrin

Cambridge, Mass—A group of protesters unveiled their banners and signs in freezing temperatures last night to greet President of Mexico Felipe Calderon who spoke at Harvard's JFK Forum. "Boston doesn't appreciate visits from those who violently suppress Indigenous movements and work to create desperate economic conditions that force millions of their citizens to migrate in search of better lives," read a press release that the Zapatista Bloc circulated previous to the protest. The bloc is formed by a group of local anarchists who value indigenous rights of self-governance, but many other Boston activists were present at the rally as well.

At the forum Calderon talked about his plans for investment and privatization of Mexico as a main focus for generating jobs. "The goal is to make Mexico the best place for foreign investment in the world," he said. As a strong supporter of free trade agreements like NAFTA and Plan Puebla Panama, Calderon wants to develop infrastructure from "coast to coast" and apply a strong hand (ie, through the national armed forces) to accomplish the stability required for foreign investment. "There are a lot of investors who are looking for a safe place to invest," he said.

Unfortunately, the biggest investor in Mexico, the United States, is seeking to help control of the region by pumping it with a $1.4 billion military aid package over the next three years, to be debated on in the U.S. Congress. Such aid, which includes counterinsurgency training, is said to be to fight the war on drugs, but the U.S.-sponsored militarization of Latin America is well-known for its brutal after effects, particularly among corrupt armed forces.

"If you see dust in the air, don't mind us, we're cleaning the house," said Calderon referring to war on crime in his country. However, critics of Calderon's short tenure say that his strong-hand tactics will likely overrun the rights of Mexico's poorest, particularly in indigenous-populated areas in the south. One of the protesters last night, Bryan O'Connell, an Equal Exchange staff member who just came back from visiting Chiapas, was shocked to witness the kind of repressive politics in the region. "Paramilitaries are acting out in the open, particularly in the last 2-3 months," he said.

An indigenous autonomous region, Chiapas has tried for more than a decade to settle an agreement with the Mexican government to safeguard their rights for self-governance. Zapatistas negate the classic capitalist neoliberal ideals affirming that it is not a sustainable system and would like a chance to practice their own indigenous social values through collective decision-making and a better coexistence with nature.

Yet, the indigenous claim is seen as a threat to the established powers who benefit from absolute control of the region for the exploitation of its natural resources. According to the Zapatista mobilization in Chiapas, four communities were forcefully displaced in August 2007 from the biological reserve they had been set up to protect, Montes Azules en la Selva Lacandona. Since September, members of the Bolon Ajaw community have been threatened and harassed, including the setting of fire of several homes, by the paramilitary force active in the region, the OPDDIC. In December and January, three activists were targeted and shot by members of the same group, two of them (Eliseo Silvano Jiménez and his son Eliseo Silvano Espinoza) were subjected to torture while in detention.

The collision between these two worlds has historically been a violent one, which today is emminent in the show of force in Oaxaca and Chiapas led by Calderon's military. The indigenous of the America's have always been seen as a threat to the system, yet the most recent influx of tourism has happened, ironically, because of its people's unique vision of the world.

In Oaxaca, thousands tried to make proposals for better government—a government less prone to corruption—but have been met consistently with state repression led by the state's governor Ulises Ruiz. In the past two years many have died and many others remain illegally detained. One such activist who was detained in clashes with the police in Oaxaca last year, David Venegas Reyes "Alebrije", wrote from jail:

"In Oaxaca, a state whose regions are inhabited by sixteen Indian nations, dispersed in ten thousand communities, a state in which we city dwellers are descendants and heirs to this Mesoamerican Civilization, autonomy is a reality in many towns and villages. It takes the form of self government based on traditional customs and practices. Although it is limited by the government and the political parties and attacked by the same forces, it is possible to observe autonomy in practice in many indigenous and mestizo communities, where it stands as an example of what may be viable for our society as a whole in the future."

Indeed, the same people seeking peace in the region claim that their world does not need to be set against the government's agenda if such sincerely includes, a unified Mexico in all its diversity.

Calderon's promises at Harvard's JFK Forum indeed seemed inclusive of many progressive ideals including universal health care, a safer immigration policy at both the northern and southern borders, low-interest loans for micro businesses, social security for those working in the informal market, better relations with Latin American countries, including Venezuela and Boliva, and an environmental agenda that's inclusive of the Kyoto Protocol.

Many argue that his ideals of economic growth through free market policies will sweep the most vulnerable in a continent where indigenous peoples have been denied for centuries their right to life, Zapatista-style. It also remains to be seen how civil society in Mexico reacts if NAFTA-plus is implemented. On January 31 as many 300,000 protesters marched the streets of Mexico city to demand a renegotiation of the free trade agreement to guarantee certain trade protections against agricultural items like corn, which can't compete against the heavily subsidized items flooding from the United States and Canada. Free trade agreements have been known to benefit big companies while undermining local labor and environmental laws. NAFTA has been largely blamed for forced migration to the north and the loss of jobs in rural areas, coupled with an invasion of maquiladoras that compete amongst themselves to offer foreign investors the least restrictions and lowest wages.

"It's the same speech we've heard from PRI and PAN for decades," complained Gilberto Humar, a recently arrived immigrant from Mexico who was among the protesters at Harvard. He did not believe in Calderon's promise for jobs because he said that in Sonora, where he is from, jobs have been disappearing since NAFTA took over. He himself was convinced he could make enough at his local maquiladora, where he left most of his friends, and made his trek up north.

The resistance against "free trade" is coming from all sectors of the Mexican civil society, but it started most definitely in the south. As early as 1994 the Zapatistas declared themselves unilaterally against NAFTA. Their ideals all of a sudden seem closer with Mexico's hope for their future than Calderon's vision of the same old Mexico

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The Democrats keep voting to fund the perpetual war.

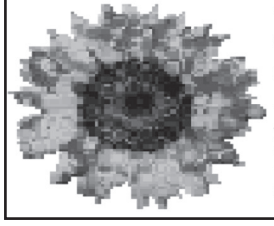
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Due to Byzantine election laws, the **Green Party of Texas** does not automatically appear on the November ballot. Between March and May the Greens must collect thousands of signatures from registered Texas voters who did not vote in any party primary.
Once on the ballot, the Green Party can stay on by garnering 5% of the vote in any statewide race. This year we also have **Art Browning** running for Railroad Commission, **Charles Waterbury** for Supreme Court Chief Justice, and several candidates for President: **Jesse Johnson**, **Cynthia McKinney**, **Kent Mesplay** and Texas's own **kat swift**.

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Can you help?



Contact the Harris County Green Party at 713-866-6285, or visit www.hcgp.org. HCGP meets on the third Monday of each month, upstairs at Central Market, 3815 Westheimer.
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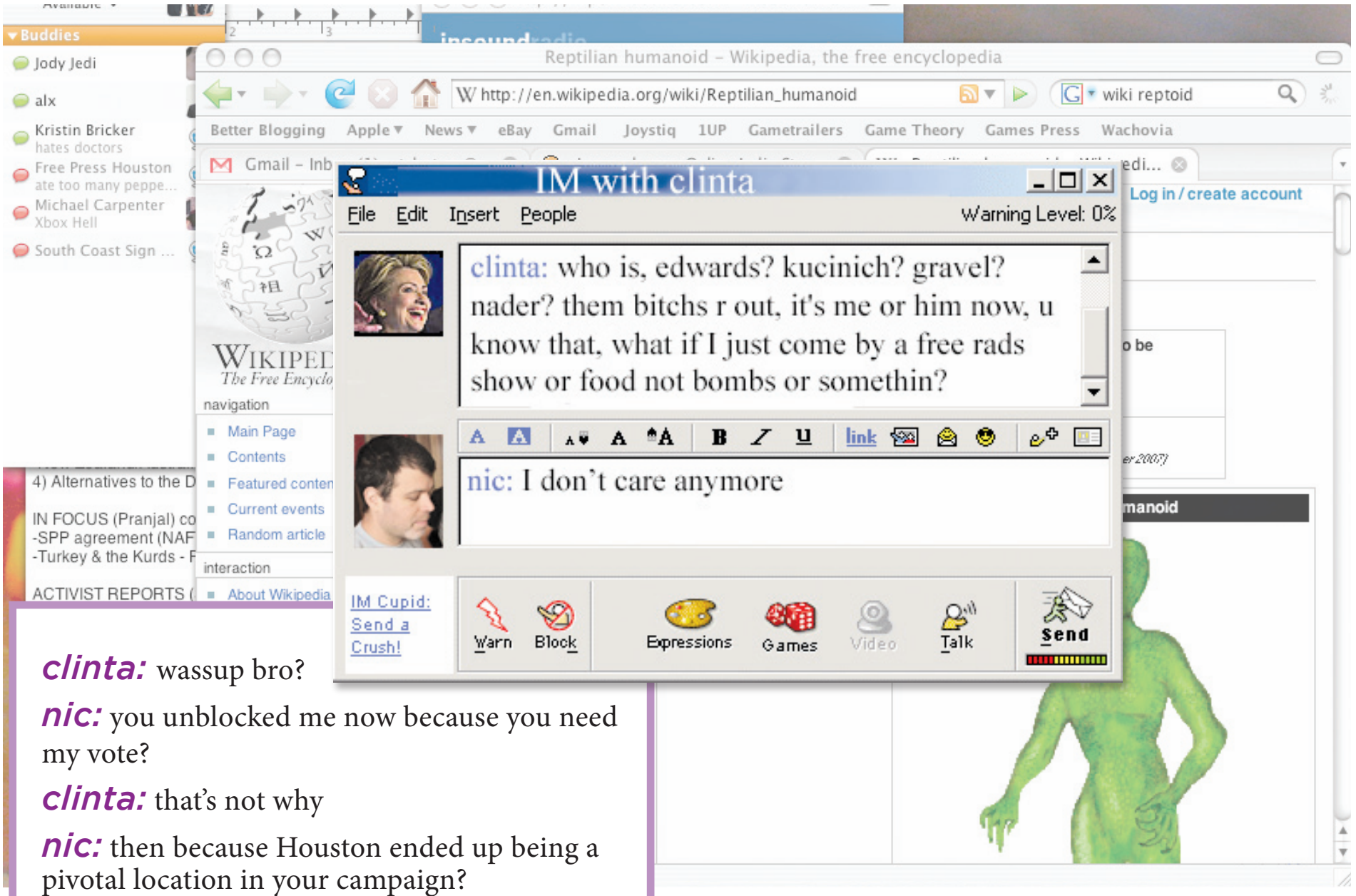
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HILLARY

Back on My Buddy List

by Nick Cooper | nickcooper.com



clinta: wassup bro?

nic: you unblocked me now because you need my vote?

clinta: that's not why

nic: then because Houston ended up being a pivotal location in your campaign?

clinta: u hate me?

nic: yeah, kinda...

clinta: more than Ob-Mama?

nic: I told you in that email I sent before the war, if you voted for it, I would oppose you for the rest of our lives

clinta: can I make it up to u?

nic: you guys killed like a million people, how are you going to make up for it? by peppering your speeches with some anti-corporate stuff you got from Edwards?

clinta: lmao.... u noticed?

nic: yeah... well, maybe if you'd be willing to go up there and make a pledge to end nafta, diebold, money in elections, the patriot act, or the CIA or somethin within your first month…

clinta: sounds like u want me dead an' shit…

nic: so… not ready to join the couple million Iraqis you and Bill killed by votes and sanctions?

clinta: nick! wtf?

nic: what?

clinta: come on dude, I'm not a monster, and if u think I screwed it up, at least give me the chance to fix it

nic: you don't know how, and they probably wouldn't let you

clinta: here we go with 'they' again, who are they this time?

nic: whoever, Halliburton, I don't know, whoever you were talking about that would make you dead if you got rid of the CIA

clinta: yeah, well howz your hero, mr. Ob-Gyn gonna stand up to this 'they'?

nic: he's not my hero

clinta: who is -- edwards? kucinich? gravel? nader? them bitchs r out, it's me or him now, u know that! what if I just come by a free rads show with a posse, or food not bombs or sumthin?

nic: I don't care anymore, ok I'll vote for you if you do something shockingly honest

clinta: like say who killed Kennedy or some shit?

nic: yeah, whatever, something

clinta: lol! ok, 'they' did it

nic: not to me, I mean in a speech – damn if you just wrote your own speech one time that would be a shock

clinta: I write my own IMs

nic: impressive

clinta: look man, we fucked up in houston, we thot the shit would be wrapped up by now and didn't even have an office there until a few weeks ago

nic: yeah you fucked up a lot of places, Iraq, New Orleans…

clinta: u do hate me :(come on man, don't tell me u would choose Mr. Bomb-bomb-bomb Iran over me if it comes down to it?

nic: grrrrrr FPH

super happy fun land

March 4th: The Scooterz, The Savells,Vatos Locos

March 6th: TBA

March 7th: SXSW Overflow Fest 2008
Vincent Black Shadow (Baltimore)
Wolff (Tuba from Drums and Tuba - New York)

March 8th: SXSW Overflow Fest 2008
AutoVaughn (Nashville)
The Payola Reserve (Baltimore)

March 9th: SXSW Overflow Fest 2008
Have Gun Will Travel (Florida), The Vettes (New Orleans)
Brenn (Nashville), Mermaid Police (Tennessee)
Band LeGrand (Chattanooga)

March 10th: SXSW Overflow Fest 2008
The Swimmers (Philadelpia) 4pm
Everthus the Deadbeats (Indianapolis)
Grampall Jookabox (Indianapolis),Mumpsy (Orlando)
All American Werewolves, Infected, Kill Toby Wyatt (Kentucky)

March 11th: SXSW Overflow Fest 2008
You, Me, And Everyone You Know (D.C.) (4pm)
All Parallels (New Jersey) (5pm), Biclops (New Jersey) 6pm
Knifeworld (Minneapolis) 7pm
Meredith Bragg and the Terminals (D.C.) 8pm
Mossyrock (Brooklyn) 9pm, Justice Yeldhelm (Australia) (10pm)
The LK (Sweden) 10:30pm, Pash Band (D.C) 11:30pm
We Verses The Shark (Atlanta) (12:30am)

March 12th: SXSW Overflow Fest 2008
Cloud Minder (Philadelphia) 6pm, The 8 Bit Revival (Ohio) 7pm
Apteka (Chicago) 8pm, Dead Legs (Tallahassee) 9pm
Jason Webley (Seattle) 10pm, Black Horse (Brooklyn) 11pm
O! Captain! My Captain! (Pittsburgh) 12am

March 13th: SXSW Overflow Fest 2008
Iceage Cobra (Seattle), Royce Icon (Seattle)
The Coma Lilies (California), The Coma Recovery (Albuquerque)
Adai (Denver), All the Saints (Athens), Hi Red Center (Brooklyn)

March 14th: SXSW Overflow Fest 2008
Minmae (Portland), Tom Vollman (Milwaukee), Chase Frank (LA)
Rademacher (California), Goodbye Gadget (California)

March 15th: SXSW Overflow Fest 2008
Thee Emergency (Seattle), Whitman (Austin),
Me Talk Pretty (New York)

March 16th: SXSW Overflow Fest 2008
Boy Bathing (New York) 5pm
Cameron McGill And What Army (Chicago) 6pm
Mia and Jonah (California) 7pm
Great Lakes Myth Society (Ann Arbor) 8pm
Angelo Spencer (Olympia) 9pm, Kimya Dawson (Olympia) 10pm
Audrey Ryan (New York) 11pm, The Pasties (Olympia) 12am
DIE DIE DIE (New Zealand) 1am

March 17th: SXSW Overflow Fest 2008
Puddin' Tang (Brooklyn) 5pm, Goes Cube (Brooklyn) 6pm
Fire Flies (New York) 7pm, Capitol K (United Kingdom) 8pm
Bryan Scary & The Shredding Tears (Brooklyn) 9pm
The Pharmacy (Seattle) 10pm, Pleasureboaters (Seattle) 11pm
Wildlife (San Francisco) 12am, Cougar Den (Wisconsin) 1AM

March 18th:
Tori Sparks (Nashville), The Silent Years (Detroit)
Charly Monroe (Connecticut)

March 19th: The Burnin Smyrnans, D-Fyant
March 22nd: Scream Club (Olympia), The Hydra Melody
Mexican War Band, Atticus & The Foul Foul Gingerbrows
Shadows and Tall Trees, Shutting Up, Transense

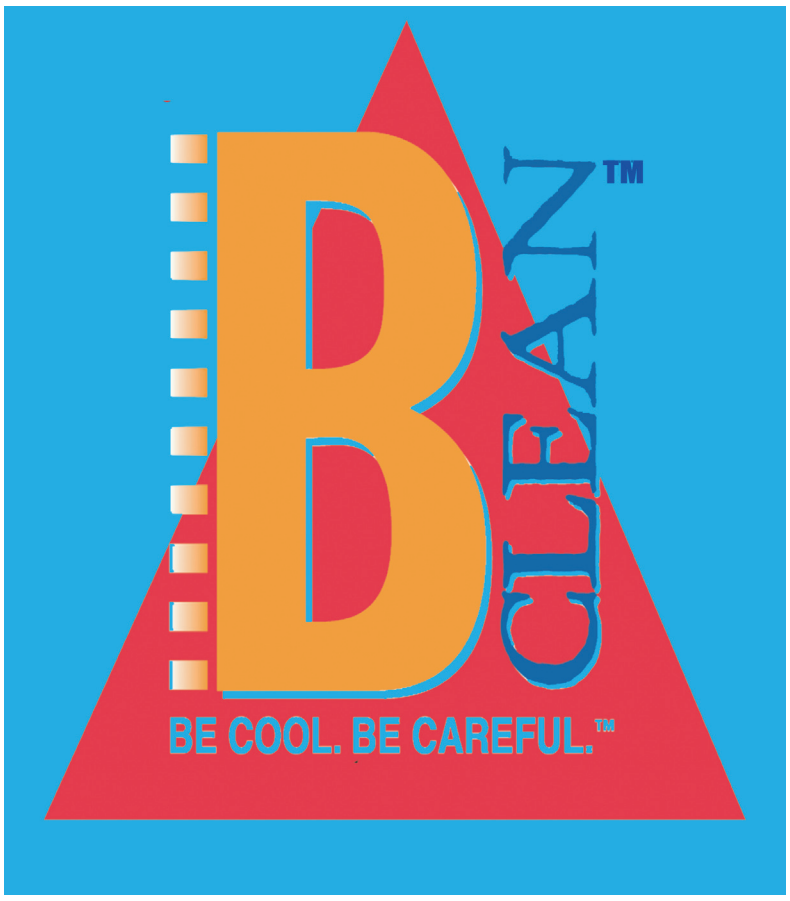
March 23rd: Foul Tip, The Burnside Fountains, Lithium Waltz
March 25th: Pericles, Lazyhorse
March 28th: Super Happy Fun Land 5 Year Anniversary
March 29th: BK & Mr. E, My Life on Film, Rage Ranger
March 30th: Punk Bunny, Ultraviolet Sound
March 31st: Nick Jaina, Wild Moccasins
April 1st: Spazathon 2008

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