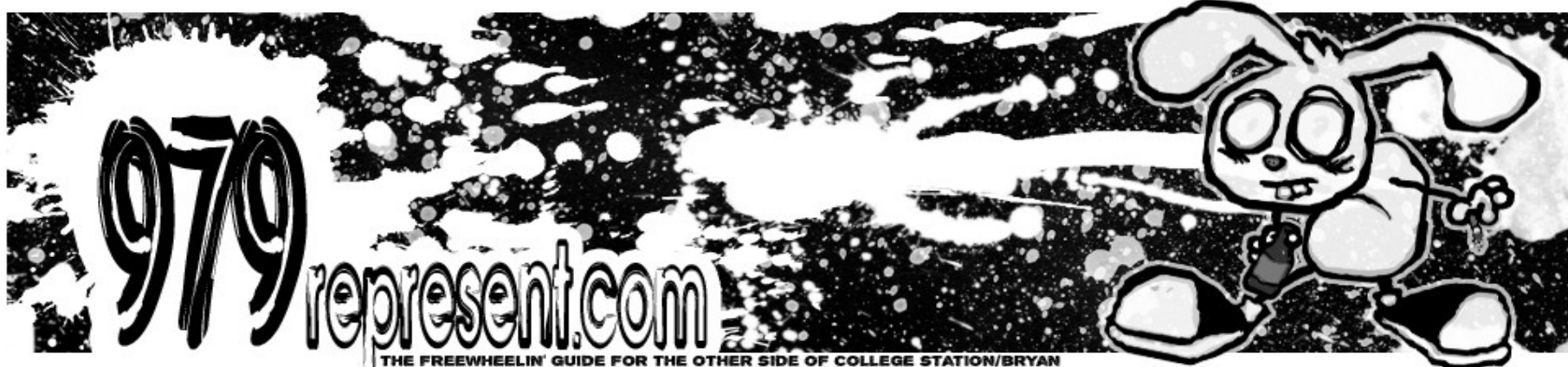


APRIL 2010
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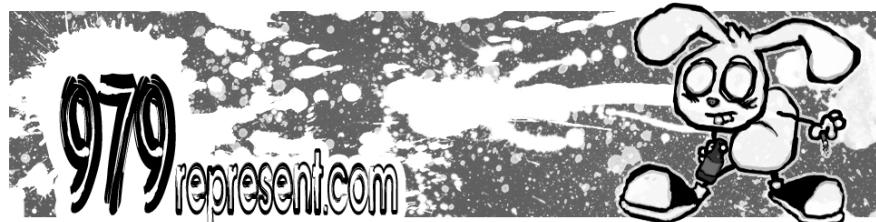


BRYAN ROCK CITY



THE HISTORY OF THE 2 CLUBS THAT KEEP B/CS ROCKING

INSIDE: 8-BIT BURGERS—NAVASOTA SK8 PARK—ALEX CHILTON IN MEMORIUM—CONCERT CALENDAR—OTHER SHIZZ



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for the discerning dirtbag.

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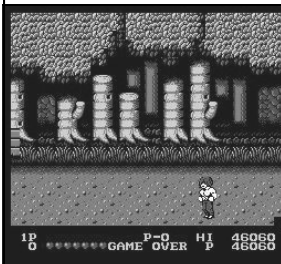
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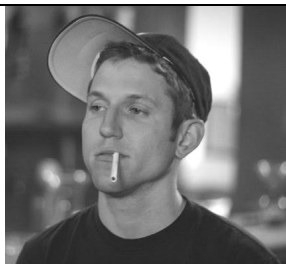
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LOCAL HIGH SCORE BADASS OF THE MONTH



NAME: Mikey Roe
GAME: Double Dragon
PLATFORM: NES (emulator)
SCORE: 46,060
DATE: 3/16/2010



You wanna be a local video game badass too?
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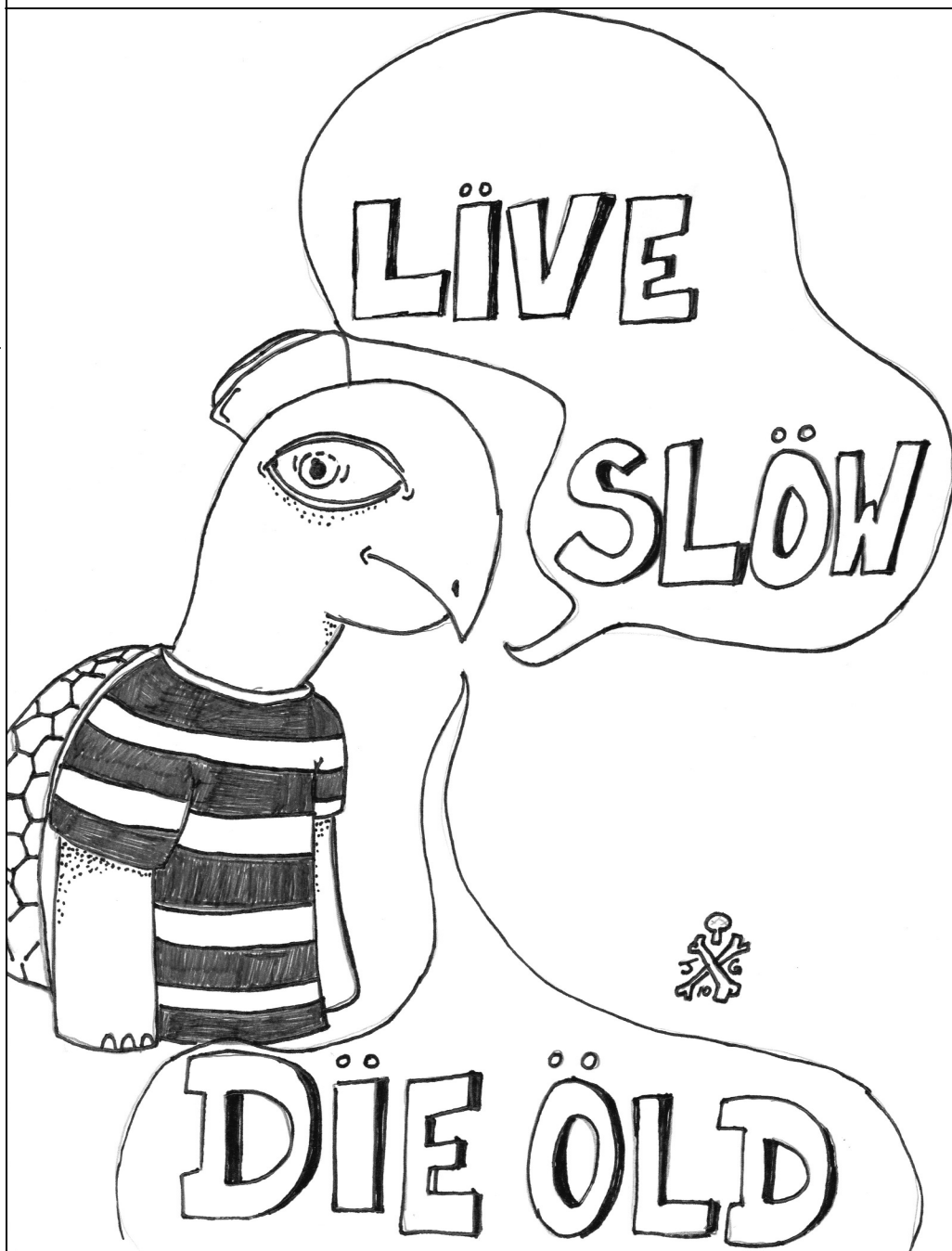
This Year's SXSW Made Austin a Little Less Douchey

I'm not gonna lie. I used to be one of those snobby "Austin" dudes we all love to hate around here. Although I grew up in Bryan, I hauled ass to Austin the first chance I got and loved every damn minute of it for just about ten years. Eventually I ended up back here and with plenty of that "cooler than you" attitude to spare. But that was eleven years ago, and a lot of things have changed, including me. Now I'm the one hating on those annoying "Austin" hipsters who can't show public enjoyment because it might let on that their band is not as good as the one they are watching or that they aren't gonna be the hippest guy around and therefore stand out in a crowd of lemming non-conformists. This is the exact reason that my love for Austin has dwindled since moving back to B/CS. Every time I go back to visit, I miss it just a little bit less. Not because the traffic is worse, but because the attitude is. That is, until my recent trip this past weekend to play three shows at the big South By Southwest shindig.

I was apprehensive and actually very stressed out about it. My previous experiences playing in Austin since the move back have been to a handful of crossed-armed, seemingly unimpressed scrawny dudes in Beate boots and bad cougar haircuts who could hardly be bothered to clap. Who the hell wants to drive two hours to play for that? And during SXSW? OMG! That's gonna be like normal Austin to the bazillionth power! From talking with other local friends about the SXSWs of recent years past, they also had lost the taste for it because of the overabundance of hipsters and shitty attitudes. Well, much to my surprise and relief, this year was a complete 180. Sure I saw a shit-ton of hipsters in dork shoes and high water pants. Hell, I even saw a couple of dudes dressed up like the murderer kids in *Funny Games*. Kind of a Hitler meets Arcade Fire thing they had going on. Completely ridiculous. I wasn't sure how they could keep walking around without laughing, like everyone else who saw them did.

But hipsters aside, every show I played and went to was filled with nothing but tons of people having a good damn time and outwardly showing it. There was no stink-eyes, or crossed arms, or snide comments while bands were playing. Everyone playing and everyone watching was doing what they should always be doing. Having a GREAT time. I got lots of positive response and gave a million times more back. To me it was like being in Heaven. Everyone getting along, sharing equipment, beers, drugs, and even pancakes! Was it because Austin was filled with thousands of extra non-Austinites? I don't really care. What I do know is that after all these years my dislike for Austin has started to shrink, while my love for B/CS has grown. Because the B/CS music scene I live in is almost always like that. People who aren't too damn cool or too jaded to have a good damn time and show it and be proud of it. So next time you see that "Austin" hipster giving you the stink-eye, just know that actually you are the one that is cooler than him.—ATARIMATT

MOUSTACHE RIDES WITH JAMES GRAY



This is my 9th year at SXSW since moving to Texas in 2001 and it just seems to get better and better every year. I know there is a lot of cynicism out there surrounding SXSW, with good reason. Most local bands in Austin are ignored or altogether invisible during this annual festival, and while this is a valid reason for many musicians to be less than optimistic about their chances of making something happen professionally, it doesn't mean that there is not a huge amount of possible fun for the fanatical music obsessive (yes I am talking to YOU).

their past records. They opened with 'Twilight Galaxy' one of the subtler moments on *Fantasies*, and it was a counter-intuitive choice that worked to build the mood perfectly. Frontwoman Emily Haines was amazing all night, blending synths beautifully with the power trio backing. A great start to the week.

The Pains of Being Pure At Heart—photo by Jay Satellite

Thurston Moore—photo by Jay Satellite

Murder by Death/Black Rebel Motorcycle Club @ La Zona Rosa, Mar 19. I saw these L.A. dudes open for Guided by Voices on the *Isolation Drills* tour in 2001 here in Austin, and while it was an odd pairing, they took the stage with bright lights facing the audience and it was a seriously cool, dark, atmospheric show. They have better lights now, and better songs. The new stuff I heard was hookier and a lot less repetitive than what made me think of them as a bluesier Secret Machines. The audience was chock full of c-list L.A. folks, and it was a lot of fun to people watch outside in the smoking tent. Murder by Death played before BRMC, and truth be told, they put on a better show. I was really blown away by this Bloomington, IN-based bands songs of dark love and betrayal. Hard to define, but instantly enjoyable.

Midnight Masses—photo by Jay Satellite



TO THE POINT

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For those of you who have been to South By Southwest, you can agree with me that the shows you can only get into with those stupid, overpriced badges are absolutely not the proverbial where-it's-at. For the seasoned SXSW veteran, the multiday event is all about the random shows you happen to stumble upon or get into for free. SXSW 2010 is no exception to this rule, but for this SXSW fanatic, this year was definitely all about free and stumbled-upon hip hop.

Seen at the Levi's FADER Fort on Tuesday was Nas with Damian Marley performing songs from Marley's recent album *Welcome To Jamrock* and a number of songs from Nas' illustrious catalog. The second Damian Marley joined Nas onstage the audience went into a frenzy. I was nearly trampled by a stampede of frat dudes running towards the stage to join their dreadlocked counterparts. In all, an incredible set! Wednesday, my posse and I were headed towards Austin's downtown on foot when we walked by some small, hole-in-the-wall venue that was piping some really cerebral, well-produced hip hop. The dude's name was J.Pinder, and he was quite possibly my favorite discovery during this SXSW. He couldn't have been more than 5'6" and was wearing nerd glasses and sporting a polo, but when he launched into the deeply personal "Go Far," the do-ragged hip hoppers and middle aged alt-rocking audience members alike were rapt with attention. J.Pinder's set was by far one of the tightest, most visceral sights to be seen at SXSW this year, and in true SXSW fashion, no one knew about it, which is a shame. M.I.A.'s new protege Rye Rye was too cool for words, and I'm certainly looking forward to seeing her again. Also, Wu-tang's GZA brought it like you might expect on Thursday night, and Friday night Bone Thugs 'N' Harmony brought down a completely packed FADER Fort. There were even people ripping up the cloth siding on the outside of the fence just to catch a glimpse of the legendary emotive rappers. You don't really see that kind of fervor at South By for any other genre, so I officially declare this year's SXSW the Year of the 4 Elements.—MARINA BRIGGS

A black and white close-up portrait of a woman with dark hair and bangs. She is looking down and slightly to the side, with a contemplative or somber expression. The lighting is soft, highlighting her facial features.




It is hard to explain why Big Star was such an important band. The band only made three albums in the 1970's, and really only two of those albums were really band albums (*3rd/Sister Lover* is a Chilton solo record in disguise). No one heard the albums at the time. Big Star was signed as one of the only white rock acts to a subsidiary of Memphis soul label Stax (Al Green, Isaac Hayes, etc.) and the label didn't know what to do with them. Columbia soon after bought Stax and Columbia didn't know how to do with Big Star either. So two albums that cast a very long shadow today were cast against the Great Musical Wall by daring A&R men without support or promotion, and those two albums did not stick. Then in the 1980s Big Star records were traded around among the burgeoning underground cognescenti and they became a sort of buzz band for the young and restless indie underground. Like the Velvet Underground for the 1970s punks, Big Star was the band that launched a thousand pretenders. Pick up a copy of *Children of Nuggets* and you can hear it. R.E.M. covered their songs as did pretty much every '90s post-grunge power-pop band, The Replacements went as far as to write a song called "Alex Chilton". I'm in love with that song indeed. I think it is partially that hipster status of lost crate classic that helped to build the Big Star myth, but if the music wasn't really *that* good I don't think the myth would've stuck. But yes, if you've not heard the band, *the music is really that good*.

When I first heard *#1 Record/Radio City* in college I was really prepared to be completely blown away, since so many bands and critics I trusted slathered themselves all over these two albums. I was underwhelmed at first. It kinda sounded like a really soulful KISS to me. Anglo-rock Beatles style but with a definite soul music influence. I have lived with these songs now for 15 years and I've come to understand a little bit better that context is very important to understand musical greatness. The bigger deal is that as I've aged and lived a little, and now I've begun to better understand how personal those Big Star songs are. I've lived them. I know what Alex means when he sings "Your eyes are almost dead/Can't get out of bed/And you can't sleep" in *Third/Sister Lover's* "Holocaust". Yeah, we've all been there before. We've all known the initial candystore sugar crush of a brand new love like the one Alex sang about in "I'm In Love With a Girl". That clash between wide-eyed innocence or world-weariness, of hope versus reality...yeah, we've all been there before too. That is what made Big Star's music and Alex Chilton in particular so special to me and to thousands others worldwide.

I was fortunate enough to have seen Alex Chilton with the reunion-era Big Star. Chilton was aloof and seemed to think Big Star's post-mortem popularity was some big inside joke and only he was in on the punch line. That onstage sense of "too cool" translated to most of the live performances I saw with the band in that 2000-2002 era. In 2005 the band released a ho-hum reunion record, *In Space*. Sadly, all the best songs were written and sung by the other members in the band. Maybe Chilton was onto something from 1975—1993 by running away as fast as he could from Big Star. What an awful yet amazing thing it must be to know that by the time you're 22 you have created your life's greatest work and have another 40 years (in Chilton's case) to either embrace that greatness and trade off it, attempting to recreate the glory and always having those balls come up foul, or to completely reject that greatness and run as fast and as far away from it as you can, even going so far as to alienate your fanbase in the process. I cannot fathom what pressure must have been Chilton's shoulders to somehow rechannel those lightning years. Now Chilton can possibly find some peace. R.I.P. Alex.

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Bryan Rock City: A Tale of Two Clubs

PROFILE BY KELLY MINNIS

Every music scene needs its focal point, the place where folks in the community know to go to hear local and touring bands, the place where new bands aspire to play and to build popular followings or to experiment and possibly take an audience somewhere completely different than either entertainer or entertaineer has gone before. Liverpool had the Cavern Club, NYC had CBGB's, Manchester had The Hacienda, Seattle had the Off Ramp...and Bryan/College Station has Revolution Café & Bar (located in the alley behind Main St.) and The Stafford (located on Main St.).

That's kinda weird. You'd think that the local music scene would be centered, well, centrally. The casual observer would assume that Northgate, with its dozens of nightclubs, bars, music venues, restaurants and shops, would be the focal point. Maybe in the past this was true. But in the last five years there has been a subtle shift from Northgate to downtown Bryan as artists, restaurateurs, entrepreneurs and dirtbags alike have fled to the slightly seedy and rundown historic section of Bryan. For Rola Cerone, the proprietress of Revolution Café & Bar, the choice between College Station and Bryan was made very simple for her. "I got a sweet deal on a sweet space," she says.

Rola opened Revolution Café & Bar in the fall of 2003, mainly from the desire to have a place like where she'd really like to go as a customer. "I counted on at least a few people feeling the same as me," Rola remembers. As a result Revolution is really unlike any other space in the Brazos Valley. Upon walking into the café itself you notice the focus on local art (it is rotated out periodically and most pieces are for sale), the ragtag but comfy mix-matched dorm room surplus furniture, and the room-length bar. At the end of the room a very small multi-use stage sets off the décor for the average coffeehouse.

What makes Revolution so unique is that it doubles not only as a typical arts-centered coffeehouse but also as a full-fledged night club, serving lattes right beside beer and mixed drinks. And Revolution also benefits from having an outdoor courtyard that is easily four times the size of the café proper right outside the door, complete with its own larger stage. When the City of Bryan's municipal smoking ban comes down (and trust me, that ban *will* come down...y'all know shit rolls down hill from College Station) Revolution shouldn't be hurt too bad by it.

Revolution Café & Bar is definitely quite the bohemian joint, and as venue both stages are home to poetry readings, open mics, academic lectures, and activist group meetings as well as musical performances. Revolution's musical acts tend to cater to that bohemian, dare I say, hippie sort of vibe. On any given night you are likely to encounter drum circles, acid jazz, folk, world music, old-timey music, the blues, bluegrass, reggae, jam bands, and alt-country singer-songwriters. Revolution also plays home to the occasional alternative rock, punk, metal, indie and avant-garde performance art show. Revolution's rather intimate size (ie. it's not much bigger than the average living room) is a performer's paradise. Although Revolution's sound system is not the best it is the ability to really interact with the audience (in most cases rock bands mostly play on the floor in the middle of the audience) that makes playing Revolution so appealing.

That appeal has attracted many world-class touring performers through the doors at Revolution. Grammy and Juno nominees share the same stage as the first-time singer-songwriter. Each year

Revolution hosts many charity events for a variety of organizations, last year's inaugural Rock The Republic, 979Represent's LOUD!Fest and First Friday, downtown Bryan's monthly open house for the arts. It is an integral and vital part of the downtown equation.

Revolution is definitely one of the coolest and most comfortable places in town to hang out, and over the years that atmosphere has helped to attract its fair share of awesome bartenders and barbacks. One such employee, Eric Sonntag, began to evaluate what he liked and didn't like about Revolution. After three years of tending bar he decided to take his experience and, like Rola, open a place like he'd want to go to. That bar is The Stafford Main St.

"After about three years into working in a bar I figured after bartender / manager the next logical progression was bar owner," relates Eric. "I loved what Revolution is but, the music was only semi-appealing to me." So Eric took out the lease on The Stafford in summer of 2008. Unlike Revolution, The Stafford has had a long history as a rock club in downtown Bryan. In its early '90s heyday The Stafford played host to a plethora of world-famous alt-rock bands. Dinosaur Jr., The Toadies, Tripping Daisies, The Nixons, and many more.

Other than sharing the music and somewhat similar origins, The Stafford and Revolution have very little in common. Unlike Revolution, The Stafford Main is set-up like the classic dark hole dive bar. It's long and narrow, the stage is a good four feet above the audience, it's PA makes the thinnest of bands sound genuinely portly and it can hold hundreds more people inside than Revolution. It is a real rocknroll club and feels like it when you step onstage as a performer or bounce around in front of the stage. There's not many places to sit, the floor slopes inconveniently and the roof over the stage leaks when it rains hard. Did I mention it's dark?

But when you walk into The Stafford you know you are in there for one reason alone, and that is to rock out. The Stafford attracts a mostly rock-based clientele. Extreme metal, hard rock, indie rock, noise rock, dance parties, and avant-garde artists have all performed there, as well as the occasional blues, Tejano and alt-country outfit. It's reputation is as a loud fucking rock bar. It is that status as a rock bar that has begun to endanger the future of The Stafford.

The Stafford is located in a block of buildings that mostly consists of daytime businesses. There are also condominiums located in the same block. Part of downtown Bryan's vision for revitalization is to not just appeal to business owners and leisure traffic but also to property tax-paying urban dwellers. Like Austin, Seattle and many other urban entertainment districts, Bryan's nightlife sometimes clashes with its few residents. "Noise complaints have been a big problem," confesses Eric. Revolution is no stranger to noise complaints, especially with having the outdoor stage. What helps Revolution avoid as many violations is that Revolution faces away from downtown Bryan and with the outside stage the walls around the courtyard are high and on three sides and it helps to

push the sound up and backwards from Main St. Recently Revolution has had more difficulty with fire marshals, especially during last year's Rock The Republic when a second outdoor exit from the courtyard had to be created in a hurry to meet the fire code with the capacity of people that were in and out of Revolution during that festival.

While unto itself these instances really aren't raising alarm bells it is obvious to both Eric and Rola that things are changing downtown since the more live-and-let-live period of the early '00s. Rola's approach is more pragmatic and feels like "it is what it is and what's done is done," whereas Eric feels a little more strongly that some demarcation should be established. "I see a legal battle brewing over the issue of noise violations" he says.

Still, both Rola and Eric are quite proud of their clubs and have established a camaraderie that is unheard of in many larger cities. The two clubs compliment each other in a way that benefits both places and the live music fan. Don't like what's going down at the Staff? Let's go to Revs, and vice-versa. Some cities take this approach one step further, like Seattle for instance. In the historic Pioneer Square district of downtown there is a joint cover agreement between nearly a dozen of clubs. The clubgoer pays one \$10 cover and can roam between the different bars (some over rock, some dance, some country, etc.) until that person finds the proper party atmosphere. That obviously benefits the patron who doesn't have to shell out two different covers. The same approach could work for downtown Bryan, since both clubs share most of their patronage.

In the near future Eric plans on hosting a "pay off the noise violations" party as well as celebration of The Stafford's 2nd birthday in July. Rola jokingly wishes she could serve some badass grilled cheese but really wants to "scrap the whole thing and start again". Whatever that may entail one thing is for sure. The Bryan/College Station original music scene would not exist without Eric and Rola.



LEFT: Revolution proprietress/mastermind/awesome person Rola Cerone
RIGHT: B/C/S punk rock legends Street Pizza light up the stage at the Stafford during LOUD!Fest 2009

LEFT: Houston avant-garde/performance artists The Dee Use make artistic terror @ Revolution during LOUD!Fest 2009
RIGHT: The Stafford's big cheese/nerd herder/chief noise complaint magnet Eric Sonntag
TOP: Anonymous crowd surfing at The Stafford.

Power Word Herb: The Shire of the Shadowlands



Weary veterans arrive home after a campaign. Having fought hard and valiantly they return to families and friends with scars, war stories, and often tokens from far away lands. They also bring home hurts, broken equipment, and dirty laundry. Some thrilled to battle while others were scared witless every moment but all are happy to be home.

This story happens nearly everyday somewhere in the world, and it happened on a smaller scale in BCS on the days surrounding March 20th. Actually, let me rephrase that. It happened here in the Shire of the Shadowlands, capitol of the Kingdom of Ansteorra. The largest contingent of fighters wearing the livery of our fair (if shadowed) land ever to take the field of battle at Gulf Wars returned home.

Shadowlands? Shire? Livery (just what does that mean anyway)?

Well, for those of us trapped in the mundane we live in the shadow of a far grander world, The Knowne World of the Current Middle Ages. Entry in this world is gained through the activities and events of the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA). The SCA is a collection of folks engaged in recreating the high points of the Middle Ages (broadly defined as the period from the fall of Rome to 1600). Their love of the Middle Ages has placed its stamp not only upon their day to day lives but upon the map of the world. This paper is published in The Shire of the Shadowlands in the Kingdom of Ansteorra. Ansteorra is one of 19 kingdoms covering all of North America, Europe, Australia, New Eland, Japan, Korea, occasionally a US aircraft carrier, and the International Space Station. The latter was claimed for Ansteorra by Don Shamino (aka Richard Garriott) in the name of King Ulsted and Queen Ebergardis during his 2008 visit there.

If it was done during the Middle Ages members of the SCA do it. They have grand feasts. They build siege engines. They sew and wear beautiful clothing (sometimes starting at "shear sheep"). They compose grand poems and recite them. They play music and dance in traditional ways. Oh, and they fight.

The oldest form of combat in the SCA is chivalric fighting which is men and women in armor fighting with swords and shields as well as spears, maces, and other implements of destruction. From the first tournament to the present day the crowned heads of all the kingdoms are determined by individual combat at arms in this manner. In addition to chivalric fighting, period fencing and archery are practiced. All are fought both one on one and en masse. Every now and again enough SCA-dians get together to fight in large (1000 plus per side) battles know as wars. Gulf Wars, fought annually by the kingdoms of Ansteorra and Trimaris, has just passed.

Interested parties can find the local SCA online. The easiest way to do so is to go to www.ansteorra.org and work your way down to local groups. While a variety of activities occur on a regular basis the easiest to find is fighter practice which happens most Thursdays at 7:30pm at Simpson Drill Field on the A&M Campus. Newcomers are welcome to come and watch and get more information.

Oh, and livery? The Wikipedia defines it as "a uniform or other insignia or symbol worn in a non-military context on a person or object to denote a relationship with a person or corporate body, often by using elements of the heraldry relating to that person or body, or a personal emblem, and normally given by them." The livery of the Shadowlands can be found on the author's picture with this column.

Addendum to last week's column: The RPG world has seen the spread of "Red Box \$CITY" groups devoted to playing Red Box D&D. Bryan/College Station is no exception and interested parties should go to redboxbcs.wikidot.com for more information. Everyone is welcome and no experience is required.

Brazos Valley Metal News From FoilFace the Metalhead www.myspace.com/brazoscountymetalmusic

If y'all read last month's issue of 979Represent, I warned y'all Metalheads that on March 15 the bands Witchaven and Hatchet were coming back to our sleepy little town to Re-Thrash our asses. Well, Folks, they did just that! Let me skin ya a slab of what went down....

The show started with a band from Washington State called Wide Eye Panic. The powerful and clean sounds of this Hardcore Metal band filled The Stafford Main. As the second song started, the Bryan Police Dept. showed up and directed that the band "turn it down" which they did and finished a great set but at low volume levels. Not the way Metal music should be played, but it kicked ass anyways.

After this, the headliners Hatchet then Witchaven took the floor instead of the stage tryin' to keep the noise levels and hard-hittin' bass sounds down so the Bryan PD wouldn't unplug and shut down the show. Both bands delivered some Brutal, Ass-Kickin' Thrash Metal music, just turned way down to the level of elevator music. Witchaven topped off their set pissed at Bryan PD and felt sorry for their fans who wanted some loud West Coast Thrash. The band gave everyone in attendance their new CD *Terrorstorm* to play loud on our



Olympia WA's **Wide Eye Terror**—photo by Foilface



Oakland, CA's **Hatchet**—photo by Foilface

own time. Metalhorns held high for these bands from out of state. Please come back and see us again Guys!

Primal, our local badasses with new bassist Joe Turner, dished out a great set of Primal Metal that sounded really clean with the volume turned "Way the fuck Down"! Primal is not to be played turned down. The new guy Joe and the rest of Primal are in the studio layin' down sum new shit, so stay tuned, It's gonna be good y'all!

Throne of Odin finished off the night with pure Death Metal at low levels of volume. Not their best performance, but being 2 in the morning and everyone worn out, it was a good finish to a Brutal Metal Music night in Brazos County.

Great show other than the fact, the Cops showed up, and the volume had to be turned way the fuck below normal metal music levels because some jackhole downtown complains. For a Monday night It was Thrashin'. Thanks to Hostile Lands Productions for booking these extreme metal shows & feeding us Metalheads here in this country music polluted Brazos County.

Now this 100 yr old Metalhead ain't gonna rant anymore bout Cops, Country Music or low volumes in this article, but i will tell ya this..

*On April 16 Zero and Falling (with new lead singer), Within Chaos, Killing in Apathy and more bands will be playing at The Stafford Main.

* Keep in mind y'all - Loudfest 2010 is taking place May 21 & 22. April might be a little lite on Metal Music shows scheduled but in May Loudfest & other shows in the works will more than make up for it! Trust me \m/.....

*Check out 979Represent.Com on the net for most shows going on this month & get off your ass and go get ya sum Live. Folks, you will Live longer if ya Keep a Rockin'.

Hangin' with Niki Pistols HTGK Dance Crew

So, this issue I'm doing something a little different. Seems Jerk dance crews are popping up everywhere and one of my nephews is into this in a big way. In case you don't know what this is, Jerkin' is a type of dance that is all over YouTube. This past weekend our house was overrun with 12-14 year old boys eager to tell me about what they do and how they got started. Meet HTGK.



HTGK Dance Crew—photo by Niki Pistols

We would love to be able to enter into a big competition! There's one in California called "The Function", that's what we want to be able to do! We are sponsored by Hot Topic right now but are trying to get more sponsors so that we can enter some competitions.

These kids are awesome!!! You can check them out April 17th at Art Relief Haiti Benefit in downtown Bryan performing with Atarimatt. You can also see them on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/HTGKjerk>.

NP: Who are the members and how did you get started?

Justin Kirkley, Kennon Williams, Michael Garrison, Rayshawna Woods, Kevdrick Jefferson, Damichael Henson, Devante Coleman, and Zach Smith. Michael started it, he and Kennon knew each other from school, originally they started as two separate crews but decided to combine into one.

How often do you guys get together?

Usually on the weekends and really as much as we can.

How would you describe this dance style to someone who has never seen it?

Well..... it's a lot of complicated footwork mixed with old and new skool breakdancing.

So, do you guys battle other crews? How do you know who wins?

Yes! We'll set up a time and day, we usually have them at The Exit. Pretty much the crowd decides who wins by who they think is better.

What do you hope will happen with this crew?

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concert calendar

4/1—J. Wesley Haynes Trio @ Revolution Café & Bar, Bryan. 10pm
4/1—Johnny's Body, Riot Scene, Dark Horses @ The Stafford, Bryan. 10pm
4/1—Almost Handsome @ Schotzi's, College Station. 10pm

4/2—Paul James Possessed, Rocker Horror Picture Show @ The Stafford, Bryan. 10pm

4/3—High Voltage Sounds @ Revolution Café & Bar, Bryan. 10pm

4/6—The Ex-Optimists, Red Meadow, Magic Girl @ Revolution Café & Bar, Bryan. 10pm. No cover.
4/6—Naked Ads, Shameless @ The Stafford, Bryan. 10pm

4/8—Higher Than Why, Afrofreque, Dem Southern Folkz @ The Stafford, Bryan. 10pm

4/9—Plump @ Revolution Café & Bar, Bryan. 10pm

4/10—The Hangouts, Something Fierce, The Open Casket, Kill the State @ Revolution Café & Bar, Bryan. 10pm

4/11—Predominant Mortification, Primal, Wellborn Road, IPV, A Quiet Mind @ The Stafford, Bryan. 10pm
4/11—Chicago @ Rudder Auditorium, Texas A&M University, College Station. 7:30pm

4/16—Killing In Apathy, Am Lab Rat, Dead Earth Politics, Convicted of Treason, Zero & Falling @ The Stafford, Bryan. 10pm
4/16—The Happen-Ins, Wine & Revolution @ Revolution Café & Bar, Bryan. 10pm

Totally Boss Show of the Month

As a Kentuckian growing up I really didn't have a lot of local heroes I could root for in the musical world. Sure, the Everly Brothers were from around the corner, as were Bill Monroe and John Prine but those were my parents' musicians and not mine. It was rumored one of the dudes in Tesla was from Louisville but that's all I had. That was, until **Dwight Yoakam** hit the scene in 1986 with his first album *Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc. Etc.*



Dwight was country, but we knew he was kinda punk rock too. He sang with Maria McKee of Lone Justice on occasion and his country was a throwback to the California country-pop of the 1960s, mainly the style of Buck Owens, who was one of my favorites from watching *Hee Haw*. *Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc. Etc.* was the very first country album I owned that I could enjoy from front to back without fast forwarding through a song, and it helped me to re-evaluate country music in general. Before Dwight Yoakam that was my mom's music. Dwight Yoakam was the gateway drug for me to real country music.

25 years after his debut Dwight Yoakam is still making records and touring, between the occasional Hollywood gig taking bit parts in the movies (like *Sling Blade* and *The Wedding Crashers*) and he makes his B/CS debut April 10th at Chilifest in Snook, along with Chilifest regulars Roger Creager, Aaron Watson, Eli Young and Corry Morrow.

As a Kentuckian I do not apologize for Billy Ray Cyrus, Days of the New or Montgomery Gentry. But you can thank me kindly for Loretta Lynn, My Morning Jacket, Slint and Bonnie Prince Billy.—**KELLY MINNIS**

record reviews



Lady Gaga
The Fame Monster

Stop me if you're heard this one. A new pop tart with a sexy look, quirkiness, and danceable songs with simple lyrics comes out with a couple of albums and is everyone's darling. You look beyond the videos and singles and realize she's a complete product of a label picked for her cheek bones and willingness to do anything to be a star. So you passed by last year's biggest selling album, *The Fame Monster* by Lady Gaga because you've seen this story before.

Yeah, me too.

Then I actually sat down and listened to a couple of the songs for the oddest reason in the world (an RPG site's weekly "Write Up this Person for Your Favorite Game"). I realized I'd been so concerned about being pure or cool or something that I'd once again passed up a good album.

The Fame Monster is Lady Gaga's follow up to *The Fame* and is the first mainstream album I've bought in years. Stylistically it covers a variety of genres. Most of it is dance but "Speechless" has more of an early 1980s rock vibe. Of the eight tracks four really stand out and none come across as filler or phoned-in. The weakest link is the second single, "Telephone". It was originally written for Britney Spears and should have stayed there. The huge list of writers responsible gives a hint to its status as the weakest link.

The highlights are "Bad Romance", "Monster", "Dance in the Dark", and "Teeth". All are very danceable and many will use this as an excuse to discount the songs outright. This is a mistake. Musically many are interesting. What really stands out though is the quality of the lyrics. Dance lyrics are simple and rely to a large degree on repetition. The songs on *The Fame Monster* are no different. What is surprising is how much Lady Gaga packs into them.

Not only do the songs hold together lyrically but they actually hold together as a whole. One line used directly in both "Bad Romance" and "Dance in the Dark" is "I'm a free bitch". While on the surface this seems like a typical feminist statement of freedom, the idea echoes across the album in negative ways. Almost all the songs feature a sense of isolation or disconnect. "Bad Romance" begs for a relationship that consists of being used while "Teeth" tries to be the user. Yet that "free bitch" is so neurotic about her appearance and sexuality in "Dance In the Dark" that she has to hide it all in the dark. She rejects connection in favor of dancing in "Telephone", which is perhaps the dark side of her first hit, "Just Dance". "So Happy I Could Die" embraces the shallow happiness of the club. "Teeth" leaves me with images both of a non-sexy (but still erotic) vampirism and slave buyers inspecting the teeth of potential purchases. While I'm not calling her the next Tori Amos or Aimee Mann, Lady Gaga can write songs that have some substance.

Lady Gaga has talked about the album in interviews and said she wrote it to encompass the dark side of fame. Normally, I'd dismiss such talk as interview blather. However, in this case the album's lyrics support the artist's contentions. I can't say if she wrote with intention or simply realized later where her muse lead her but there is a unity in this. It's been a long time since the best selling album was actually an album in the sense of a unified body of work instead of four singles and some filler.

Plus, it has a nice beat and is easy to dance to. What more could you want.—**HERB NOWELL**



Clairmont
Strength Like Lions

Clairmont is College Station's very own very modern modern rock band and has recorded quite possibly the most commercial and professional sounding album ever released by a local band. That album is *Strength Like Lions*.

When I say modern rock I'm not really talking about douchebag Daughtry or Nickelback or something. I'm talking about the commercial version of alternative rock. Like Coldplay, Snow Patrol, or Death Cab For Cutie. Actually I wouldn't be surprised if you sampled any of the fellas in Clairmont's iTunes most played if you wouldn't find Florida smooth rockers Copeland at the very top. Both Clairmont and Copeland share a sophistication that a lot of indie bands pretend towards but don't always get exactly right. Knowing that maybe the full-on onslaught may not always be the best choice and knowing how to tiptoe around an arrangement are two different things, and from album opener "Breathing In" Clairmont lets you know that they know how to tiptoe, from the creepy Radiohead off-kilter piano balladry to the filtered drums. I like it, but I can't but notice that Copeland's *Eat.Sleep.Repeat* album opens up in almost the exact same way.

Just because Clairmont knows how to tiptoe doesn't mean that's how they roll all the time. There are plenty of modern rock ballads that show off intricate interplay with the rock, such as "Oh Foolish Heros" with the dreamy delayed guitar thing the Brits showed

us all about years ago laced between crunchy guitars and anthemic vocals from Josh Taylor. Elsewhere you have hints of Britpop, hushed acoustic revelry, and more over-the-top '00s radio rock with little twists, or sometimes just beating you upside the head rock & roll like "The Call".

All in all *Strength Like Lions* will surprise you with its heft and polish. You've never heard a College Station band sound like this before.—**KELLY MINNIS**



Sorry for the Mess
Da Mixtape vol. 1

Screamo rap. That's how Bryan/College Station hip-hop crew Sorry For the Mess describes their sound on their website. On the outside that might sound anomalous or perhaps just plain awful, but this type of music is not new and you have heard it before, you just didn't realize it. If you have listened to pretty much any post-Lil Jon drrrrrry south hip-hop joint then you have heard the sound of a careening '80s new wave and '00s Euro-electro backing track with some dude screaming out the chorus. Hell, Usher take that shit to the bank with "Yeah!" five years ago.

Aside from the occasional extreme metal interlude, Sorry For the Mess are acolytes to that southern club sound and don't really stray from it on *Da Mixtape Vol. 1*, a demo of sorts to tide fans over until the release of a proper album later this year. Guest MC's like Goat and Versy turn in admirable

4/17—Lonesome Heros, The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter, Blinded By Bears, Word In Windows, They Mean Us @ The Stafford, Bryan. 10pm
4/17—The Mag Seven @ Revolution Café & Bar, Bryan. 10pm
4/17—Lotus Essect @ Schotzi's, College Station. 9pm
4/17—Atarimatt Experience, Perseph One @ Art Relief For Haiti, downtown Bryan. 2pm

4/18—Warblers PI, Air Castle Mystery @ The Stafford, Bryan. 10pm

4/20—Come Go With Us @ The Stafford, Bryan. 10pm

4/22—Dirty Little Mouth, Fareview, Trebuchet @ The Stafford, Bryan. 10pm

4/23—Twilight Hotel @ Revolution Café & Bar, Bryan. 10pm
4/23—Coolio @ Duck Jam, Wolf Pen Creek Amphitheatre, College Station. 8pm

4/24—979Represent presents The Ex-Optimists, Almost Handsome, Jay Satellite, Stay In Touch @ Revolution Café & Bar, Bryan. 10pm
4/24—Captain Incredible, The Hangouts, Blunt Force @ The Stafford, Bryan. 10pm
4/24—The Literary Greats @ Schotzi's, College Station. 9pm
4/24—Willie Nelson, .38 Special @ Duck Jam, Wolf Pen Creek Amphitheatre, College Station. 8pm

4/25—BONNIEblue @ The Stafford, Bryan. 10pm

4/29—The Night Pepperlane, Roaming Soldiers @ The Stafford, Bryan. 10pm

rhymes on "My 2-Step" (definitely the best track on here) and the group's main MC Easy has the right flow on "City" but I can't help but get distracted at the occasional screamo action. I'm no stranger to aggressive music but I'm not sure chief Cookie Monster Ethan is really adding anything to the music. Maybe by the album they'll have the balance between the hip-hop and the scream ironed out. Still, Sorry For the Mess is representing 979 for realz on the hip-hop tip.—**KELLY MINNIS**



Oxvylu / Bit Face
Split

Sinkhole Texas Inc. is to a certain extent Atarimatt's record label. We all know how facile Matt is with his Atari 2600's and Synthcart. We are very much spoiled by Matt, because truth be told most game system musicians are shite. That's either because they lack the imagination to use or abuse their hardware in a new and unique way or are creating music for all the yeasayers in the chiptune/gaming music community online.

For SHIT's first international release Atarimatt pulled together two game console artists who excel at making unusual music with toys. That would be Toronto's Oxvylu and Scotland's Bit Face.

You will find traditional sounds that you associate with all your favorite Nintendo, Game Boy and Atari 2600 games but not in a true game music sense. Oxvylu's music is smooth and at times atmospheric. There's a

sophistication to tracks like "Blankets" that will have you incredulous that this atmospheric and somewhat celestial song was created by video game consoles. Bit Face is slightly more noisy but still far from shoving the Mario-ness fully in your face. With "Sad Happy Cute" Bit Face makes like Kraftwerk and dances your robot ass to the nth degree. Together the two artists tend to round each other out.—**KELLY MINNIS**



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