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Also inside: *Operation KerrBear—Atarimatt vs. Fitzwillys Widowmaker—Pedal Pushing—GeekBiz101—The Dahlia Rama—Brazos Valley Derby Girls News—Reviews Galore—Concert Calendar*



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# OPERATION KERR BEAR



Kerry Deal-Commander is a local 35-year-old mother of three who has end-stage Clear Cell Sarcoma; yet she finds the strength to greet each day with a smile as she lives up every moment with her children. It is not only the love and compassion of her family and friends that have helped her to maintain her vibrancy through this two year journey of misdiagnoses and unsuccessful treatments, but her love for music. Her passion ranges from Classical to Southern Metal and everything in between. However, if you ask her who takes the top spot in her heart, she is going to say Guns N' Roses every time! Music takes Kerry to a place where, somehow, the pain is non-existent and her body is calm. It is this love and strength that brought her friends together to put Operation KerrBear in motion with the hopes of capturing one of B/CS's local musicians to headline the event... never thinking that two would volunteer their time!

Operation KerrBear will be held on Saturday, July 16, 2011 at the Sons of Hermann Hall at 1104 W. William Joel Bryan Pkwy in Bryan from 2 pm - 12 am featuring a silent auction, cake auction, food raffle and LIVE entertainment from **Sea of Wolves**, **Venomous Maximus** and **The Tron Sack**! Raffle tickets are currently on sale! **Kerry DOES NOT have medical insurance or life insurance.** Please come out, bring your friends and show your support! For more information, please call Louise Bryan Akin @ 979-587-0066 or Amanda Yates @ 979-739-2362.

**\*LADIES NIGHT\***  
**ACROSS TEXAS**  
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BLACK COCK	ONLY BEAST	ONLY BEAST
THE HANGOUTS	BUSY KIDS	THE HANGOUTS
ONLY BEAST		BLACK COCK
KILLDEER		BUSY KIDS



## 8 Bit Burgers: *Fitzwillys Widowmaker*

I haven't been to Fitzwilly's on Northgate in a long damn time. They used to have my favorite burgers in town. So I was pleasantly surprised when I ended up there to meet Microphone Smasher Jonny's mom and saw the Widow Maker on the menu.

All I saw was "deep fried bacon" in the description and there was no other option. Deep fried bacon. I've know about deep fried bacon for years, but have never been to a place that served deep fried bacon. Deep fried bacon. The Widow Maker is a 1/4lb burger with all the normal stuff, lettuce, tomato, a couple pieces of cheese, etc. and of course the deep fried bacon and gravy. Deep fried bacon. I wouldn't necessarily say it lives up to its name because it's really not all that big or really all that unhealthy in my opinion but I guess the deep fried bacon makes it kinda heart attackish. Deep fried bacon. This burger was great. Deep fried bacon. I love gravy and now I love deep fried bacon. Deep fried bacon. It was also relatively inexpensive as is the reputation for Fitzwilly's burgers. Deep fried bacon. I will most definitely make it a point to go back and get this one again because of the deep fried bacon. Deep fried bacon.



*Deep Fried Bacon Bit Rate:* 10/10

## BV Derby Girls Action Heating Up

On June 4th the Brazos Valley Derby Girls put on an exhibition bout at the VFW Post 4692 in Bryan to a sold out crowd. The Girls put on an amazing match with hard hits, blocking very fast skaters with flips and spills, and giving the audience the true feeling of Women's Roller Derby. On June 17th, The BVDG won their second match of the year against the Corpus Christi Maidens (Facebook/Cc Maiden Texas Derby) 137-50 at Corpus Christi, bringing their yearly record to 2 wins-2 losses.

Some changes have taken place with the BVDG with the President's position, now taken by Dani Moore (Rabid Monkey) replacing Laura Thompson (Suzie Fleshtaker). Laura and family are moving to San Antonio where she plans on continuing skating in the SA league. Keep Jammin' Laura! Rabid Monkey gave me the lowdown on how the team has been doing overall. In the last two months the Girls have been on a regular practice program, added a few new members and worked on "teamwork" on the flat track. She said "We have done really well with only a few injuries, one being a split open chin requiring stitches to close the wound" and mostly bumps and bruises. Otherwise, all the girls have become stronger and better skaters as each week goes by.

This month the Brazos Valley Derby Girls activities include :  
\* On the 9th the Girls are having a Car Wash to earn some operating cash. This will take place at the AutoZone at 2706 Texas Ave.South between 9:30 am -2:30pm. The BVDG will be asking for \$5 per car wash, but will accept larger cash donations;  
\*on the 31st there's an exhibition bout taking place at the Bryan VFW-starts at 7pm;  
on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week at 6pm the BVDG practices at the VFW. If you're interested in joining the Derby Girls come on out! New Skaters are very Welcome. Also check them out on the internet at: Facebook/Brazos Valley Derby Girls <http://www.brazosvalleyderbygirls.com/> - DAVID LYNCH



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## Geekbiz101 With Jeremy: *The Cloud*



### Theory of operation

What is "the cloud"? The "cloud" is an I.T. term for the Internet, and cloud computing, or cloud integration, means storing and having access to your computer data and software on the Internet, rather than running it on your personal computer.

### First Some History

In the beginning of the late 1950's, computing began with large mainframe computers. These were huge machines that people had to take turns using. In the 60's and 70's came time-sharing which allowed multiple users to access a single mainframe computer. By allowing a large number of users to interact concurrently with a single computer, time-sharing dramatically lowered the cost of providing computing capability, made it possible for individuals and organizations to use a computer without owning one, and promoted the interactive use of computers and the development of new interactive applications. Personal computers eventually came along because of the freedom it allowed. With personal computers there was no one to tell you no. Before this on a timeshare system you would have to ask permission from a department in order to get clearance to run your software. It was very restrictive and so even though personal computers sucked at the time as far as processing power went, they still became highly popular. This allowed innovation. This allowed people to try new things that had never been done before.

### Today

Now it seems that we are going away from personal computers and going back to time-sharing. Cloud computing is modern day time-sharing.

Google Docs, iCloud, and Facebook, are all examples of cloud computing. These programs are not actually on your computer, you just use a browser or client to access it. All of your data is stored on their computers which you can access from anywhere. It seems very convenient, and if you are not concerned with privacy at all, then it is. Cloud computing is essentially erasing the 4th Amendment. For those who don't know the 4th Amendment, it is the part of the Bill of Rights that mostly relates to privacy. It means that you have the right to be secure with your personal artifacts and information. Unfortunately this rule does not apply when your data is held by a third party. For example, anything on your personal computer at your house is protected by the 4th Amendment. If you put something on a computer owned by Apple or Facebook it is NOT protected by the 4th Amendment.

So why is privacy even that important? Many people ask "If you're not doing anything wrong then what do you have to hide?" What people don't realize is that when you are being watched you are less free. It is a natural censorship that happens when you are being monitored. Even if you don't think it is a problem to be watched it still changes your behavior. No one cares about privacy until theirs has been invaded. The Cloud also brings us things such as S.S.O. or single sign on. This is a single service where you have one account set up that lets you easily port all of your information over to other sites. It makes it very easy to move all of your data from place to place like if you wanted to port all of your data from MySpace and copy it over to Facebook. In the old days when you wanted to sign up for a website you had these long registration forms to fill out. There was a limit to what they could ask you to do because no one wanted to fill out all of the information. Now with single sign on websites can say "Hey tell us everything about you, It's just one click! Its easy! Why *not* tell us everything about you? All of your friends are doing it!" When you make something like this **SO** easy to do, it will be done more often, and eventually **demanded** more often. Take Facebook apps, for example. When you want to use one they say "hey check this box to tell us everything about you and all of your friends." If you say no then they basically say "No? Then why are you fucking with us? Tell us everything about you or fuck off! All your friends are playing Farmville why won't you just tell us everything about you?" So we live in a sad time where we must either abandon privacy or abandon the services all together.

### The Future

If all of society follows this path of cloud computing we will find ourselves living in a policed world like in the movie *Demolition Man*. Freedom will come only in the life's of the outcast, dregs of society.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbSXrH\\_CPKg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbSXrH_CPKg)—JEREMY FRANK



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979 Represent 3

# EX-OPTIMISTS ROAD DIARY

## as recalled vaguely by holly minnis

**Day one:** The Ex-Optimists are to play Here Today Gone Tomorrow in Baton Rouge this night. Baton Rouge is fairly close to College Station (six hours) so we have some time in the morning to do some things that need doing.

The Ex-Optimists rarely get a chance to practice these days, what with four completely different schedules to contend with. We are able to meet up before loading up to run through a few songs to make sure we are all on the same page. The band recently has been mostly newer non-album songs live, but on tour I wanted to go backwards a bit and play more music from our album. *Soaking Up The Cathode Rays* has been out for 18 months now, but to everyone else on tour it will be our new album so it makes sense to play more of those songs. We rehearse a few songs then pack up and begin the Tetris of Band Van Packing.

It is a little easier to make this happen for this trip, though none of us are glad of it. X-Ops bassist Steve (also known as The Beard, Stevipedia, Stevie DiCap and Big Beaver) cannot make the tour with us. Although he asked for the time off work, apparently his presence was required in College Station lest the fabric of time be ripped apart without his book and record selling/buying prowess. It was his bass playing that was more important to us, but we were three before Steve joined, we could be three again for this tour. We got everything shoved in and away we went.

The Ex-Optimists have rarely had a chance to do this sort of thing as a band alone. Usually we go on tour with our sister bands The Hangouts or The Tron Sack. This is the first time we've gone out completely by ourselves. It's kinda fun actually. But it makes for a quieter, less animated car ride. Six hours through Houston, Beaumont, Orange and across the beautiful Atchafalaya Basin we make it to Baton Rouge around dinner time.

Anyone who takes long road trips will tell you that Mapquest and Google Maps often diverge on their method of getting you from Point A to Point B. I am a long-time Yahoo devotee so I went the Mapquest route and printed out our routes for all four days and brought them with us. Upon making it in town we discovered the complete breakdown between Mapquest and reality. Luckily, Michael has an Android phone with a truly awesome GPS function that took care of us. My poor 3G iPhone cannot even pretend to hang with the Android's functionality. I felt a little jealous.

We reach the club finally, a good 90 minutes ahead of rocking time. We are a bit agog at what we see. I knew going into it that Here Today Gone Tomorrow is a thrift store. I was unprepared for the enormity and the sprawl of it, the former motel turned warehouse of discarded ephemera. We eventually dispatch to find dinner. A quick consultation of Robot Bitch (our fond pet name for the Android's GPS voice) leads us to George's. We had hoped we could get a little local "color" when it came time to eat and this place was about as colorful locally as you could ask for. After filling our guts to busting with crawfish etouffee, fried catfish and "gator balls" we picked up some beer and went back to the club.

Here Today Gone Tomorrow is all ages, and is set up with a main floor stage area. A nice PA set up, a little bar area (no alcohol) and an upstairs area with couches, tables and chairs. Our host Jason tells us we can drink in the back room so we head to our "green room" in the back and crack open PBR's and Abita Ambers and start to get loose. The first act, Jesse Brooks, plays acoustic guitar singer-songwriter stuff for what seems like two hours. We hang out in front of the club, sitting on converted van benches (an ingenious idea) and talking to Michael's friend Annie (who is as cute as a button, as my mother would've said) and her friend Jeremy who drove up from New Orleans to rock out with us. We quickly raid the donation cage outside for fun things to play with, like Hands On Bible and a half-broken Tony Hawk remote control skateboard thing. Tony Hawk is on the board, crouched down and with an enormous package and it cracks us up. Lewd photos ensue. Later, after Youtube videos of obscure but compellingly cute animals, The Ex-Optimists take the stage.

We played okay. Not great, but not horrible either. We started off a little fast, and my guitar playing never seemed to recover from it the whole night. Vocals are good, mainly because I have taken to wearing earplugs on stage. This night I only use one plug so I can get a better gauge on what's going on with my guitar tone. Big mistake. So I became only half-deaf. It is distracting to play because our friends Annie and Jeremy are downstairs with us, but a bunch of mostly high school-aged girls (waiting for the headliner band) sit upstairs in short shorts/skirts, putting their pretty manicured feet up on the railing and pretty much giving us all beaver shots. So I concentrate on looking anywhere BUT upstairs.

After 35 minutes of making noise we call it quits for the night. I think the high schoolers were baffled by our sound. We're not pretty (well, Jess is), we don't play pop music and we are BRUTALLY LOUD for a small band. So we're not making many friends tonight. The club owner loves it though since he is close to 40 and is familiar with the bands The X-Ops rip off. He tells us the hardcore punk rock dude running the door told him that we were really loud. Jason got tickled about that, considering the punk's band is just as loud. We down a few more beers and attempt to be social but the Baton Rouge crew ain't having it. So we go back to the "green room" and listen to Ronen, the last band of the night. These guys have a serious Death Cab For Cutie/Copeland crush. They are a much nicer band than us. Decent songs, good sound, cute singer...I can definitely see why the kids would prefer that to us. But it's rather boring to me so I just drink in the back.

Eventually the night comes to a close. We take \$45 at the door (yay!) and Jason allows us to sleep in the club ("just lock behind you in the morning guys!") We drag in mattresses from the warehouse. I check out pretty early but Jess/Michael stay up drinking and hanging out with Annie and Jeremy.

### 979 Represent 4

**Day two:** I'm up at 6AM because the club seems insanely bright. I'm afraid I've overslept, and this

day is our longest drive of the tour, to Evansville, IN for TJ's Stockyard Inn. A quick glance at the phone tells me not to worry, but I begin to clean up/pack up, etc. We get back in the van by 7:30a and head out of town. I wind up going onto the wrong interstate (needed 12, not 10) and whilst doubling back took the only war wound for the tour: a sizeable rock chip in the windshield courtesy of a dump truck ahead of us on the entrance ramp. Way to go, dude.

We are playing Evansville because it is the closest I can get to my hometown of Owensboro, KY (about 30 minutes away). We make it to Evansville after like eleven hours of driving, an interesting lunch at a Waffle House somewhere in Mississippi with a waitress who screws up our order and mistakes us all for tattoo artists (interesting choice there) and we finally make it to Evansville, but not before having another rift between Mapquest and Robot Bitch.

We discover that TJ's is, well, smack dab in the middle of a neighborhood and across the street from The Projects (that look amazingly like the PJ's I spent a year in when I was 8 y/o). We walk into the bar and it was like the sitcom cliché of the record skipping when people who clearly don't belong show up somewhere. The club is small, but it is more of a hardcore 40-something's alcoholic bar than it is a rock and roll venue. Sure, they let bands play in the other room, but only if it doesn't distract from dead-end drinking.

We hang out at the patio out front for a bit, drink a beer or two and let Android tell us where to eat. We were led to Turonis Pizza and Brewery and boy was it ever a lucky break for us! Walking in feels like going to an Italian supper club with private rooms on the right. We have a few of the onsite brews and an awesome three pepper thin crust pizza that I am getting the tummy grumbles just thinking about right now. After getting awesomely full and a little buzzy, we head back to the bar. My friend Holly from high school has showed and we hang out and wait. Then a few more of my friends and the other bands show up and it begins to feel more comfortable. Eventually it is time to rock, and my friends The Dashing Skull Club get to work.

One small word about the DSC. This is the last band I was in before I left Owensboro in 1994. And they are still mostly together, at least the core members Larry and Jeff are still together and still play a few songs from back then. When I was in the band DSC was more like a cult that played rock & roll. We had a drug dealing bass player, a guitarist who refused to learn the songs (he'd just noodle along) and we rented out a practice house that became a gathering area for most of the area's freaks. The New Millennium version of the DSC are a real band and rock like it. Jeff still twists and dances like a fish out of water, Larry still plays incredible lead guitar, but now with our youngest fan from back in the day Aaron playing harmony leads and a good solid rhythm section. Jess in particular liked DSC.

We load in, set up and get to rocking. Sadly, the handful of people there for the DSC have mostly gone. So we play for my three friends and eventually a black dude who wandered in and was totally into it. This time I went for both ear plugs and had a better time with it, but the club itself was so smoky (short ceilings and no ventilation) that my voice is shot and I'm pitchy. Musically though we played better than Baton Rouge. Jess, eventually tiring of being ignored from the other room, takes her shirt off. Those of you reading this in B/CS know that this is not really anything special. Half of Bryan/College Station has seen her topless by this point. But I wanted to see what the reaction would be at TJ's Stockyard to a half-naked girl drummer. And the response was... meh. No one really paid attention. Twas kinda funny. Michael has some guitar trouble (his signal kept cutting out) but he bears it. As we get into the last song (which is almost always "Do No Harm") the mic cuts out, so we wing it instrumental style, which actually worked surprisingly well. Said black guy (Richard was his name) got down with us and we eventually lost one of my friends because it was too fucking loud. Another X-Ops success.

We load out quickly and hang out with Richard out front (as all my friends have cut out and DSC have left by this point). He and a couple of other older dudes who remember '70s rock from high school were talking about how great we were and they scrounged up some money for CD's and t-shirts. These dudes reminded me so much of Robert Pollard of Guided By Voices' Dayton crew that I was moved to dub these three the Evansville Chapter of The Monument Club. It was pretty rad actually, just shooting the shit with regular people who may or may not be meth heads and are most certainly drunk and having a good time.

The host band Star Pupil takes the stage and play Korn-like nu metal. I hate this kind of music with all of my fiber so I stay outside. Eventually I take a text from my friend David Daniels, who is putting us up for the night in Owensboro, that we need to come on while he's still awake. So I go inside to fetch Michael and Jess. Once inside, I am greeted to a song about "killing the retards". It gives me pause. Michael says that I haven't heard the half of it, since I just missed the white supremacist song right before this one. I am more than a little whigged out at this point. We say our goodbyes (apparently TJ the bar owner plays music and actually liked us) and head out to Owensboro.

After our next letdown from Robot Bitch we finally make it to Dave's hideaway,

and become immediately and deeply jealous. David and his crew have an awesome 1600 or so sq. ft. rock space complete with several drum kits, tons of guitar amps, PA gear, recording stuff, couches, weights, etc. It is like the ultimate rock dude's man cave. Michael and I ooh and ahh over all the awesome gear (the Matamp head/ 6x12 cab and '70s SG in particular) and eventually David leaves us to get some sleep. Sadly, very little of that occurs because it is hot out there and the horseflies keep biting us.

**Day Three:** We get up around 7am and groggily prepare to travel. Michael brings in his pedalboard to see if he can ascertain what's up with the cutting out the previous night. We figure out it's just a bad patch cable. We thank our friend David for his hospitality and hit the road by 10am. Today we have a fairly short trip to Memphis to play at P&H Café with our friends Modern Convenience and Chinamen. But because it is such a short trip I ask the band if they'd like to call an audible and go to Memphis by way of Nashville, since neither of them had ever been there before. I lived in Nashville off and on for six years and I've got family there so it's only natural I wanted to go there. But I wanted to do some things that I don't normally do when I go there, some things the band would appreciate, so that is our destination for the day.

We make Nashville at lunch time and head towards downtown. This is always a surreal experience for me because Nashville is so radically different than it was when I went to school downtown on 8" and Broadway at Hume-Fogg Magnet High School in 1989-1991. Downtown then was seedy, the province of transsexual hookers, drug dealers and hardcore alcoholics. The places I used to hang out, walk, skateboard, eat...they are all gone now. Broadway has become a serious tourist trap. But I figure Jess and Michael ought to see it, plus we should be able to grab some grub and take Michael to worship at the shrine that is Gruhn Guitars, one of the premiere vintage guitar stores in the world. Sadly, Gruhn is only open by appointment now on Saturdays (what the fuck? I mean really gauche) so we have lunch at a touristy but very beer friendly joint on Broad. We are turned on to local brewery Yazoo and drink some more brown oat soda. We make plans to meet up with my older brother at Third Man Records.

After surviving another Robot Bitch snafu involving the world's slowest train we make it to Third Man. For those of you that don't know, this is Jack White's record shop. Yes, *that* Jack White. It is seriously tiny and somewhat uncomfortable to be in if more than six people are inside. But it is cool as shit inside. Jack only sells records he puts out on the Third Man imprint, and we got the check out some other really cool White Stripes ephemera, and meet up with my brother. Jess and Michael score some 45's, I buy a shirt and off we go. We also take in Grimey's Record Store and Corner Music/Forks Drum Closet (the best drum shop in the world) before heading out of town.



The Evansville Chapter of The Monument Club, featuring our friend Richard who looks like Of Dirty.—Photo by Wonko

It has been 16 years since I've played in Memphis. We are led through some really awesome neighborhoods to the P&H Café, which finally looks like the kind of place we should be playing at. We noodle around a little and then set out on foot to find some grub. We eventually land at a bar down the road a few blocks and listen to some soul on the jukebox, drink some more Yazoo porter and have some fine pub burgers. Then we go back to the club with a good two hours before it's time to play. So we mill about, drink pitchers of PBR, shoot pool, wander around and eventually go comatose on the back patio. Two dudes eventually show up who look like band guys (I remember what the dudes in ModCon look like but not Chinamen). I mistake them for Chinamen and we start talking. We practice our fistpumping while listening to the jamz that spill out the doors to the smoking area of the bread factory turned awesome music store sadly now turned into a guidowannabe club. I find a plastic quarter machine Houston

Oilers football helmet on the patio and take that as a good sign. We go in.

Eventually we play. There's a good sized crowd and we are feeling limber. We turn it on and completely turn it out. Best show of the tour by far, maybe one of the three best shows we've ever played. The combination of exhaustion, cheap beer and a good crowd finally gets to us and we just EXPLODE. We nail all the songs. Then Modern Convenience comes up and kills it. Then Chinamen comes up and just COMPLETELY floors us. They are much noisier than we remember them from last year's Loudfest. All in all it is the only bill we've played this tour that makes sense, that feels right. Memphis is magic.

We hang out with our new friends Bobby and Sterling. We marvel at Bobby's incredible moves while dancing to the bands. Dude will jump on a table and then jump down to land on his knees, and then bounce right back up into the Molly Ringwald Jerk. He is spastic in all the right ways. He should front a band. I think he might already. We love Memphis, and Memphis loves us. We pedal away most of the rest of our tour merch, drink some more to the point of near oblivion and eventually drive away to ModCon Mikey and Maggie's place to crash.

**Day Four:** We accidentally sleep in til 10:30a. While our bodies fully appreciate it, it messes up our timeline real good. So we hurry to pack and hit the road. We stop in Little Rock and have a leisure meal at the Flying Saucer where we are wowed by brauts and me in particular by a seriously awesome Moylan Scottish Ale. About 60 miles east of Texarkana it begins to rain and we go through several hours of thunderstorms (some pretty strong) across northeastern Texas. We drop off the interstate and go the back way through Lake Palestine, Tyler (where we have our first and only fast food meal of the tour) and slog our way back to town through some heavy lightning. Finally we arrive in College Station around 10pm. Tour complete, band cashed. Van unpacked, Michael and Jess dropped off, and back to normal life.

All tolled, the tour was a success. We had fun, played some good shows, enjoyed some fine food and spirits, and had some surreal OMG moments.

# Black Cock

as profiled by Kelly Minnis

Austin rock trio Black Cock is the strangest band I've ever encountered. Musically, it's hard to tell whether they are way behind the curve or way ahead of it, melding mid '90s math rock and cyborg synthesizer soundtracks with the playful theater of early '70s progressive rock. What sounds like musical dilettantism on page comes out like a roaring beast of a sound that can physically slam you against the wall in the back of the room. It is loud, joyful, whimsical and nearly impossible to wrap your head around. And that is why Black Cock is so fascinating to me. They sound like no one else in Texas. They kinda sound like Six Finger Satellite. They kinda sound like Bjork backed by a rock band. They kinda sound like a less removed Autolux. They sound *completely* like Black Cock.



Black Cock has its origins in the partnership between drummer Benjamin Kent and singer/guitarist/programmer Chico Jones. "Ben sat in with my previous band," remembers Jones, "and then we stopped playing so much because I was sick of what we had been doing." The band devolved into just the two of them, but then Kent quit the band to come to College Station to attend Blinn. "After Ben got back from school we began to write together again, and it was clear from the start that we were onto something new." Jones and Kent attempted to marry crazy drones with live drums but it wasn't exactly working as planned, so the two completely altered their approach, streamlined their sound and the real foundation of Black Cock was laid.

At this point Black Cock had two other guys, but Jones and Kent both wanted "female energy upfront" so the duo pared off and began auditioning a steady stream of women singers. Jones' girlfriend Whitney Lee watched all these women come and go and thought to herself "Why don't I try it?" Lee remembers her rationale: "Even if I'm awful it won't be as bad as any of the other people who tried out!" Lee played music growing up in Ohio, but had spent the better part of the 2000's as a visual artist and photographer. Lee was the missing piece of the puzzle for the band, and the modern Black Cock came together.

But not without more growing pains. The band live presents itself as a trio, with Kent playing drums against a click track to guide the beat over the prerecorded synthesizers, performed by Jones on vintage analog synthesizers. "At first my brother Jordan played keys with us," says Lee, "but he moved away from Austin." Rather than replace him, Black Cock decided to stick to being a trio plus tapes. "Different people bring different things to the table," relates Jones, "but I think we decided after awhile that it was better to keep some things to the core of the band, so now we are down to our essentials." The synthesizers are a key part of

the band both live and on album. The band's most recent album *Robot Child With a God Complex*, mixes the aggressive guitar with synthesizers not only as tonal instruments but also as a provider of mood and color, and sometimes completely siphoning those traits entirely from the music. Live, the band presents the music EXTREMELY LOUD ("we gotta play loud to get over Ben's drumming!") with the canned synthesized bass so loud you can feel it in your chest. Lee also provides some keyboards between vocal lines. "We had two guitars at first but we were always after different sounds so we added the keyboards and it was like a taboo,"

explains Jones. "There's a stigma for synths in a rock band but I thought it was a cool challenge to take something out of context and make it rock."

The keys definitely add a different flavor to the band, but the most arresting part of the band's performances come from Whitney Lee. She alternates between the guises of a petulant grade schooler mid-tantrum and an otherworldly explosion of hair and klaxon voice, turning all the female singer rock and roll stereotypes upside down. "I don't really think about what I'm doing so much, I'm just trying to have fun with it," Lee explains. "It should be like sex. I'm gonna screw the way I screw and have fun with it." Jones feels there's more to it than that. "I think Whitney has something fresh and different just because she doesn't have to unlearn a lot of the typical female frontwoman tropes, she's free to just be herself and do what feels best."

It is Lee's combination of whimsy and sass, along with the anti-rock synthesizers, that help leaven the otherwise very male and aggressive sound of the band and make it something unique. "When you are 20 and you're pissed at the world you play with a certain aggression," Jones says, "but our loudness is more like that of a 12-year-old goofball kid,

all wonder and joy and excitement." Or as Lee puts it, "We have these rhythmic nuances and keyboard textures, but it's all tied into this aggression and a maturity of songwriting."

At the core of *Robot Child With a God Complex*, Black Cock's debut CD, are claustrophobic pop songs trying desperately to crawl to the forefront. "Starfleet Destroyer" has a winning bubblegum '70s Saturday morning cartoon cheery boy-girl back and forth thing filtered through distortion and whining Moog; "45" buries the darkened tentativeness of the vocals beneath heavily tremoloed guitars and helicoptering LFO's and math-rock drums; "Cheating" makes you think they are gonna play straight with you before it explodes into feedback guitar and harmony vocals.

*Robot Child With a God Complex*, is now a couple of years old, and the band has already written the lion's share of its follow-up and has been performing new songs for awhile now. But don't expect a full-length release any time soon from Black Cock. "We'll release it as we finish it," Jones says. "It helps us to think more about the individual songs this way, concentrate on one song as the end result rather than how a bunch of different songs can fit together." All three members of Black Cock agree that releasing individual singles is most likely how Black Cock will work in the future, with a possible vinyl-only EP to follow. "Playing in a band is like operating a business," laments Jones, "and who of us signed up for that?! It's a challenge to figure out how to properly release and promote your own work, so much so that you *really* have to love what you are doing to go through with it all." The band has had its share of challenges

figuring out the business side of modern musicmaking, booking and promoting shows and how to be heard in the incredible melting pot of talent known as Austin. "The band business is one thing, the bar business is another," explains Jones. "If you play music in front of people then you have to prepare yourself for the commerce side of things, or why else give your band a name or even form a band at all?! To say otherwise is



an attempt to cover your ass."

Although the band has seen its fair share of challenges, Black Cock continues to meet them head-on and deliver visceral, punishing indie rock in a singular fashion. "If you enjoy (the music) after all the other stuff, then that's most important," Jones reveals. "The music is our reward."

*Let Black Cock reward you with their music during their Bryan, TX stop on the Ladies Night Across Texas Tour. Friday July 1st at Revolution Café & Bar in downtown Bryan with The Hangouts, The Busy Kids and Only Beast. Find more details by searching "Ladies Night Across Texas" on Facebook.*



## Super 8 Not Just a Hotel Anymore

A crowded theater awaits the arrival of a new generation of storytelling. The house lights fade to darkness and the murmurs dwindle to silence as we enter the world that director J.J. Abrams has created.

Abrams, director of the hit television show *Lost*, has harnessed the likeness of *Super 8* producer Steven Spielberg's classic films *The Goonies* and *E.T.* to create a memorable tale of adventure, love and ultimately understanding that will have you asking for more.

Joe Lamb, played by Joel Courtney, is a middle school boy finding comfort after the tragic death of his mother by assisting his friends in creating a zombie film in his small town. The boys sneak out to film a late night scene with the aid of Lamb's love interest, Alice, played by Elle Fanning, only to become witness to a brutal train wreck.

Joe's father, Deputy Lamb, played by Kyle Chandler, tries to find the cause of the crash. His attempts are quickly halted by the intervention of superior forces that do more in raising questions than answering them.

In true *Cloverfield* fashion, the villain remains hidden in the shadows until the critical climax of the film, keeping the audience on the edge of their seats in anticipation. This element of suspense adds a layer of depth to the movie that sets it apart from the previously-mentioned Spielberg films.

Abrams brings a group of lesser known actors together to create a film with realistic characters and snazzy CGI without the high-dollar price tag. It is nice to know that quality film can be made on a budget of less than \$100 million.

Saddle up your kids or your Sci-Fi brethren and enjoy a flashback to films of yesteryear or, better yet, this generation's soon-to-be cult classic.—*JESSICA KEMPEN*



## Father's Day, The Blues & A History Lesson

For years now my dad has shaped my taste in music and given me a respect and appreciation for the foundations of what I listen to today. This year for Father's Day I took him to see Buddy Guy, a six time Grammy winner and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Member, and one badass blues guitar player, oh and 74 years old. I knew the music would be amazing, but wasn't sure about the performance until he took the stage. Anytime you are told to 'Shut the Fuck up and Listen!', by a man that old, you know you are in for something exciting.

The level of guitar work was mind-blowing, considering he paid tribute to Jimi Hendrix and played behind his back, and never missed a beat as he soloed through the crowd, up into the mezzanine and back down on stage. I was thor-

oughly impressed with everything about the show, and more than that, was struck by a comment he made about music. He told us he was here to play some good old blues music, some of his own, and some he plays in respect. He was there to teach us about the past, in a hope that one day we could, once again, 'hear good music on the Damn radio!'

As he blazed through classics like Muddy Waters, he talked to us about how we needed to respect this, because without it we would never have what we have today. He is right, what we love today, in all genres of music from rock to hip hop and country, is influenced by the blues. Blues paved the way for many of today's musicians to have an outlet to break out into mainstream success. Artists like Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin took their cues from the generations before them like Johnny Lee Hooker and Robert Johnson, and in turn, became influences on many of today's artists. The point Buddy Guy was trying to get across was that we all need to learn to respect music in all its forms and to learn to listen, like it or not. Guy made a comment on stage about the number of young people in the crowd, and said tell our parents thank you, for teaching us something about music.

He is right, learning about music in all forms is a history lesson. It can show the attitudes and influences of an entire generation of people in about four minutes. I am thankful every day that I grew up in a household surrounded by music, and was given the opportunities to learn where things I listen to today came from, and it makes me anxious to see where they will go. I can only hope that this next generation of kids can have the same respect for the past, and look to their parents, and grandparents for inspiration. In working with kids as I do, it breaks my heart to hear these kids fight against their parents to listen to anything other than what is pumped into them on MTV. So this is my attempt to reach out to the youth and say, take the time to listen to those old albums your parents tell you about, you never know what you will find. Have an open mind, and remember that without the classics, where would we be today? So with the entire world at your finger-tips, use the internet's mass catalog of music and find something old.—*BRI EDWARDS*



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## Asian Persuasions: *Identity*



Back in the late 80's, I used to watch a TV show called *My Secret Identity* on Saturday afternoons. It starred a Jerry O'Connell who was skinnier than his *Stand by Me* counterpart and was the story of how a teenager was imbued with superpowers courtesy of his goofy neighbor scientist. Think of *Back to the Future* meets *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*. As with all shows from the 80's, it was quite short lived, but what reminded me of the show was how it dealt with the concept of identity.

Apologies in advance for such a serious article, in an art inspired paper, which you are reading for free while you stroll around downtown Bryan, and while some of you may not be familiar with the writings of the Dahli Rama (especially since he missed deadline last issue), I will try and tackle this month's piece from a perspective littered with a little humor. For example, the ridiculousness of how long that run-on sentence was. Being the local Buddhist, as well as the worst Asian amongst my circle of friends and quite possibly in existence, I've become accustomed to certain attributes that help me define who I am. In conversational settings, I am comfortable taking the reins of uncomfortableness and focusing them on stereotypical and physical anomalies associated with being Asian to inspire spontaneous laughter and disarm situations that some may find awkward. In others lives, like my daughter's, I am her everyday Kato who surprises her with laughter, different activities, as well as her meal maker and shower chaperone. I'm also her china town dry cleaner circa 1885, but by no means is she a railroad worker; those hours in the sweat shop slaving away at knockoff Nike shoes and other various apparel can be taxing even for the youngest and nimblest of fingers. These are all qualities and instances that I identify with and others in our quaint circle have come to identify with as "dirtbag." It's the time away from the norm that allows me to be the so called real "me" and salvages what little sanity that life has blessed me with. But being a participant of this monstrosity known as "society" has in a way obligated me to participate in instances where I must play by the proverbial rules. I need to hold a job, I need to pay taxes, and in some occasional offhand moments, even act as a professional complete with shirt, tie, pants, and shoes that aren't made of canvas.

As with the cycle known as life is so accustomed to, self initiated change to pursue the endorphin riddled experience known as happiness, sometimes causes you to seek change. Then there are situations, like yours truly has endured, that require you endure inexplicable periods of suffering. Being in the middle of such situations recently has made me question this notion of identity. It's a difficult notion for me to put into real perspective because it contains so many elements that coincide with one another that even when I take the time to take it apart, it doesn't really amount to an answer that satisfies an inquisitive mind. There is the self image of who I am in relation to my own mental image of who I am now, the identity of who I was to gauge change, the identity of who I want to be (cause we all want to change for the better), and the unknown identity - who is it that everyone else thinks I am.

It's pretty common for the Dahli Rama to have a nice fortune cookie-esque answer to summarize the purpose of all that exists, but being the iconic emblem I am for the circle of friends who I dearly love and care about, I guess I'll stay true to form and exercise my right and ability to be the worst Asian ever. As my finger tattoo illustrates (1+1="bird"), I'm prone to have the wrong answers. In this case, I'll take the middle path and say, I don't have any answer at all. Sometimes the situations that you dwell on in life are like the fortune cookies you get at restaurants; sometimes you open them up and they either don't have that oddly length piece of paper or it's in there with a message in Spanish. But what I will close with and what you can take away from this medium sized piece from yours truly is that while this identity crisis may seem overwhelming or not understandable, it's all impermanent. Change is constantly happening (how's that for a fortune cookie message?), and it's happening in increments we don't even notice, and though it may be out of our perception and control, the goal for all of us is to be the high school unpopular kid who blossoms into the successful beauty queen/king. If not there's always a role in porn. And for the others an audience for porn.—*DAHLI RAMA*

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# concert calendar

7/1—The Hangouts, Black Cock, Only Beast, The Busy Kids @ Revolution Café & Bar, Bryan. 10pm  
7/1—The Conglomerate @ Schotzis, Bryan. 9pm

7/8—Rock 103.9 HomeBrew Show w/Wellborn Road, Signal Rising, Bonnie Blue, Transparent Offense Therapy @ Schotzis, College Station. 9pm

7/15—Behold The Great Throne, Signal Rising, United We Stand, Sea Of Wolves, Transcend Before Azalea, Black Tar Heroine @ The Stafford, Bryan. 7pm

7/16—Behold The Great Throne, Caliber Of A Killing, Into the Gates Of Hell, Thera, When Men Become Gods, Transcend Before Azalea @ The Stafford, Bryan. 7pm  
7/16—Operation KerrBear Benefit with Sea of Wolves, The Tron Sack, Venomous Maximus @ Sons of Hermann Hall, Bryan. 9pm

7/18—Red Morning Voyage, Sound The Ruin, Halt The Morning, Protest The Protest, Brothers N Arms, Dodokaht! @ The Stafford, Bryan. 7pm

7/30—The Ingredients, Signal Rising, A Second To Last, Adelaine, Brothers N Arms @ The Stafford, Bryan. 8pm

# record reviews



**Death Cab For Cutie**  
*Codes and Keys*

If you know me at all, then you probably already know that I like Death Cab For Cutie. A lot. I first saw DCFC at NXNW Conference in Portland, OR in the fall of 1998. I became friends with the band that night, gave them their first national press early the next year, even tried out to replace their first drummer when he didn't make the move from Bellingham to Seattle in early 1999. I go way back with the band.

Of course, not so much these days. As the band that once played to a dozen people on Tuesday nights at the Crocodile Café in Seattle has now become a Grammy-nominated, widely respected, hot actress marrying and living in L.A. kind of band. That's not necessarily a bad thing, but the days of running into Ben Gibbard walking down Denny from Capitol Hill to Belltown are long gone for both of us.

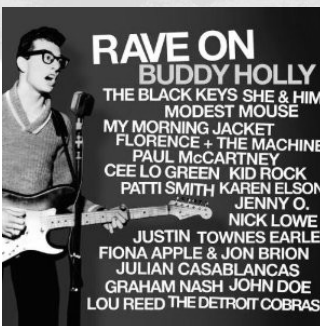
DCFC's rise coincided with my move to Seattle, and I have assigned meaning to their first new albums that makes them very personal to me, regardless of whether or not *Something About Airplanes* and *We Have The Facts...* are their best albums. Death Cab will always have to measure up to those albums for me, and I realize that's entirely unfair. But that's how it goes.

DCFC has had an up-down battle measuring up. 2002's *The Photo Album* does not measure up; 2004's *Transatlanticism* does. 2006's *Plans* and 2008's *Narrow Stairs* is hit or miss. Their brand new album, *Dots and Codes*, falls in the latter category for me.

Prior to the album's release, guitarist/producer Chris Walla told anyone he could talk to about it that the new album would reflect their new love for Berlin-period Bowie and Krautrock, and that much of the album was written from the keyboard rather than guitar. So I was expecting an album full of "I Will Possess Your Heart," the surprisingly vital post-rock 8-minute drone pop single that lead off *Narrow Stairs*. Well, that's not *Dots and Codes* is like. But for the first time, you get some spillover between DCFC and Gibbard's much acclaimed and influential electro-pop side project The Postal Service. The first track "Home Is a Fire" has the electronic streamline, the shuffling processed drums, the filtered vocals...pretty much everything but

Jimmy Tamborello...and the hooks. *Codes and Keys* is not a disappointed necessarily, but it's not immediate either. Many of the hooks are obscured. The band goes for texture. When it swings for the fence for pop smarts, such as on "Underneath the Sycamore," it does so largely on the recycled backs of previous more tuneful DCFC songs.

I say all this like *Codes and Keys* is a bad album. It's not really. But it's not a great album, like I know this band is capable of and has achieved before. It is an album that is meant more for the background than the foreground, and that has not always been the case with this band's music. Not disappointed necessarily, but I'm still left wanting something perhaps different from Death Cab than this.—KELLY MINNIS



**Various**  
*Rave On Buddy Holly*

Good tribute albums must balance a fine line: close enough to the originals to elicit our interest and yet putting a new spin on the familiar. The problem is compounded with an older artist like Buddy Holly (he died more than a half century ago) who has incredible tunes, but whose catalog is slight in number. Sometimes, the juxtaposition of an unexpected artist doing a classic tune is enough to transform a tribute into more than an opportunity to cash in on a famous name. Sometimes it isn't.

On the plus side, two of the best performances on the *Rave On Buddy Holly* album are - surprisingly - by rapper Cee Lo Green and the legendary Sir Paul McCartney. Green taps into the glee of "(You're so Square) But I Don't Care" that mixes the timelessness of Holly's era with his own approach. McCartney bounces through an irreverent Mojo Nixonish ramble through "It's So Easy" that could have been on one of the Beatles' first albums. It's a hoot.

Other performances are much too respectful. Of course, you'd expect elder statesman Graham Nash to render "Raining in my Heart" in such fashion - his Sixties band in England was the Hollies. But Grammy winner Fiona Apple and Jon Brion didn't bring anything new to their measured reading of "Everyday." However, you would expect The Strokes' Julian Casablancas to do something with "Rave On" - the most you can say is he doesn't ruin it. The same can't be said of Modest Mouse's pretentious take on "That'll Be the Day" or the turgid turn by Lou

Reed on "Peggy Sue." It makes one wonder who picked these tunes for these artists.

The two top renditions of Holly's songs are by British model/singer Karen Elson and former X punkster turned country crooner John Doe. Elson nails the playful joy of "Crying, Waiting, Hoping" in a manner that recalls that earlier era but with a modern sheen. Doe does a transformative interpretation of "Peggy Sue Got Married" that wrenches out the desperate melancholy of Holly's tune. Doe's performance is why these tribute albums work sometimes.—MIKE L. DOWNEY



**Jesu**  
*Ascension*

I remember when I was in high school there was this band called Napalm Death that only the most bearded of metalheads were into; they were heavier than heavy; ridiculously abrasive and completely inaccessible. In college, I heard one of the guys from Napalm Death, Justin Broadrick, formed a new band called Godflesh, and they were pioneering an even more abrasive form of metal combined with industrial's programmed beats called grindcore. I was not a fan. Years later, in my early 30s, I heard about a new band called Jesu, and the word I heard associated with them made me pay attention: shoegaze...I was a huge fan of the early 90s U.K. movement, but this new band Jesu was from none other than Napalm Death's and Godflesh's Broadrick, so I wasn't sure what to expect. What I heard and continue to hear on the new Jesu LP, *Ascension*, is the sound of a man who seems to have found his bliss, his place of peace after years of flailing in the darkness.

There is light in Jesu's music, the kind of light that opposes darkness, and this, more than anything else, is why I love this band so much. Their sound is pretty simple - slow, droning waves of sound and faint vocals, all emoting and releasing pain and light, but the difference here is the tools used to create the atmosphere - contrary to much of shoegaze's softer tones and ethereal textures, Broadrick has used high-gain guitar tones reserved for drop-D metal excursions to craft his lovely waves of sound. Here, on *Ascension*, they do shake things up a bit - there are more dynamics here, the guitars start cleaner, and edge closer to heavier and heavier sounds. There is more space between the sounds. Broadrick has stated that he felt Jesu was bearing too

much of his various musical pursuits, and has added even more side-projects to his already huge list of band names to delve out all his different productions to. I think this has resulted in a more focused Jesu LP, one that gives their best LP, *Conqueror*, a run for its money.—JASON CLARK



**Gillian Welch**  
*The Harrow & The Harvest*

Gillian Welch and music/life partner David Rawlings have been making albums together now for 16 years. Each album has seemed like one step forward in progress with each new release. With *The Harrow & The Harvest*, Welch's first album in eight years, it seems like the duo is moving the sound backwards. Their debut album, *Revival*, was produced by T-Bone Burnett and really featured his heavy hand. Their subsequent two releases *Hell Among the Yearlings* and *Time (The Revelator)* stripped their sound to the barest essentials, recorded live at the mic. 2003's *Soul Journey* saw an almost modern approach for Welch, with full band arrangements (overdubbed by Welch and Rawlings) and fewer old-timey styled songs. Since then Welch and Rawlings have worked with many other artists, and Rawlings released a nice solo album with Old Crow Medicine Show backing him up. Eight years has lapsed, and then very quietly *The Harrow & The Harvest* was released.

This album is a step backwards to the duo's mid period. Two guitars, two vocals, an occasional shaker and banjo too. While I definitely enjoy this spare approach, the songs have to be airtight to take that kind of delivery. Sadly, the songs aren't really here this time. One exception is "The Way It Will Be," a big bummer downtempo tune that features some spooky unison vocals from Welch and Rawlings before it opens up into a beautiful, languid harmonized chorus. But the rest of the album just kinda...I don't know. I expect if you take eight years between your albums that the next ten songs you deliver should be pretty unfuckingbelievable. And Welch and Rawlings are totally capable of those reaches. But not this time around. This will be a good album to tour off of, and these two are not to be missed live, as they are eerily perfect performers, and Dave Rawlings is a super stud guitar hero (and sadly underutilized on this album). Long time friends will dig it. If it's your first rodeo, dig up *Time (The Revelator)* instead.—KELLY MINNIS

## Pedal Pushing: Korg Monotron

Last year the Internetz was full of the buzz that Korg, a maker of fine electronic instruments, had finally decided to enter the revived analog synthesizer market. Korg has released many classic analogs, like the Mono/Poly, the MS-10/MS-20, and the Polysix. Was Korg gonna reissue one of those classics? Or a new modern classic? No, not exactly. What they did issue was the Korg Monotron.

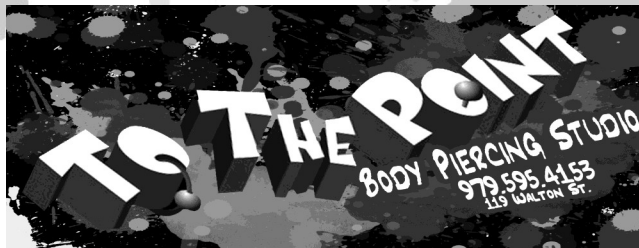
It looks like a toy and harkens back a bit to the 1980's Casio fun keyboards. But make no mistake. This is a professional tool hiding inside a toy's façade. Inside is a square wave 100% voltage-controlled analog oscillator, a voltage-controlled 12dB analog low pass filter modeled on the Korg MS-10's classic filter, and a digital low frequency oscillator that can control either pitch or filter cutoff. There is an onboard speaker so you can use it like a fun toy, or there is an 1/8" headphone out so you can amplify it. There is also an 1/8" audio input to the filter and the onboard speaker (more on this later). It runs on batteries only, but I've had mine since January and I still have the original battery in it.



In use, it is really just a noise box, patterned after the popular Gakken SX-150, a DIY kit that was included in a Japanese magazine two years back. It is also somewhat like a stylophone, in that there is no keyboard, just a ribbon that you can index finger. It is near impossible to get any real intonation to play melodies or such, but you can get some crude stuff going with it. As a noise maker though, it excels. The LFO runs fast enough that you can get the filter to extend well into FM range, or when modulating pitch the LFO extends into audio range as an extra oscillator. The filter will self-oscillate and it is a true ripper of a filter. The resonance is gnarly and aggressive, like you'd expect an MS-10's filter to be. It takes stereo input and passes it through, but the filter itself is not true stereo (ie. affecting each channel differently). So producers could like at the Monotron as just a filter box for processing drums, vocals...pretty much any line level input. The oscillator is somewhat of a bonus. The only problem I have is that there's no way to open the output on the synth to allow it to just drone. You have to have a finger on the ribbon to work the oscillator or filter. If you have something plugged into the input the oscillator and amp out is bypassed, so you are free to use both hands to mess with it. You can also plug a dummy wire into it to use the filter as a sine wave when self-resonating.

One aspect of the Monotron that has been a real attraction for DIY'ers is that Korg made it very easy for the Monotron to be hacked by circuit benders. I've seen lots of stuff online from people who've added MIDI, control voltage in/out, extra LFO's, extra oscillators, etc.

The best part of the Monotron is its cost. It retails online at \$59. You can't find access to a true analog filter for that price anywhere. Heck, you can't even buy the parts to build one yourself for that cheap! It's a serious audio tool, but it's also kinda fun to run it into a delay pedal and just make strange blats of Lucasfilm Foley sounds. If you've ever wanted a noise box or oscillator box and was a bit leery of buying something someone made in the garage on Ebay, then this is certainly your instrument. Or if you ever wanted to run a drum loop through a filter and shake it on down, then you *definitely* need one of these.—KELLY MINNIS



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