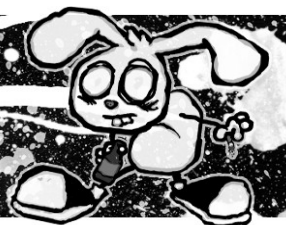


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THE FREEWHEELIN' GUIDE FOR THE OTHER SIDE OF COLLEGE STATION/BRYAN



winter beers



we drink...you,
uh, decide

*Also inside: Superlatives of 2011—Skinheads Aren't All Rac-
ists—Guided By Voices Returns—Art Films Are Weird—Pedal
Pushing—CD Reviews—Concert Calendar*



You're Doing It Wrong

Many in downtown Bryan sometimes wonder why an effort isn't made to find some way to siphon off business from Northgate and import it into downtown Bryan. Wouldn't we all get rich if we could get some of those drunk Aggies to drop premium coin on Woowoos and Saki Disasters or whatever shit drinks the kids are pouring down their pampered gullets? Then all it takes is having a few of them descend upon downtown in bulk to remind us all why that is *not* a good idea.

Twice last year a bunch of college students attempted to reenact a Critical Mass sort of ride to downtown Bryan from campus for the sake of maximum partyage. Last summer these folks fell into The Stafford and spent about ten minutes attempting to slamdance, getting it all wrong and hurting people in the process. Acted like fools, didn't buy anything and caused a general ruckus and then left nearly as soon as they showed up. Last month this crew did pretty much the same thing, resulting in several douchebags getting 86'ed out of Revolution for acting like complete fools.

Townies have spent a good deal of time and effort cultivating downtown Bryan as the Anti-Northgate. There are lots of us here who aren't college age but are still too young to want to just stay in at night. In downtown Bryan you can have a quiet evening at a wine bar, learn to salsa dance, hear rock & roll or sensitive singer-songwriters, watch the game in peace or dance til 2am with cross dressers. In Northgate you can chase 20 y/o tail, and the experience is geared completely around that pursuit.

This does not mean that I think we should shut off downtown to college students. I think we should welcome them to what we've got going on downtown. But if you're going to act like an idiot then you need to hop on your bicycles and pedal your ass back down College Ave. Because the next time those bozos show up, it's going down *Warriors* style.—KELLY MINNIS

Writers At A Urinal

Verse by Kevin Still

At a medium-height urinal in a chain bookseller, I think of what I only just read, of Ian McEwan's descriptions of John Updike's descriptions of "lips" and "cunts" and the latter's "pansy shaped M, or W, of fur", thinking it funny grown men collect American dollars and accolades to write such things in library books – the same sorts of things I spent many a detention regretting having written in the margins of library books – when I glance up a momentarily from my own sprightly impressive genitals (hung head *LOW*, genuflecting reprieve) to find a connect-the-dots sequence of lumpy boogers permanently pasted to the wall, like good-time blowjob phone numbers or bad key-scratched wiener art – green and yellow boogers from a nostril to a chain bookstore wall, transported by a fingernail and a "fuck-em-all" fever – and I think to myself, now this is vulgar.

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Editorial bored

Kelly Minnis—Atarimatt—Niki Pistols

Art Splendidness

Wonko The Sane

Folks That Do Shit For Us

Mike L. Downey—Bri Edwards—James Gray—Katie Keller—David Lynch—Mary Manning—Kevin Still—Jon Warncke

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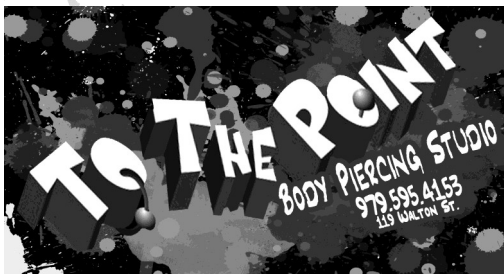
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Nevermind the Bollocks... Skinheads Rule, OK?

When someone uses the word *skinhead*, the image of violent swastika-laden racists comes to mind. This is a common misconception that could not be further from the truth. Skinhead is simply a working class youth subculture that became prevalent in Britain in the late 1960s, and through fashion and music, it has transcended racial, social and national borders.

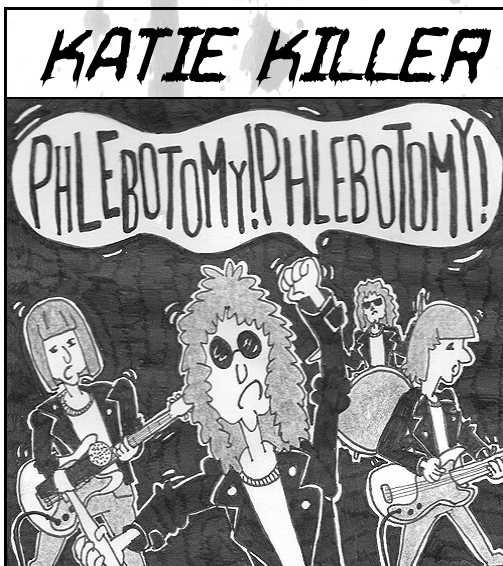
Named for their close-cropped haircuts, skinheads shaved their heads in response to the long-haired hippies of the time. The short hair style was also highly influenced by the recent Jamaican immigrants who worked alongside many of the lower class British skinheads. Stamping out a place as working class, conservative and politically-conscious youth, the skinheads adopted a clean-cut and aesthetically intimidating uniform. Traditional British fashion that was accessible to working class families was most common. Classic skinhead garb would include steel-toed Doc Marten boots, cuffed Levi's blue jeans or Sta-Prest trousers, Fred Perry and Ben Sherman shirts, and thin clip-on suspenders known as braces. In addition to the skinhead hair style, West Indian immigrants who came to England to take advantage of the post-World War II economic boom also influenced skinhead music. Jamaican reggae and ska artists such as Desmond Dekker, The Maytals, and Symarip are still staples in the skinhead music scene today. During the first wave of punk rock in the late 1970s, the skinheads carved out their own subgenre of punk known as Oi!, including bands such as Sham 69, The Business, Blitz and Last Resort. Through these musical styles, skinhead was able to move across Europe as well as the Atlantic Ocean. Many of the Oi! bands of the late 1970s and early 1980s influenced American hardcore punk bands such as Agnostic Front, Negative Approach, Cro-Mags, and Warzone, who adopted much of the British skinhead style and gave it an American attitude.

However, even though skinhead culture was built upon ideals of racial unity and working class pride, some aspects turned out to be nationalist and racist politics. During the economic turmoil of early 1980's Britain, many were looking for a scapegoat on which to take out their frustrations. Unfortunately many Pakistani immigrants were targets of racist and right wing

organizations in England. Groups like the National Front recruited young white skinheads as street soldiers due to their tough, working class image, along with their affinity for violence and angry music. This is where the concept of the racist Nazi skinhead was derived from.

In response to this racist image, many traditional skinheads both black and white, made an attempt to remove themselves from the right wing racist skinheads that the media focused its attention on. In the 1980's skinheads across the world started groups such as S.H.A.R.P. (Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice), who held true to the culture of the traditional skinhead movement. Even though race and politics have seemed to muddy up the unknowing public's ideas of what skinhead culture is all about, skinhead is by far one of the most important youth subcultures of the 20th century and today, having significant influence upon art, music and fashion.

It is important to understand that one cannot simply declare themselves a skinhead by going out and buying a pair of Doc Martens and a Cock Sparrer record, it's a title that must be earned. Prospective skinheads who display respect and pride can get cropped (head shave initiation) by an older skin in the scene. I got cropped into the San Antonio crew known as Chaos City in February of 2008 by Omar Salinas. For at least the first year of being a skinhead or sometimes longer, you are known as a "Fresh-Cut". Fresh-Cut's are expected to carry out duties such as shining boots, and other menial tasks. This mild hazing helps to show the older skins what a Fresh-Cut is made of and will ensure that the newly shaved skin is making a commitment to the scene, rather than just claiming a title. My Fresh-Cut year I did everything from clean bathrooms at local San Antonio venues, to cook fajitas at crew BBQs. Explaining to friends and family who were not involved in the punk rock or hardcore scene that I had become a skin also presented itself to be difficult. People's first reaction was to ask if I was a Nazi, when I am in fact half Hispanic with Jewish heritage. The experiences I have had as a skin include both good times and bad, and have helped to shape me into who I am today. With this said, I am proud to be a skinhead, and will be 'till the day I fucking die. Oi! - SKINHEAD JONNY



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Pedal Pushing: Fulltone '69 Fuzz

I seriously LOVE the idea of fuzz pedals, but I seriously HATE fuzz pedals at the same time. How is that? Because I play guitar in a two-guitar full-on Memorex holocaust building destroying rock and roll band, and the problem with fuzz pedals is that no matter how righteous they may sound at practice or in your bedroom, at gig volume in a two-guitar band you may just as well have stepped on a mute button. Fuzz pedals are like carpeting. They just cover the floor and everything else in the room steps right on top of it. Big Muff owners, y'all feel my pain.

But the booteeek geeks have done wonders with the fuzz pedal design and have come up with interesting ways to make a classic silicone or germanium fuzz play nice in a band context. One of the better rated designs comes from Fulltone with their '69 Fuzz pedal. Would this be the fuzz that finally made me not hate fuzz pedals?

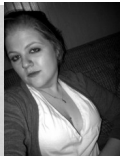
No. But don't let that stop me from telling you that it's not actually a bad pedal.

Fulltone released the '69 Fuzz 15 or so years ago to much acclaim in the heady early days of the boutique pedal revolution. Then it was out of production for awhile, since Mike Fuller couldn't get the vintage circuits he required for this design. Three or four years ago Mike found some and released the '69 Slight Return and it sold out immediately. Recently he was able to get a steady supply of the circuitry and is now on Mk II of the '69. Its smaller, MXR-sized enclosure fits on your pedalboard much better. It's a basic germanium fuzz reminiscent of the classic Fuzzface circuit. Think Hendrix, think Blue Cheer, think Stooges. Think 1969. There are additional input and contour controls. It has that all encompassing super compressed nasty fuzz sound that just really makes you want to play "Wild Thing" over and over again. Or "You Really Got Me". The cool thing about the design with the additional controls is that it helps to open up the '69 to a more distortion-like territory than just straight fuzz. Think gravelly rather than wooly. But the controls are finicky, and it's kinda hard to make your tone stick out in a band context. If you are in a power trio none of this is going to matter at all. And bass players...those of you that love that Big Muff tone but hate that it sucks volume and tone, you should DEFINITELY think about picking one of these up. The contour control really helps to dial back some of the low end that fuzztone tends to eat up.

So the search continues. Wonko swears by his Musket fuzz box. Others swear by Triangle and Rams Head Muff clones or the Swollen Pickle or any number of the hundreds of fuzz pedals out there. Reference the *Fuzz: The Sound That Revolutionized The World* documentary on Youtube for background. But I will have to be moving on from the '69 and stick to the Rat. For now.—KELLY MINNIS



My Adventure In Independent Film



My roommate has suffered through all these films I watch, searching for the best of the worst films ever made, and he has been helping me find something new. On a recent trip to the movie store he decided to bring me the most outrageous thing he could find. It's an independent film titled *Septien*, and it takes crazy to a new level. The opening credits alone involve enough disturbing images to deter most viewers.

The Rawlings brothers are reunited after an eighteen year hiatus from their brother, Cornelius, who refuses to mention where he has been or why he was gone, leaving Amos and Ezra to wonder about his current situation. These are the three most neurotic people I have ever seen on film. Cornelius is a sports hustler, and can beat any one at any athletic game for cash on the spot, which fuels his huffing problem. He passes out feet from a highway in broad daylight, face down in the dirt and grass.

Back at the house you have the artist, Amos, who only works on the most grotesquely comedic, obscenely stimulating paintings. His work centers around football players, death and genitalia. All the work is done in a dimly lit shack, where he spends most of his time alone, dirty and shirtless. He shares the main house with his brother Ezra, who is an obsessive cleaner and eternal optimist, yelling things at his brothers like, "When you got one finger pointing at me, you got four pointing at you", until a toilet overflows and he is left to call a plumber. This crazy turn of events is a series of happenstance that goes beyond unexplainable.

The plumber turns out to be an old football coach of Amos and Cornelius's, and he is accompanied by a very young girl. Amos' reaction to the realization of who this man was stirs his work in a new direction. A comic strip depicting the destruction of a young man's soul. This sends the family on a mission of salvation, led by a stranger who walks in out of nowhere preaching of demons and damnation.

The film borders on deranged at times, culminating in a demon cleansing involving a rapist plumber and the mystery tongue speaking Bible Beater, leaving the brothers free from their burdens and open to express themselves, including one parading around in a dress claiming to be the mother now. A chant of "I am not damaged goods, I am good" radiates as the events come to a close with a final act of penance.

The movie left me speechless, and feeling slightly uncomfortable in my own thoughts for awhile. In the end, a statement from Amos rings out, "do what you love", and the movie ends with their slow caretaker playing the guitar for the peaceful family.—BRI EDWARDS





Brazos County Metal News: Revolving Bandmate Doors

Folks, the major news in the Brazos County Metal Music scene came right after the last issue of 979 went to print. Our local heavyweights and 2011 Brazos County Metal Band of the Year **Behold the Great Throne** announced that frontman and lead vocalist, John Gray, would be leaving the band to pursue personal interests, sending shockwaves throughout the scene. John, who has been in the local Metal scene for years now with bands such as **Lysis** and **The Devine Awakening**, has been THE voice of local Hardcore Metal and will be truly missed. As for the band, they are looking for another lead singer and plan to keep on performing. Good Luck to ya John and Thanks for all the awesome shows and mosh pits you gave to the Brazos County Metal Music scene. [m/](#)



Another shock came from the band **Signal Rising** when guitarists Michael Szabuniewicz and Roger Moore quit the band for reasons unknown. Signal Rising has been a leader in the Hard Rock genre of the local scene for two years now and has established a strong fanbase, which actually helped them in replacing the vacant band positions. Chris Pate, lead singer and band manager, said within days both guitarists' positions were filled. Lenny Palmer is now guitarist and Eric Dickerson is now bassist. Signal Rising performed their first show with its newest members on Jan. 6 in Austin at Red Eye Fly for the largest Austin crowd yet. "Lenny and Eric fucking killed it on stage" says Chris Pate. "I was so proud of them to pick up the music through excessive practice over the last two weeks and to perform a awesome set there in Austin. No doubt, we are better as a band...It was incredible," says Chris. Stop by their Facebook page and Welcome SR's newest members: Facebook/Signal Rising.

The most exciting news so far for the 2012 Brazos County Metal Music scene has been the announcement that local Thrash/Death Metal band **Primal** is back! The band has regrouped and has been practicing and is ready to start performing onstage again after a year and a half delay. Keep a look out for a full depth interview with the band here in an upcoming issue of 979 Represent in 2012.

Add Foilface the Metalhead on Facebook for all the latest info on all local Hard Rock/Metal Music shows, news, pictures, and video of local artists.—**FOILFACE**

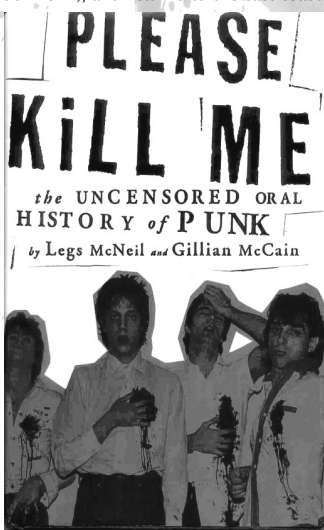


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Reading Rocks: Please Kill Me

Please Kill Me is another history of punk rock—this one with a decidedly American viewpoint. It is fundamentally a tale of two cities: Detroit Rock City and New York City. And while a very select few acts from the Midwest are included (e.g. Ohioans Dead Boys who spend significant portions of their career in NYC), very few acts outside these two cities are covered. Curiously, a section devoted to the Doors and Jim Morrison is included.

The narrative starts with punk predecessors Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground (1965-1968), moves to Detroit with MC5 and Iggy Pop (1967-1971), and returns to the east coast



with a treatment of the New York Dolls (1971-1974) before finally focusing on what might more readily be called the beginning of punk proper with Patti Smith, Television, Blondie, CBGBs, The Dictators, and The Ramones (1974-1975). In the chapter "Why Don't We Call It Punk?," Legs McNeill explains how he, John Holmstrom, and Ged Dunn started the magazine *Punk* in 1975. Although his claim is disputed by some, McNeil argues that they and the magazine *Punk* instigated the use of the term of "punk" to describe a developing style of music, fashion, and attitude at this time in NYC.

The narrative does eventually cross the pond to Great Britain, where punk music acquires a more narrowly defined sound and a more pronounced style (think leather jackets, spiked hair, safety pins, and gobbing). It continues to follow the adventures of the Sex Pistols in the United States and the deaths of Sid and Nancy at ages 21 and 20 (respectively). Nancy fares better here than she does in John Lydon's book (*No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs*). For example, Iggy Pop states "she wasn't a beauty, but I liked her," and Terry Ork (former manager of Television and president of Ork Records) commented on the genuine affection that she and Sid had for each other.

In the end, many of the subjects of this book die: Stiv Bators (Rocket from the Tombs, Dead Boys) never wakes from a head injury; Johnny Thunders (New York Dolls, Heartbreakers) dies a drug-related death; Sid Vicious dies of a heroin overdose; and Nancy Spungen is stabbed to death. Those who leave the New York punk scene fare better in this narrative. Patti Smith marries Fred Smith and quits making music to devote herself fully to being a good wife and mother. James Grauerholz (writer, editor, and literary executor of the William S. Burroughs estate) convinces William Burroughs (often called the godfather or the grandfather of punk and a major influence to Patti Smith) to leave the Bunker in NYC for Lawrence, Kansas. Richard Hell (Television and whose t-shirt scrawled with "Please Kill Me" inspired the title for this book) leaves music making for writing.

All-in-all this weighty 525 page book is well compiled. It consists primarily of transcribed interviews of most of the heavy hitters of the early punk scene. As the subtitle states, it is "uncensored," and there is plenty of sex and drugs—and profanity.—**MARY MANNING**

winter brews

quaffer & reviewer by nevin still

I'll tell you right now, I can't tell you a damn thing about New Mexico. You give me a sandbox and a pissed off middle finger and I couldn't draw it any better than I could slick the Mona Lisa's eyebrows with my bare tongue. From what I recall, New Mexico is between Texas and Hawaii, this side of California and not far from El Paso*. Despite my "Sunshine State" ignorance, I know a good IPA when it sprawls real sexy across my palette, and this here **Happy Camper IPA** from Santa Fe Brewing Co. is good enough to get me writing for 979 again. This sucker's beautifully balanced: mega-hopped but still bagel-chip crisp. Steer clear of Happy Camper if you're averse to piney hops. Happy Camper's as spiky and green as deciduous tissue.

Yessir, I know this is a Christmas beer review, like the title says, but I'm drinking Happy Camper for inspiration and courage, so consider the above review a bonus track. This year I sampled 13 different Christmas ales, but only two impressed me enough to splinter my wallet several times. Interestingly enough, each beer in this pair exaggerates a primary beer flavor: one is divinely hoppy while the other is domestically malty.

First, it is a scientifically Biblical fact that **Sierra Nevada's Celebration Ale** is the best Christmas beer ever. We are told in the Gospel of Luke, page 5, that the Shepherd's came to worship and celebrate the new-born child. They were obviously hopping about, as if spirit-filled by 6.8% ABV. They were bathed in miracles and genuflection. They presented gifts, what in today's currency would surely exceed \$8.99 a sixer, but, with conversion rates and modern inflation, you never know. Hell, y'all, I love this beer. And I love the baby Jesus. Make both a bobblehead on my dashboard and send me cruising the wrong side of town and, five bucks says, I'll be just fine. SN's Celebration was



made for hop-heads and believers. Let me clap my hands and slap somebody's face cause this beer gets me church'd up.

Finally, my most favorite Christmas movie ever is

Gremlins. Love seeing them little buggers send the towns people running for glory in that deep, deep snow. Always loved that demonic little fuck hiding in the Christmas tree with a kitchen knife. Feels good. Feels like the holidays. Like you wanna cozy up warm with Pheobe Cates and suck on a ginger man's foot, or vice versa. We don't get those kinds of holidays down here in the South, the ones full of heavy clothing and fire-places and Dick Miller driving a snow-plow through your living room. But **Brooklyn Winter Ale** makes me think of such a day, such a winter, so cold you look even to beer to relieve the nip. Brooklyn Winter Ale is wool-sweater malty with thick curls of buttery vanilla swirled around the cuffs. A slow-sipping ale. A story-telling ale. An ale worth giving your grand-kids at Christmas. Plus, you can drink them after midnight and not wake up in a cocoon.

*One time, I had a tuna melt sandwich in El Paso that nearly made up for being in El Paso. My friend Becky and I snuck out early on our professional conference to have the tuna melt for lunch. We liked it so much we had it again for dinner. We both claimed to wanting it for breakfast the next morning. I recommend it. The tuna melt, not El Paso.

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dirtbags on stouts

quaffed by miscreants, compiled by Kevin Still

THE TASTERS: Kelly Minnis (editor 979Rep); Wonko (art editor 979Rep); Katie Killer (cartoonist, 979Rep); Niki Pistols (editrix, 979Rep); Jessica Kempen (drummer, The Ex-Optimists); Kevin Sorensen (Jessica's dude); Tim Hom (drummer, Mike The Engineer); Todd Hansen (all-around band dude)...the scene: Wonko Central.

ANCHOR CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR - Five stars all round! Niki said, "It doesn't burn!" Katie said, "It's charred!" Michael said, "It's my favorite beer of the night." We all moaned and sniffed and sniffed and groaned, as this was the first beer of the night. I told Niki I would burn this beer as a candle. Kelly looked like he needed a cigarette after rolling it around in his mouth.

ABITA VANILLA DOUBLED OG - Kelly informed us that, not only is this his favorite beer of the season, but he obviously loves us enough to share his last bottle with us. (Now we all have to like it.) But he weren't lying - this shit's legit. Kelly was right: you want to compare this to Breckenridge Vanilla Porter, but this is a totally different beast. "The vanilla beats the shit out of you!" More moaning and groaning. I think somebody in my peripheral here was even swaying to this beer, like tweeners to a pop ballad.

WASATCH WINTERFEST SEASONAL ALE - Instant wafts of hops and Niki's asking for a shorter shot. Kelly blasphemes the Sierra Nevada Celebration, his crotch swishing behind my shoulder as I type, giggling, "Well, it's not as bad as the Celebration." Several declarations rise that the hop flavor is not as big as the hop aroma, and they all sound like that's a good thing. (What ragtag group of misfits have I fallen in with?) Overall consensus: not Wintery enough. Someone says that hops are not very Wintery, which elicited an uproar that, what the fuck, drinking hops are like drinking pine cones, fucking slamming back some Xmas trees.

BOULEVARD NUT CRACKER ALE - Kelly announces a hoppy aroma, but more subdued than the Wasatch. Michael said the flavor here is on the end. Head nods and groans of agreement. The alcohol hasn't set in, but no one would notice. Katie sips and says, "I taste glue!" Kelly chugged it and said, "it's clean." Then Kelly starts talking flavor graphs and charts, and I recant my previous statement about no one noticing the alcohol falling over us. Boulevard's a hometown brewery for me, but the Nut Cracker has always been the green labeled step-brother we hide in the garage, hoping the guests won't notice. And, sure enough, this Nut Cracker gets the Dirtbags questioning Boulevard's virtue. I start to shout my approval, but luckily Katie gushes over Boulevard's Double Wide IPA. I feel personally vindicated.

LAGUNITAS SUCKS HOLIDAY ALE - Niki says it smells like cat pee. Jess said it smells like apricots. I'll take Jess's version. But maybe I agree with Niki. It smells real bad. Kelly said it's not Christmasy at all. Jess said it tastes like your aunt's old

Christmas sweater." And then Niki grimaced. Katie read the bottle and the brewery even admits that this beer is awful. Jess says, "I would have probably drank two of those before I realized it was bad, but, then again, my palette cleanser is Lone Star." Jess is winning major points with me, and I'm about to ask her for a Lone Star.

HARPOON CHOCOLATE STOUT - Todd said, "I love this beer", even before he tasted it. The room has simmered down and laughter befalls us again as the Chocolate Stout pours. Folks are singing praises faster than I can report. "It smells like brownies!" "This reminds me of Corpus Christi!" "Even Niki likes it!" "What was that bacon stout we had at y'all's party?" Honestly, this stout offers zero beer aroma. Michael declared this beer "the winner!" - but he's already said that about another beer. I like this about Michael.

SAINT ARNOLD WINTER STOUT - Smells so good! Todd still smells the Harpoon Chocolate Stout. People are loving this beer. I did say that I liked the Winter Stout better than the Chocolate Stout, but every-

one else prefers the

Chocolate Stout. I'm the lone wolf here. The dirtbag among

dirtbags. Or maybe I'm bragging.

RAHR WINTER WARMER - Todd declares this the best beer by Rahr. Michael said that Rahr's disappointing: you have a good Rahr, you like it, and a few days later you wonder if you've ever had anything by Rahr. Michael said, "They make the beer taste like it should." Todd said, "They don't brew outside the bottle." Katie said, "They don't brew outside the bottle?" Laughter ensued. Michael and Katie debate the beers they've tasted recently and Kelly says, "You guys taste so much beer, how can you keep them straight?" And Michael said, "And that's why Rahr is so disappointing, I never remember them!" Tim said, "I wish this Winter Warmer was not a winter ale. I'd drink this all year round."

ABITA CHRISTMAS ALE - Katie sips and says, "How is this Christmas? This isn't Christmas!" Then she says, "It smells bad. Like fertilizer." Kelly says it smells hoppy, like the first beer we had that was a hop bomb, but also like some skunkweed homegrown. Tim said, "That's what I was thinking." Chatter that this doesn't taste as hoppy as it is. Then we talked about the relationship between marijuana and hops, which is pretty damn close. Michael said, stroking his chin, "It has a hint of bad New Republic." No one can figure out what it tastes like. A few keep drinking. A few toss it down the drain. As a hardcore journalist dedicated to the martyrdom of my research, I'll not admit what few I joined.

MAGIC HAT HOWL BLACK LAGER - Todd reminisces, "This is not as good as I remember." Kelly, "This is a lighter version of the Rahr that's lighter version of the Anchor." Michael gave his sample to Zoot, who'd already lapped up some Lone Star from Jess. Zoot loves the Howl. Zoot seems to love all the beers.



This Dork's Favorite Albums of 2011

By Kelly Mirnde



St. Vincent
Strange Mercy

No surprise here. When someone as adept as Annie Clark blends Judy Garland 1940s film soundtrack lullabies with post-*Remain In Light* electronic funk and the psychedelic middle period of post-*Purple Rain* Prince all with a wry wit and slightly kinky sexual glee you know I'm gonna be all up in that shizz. That's *Strange Mercy* and that's my favorite album of the year hands down.



OFF!
The First Four EP's

Keith Morris may be 50 and balding but his new band OFF! spans out classic pre-hardcore Black Flag styled punk rock like it's something brand new and vital. No song tops 90 seconds, the band is tight and cranks it out old school at a time when punk has kinda lost itself.



Phil Manley
Life Coach

Trans Am principle Phil Manley does a fantastic job of consolidating all of what is great about late 1970s Germany into one album. The electronic pop of Kraftwerk, the guitar histrionics of Can, the motorik drone of Neu!, the impressionistic mellow ambience of Cluster...all in one package. Consider it an Intro to Krautrock.



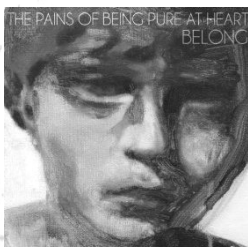
Kate Bush
50 Words For Snow

I love Kate Bush, but I've been disappointed in her post-*Hounds of Love* albums. All two of them. 2005's *Aerial* was a step in the right direction. This year's *50 Words For Snow* is a return to form, though radically different for her. Mostly piano and voice, subdued and quiet, but yet still playful and seriously weird at times. This is how a 50+ y/o woman shows the world about the beauty within pathos.



Wild Flag
Wild Flag

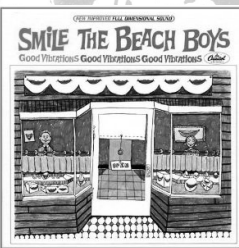
Or as I refer to it as, 21st Century Television. This album sounds so much like *Marquee Moon* at times it is frightening, though the influence never overpowers the voice that comes from forming a 1990s indie rock supergroup with members of Sleater-Kinney, The Minders, Quasi and Helium. This from "Romance", the first song of the album: "You watch us dance, we dance lit we're dying/we dance, we love the sound, the sound is what bound us/The sound is the blood between me and you". I've never heard a better lyric about the bond between musicians.



The Pains of Being Pure at Heart
Belong

The Pains started out as a C86 late '80s British jangle pop flashback, but had the songs to make it more than just a retrograde trip. On this album The Pains worked with Flood and Alan Moulder to update their sunny guitar pop with a taste

of shoegaze and more than a taste of bigger, dirtier guitars. If their debut was all about 1988, then *Belong* is all about 1992.



The Beach Boys
The Smile Sessions

Ok, it's no *Pet Sounds* but I'm glad after decades of hearing a variety of bootlegs' interpretations of how this album was supposed to sound that Brian was able to take the masters and whip them into the closest thing to a finished product we will ever get. It's beautiful, weird, precocious and easy to tell why the rest of the band balked at its release. Mostly it makes me sad that pop music today can't take even 10% of the risks that a band like this took 45 years ago.



Ryan Adams & The Cardinals
III/IV

Yet another album recorded several years back and left in the can until this year. It has The Smiths-ish feel of 2003's *Love Is Hell* with some of his latter day goofiness, but the songs are first-rate and it shows that more often than not when Ryan just kinda tosses one away it's brilliant, and when he's aiming at making a BIG STATEMENT he more often fails miserably.



The Busby Kids
The Busby Kids Stole My Boyfriend

This Houston foursome has brought teenage kicks back! Short songs about boys and stuff kicked

out with all the joie de vivre of one's first garage rock band



Gillian Welch
The Harrow and the Harvest

My first few listens to Gillian's latest left me underwhelmed. It was no *Time (The Revelator)*. But after repeated listening the songs have soaked in. How two people armed with the most essential of materials to make music (a guitar and a voice) can do so much and create such a varied tapestry is beyond me.



Venomous Maximus
The Mission

Stoner metal that doesn't take itself too seriously. It gallops, the guitars are doomy, the vocals aren't much above a sort of sing-songy chant but the drums land and the songs make you want to rip arms out of a denim jacket and bang yer head.



Radiohead
The King of Limbs

This is another one that had to grow on me. I had to see the *From a Basement* series performances of these songs for me to finally grasp the complexity of this album. It sounds more like *The Eraser* than *Kid A* but it points to a different sound for this band. And you have to admire that these guys have played together for 25 years now and still find ways to continue to challenge themselves and their audience.

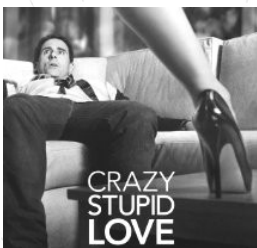
That Dork's Favorites of 2011

By Kevin Still

As much as I'd like to make a Top 11 of 2011 list for each of the following categories, the truth is that I did not read enough books or keep extensive enough film notes to hold your collective attention for all that bullshit. So I've narrowed the following lists down to Top 5 of 2011 (so original) in the hopes that someone might actually read these. Anyway, enjoy.

FILMS: Missed several films this year that I desperately wanted to see, but those I caught were game changers.

1. **CRAZY STUPID LOVE** - Proof that rom-coms are totally legit and that Julianne Moore's still got it. Also, I'm totally ga-ga for Gosling and Stone, who together sucked down a whole bottle of Pappy Van Winkle just "talking" on his big-ass bed. BTW, are those pics of AnnaLeigh Tipton on the web?



2. **50/50** - I had bone cancer when I was 14, and my best friend's mom stopped him from shaving his head before I started chemo. It was a kind gesture. So, yes, this disease-plagued buddy film resonated honestly with me. Also, I've had a crush on Seth Rogen since 2008. If I ever relapse, I'm calling Rogen's agent.



3. **THE MUPPETS** - I asked this movie into my heart both times I watched it. Sincerely, I could not love two Hollywooders more than Segel and Adams. Not to mention, Piggy performed a Tarantino kung-fu bit on Jack Black. So glad to see 97% adult aged audience at both showings.

4. **DRIVE** - Proof that solid story and talented acting still reign. Nothing flashy here. Dude drives cars. Girl scrapes by to raise her son. Dude fights all odds. Girl is too good for anyone she meets - including her own husband. Dude has access to a stellar crime-fight for good. Typical non-

worthy mask but actually uses romantic love story between dude and girl.

5. **PAUL** - Pegg and Frost are our modern-day Laurel and Hardy, only with zombies, coppers, and aliens. Toss in Kristen Wiig's apostate vocabulary ("...tittie fartin' nap...") and you've got the inevitable future of conservative Christianity in the face of true Armageddon. I've seen the future, and it's green alien but-ticks.

fugitive
celebrity
slacker
joker
alien.



BOOKS: I did not read as much this past year as I intended. I took a British literature course at Sam Houston in the Spring, but I'm not including any of those titles. They were assigned, so they don't count.



1. **ZEITOUN** by Dave Eggers - One man in Post-Katrina New Orleans putts around in a canoe to save people, stray dogs, and his own family. Shocking revelations of the U.S. Government's response to Katrina make Eggers' true report fascinating and heart-breaking.

2. **THE HELP** by Kathryn Stockett - I grew up in South Arkansas, so this story felt more like the mid-1980s than the late 1960's. I cried three times reading this book and I'm not afraid to admit it. Fuck the movie: Abilene and Miss Elizabeth's baby girl shared moments in this book

that can't be captured on film.

3. **ENDPOINT** by John Updike - In Updike's last collection of poetry, the poet wrote with finality, seeing the end at the corner of each fresh page. Beginning with a nearly-30 page poem that chronicles the poet's final birthdays, Updike explores intimate moments of family, writing, his own reading, and even his failing body. Beautiful sonnets connect reader to an everlasting spirit. I loved this book.



4. **THE WOMAN** by Jack Ketchum and Lucky McKee - This book marks the third title in Jack Ketchum's Maine cannibal trilogy. I've enjoyed the entire trilogy, but Ketchum's addition of acclaimed film director Lucky McKee (a personal favorite director of such films as *May* and *Masters of Horror: Sick Girl*, both starring Texas native Angela Bettis) into the writing process added viscerally visual layers to the story that were not easily forgotten. The film version of *The Woman* (directed by Lucky McKee, starring Angela Bettis and Pollyanna McIntosh) releases on DVD January 24, 2012. I preordered my copy weeks ago.

ENDPOINT

and other poems

John Updike



5. **THE HUNGER GAMES** by Suzanne Collins - Equal parts dystopian fiction (ala *Brave New World*, 1984, and *Anthem*) and Young Adult Romance (the *Twilight* saga or anything very sad by Judy Blume), *The Hunger Games* offers the one thing I want most from a good book: a rollicking fun read. Honestly, I could not put this book down, and now I tear up every time I see the movie preview.

let's go eat the factory...

guided by voices return

I'm not the world's biggest GBV fan, but I'm probably in the top 200 easily. I've seen GBV live a dozen times, have collected most of their expansive and hard-to-collect discography and I've followed most of the band's solo works. I am a big fan. So why is it that I would view in advance trepidation *Let's Go Eat The Factory*, a new GBV album produced by the "classic" 1994-96 GBV lineup of Pollard, Sprout, Mitchell, Demos and Fennell? Well, because I had begun to believe that GBV supreme Robert Pollard had largely lost the plot.

Pollard's post-GBV releases (and there have been dozens of those) have been spotty. The prolific nature of Bob's muse saw him true in that 1992-1997 period, but from 2004-11 I was thinking more and more that Bob needed an editor. *Let's Go Eat The Factory* is a mixed bag, blending in some of the old 4-track fading gym coach indie rock paeons that I know and love from classic GBV with some of the latter post-GBV stuff that I only like.

"Laundry and Lasers" gets things started in a similar vein to Bob's post-GBV solo work produced by Todd Tobias. In fact, it's near indistinguishable, except that the songs are shorter. And then rhythm guitarist and foil Tobin Sprout shows up to steal the show from Bob. "Spiderfighter" is both snotty in the front and pensive on the flip side in a Beatle-esque sort of way. "God Loves Us" is easily the best song on this record. I don't know if it's because Toby doesn't have the constant outpouring like Bob does, but it seems that Toby saved his A material for just this opportunity, whereas Bob is what Bob has always been: casually tossed off brilliance and utter shite. "My Europa" is beautiful and weird, and has that Bobby Pop magic; "The

Unsinkable Fats Domino" is pure British Invasion via Dayton GBV awesomeness; and "Go Rolling Home" and "Room Taking Shape" have some of that wall-splattered 45 second sound collage that shows maybe all good ideas need not be fleshed out...but overall I find myself still somewhat troubled by this album. I will say that on repeated listens I have

warmed up to it more, but it doesn't have that instant "fuck yeah!" for me that *Bee Thousand* through *Under the Bushes*... has. Perhaps I need to hear these songs live. And you know I will. —
KELLY MINNIS

I had an epiphany about Robert Pollard and company while listening to the latest album from Guided By Voices. The album M.O. is the opposite of a trio of releases by another musical genius: Pete Townshend. The "Scoop" albums are demos and outtakes of Townshend's songs over the decades, sketches of inspiration of which many were crafted into Who tunes now part of rock's canon.

GBV has instead gone with the first revelatory blush of its tunes and released them rather than how Townshend did. These snippets of songs contain musical gems just waiting to be polished. Whether they ever will be is doubtful though, given GBV's past history.

But not to fret - just enjoy the wisps of tunecraft: the plaintive "Doughnut for a Snowman," the chord-crunching "Cyclone Utilities (Remember Your Birthday)," the quietly-majestic "Old Bones." Mainly, though, revel in the casual brilliance of tunes like "Wave" with its Michael Stipe-mumble and astounding garage guitar - at least it stretches past three minutes. —**MIKE L. DOWNEY**



MOUSTACHE RIDES BY JAMES GRAY



No teeth, No Hair, No Friends.
But Damn you'll get stuff done!

concert calendar

1/13—Rock 103.9 Homebrew presents **Wellborn Road, Transcend Before Azalea, Hell's Conspiracy, Predominant Mortification** @ Schotzis, College Station. 8pm

1/14—Raspa @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

1/15—Kevin Fowler @ Hurricane Harrys, College Station. 9pm

1/19—Velcro Pygmies @ Daisy Dukes, College Station. 9pm

1/21—J Wesley Haynes Trio, Megafauna @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

1/27—Pearl Light Specials, The Ex-Optimists @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

1/27—The Ton Tons @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

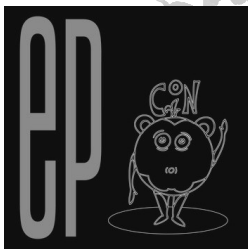
1/28—Boxcar Bandits @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

1/30—Harlem Globetrotters @ Reed Arena, College Station. 7pm

TX Hall of Fame Closes Doors For Good

The Hall of Fame had hoped to make a big splash with a going-out-of-business party on New Year's Eve starring Aaron Watson but management instead decided that the potential for trouble making was too great, so they have quietly shuttered the historic Texas country venue early in an attempt to preserve its legacy as its proprietor Johnny Lyon, who passed away about a year ago, would have wanted it remembered. That is most unfortunate, but completely understandable. Perhaps Harry's or Schotzis or the reopened Stafford may pick up the slack but I cannot help but think that the Hall of Fame's closure is a gigantic blow to the local live music scene. Pour one out this month for the Texas Hall of Fame and all the fantastic live shows that have played out on its storied boards. It was a local treasure while it was here. It is a loss that this community must somehow endure.—**KELLY MINNIS**

record reviews



The Coast of Nebraska
Hope Swallows

I've seen New Yawkers by way of Austin indie rock duo The Coast of Nebraska probably a half dozen times over the past three years. Whilst taking in their mid-'90s college rock sound I always thought that they wrote really good guitar riffs, the drummer was really good but the songs lacked a certain catchiness and I thought they could REALLY use a bass player. So I was in for a bit of a shock when I downloaded *Hope Swallows*, the band's new free EP. You too can download it at <http://thecoastofnebraska.bandcamp.com>

Title track "Hope Swallows" is fairly delicate with strummed acoustic guitars, echoed guitars and whispy synthesizers. Reminds me a lot of the jaunty late '80s post-Paisley Underground college radio pop of bands like The Dharma Bums and Game Theory.

"This Old Home" kicks you in the head with those great guitar riffs melded to a new wave synthesizer hook and the production really sounds big and crisp, and again I'm reminded more of that late '80s college radio sound. With "Fast Song" though I finally get a bit of the '90s vibe, and this is

probably the best song on this quick three song EP. The vocals are suitably snotty to match the buzzsaw fuzz riffs and the band's new bassist really gets down on this one.

All told, this EP has helped me to reevaluate The Coast of Nebraska a bit. Can't wait to catch these guys live again.—**KELLY MINNIS**



Skyacre Spyplane
The Imaginary Album

I've been hearing about Austin's Skyacre Spyplane for a couple of years and even met some of the guys but never had a chance to hear them until The Ex-Optimists shared a bill with them last month. Woo boy, we've got to have these dudes over for Loudfest.

Skyacre works the same territory as early ...And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Dead and perhaps a less melodic Sunny Day Real Estate. Odd time signatures, big drums, melodic guitar leads, creepy singy-shouty vocals. The manifesto is laid out from the very get-go on *The Imaginary Album*. By second track "Her Energy Splashed" the band has settled in for some arpeggiated guitar noir, swelling cymbals and husched vocals before kicking into Sonic

Youth gear. By "Stockholm Syndrome" they detune the guitars and get heavy as fuck, and the unerving nature of the loud/heavy on "Calm" shows off how tight this band is.

Rush on over right now, run don't walk, to <http://www.skyacrespypne.com> and download their album immediately.—**KELLY MINNIS**



Bob Seger
Ultimate Hits

The drawback of greatest hits collections is the compiling is often done by committee or just the artists (rarely the best judge of their own art), so the "greatest" songs often go neglected. Such is the fate of *Ultimate Hits* by heartland rocker Bob Seger.

This twin-CD collection does gather the obvious Seger classics: "Old Time Rock and Roll," "Rock and Roll Never Forgets," "Against the Wind," "Like a Rock," and other expected choices. However, ultimately, the collection fails to show the real depth of Seger's songwriting and performance talent.

Seger has often been compared to Bruce Springsteen over the

decades, both apt chroniclers of working-class America. But Seger is closer in output to another classic rock performer: Neil Young. Seger's work is torn between full-tit rockers and softer mid-tempo ballads, much like Young ping-ponging between folk and gonzo Crazy Horse guitar riffs.

You can guess what dominates on this collection - only eight of the 26 cuts classify as rockers, and one of those is "Shakedown," wisely left off previous hits collections. And you get a Christmas song.

Where is "Sunspot Baby"? "Betty Lou's Getting Out Tonight"? "American Storm"? Where is the more-relevant-than-ever "Feel Like a Number"? The cover of Rodney Crowell's "Shame on the Moon" is here (never that great), so why not Seger's killer version of Chuck Berry's "Let It Rock"? Finally, where is one of the best love song rockers Seger ever wrote ("Even Now")?

As deep as Seger's catalog is, you could have satisfied the mid-tempo audience with his other tunes in that vein - "Understanding" is better than "Fire Lake" and "You'll Accompany Me" any day. I could go on and on, but you have to go with what's released in the end.

Finally, despite all its faults and my whining, *Ultimate Hits* is a fair-priced collection of many of Seger's hits in one purchase, but for those who want more, dig for the rock.—**MIKE L. DOWNEY**

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