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979 REPRESENT



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979Represent is a local magazine
for the discerning dirtbag.

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How To Secede At Life

Last month the citizens of the United States of America re-elected Pres. Barack Obama to another four year term in the White House. Texas voted overwhelmingly for former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney, and, shortly after the election, many Americans signed an online petition to the White House's website asking that the U.S. government recognize their state's intention to secede from the Union. Texas, naturally, has turned in 5x the amount of required signatures to get the White House's attention.

I make no assumptions about how any of you voted last month. Some of us on staff voted Romney, some of us voted Obama, some of us opted not to vote, and still some of us incredulously had no idea there was an election happening. But I will use myself as an example. I voted Obama...again, like I did in 2008. It was not an endorsement on the job he did in his first term. My vote was as much against Romney as it was for Obama. We can argue about it over a beer some time if you like.

I was unable to vote in 2000. My family suffered an unforeseen tragedy at the end of October that year, and in the recovery process my wife and I fled Seattle (where we lived at the time) to a hideout in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains of Montana. Neither one of us had the time nor the foresight to request provisional ballots so we did not vote in the Great Mess of 2000, though we did watch it unfold on television like so many of you did (Tim Russert, I so hope your family buried you with a dry erase board, my friend). Had my vote been registered, it would've rung up for Gore, as my previous two votes had been for Clinton. In 2004 I wasted a vote on Kerry, though again was voting as much against George W. Bush as I was voting for Kerry. I was in Seattle on Election Night 2004 and there were a lot of stunned progressives, Democrats and the like. The whole "Bush is a war criminal" group, far left fairy wing wearing WTO protesters, borderline environmentalist/ecoterrorist gang hung their heads in disbelief. And then very quietly got back to work, wondering how they could turn it all around. No one suspected that the guy I saw speaking in Boston in August 2004 from the back of the room, the senator from Illinois with the funny name and to this day orator of the most awesome political speech I'd ever heard, the kind that had everyone in that room asking each other "who the FUCK is this guy and why isn't he our candidate?!" would be the turnaround for all those upset Seattleites whose candidate lost the election.

Never once did I hear any of those people, for whom many conservatives proudly disdain as traitors to this country, ever say a thing about secession.

So in 2012 we find 500,000 or so sore losers signing that White House petition, which is ultimately a lot like "pissing in the wind" (which is a direct quote from a friend of mine who worked inside the second Bush administration). Some 100,000 or more of those come from our fellow Texans, maybe from some of you reading this humble magazine. Look, y'all, I've got a few words from you. I know you're grieving. I know it sucks when the dude you've hung your hopes on, well, the rest of country just doesn't agree with you enough to vote for that dude. Taking your toys and going home butthurt is perhaps the worst possible way to deal with the situation. The best possible way is to figure out why your candidate did not appeal enough to the 20% of swing voters in this country that lick their thumbs, hold them up, determine which way the prevailing wind in the country is blowing, and then vote accordingly. This election was your party's to lose. Then your party nominated the most out-of-touch effete job outsourcing 1% shithead they could find and ran him up the flagpole, shocked to find that most Americans realized that the ultra-wealthy venture capitalists of the world very much helped to put us in this mess. Secession is not the answer, my disgruntled friends. Nominating the right candidate to move your party forward in the 21st century, however, is the answer.—**KELLY MINNIS**

What the Fuck Is a Mexican Street Burger?!

Early last month I started to hear the rumblings in the B/CS rumor machine that our very own star chef Charlie Stover was about to embark on yet another restaurant endeavor. If you have been keeping tabs, that would be the 4th restaurant Charlie will have opened around here since 2007. I was eager to hear more, as I was an avowed Stover Boys fan and while I also dig on Stover Bros. Café (located inside Village Foods in Bryan)...it's just not the same. Sure, you can still get the famed bacon double cheeseburger with the Stover sauce and nary a tomato in sight...but the dogpile chili? The Death Fries? That feeling that you've gone into a man's club (replete with comic book pages on the wall) to eat a man's burger? Not happening with Stover Bros. Café. So when I heard about this new Stover restaurant, I knew it would rule.

Flip & Peel is Charlie Stover's next concept in dirtbag dining. The restaurant is located in the old Sonic locale inside Post Oak Mall. Say what? Yes the mall. I know you haven't been there in a year or two, but yes, it is still open. When I cruised in there late last month for my inaugural Flip & Peel experience I was struck by how different the mall's food court is now. No more junky ghetto-ass children's play area (I hear a new one is being built by Sears...dear Post Oak, TAKE BETTER CARE OF THIS ONE!), Chic-Fil-A is out and replaced by Canes, no more sushi or hot dog place...basically just a handful of eateries, and now Flip & Peel.

First glance at the menu and it will look not entirely unfamiliar to you. The typical Stover Boys hamburger fare is loud and proud, as are the Death Fries. But the handmade shakes and dogpile chili has been replaced with gourmet fries and Mexican street burgers. Now, while I have been hankering for some Death Fries for nearly two years now, I took one for the 979 team and auditioned a Mexican Street Burger (the Carnitas Burger to be exact) and split an order of bourbon caramel fries.

Let's start with the burger. Wasn't entirely sure what to expect, but knew that my burger, featuring beef, carnitas, cilantro, grilled onions, pickled jalapenos, guacamole and sour cream, was not exactly a patty, unlike the fantastic beef/chorizo hybrid burger I had a few months back at The Proudest Monkey in downtown Bryan. The Mexican street burger comes off like a cross between a torta and a Philly cheesesteak. The beef was grilled and tender, the carnitas seasoned just right so as not to overwhelm, all set off by a topping of fire-roasted tomatoes and arugula. Sounds fancy, right? But it sure didn't taste like gourmet stuff. It tasted like a badass south of the border cheesesteak. When Charlie asked me what I thought, I asked him "So how close to an authentic Mexican street burger is yours?" Without batting an eye, Charlie informed that "there's no such thing as a Mexican street burger". Charlie revealed that he knew he couldn't call it a torta because real torta fans would be up in arms, and it sure as heck isn't a burger, hence the addition to the local foodie lexicon: Mexican street burger. I was certainly a fan.

And the fries...well, let's just say this portion of Flip & Peel's

menu is even more unorthodox than the Mexican street burger. If you remember my beloved Death Fries from the first Stover restaurant, you'll recall a big mess of flavors: fries, pickles, mustard, Stover sauce, bacon, grilled onions, the hottest frickin' jalapenos in Brazos County and a slice or two of American cheese...all layered in a caloric mass of nastiness that shouldn't have worked together, but somehow the sum of the individual pieces transcended. Flip & Peel still serves the Death Fries (now coined Diablo Fries) but it's the other fry concoctions that I think will have people talking about this restaurant. The fries come in two different categories: the sort of drunk pile salty side and the dessert-sweet side. Anyone who's had chili cheese fries or anything like that won't be too particularly thrown out of shape by Charlie's 6 Cheese Fries or his New Republic BBQ Pork Fries. The Canadian Fries, for those of you who've never had fries with brown gravy or cheese curds, might seem odd (but they really do eat them like that in Canada, eh?). The dessert side is where you are really in for a surprise.



I took Charlie's advice and shared an order of the Bourbon Caramel Fries. First, you have a layer of shoestring sweet potato fries, coated in bourbon caramel sauce (prepared by Charlie and not out of a jar), sprinkled with shortbread crumbs, powdered sugar and cinnamon. It was an interesting experience, reminding me a bit of eating a funnel cake, but with more of the starchy character of the sweet potato fries and the heavy caramel underpinnings. It was definitely a serious confectionary and is

certainly intended as a dessert-type item. Charlie told me this is why Flip & Peel doesn't serve milkshakes: there's no need, as these fries are surely enough sweet for the average person. Other concoctions include Nutella Crunchberry Fries (with raspberry sauce) and S'Mores Fries. Sure, you can just get plain ol' white or sweet tater fries too, and Charlie fixes you up there too with a choice of interesting dipping sauces, like Strawberry Habanero Ketchup, Raspberry Chipotle Mustard and Lemon Garlic Aioli. Charlie told me he knew the fries would be the selling point of Flip & Peel and agonized over whether to make the restaurant fry-only with burgers as an afterthought, but I am glad that you get the flip AND the peel (geddit?)

Flip & Peel occupies its own space in the local gourmet burger pantheon already peopled quite happily by Grub Burger and The Proudest Monkey. There's nothing like a Stover Burger, and when you want one you really can't get it anywhere else around here (aside from The Village). The cool thing is not only does Flip & Peel got the burger part down, but the fry part is certainly unique to these parts and I think will build Flip & Peel's reputation as a quirky and different place to grab lunch, dinner or a tasty treat. My only worry is the location itself, as I generally avoid the mall like the plague. But Flip & Peel will have me coming back to the mall, and maybe while I'm walking off all that fantastic food maybe stop by Hot Topic or Journeys or something? That's what Post Oak Mall is hoping I'm sure. Either way, you owe it to yourself to stop by Flip & Peel and see what this place it all about. Find out more on Facebook or at <http://flipandpeel.com>—KELLY MINNIS

I Mean / You Know

Chuck returned with a refill of coffee, still smirking from the story he'd told Marcy.

"So, was the guy on a bicycle or a long-board?" Marcy asked as Chuck sat down.

"Nope," Chuck said. "Not that I saw. He just waltzed in with this pretty Black girl. The couple in front of him was also mixed. White guy and Asian girl. I kept thinking it could have only been better if the two White guys were together and the hipster's Black girl was with the Asian."

"God bless America," Marcy said. "What was it he said again about the Kelly Clarkson shirt?"

"Yeah, so he has this Kelly Clarkson t-shirt partly covered by this plaid button-up number, but you can totally see Kelly Clarkson's face peeping through. And I ask, genuinely ask, cause, you know, I'm curious and all . . ."

"Right."

"Is that Kelly Clarkson on your shirt? I mean, I can't tell them all apart. Kelly for Britney for Avril for who-shit-ever."

"Total pop tart for pop tart," Marcy says.

"And this guy rubs his hands over Kelly Clarkson on his shirt and says, Of course. And I say, did you see her in concert? And he says, yeah, right here in Houston. And that's when he said it was a total 'bucket-list worthy show,'" Chuck twitters his fingers in the air, wrapping quotations around his story.

Marcy laughs, clapping her hands, "Oh, man, priceless! Bucket-list worthy? What a tool!"

"I know, right?" Chuck says laughing. "All I could say, and I didn't mean to say it out loud, was 'weird.'"

"I mean, you know that guy just wears that shirt to be all ironic. Guys like that are classic for wanting to be ironic. And what was the thing he said about the source of his awesomeness or whatever?"

"Yeah, so he's got this beard that's all nipple length, this one big chunk is all kicking over to the side. And I nearly made a No-Shave-November joke but I thought that might be a bit too douche-baggy."

"No way! You should have! That's totally funny!"

"But, you know, I've only got this fuzz, and I did start up for No-Shave November. So I didn't want to draw attention. I mean, his beard was long, but he still complimented my fuzz. Said mine was solid and his had patches."

"So patronizing," Marcy scoffed.

"Oh, which reminds me that I need you to help me upload a pic of today's No-Shave progress to my Tumblr and Instagram. The ones I've been taking of myself are all full of nostril."

"Yeah, of course. No problem."

"So, yeah, I ask him, do you think that people give you more respect because you've got that awesome beard?"

"Totally legit."

"And he looks at me like it's a weird question and says, maybe. He says his students ask about his beard quite a bit. And I say - and I say this as a total compliment - they probably ask because they think it's so awesome. And that's when he strokes his beard with his hand and says, yeah, but I have to remind my students that my beard is not the 'source of my awesomeness,'" Chuck twitters his fingers quotationally again.

Marcy laughs while sipping her latte, pinching her nose with her fingers. She coughs, "Man, that is golden! 'My beard is not the source of my awesomeness!' Seriously, how lame can you be?"

"I know! I couldn't wait to find out if Mark or Biscuits heard it, too. I needed someone else to validate that it happened. And you're totally wondering, like, how does this guy not get his ass kicked, like, everyday?"

"And you say he was with a Black girl?"

"I mean, he came in with a Black girl, but I don't know if he was with the Black girl. Mark sold the guy mint lemonade and the Black girl a vanilla latte. Said they paid separate but the guy had a business card credit card."

"My god. I would hate to be one of his students hearing about the source of his awesomeness all the time. Makes me think of this record review I read the other day where some guy says something about Best Coast being the West Coast Ramones with a Josephine instead of a Joey."

"That is so retarded," Chuck said. "And not even, like, Special Olympics awesome."

"Totally. And you know whoever wrote that is some lame old cigar trying way too hard to sound cool. I mean, does anybody even listen to the Ramones anymore?"

"Who knows?" Chuck says, lighting a Pall Mall. "Which reminds me, you still have my Ramones shirt."

"Oh yeah. I washed it," Marcy said, reaching for Chuck's cigarettes. "You can grab it after we hit Urban Outfitters." - KEVIN STILL



Xmas Music That Won't Make You Want To Kill Yourself

The first thing about enjoying Christmas music this time of year is to have a few simple rules:

1 - Christmas music should be happy and make you feel happy. Period. Christmas is about the birthday of Christ, so all the music should be upbeat and celebratory like crazy. It's a birthday, but no one would play what passes for most Christmas music at anyone's birthday party, not unless you wanted to make them suicidal. And about the only religious Christmas songs with any gusto are "Joy to the World" (not the Three Dog Night song) and "Hark the Herald Angels Sing", so you have to go secular for the rocking birthday Christmas tunes. Since I've been listening to the same Christmas songs for decades, now I tend to like surf and punk versions.

2 - Play Christmas music only in the month of December. This is hard since many yahoos start spitting out the Yule tunes as soon as Halloween is over. Comfort yourself with the knowledge that the artist warbling about chestnuts and the open fire had to record that song months earlier in the summer, so imagine him or her with a nasty heat rash that still plagues them. Assume the programmer has it too.

3 - Prepare playlists for the occasion. Most family gatherings aren't ready for tunes like "There Ain't No Sanity Claus" with the Damned or "Christmas Night of the Zombies" by MXPX, so have something prepared for everybody that the folks and relatives can put up with and that won't drive you crazy.

So here's some tunes to mix and match for the season:

A Lump of Punk in Your Stocking

1. "Merry Christmas (I Don't Want to Fight Tonight)" - The Ramones
2. "Silent Night" - The Dickies
3. "White Christmas" - Stiff Little Fingers
4. "Christmas Day" - MXPX
5. "Run Run Rudolph" - the Humpers (Honorable Mention) - "Christmas Sucks" - Velodrome 2000

Putting the Sleigh in HyperDrive

1. "Oi to the World" - No Doubt
2. "Step into Christmas" - Elton John
3. "Soul Christmas" - Graham Parker and Nona Hendryx
4. "Holiday Spirit" - The DBs
5. "Auld Lang Syne/You'll Never Walk Alone" - Slade (Honorable Mention) - A Great Big Sled - The Killers

Yule Have No Vocals

1. "In Dulci Jubilo" - Mike Oldfield
2. "Jingle Bells" - Flat Duo Jets
3. "(We Like) Eggnog" - The Rory McBrides
4. "Blue Christmas" - The Ventures
5. "A Dance Duet-Reels" - The Chieftains (Honorable Mention) - any of John Fahey's Christmas albums

If Scrooge were Santa: Tunes to Avoid

1. Any version of "The Little Drummer Boy" (not even David Bowie and Bing Crosby can save this one)
2. "Happy Holidays" by Billy Idol (unremittably boring)
3. "Acoustic Christmas" (dull, dull, dull despite Rosanne Cash, T-bone Burnett, and others)
4. "Joy to the World" by Chuck Negron (One Dog Night)
5. "Now That's What I Call Christmas" collections - you're guaranteed ¾ songs you'll hate.

Santa Wears Boots

1. "Christmas Time's A-Coming" - Emmylou Harris
2. "One Christmas Tree" - Nitty Gritty Dirt Band
3. "Something 'bout This Time of Year" - Mike Daly (Whiskytown)
4. "Merry Christmas from the Family" - Robert Earl Keen
5. "Christmas Time in Texas" - Vince Vance and the Valiants

My Top Christmas Songs This Season

1. "Mambo Santa Mambo" - Enchanters
2. "Rock and Roll Christmas" - George Thorogood and the Destroyers
3. "Pachelbel's Canon" - The Baronics
4. "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" - Bruce Springsteen
5. "Silent Night" - The Dickies
6. "Little Saint Nick" - The Beach Boys
7. "Here Comes Santa Claus" - Elvis Presley
8. "Rocking Around the Christmas Tree" - Brenda Lee
9. "Soldier's Home" - The Del-Lords
10. "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)" - Darlene Love - MIKE L. DOWNEY

(ed.—What????! No "Soulful Christmas Tree" by soul brother numero uno James Brown? Chipmunks' "Christmas Time Is Here?" T'aint Christmas round my place until we break out the Chipmunks Xmas album (now on CD, but used to be a record on Pickwick I had as a kid). I still happen to like Paul McCartney's Xmas tune (all that MiniMoog and Space Echo!) and, of course, it ain't Xmas time in Hollis Queens til Mama's cookin' chicken and collard greens (Run DMC's "Christmas In Hollis"). Admirable lists though, and necessary. Like many of youse, I've worked mall retail during the holidays and Christmas music will wear out its welcome mighty quick, and that distaste will stick with you for YEARS, if not decades. Maybe these'un can mend the lasting wounds rent across your soul done to you by Judds Christmas and, in my house, Firestone Singers Christmas.)



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Pedal Pushin': Strymon El Capistan

I love echo, echo, echo. Couldn't refrain there. But I've had the Dickens of a time finding the *right* echo pedal for guitar. I need it to be subtle and not in the way...until I want it to take off like a crazy drunken UFO careening around the corners of the room. It's hard to find the right echo or delay pedal that does both really well (and usually don't do both that great). Until I recently I had to roll with two delay pedals to get there (an MXR Carbon Copy and TC Electronic Flashback...usually both at the same time). Now I've gone booteek...with the Strymon El Capistan.

I've got an unspoken rule: never play the same gear as Wonko The Sane, the other guitarist in The Ex-Optimists. Partially because I don't want to sound just like him (though I think that's impossible even if our rigs were duplicates), the other is because I want to be "different". Wonko has rolled with an El Cap on his pedalboard for over a year now and I loved how it sounded and I certainly wanted one but couldn't because of my hang-ups. About six months back I started looking for an analog delay that would allow "trails", meaning that if I disengage the effect that the echoes would continue to trail off until they disappear, rather than just cut off. Very few analog delays do that, and those that do are super hella \$\$\$\$\$\$. That means digital, but it would have to have a buffered output so it could trail (which kills a lot of boutique pedals since those dudes are all about "true bypass" these days). Wonko suggested I get over myself and go Strymon, and I did.

The Strymon El Capistan is a DSP powered tape echo simulator pedal. You have controls for how many tape heads you want (to better emulate the triumvirate of tape echo styles—Space Echo, Echoplex and Echorec), the age of the tape (older tape means darker echoes), wow and flutter (or "modulation"), speed, repeat, mix and secondary controls for tape bias (makes the echoes either bassy or resonant), BBD reverb (like the Space Echo), and tape crinkles/splices (makes the echo "hiccup" randomly). One footswitch controls off/on and the other a tap tempo or hold it down to make the echo self-oscillate. The El Cap can take a mono signal and split it stereo but unlike the Line 6 delays it will not take a stereo signal as an input. Sounds complicated, right? And the secondary controls are all hidden functions that require you to hold down both footswitches to activate. So you really can't deep edit live. But it turns out that Strymon thought of this, and allows for one preset to be stored in the unit and asked through a latching switch (Strymon makes one but Wonko and I use a TIM switch that

is 1/3 the size of the Strymon switch) so you can have a crazy warbled out delay on preset and your more song-oriented patch live from the controls, which is how I have mine set. The Mode switch allows for three ranges of delay speeds so I can get leave the knobs alone and alternate between a slapback or more spacious echo at the flick of a switch.

Does it really sound like tape? Yes, actually. I've owned one rather bad mostly malfunctioning cartridge style single head tape delay and, when it worked, I was surprised by how hi-fi the repeats were, not completely dark like analog bucket bridge delay echoes often are. If you turn all the artificial artifacts off on single head mode the El Cap sounds like a digital delay should. But as you start adding the craziness in subtly it really begins to sound like tape delay. Depending on how you've got it set you can get it to have the "hi-fi" sound of a well-tuned Space Echo or the grungy ambience of a magnetic drum delay like an Echorec. Get a long repeat echo going, twist the time knob and it sounds remarkably like tape does, with that quick dip in pitch, then turn up the repeats and it will take off uncontrollably or, if set right, just repeat forever under the main signal. The onboard reverb really adds a lot to the overall sound. And there is also a "sound on sound" function that allows for very limited looping (though the loop will eventually degrade to a smeared wash of sound).

I do have some issues with it though. The delays aren't as "round" as I'd like, even with the tape age dialed all the way up. Also, the self-oscillation is directly linked to the bias setting, and it is difficult to get the right balance of good full deep echo that can take off if you want it and then get it to actually take off. That wouldn't be a big problem if the secondary functions had their own pots rather than being ganged and pretty much untouchable for live use. The other more major drawback is the cost. An El Capistan retails for \$299 plus another \$50-\$75 for a preset pedal (depending on if you go the TIM or Strymon route) for basically a computer inside a steel pedal enclosure. But *the sound*. When you get the El Cap dialed in it really has an awesome, singular sound. But it requires A LOT of fiddling with and it's probably best you do your fiddling with it at home before the gig. Considering real tape echoes are FAR more finicky than this, far more expensive and most require you to have Atarimatt-style skills with a soldering gun and 1950s BBC engineer skill with tape splicing, capstan degunking and head degauzing. I think I'll stick with the El Cap instead.—KELLY MINNIS



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eclipse

profile & photos by david lynch

An ad by Andrew Ferguson in the musicians section of the College Station Craigslist looking for Metal musicians wanting to start a band turned a dream of this local metalhead into a reality: a band called **Eclipse**. They are the newest Metal music band to form in the Brazos County Metal Music scene. Eclipse performed for the first time onstage last

performing. "The band is built on being straight forward as a TEAM, that is, not one person running the show, we all have the same input to the band's activities," says Adam. "We practice a lot which require us to spend a lot of time together, so everyone must get along." "After months of practicing, we are now family", stated Shaun. "Everyone contributes to the songs Andrew has written by adding their own musical influence to each song," said Jason. "If any issues arise in the band's progress, we address them as a mature group, even the negativity gets dealt with in a positive manner," said Andrew. "We are about the music and have planned for the long run in music entertainment."



As all bands find out:

"The critics started barking out even before the band started performing that Eclipse was a Marilyn Manson knock off band cause we sounded like them when we play 'Sweet Dreams' and have even been called Red Folder Apparatus over the band's media kit, which was nothing but a plain red folder with no true band name yet in the beginning," said Andrew. "Not being discouraged, we as a team, kept plowing forward getting band merchandise for sale, building a fan base, and getting airplay on Sunday nights Rock 103.9 Homebrew show. We keep practicing and working on our stage

month at the Grand Stafford Theater to a sold out crowd.

Meet the band:

***Andrew Ferguson**—lead Vocals/Song Writer/band creator: Likes Popsicles & Jello, watching Family Guy, recorded first song, called "Under the Gun", at age 15

***Adam Holmes**—Bass: former bassist for local bands **Primal & Anxious Fate**, likes watching King of the Hill, and eating watermelon Jelly Bellys

***Shaun Preston**—Drummer: started drummin' in 4th grade, loves watchin' NFL (Chargers fan) and raising his family

***Jason Turner**—Guitar: former guitarist for local bands **Illystium & Stoneset**, always first to practice, likes watching Family Guy and drinking chocolate milk

***Zorro Alvarez**—Lead guitarist: from Central Mexico, self-taught by ear, likes Dragon Ball Z & Hawaiian Pizza, favorite band ever-KISS

How Eclipse started:

The ad got Adam's attention . He answered and met Andrew. They got together, played some music and both were impressed with each other's musical talents/experience. Together, they continued to interview/screen people for new bandmates while garage recording a couple tracks of Andrew's music and uploading them to their Reverbnation band page, which quickly rose to #1 in the Bryan/College Station area band ratings. After screening many musicians, Adam and Andrew chose the new band members not only for their skills, but for their personalities and dedication to



presence." It showed in their first onstage show with an exciting set that ended with people hollering for an encore performance, delaying the national touring headliner band Flyleaf.

What to expect from Eclipse in 2013:

"Going into professional recording studio with the whole band, more songs and shows here in B/CS along with other towns are already being scheduled in Texas. Also, Zorro the Slasher has connections in Mexico, we hope to have a show there," said Andrew. "We are on a mission to dominate the Metal music world."

Stop by Reverbnation.com/eclipse4 or Facebook to become a fan

Moustache Rides

By James Gray

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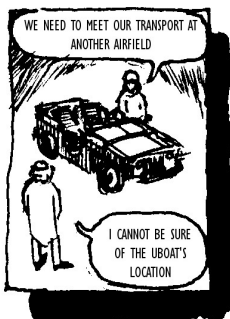
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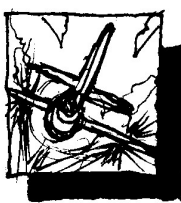
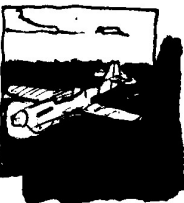
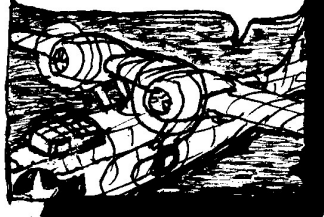
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By Patrick Schotemann



Record Reviews



Best Coast
The Only Place

Best Coast is the West Coast Ramones with a Josephine instead of a Joey. It's really really true. Best Coast capitalizes on the same musical and lyrical strengths that made the Ramones so timelessly kick butt-able, namely a hyperbolic use of minimalism. An analysis of Ramones lyrics reveal keen interests in girls, drugs, and doing nothing in New York City for incredibly long stretches of time. Likewise, Bethany Cosentino appears patriotically devoted to boys, pot, and "fun-fun-fun" in the California sun. And in the same way that Johnny Ramone found an angst-driven guitar mode that shaped the Ramones unmistakable feverish sound, Best Coast's Bobb Bruno seems to have found his pickadilly niche somewhere between alt country and surf rock, slithering whiskey rhythms through a mai tai lazy haze.

So when you boil it down, I love Best Coast because I love the Ramones. And, surely, I just won't highlight on someone's uncoupled list for that statement.

Best Coast's sophomore release, *The Only Place*, progresses the band leagues ahead of their self-titled debut. While the music feels familiar and seminally Best Coast, better production and more sophisticated song-crafting exalt everything in Best Coast's sound. On *The Only Place*, Bruno's guitar swirls rather than fuzzes, and, while he still doesn't wang out bridges or solos, Bruno feels more intentional with his craft, no longer depending on walls of static to build a two-and-a-half-minute-plus structure of laxisadistic pop. And where the vocals took the backseat on Best Coast's debut, echoing as if sheepishly recorded down a hall from the main studio, Cosentino is now front and center, shining clean and confident on each track. In spite of all this newness, however, lyrics still feel repetitive to the point of anthem or despair, given your state of mind or esteem, or (let's be honest) ether.

Even so, *The Only Place* is a yearning, hungry, barren but hopeful - dare I say, pretty - record. I've had *The Only Place* on repeat for four days solid, and I can say with all certainty that it's not the kind of record that would make The Jerk's Navin R. Johnson dance around the room and "want to be somebody." In fact, *The Only Place* has the opposite effect. It's a musical vacation, an auditory veg out, moving at the pace

of LA traffic rather than LA ambition. Stand out tracks like "How They Want Me To Be" and "Up All Night" demand blank-brain window gazing, while the more upbeat "The Only Place" (a love song to California), "Let's Go Home" and "Do You Love Me Like You Used To" inspire introspection more than action.

Like the Ramones, Best Coast thrives on wanting. On pining. On dissatisfaction. Thus, the lyrical, swirling repetition. Thus, the material obsession. Just ask Joey and Johnny: whether girls or boys, glue or pot, Rockaway or L.A., the need for something more than right here and right now exists. We're not as autonomous as we'd like to believe. We need our homes. Our friends. Our partners. Even our substances. All reminding us that right now is not perfect. It will never be. So there's art. And there's hunger. Enough art and hunger, even in two distinctly similar and different bands, for too many records and too many songs to never reach the end of either. So it goes until we arrive at or evolve to something better. —KEVIN STILL



forgetters
forgetters

You have all heard Blake Schwarzenbach even if you did not know it at the time. If any of you have been to a Hangouts or Optimists show at Revolution or on Northgate there is always a time of night, usually after the bands are through playing, when someone puts on Jawbreaker or Jets To Brazil or even forgetters and a handful of people always freak out and go crazy. Blake Schwarzenbach's bands usually have that effect on 30-to-40-something year old alt-rock lifers. But I have a confession to make: I'm not really one of them. Sure, I liked Jawbreaker but I was never insane about them like others are. So I am somewhat able to come at forgetters, Schwarzenbach's new band, with somewhat fresh ears. And I have to admit, there's something about *forgetters*, the band's debut album, that talks to me on a higher level whereas previous *forgetters* and Schwarzenbach work did not.

For starters, I think it's because the album does not just BLARE at you, and Schwarzenbach is not beating you with his admittedly awesome wordplay. This album is mostly mid-tempo, moody, dark and bleak. The album's centerpiece, "Die By Your Own Hand," is a slow pressure cooker of a song

that never explodes, leaving the listener closeted in, claustrophobic, with perhaps one of the most harrowing lyrics from the Schwarzenbach oeuvre. This is not the fistbanging rager experience I think most Jawbreaker/Thorns of Life/Jets To Brazil fans are looking for, but for people like me who are looking for a way to appreciate the softer side of Blake.

Not that this record is an acoustic record or anything. It's still a rocker, but tunes like "In America" add piano and forgetters' cover of The Human League's "Seconds" relies mainly on bass and drums to get the point across with the hint of synthesizer pads behind it before the guitars kick in. Schwarzenbach's vocal delivery is also as downcast as the album's tone, less sneery and almost defeated-sounding. Adds more weight to the lyrics me-thinks.

All in all, I think *forgetters* has finally made a Schwarzenbach believer out of me, and will have me going back to my copy of *Dear You* to see if I hear that with different ears now. —KELLY MINNIS



Kelly Clarkson
Greatest Hits - Chapter One

Here's the deal: I'm not buying Kelly Clarkson's Greatest Hits record. I'm not buying it because I have all these tracks. I'm the dedgum Clarksonian Institute. You need a Kelly Clarkson track, I've got it. Or I can get it. A performer of Kelly Clarkson's quality doesn't need half-committed fans. Don't expect to find Christmas-and-Easter-only Kelly Clarkson devotees in the Still household. We're year round Kellebrities.

Kelly Clarkson's new Greatest Hits single, "Catch My Breath", fits the sound of Clarkson's most recent studio release, *Stronger*. Where *Breakaway* and *All I Ever Wanted* showcased guitar driven pop-rock, *Stronger* strips the guitars back, amps the synths, and even swells with straight-up Nashville country sensibilities. "Catch My Breath", a memoir-ish look back at Clarkson's career from American Idol forward, solidifies the sheer electro-pop new direction of Clarkson's music, while also featuring some of Clarkson's most personal lyrics - and strongest studio performance - since *Breakaway*'s "Because of You" and "Hear Me". Likewise, Clarkson's duet with Vince Gill (which

features very little Vince Gill), "Don't Rush", is a straight early 80's country-pop standard that oddly puts me in mind of the Kenny Rogers/Dolly Parton radio hit, "Islands In The Stream". The happy-sappy chorus and swimmy guitars, chopped by an elevator-y muzak style bridge, makes me think that Kelly Clarkson is having fun here, recording an ode to childhood radio nostalgia. Whatever the case, "Don't Rush" is a far better country track than *Stronger*'s "Don't You Wanna Stay" duet with Jason Aldean: the only Kelly Clarkson track I skip everytime it circles around.

Clarkson's previously unreleased "People Like Us" begins with a spoken-word, Pat Benatar "Love Is A Battlefield" or Lady Gaga "Born This Way" style admonition of diversity and tolerance. Honestly, the vocal bit feels trite and silly but does not manage to steal the track's overall effect. "People Like Us", ripe with Britney and Rihanna club-heavy dance beats, is easily Clarkson's strongest pop-rock radio single option since *All I Ever Wanted*'s "I Don't Hook Up".

While Kelly Clarkson appears, in her song choices and writing, as well as interviews and Tweets, to be moving in a more country focused direction, I'm stoked to hear "People Like Us". I'm also loving the live version of "Miss Independent" on the deluxe release of the Greatest Hits record, which vividly illustrates the progress of Clarkson's voice and style since her American Idol days. Also, I can't get enough of Clarkson's Alanis Morissette cover, "That I Would Be Good" (available on Clarkson's Smoakstack Sessions Vol. 2). These newly available tracks prove that Kelly Clarkson is a powerhouse rock vocalist, a Pat Benatar and - dare I say - Aretha Franklin. And while I'll always prefer this rockier side of Kelly Clarkson to her country influences, I'll follow Kelly Clarkson wherever she goes. If she really wanted to go country, I wish she'd have included her cover of Patti Griffin's "Up To The Mountain" and her "Because of You" duet with Reba McEntire on her Greatest Hits, both performances proving she can hold her own alongside her successors and heroines. Regardless, I will follow Kelly Clarkson wherever she goes musically. I mean, dang it, Atarimatt was right: that woman must have sold her soul somewhere to be so good. Either that or she's one of the few with enough to shine through. —KEVIN STILL

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concert calendar

12/7—Brandon Rhyder, Bri Bagwell @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

12/7—Blue Bear @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

12/8—BMXmas II featuring Laserz, The Hangouts, Jay Satellite, Race To The Moon, ASS, Only Beast, Moron Mountain, Golden Sombrero @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

12/8—Paper Route, Valise, Scientist @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

12/12—The Romeros, Concerto Malaga @ Rudder Theater, College Station. 7:30pm

12/13—Marcia Ball, Carter Beckwith @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

12/14—Guy Forsyth, Carolyn Wonderlind @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

12/15—The Ex-Optimists, Skyacre, The Ex-Girlfriends, Frank Smith @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

12/28—Atarimatt, Lightning Briefs, Wasp and Pear, Patrick Schonemann @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm



Still Drinkin': Lone Star Bock?!

This just in: Lone Star Beer now comes in camouflage cans. The better to hide your drinking problem with, my dear.

Speaking of Lone Star Beer, there appears to be only one brew on Texas beer lovers' minds these days. At least, I've received more inquisitions and curiosities about **Lone Star Bock** than all the Texas brewed Christmas or fall beers combined. The bottle label features a simple high school mascot style black-white-yellow crest, centrally featuring a ram's head. If you think this sounds too reminiscent of Shiner's goat-tastic Bock label, don't get pompous. "Bock" means "buck" or "ram" in German, and the Germans use "bock" to describe strong, flavor pounding lagers. Heavily malted, the Old World appreciates bocks for their body and drinkability: two characteristics I would not quickly attribute to Lone Star's Bock, which is more Zeigenbock than Spaten Celebrator. Autumn oak leaf brownish orange, Lone Star Bock smells sweet and barky, but the flavor doesn't pull through. Thin, sugary and reminiscent of a beverage that comes with its own straw, I sorta like it, though I certainly will not buy it often. Enjoy Lone Star Bock responsibly or only when necessary. Meanwhile, I'll be in the bushes with my camo cans and a Lone Star lager state of mind.

(By the way, I had to look up the riddle on my bottle cap. "Time to hit the hay" was harder than you might expect.)

The wife and I hit Harvey Washbangers a few weeks ago and caught a special tapping of **Buffalo Bill's Gingerbread Stout**. Buffalo Bill's Brewing Company hails from Houston, Texas. Gingerbread Stout marks the first beer I've tried from Buffalo Bills, but my Lord, it begged faithful patronage with every sip. Styled as a Russian Imperial Stout, and weighing in at 10% ABV, Buffalo Bill added necessary spices to complete the gingerbread flavor. For the occasion, Washbangers served our pints chilled, but as the beer warmed, the ginger spice kicked up several notches, announcing itself loudly on the palette and throat. This was a fantastic beer, and probably an unfair introduction to a new brewing company. I can't imagine they could have many beers as good or better than the Gingerbread Stout.

Returning home from the Buffalo Bills' Gingerbread Stout tasting, the wife and I immediately opened our one and only bottle of **Saint Arnold's Pumpkinator**. Our own Kelly Minnis offered a fine review of Pumpkinator last month. Held nearly side by side - the Gingerbread and Pumpkin stouts - I want to reiterate Kelly's endorsement of Pumpkinator: hands

down one of the top three Texas brewed beers I've tried. Honestly, the two beers I sipped that evening challenged my view of Texas beers. I'll measure everything in this state against these two beers - even IPAs - now that I know Texas' brewing threshold.

Regardless, **Real Ale** is pushing the craft envelope, as well, challenging other craft brewers to trump their own limits. Real Ale's winter seasonal is a **Coffee Porter**, featuring a stronger coffee/espresso/dark chocolate flavor than I remember. Real Ale's Coffee Porter is a bitter, dark dessert affair that requires more than a casual sip-and-nod acknowledgement. I'm planning Coffee Porter to fill my first growler at Washbangers.

Real Ale recently launched a Brewer's Cut series: a line of experimental beers that Real Ale celebrates democratically amongst their devoted patronage. Faithful followers can vote to keep a particular beer in Real Ale's year-round lineup, or they can vote to diminish the beer altogether. Real Ale recently released their **Brewer's Choice Black Quad**. My tasting notes (scribbled excitedly on a napkin and lost in my pockets for a few days) read: "Belgian Quad. = Belgian brewed with Belgian black malts; sweet; candied figs; sugary; black with milk chocolate, iridescent edges. Got a bit of a brandy nose. Gets better with warmth and food." I'm definitely casting a thumbs-up vote for Real Ale's Black Quad. However, I would like to vote **Real Ale's Signature Hop Pale Ale** off the island. Zero balance. Spiky harsh nose. Charred hops own the palette's foreground. I worked my way through a full sixer, expecting each bottle to finally be the bottle that won me over, but it never happened. Real Ale is a great brewery, and Signature Hop Pale Ale marks my first Real Ale thumbs-down vote. I certainly have no plans to hold this beer against their future releases.

As a confession, I want to come clean with you guys (all four of our readers) and admit openly that I have fallen deeply in love with hard ciders. My lovely bride and my buddy Dale are to blame. I've been kicking back loads of **Woodchuck Fall Seasonal, Angry Orchard Apple Ginger, and Sir Perry Pear Cider**. Hard cider is lovely, lovely stuff. Unfortunately, and I'm utterly chagrined to admit this, I have not tried any of the Texas made ciders. The shame! My New Year's Beer Resolution is to taste more hard ciders, and to review for the four of you our home state ciders. January's Still Drinkin' will be devoted to hard ciders. And, if we're lucky, the wife will finally weigh in with her own reviews. Keep your fingers crossed and your Lone Star traditional.—KEVIN STILL

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