

ST99 REPRESENT



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inside: café eccel vs. the republic - todd on film - the day the dinosaurs died - beer while pregnant - mutual attraction, boobs & the consequence of technology - record reviews - concert calendar



**979represent is a local magazine
for the discerning dirtbag.**

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MUTUAL ATTRACTION, BOOBS & THE CONSEQUENCE OF TECHNOLOGY

I'm sure you've heard about it by now. If not then where in the hell have you been-A, and B- I envy you. Yup! I'm talking about the Hot or Not app. A shallow app for your phone meant to take up most of your free time and to judge people based upon their appearance. Sounds shitty, I know. But! I fell into this fad of wasted time and possibilities of hook ups—my poor phone has taken a beating. Let me explain. It's quite simple really. You click the heart icon if you find someone sexually attractive, and the X icon if not. Mutual attractions give opportunity to chat while simultaneously draining the battery life on your phone. There are also ratings on appearance, but that's bullshit. Everyone is beautiful, blah, blah, blah. One thing I've noticed about the male species is that you fellas are quick to send out these "dick pics". I mean good lord! Have some decency man! I don't want your junk popping up in my face. Personal preference I suppose. Men are also very pushy about the visuals. "No" doesn't always process well in their mind. Normally if they don't get what they want, then the conversation ends and they disappear back into the system never to be heard from again. Some keep on keepin'-on, and won't leave you alone about it. After a while Queen's "Another One Bites the Dust" plays on while fingers keep clicking and new words are formed from the keyboards of strangers.

This app has graced me into a world of the male brain, which is filled with questions of boobs and answers that lead into questions of boobs. Deep, I know. Dirty pictures and filthy words swarm the intentions of men, but of course, there are plenty of really awesome guys out there—who now have my number—and who SEEM to care. The few who care about conversation and etiquette have become a part of my "favorites" and I talk to them just about every day. Weird, I know. It's interesting how this generation has broken the walls of communication, and we can now send our voice out into the world for others to hear and read. Making connections with multiple guys in our country has fascinated me, and it's amazing how one text can travel far and wide for the sake of human interaction. Sharing personal experience, life stories, or talking about the weather, had me hooked from the get go. I devoured every conversation I had with these people from across our nation with no hesitation—that rhymed unintentionally. This is the time and age to seek something beyond a town, a city, and a state. The taboo is no longer taboo, but, it is a fad that's becoming the new normal.

Of course all of this revelation of new technology has struck my curiosity on the current generation's desensitization of character. Moral keeps popping up in my over thinking head, and I question the dignity of us all. Since texting has been invented, we all have the opportunity to keep in contact for 70% of our day—this is a guesstimate, under no circumstances is this a real percentage under any social or scientific pole. This is my logic—and this sends us on the ultrafast track to really knowing someone. Back in the good old days courting and dates where necessary for a potential relationship or scandals. Letters and phone calls have died and resurrected into a new, weird, mutated baby called "text messages". Trust and those little annoying butterflies grow with possibility of eight hour contact. You can't help it, it just happens. When trust and feelings form over a screen and a few sweet words grasp your eye balls, a request is the inevitable. UmmHumm, dirty pictures. We've all done it. Don't act like you haven't "sexted". Sexting: talking dirty through a text message, also on occasion sending some body parts... it's a verb. Glad we got that covered. So, feelings of devaluing dignity are the consequence, but for the time being, do we really care about consequence? Do you personally care if someone has your naked body and dirty fantasies within the pit of their pocket? Are all the cool kids doing it? Do you want some pot? Haha! Do we as human beings have to pervert everything? Does sex have to orbit fads and fashions?...the answer is yes...just so you know. Without the idea of sex, the Hot or Not app wouldn't have become so popular, without our dirty little human minds nothing would be sold, and without all of these weird things playing into effect, people would not just reach out in hopes of friendship without the idea of sex.

So! With that being said, try it out; give it a go. Why not right? Just keep the naughty pictures to a minimum, and try conversation first... Hear that? That's the sound of every guy who is reading this cursing me to hell. Get in line sweet heart! - JESSICA LITTLE



CAFÉ ECCEL VS. THE REPUBLIC

I have been cautionary about the City of College Station's recent case of "developmentpalooza" wherein the city has approved a massive amount of new development in the months following Texas A&M University's movement to the Southeastern Conference for athletics and the many successes of Johnny Football Manziel (a drunk outside of Rudyards in Houston last month referred to him as Johnnyball when he learned we were from B/CS so now I must always refer to him as Johnnyball, but I digress). It seems like nearly every ugly eyesore empty lot or under-developed vacant building has been torn down with a high rise apartment complex or a hotel being built or already built atop it. Last year, the city itself sold a couple of different pieces of land it owns. For starters, it wants to encourage new development (yay! new tax revenues!), but it also wants to get out of the landlord business (more on that later) and it satisfies a lot of the MyBCS talk of College Station needing to get up offa that land and sell it to add \$\$\$ to the coffers. How the city has handled the developers who they sold those lots/developments to and how it handled its former tenants tells a lot about the current state of affairs in College Station.

For many years Café Eccel has operated in the former City Hall building on Church St. next to Wellborn Rd. in the far western reach of Northgate. For as long as I've lived here Eccel has been the finest restaurant within walking distance of Texas A&M. I have celebrated anniversaries, work Christmas parties and other occasions at Café Eccel. The Dallis family, who runs Eccel, has leased their building from the City for decades. Recently the city sold the building and the vacant lot behind Eccel to Asset Plus, who plans on building a gigantic high-rise apartment complex complete with ground floor retail and a parking garage. As a part of the negotiations for the sale, the city asked Asset Plus to make space available to lease for Café Eccel, as well as guaranteed parking for the restaurant. Asset Plus agreed, and the sale began to hum along. Until the process hit a snag late last year, when the Dallis family discovered that Asset Plus did not intend to guarantee parking spots for Café Eccel customers. At that point, the Dallis brothers sued for an injunction to the development to prevent completion of the deal, as it was guaranteed in the contracts that Asset Plus must negotiate "in good faith" with the Dallises over parking. The Dallises felt that Asset Plus was in breach, and therefore sued. The city, meanwhile, sent Eccel a notice to vacate premises last month as the lease was officially up on the Eccel property. The Dallises did not vacate the premises, and continues as of this writing to operate in their location outside of a lease (they paid for the entire month of January 2014 and the city cashed the check, though later refunded the Dallises for the balance outside of the lease). The city did not hold up the sale, did not negotiate with Asset Plus on the behalf of Café Eccel and is letting Asset Plus move forward with their plans, without Café Eccel.

Also recently, the city sold the Chimney Point development along University Dr. east of Texas Ave. to PM Realty Group. The developers have made no announcements as to their plans for that plot, the buildings on it or the tenants in those buildings. One of those tenants is The Republic, another very fine restaurant, one of the finest in the county. Our local newspaper The Eagle obtained the contracts and noticed a similar "in good faith" clause for the developer in its dealings with the current tenants, but reporter Beth Brown also discovered an additional clause. I quote Brown from the January 19th, 2014 edition of The Eagle: "It further clarifies, though, that the agreement doesn't warrant or guarantee any new or amended lease. If they do enter into a new lease, though, the agreement states that there is no guarantee the restaurant can operate continuously during construction, as long as the developer is using commercially reasonable efforts."

One must note that the sale to PM Realty Group is still pending and is not final.

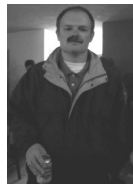
Well, that is interesting indeed. It seems that the city has learned from its mistake with Café Eccel and Asset Plus, by default, admits

to that mistake. But is there anything special about The Republic versus Café Eccel that would make the city go the extra mile to protect The Republic but not go that extra mile to protect Café Eccel? Therein lies the rub.

The City of College Station has leased Café Eccel's location to the Dallis brothers for over 25 years. The Dallis brothers also operate La Bodega, Daisy Dukes and The Backyard. A key portion of Northgate business is conducted by the family and their employees. The Dallis family has been invested in Northgate long before the recent development mania. But there is indeed a very long history to consider. Many of my restaurateur friends do not have good things to say about the Dallis family. There are as many people in the community who have a high opinion of them as there are those who have a very low opinion of their manner of conducting business. I cannot speak to whether that reputation is earned or not, and it is ultimately beside the point. Café Eccel is a long-time business, much like Heberts and Fatburger, that has been uprooted as a result of the recent development on Northgate. Not to mention other recent casualties like Loupots and Fitzwilllys. Of course, businesses come and go all the time, why should anyone really care whether a few restaurants are closed on Northgate! After all, they are almost always replaced with something. For every Eccel that closes, a Blackwater Draw opens, etc. What I find more alarming is that the city did not foresee that new development would cause such hard choices, did not fathom that a real estate developer might (gasp!) possibly spin their word to avoid a binding agreement to do something outside of their immediate interests. How naive of the city! And how naive of the Dallises, who took Asset Plus at their word. And how fortunate for the folks who The Republic, as they appear to be benefiting from the knowledge gained from the mishandling of the Asset Plus contract. Meanwhile, the Dallises get a chance to give the city and Asset Plus a nice shiner to their reputations and gain a lot of public sympathy for their situation, which ultimately does little good because I assume that by the time this issue of *979Represent* publishes Café Eccel will be out of business and without a home indefinitely.

What is also curious is that the City claimed recently in yet another fine *The Eagle* article that Café Eccel should've just used the city-provided pay parking like everyone else does on Northgate without any grumbling. The bars do with limited parking, the other restaurants do too so stop yer bitchin'. It tells me the city is perhaps far more naive than I thought, or just shocked that they got rapped on the knuckles for this. It's a bad comparison. Business on Northgate has evolved towards more of a nightlife culture, where patrons drive together, get drunk and roam the bar crawl. There are few destination businesses left, and most of the restaurants have moved their models towards attracting students and A&M employees for lunch and then becoming bars to attract the students. Café Eccel was a true anomaly from another period. Perhaps its demise is just as well, as it may not have survived the overall changing tone of the district.

This is just another sign of the changes both internal and external that Northgate continues to undergo, as well as the rest of College Station. It has grown wildly in the past seven years since I moved here. The first time I drove out Wellborn Rd. past Hullabaloo in the summer of 2006 I drove a two lane highway into the country. Where my subdivision stands was a cow pasture. In the past five years my children have changed elementary schools *three times* without us changing our address (we keep getting rezoned for new schools being built). Where once vacant lots, empty buildings and complete eyesores once stood, new buildings have now popped up. College Station has to enjoy the fantastic makeover it has undergone, but the city and its citizens have to also wonder whether or not the city is losing anything in the process. Was the shithole aspect of Northgate a part of its charm? Will too many high rise apartments have old Aggies staying away? Is Northgate just changing to adapt to the changing customer base of Millennials? These are all important questions for all of us to ponder as the mighty winds of development continue to blow across Aggie-land.—KELLY MINNIS



TODD ON FILM: SHE

As both the capability amount of access to technology has continued to increase, the social ramifications of our reliance to it manifest themselves more and more. It's hard to

convincing say whether this is a good or bad thing. I've made the occasional argument against us looking at screens all the time,

but I turn to my phone for answers as much as the average person. In the words of Don Draper, change isn't good or bad; it just is. Most of the time I think the social media is a positive force. I've kept up with numerous people that I probably wouldn't have otherwise, and I get to be exposed to stuff that may be outside my bubble. I do have self-imposed limits on how much I'll allow the internet to invade my life, and vice versa. I refuse to take pictures of my meals or use Instagram, I usually lurk during message board conversations rather than getting wrapped up in them, and I won't try online dating. These kinds of things were decisions I've made to keep certain interactions confined to the actual world, even though I might be missing out because of them.

Music and art has followed suit with commentary on the subject. Off the top of my head, for example, the latest releases by The Dead Weather, Arcade Fire, and Donald Glover all dealt with themes about the way the internet alters people's behavior from traditionally acceptable social standards. The web does indeed create avatars, personalities, trolls, and other misrepresentations of ourselves that wouldn't otherwise exist because there wasn't an adequate medium for them before. We can even interact with programs or games rather than actual people should we choose to, or perhaps actual people with a filter or barrier between them and us. I will choose the online chat option rather than the phone for a service or billing question every single time because it's easier for me, and I like having that level of separation.

The premise of *Her* is relatively simple, particularly in that we already have portable devices very capable of processing complex vocal commands. Theodore buys a personalized operating system which connects to his computer and phone to help him organize his work and home life. The operating system has a name (Samantha), personality, and the capability to actively learn as it helps Theodore manage his day. Oh, and it has the voice of a coquettish female. The combination of Theo's lonesome-ness following the dissolution of his marriage and Samantha's curiosity about the human experience lead them to interaction beyond ours with technology now, becoming friends before taking the leap into a romance that seems natural to both.

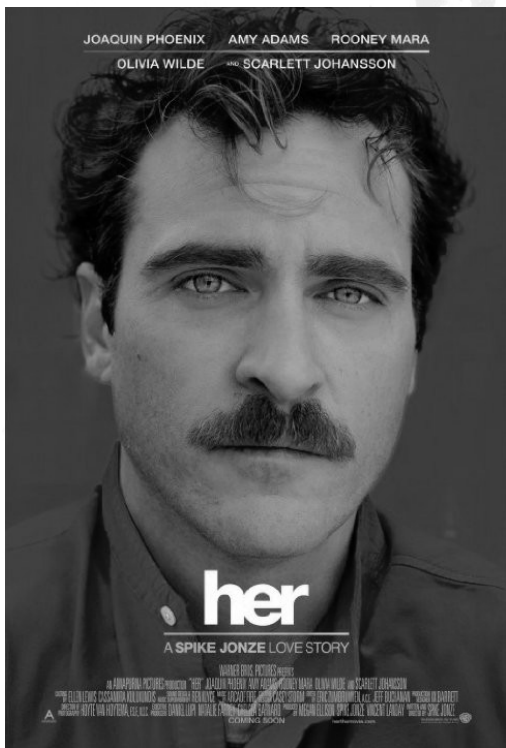
Director Spike Jonze uses some clever themes for comparison points in the movie. One is the capabilities of humans versus those of computers. During their relationship Theodore and Samantha will joyfully play music for each other as a form of expression. Samantha, who can read books in milliseconds and study lifetimes of knowledge, will compose beautiful classical piano pieces for Theodore as they go on walks together.

Theodore can strum and pick a four-string ukulele and sing along to it. On the other hand, as Theodore and Samantha move further along in their relationship they repeatedly run into barriers in place because of their physical separation from each other, at which point they must concoct a work around.

Another theme Jonze plays with is how technology can bring us together or further apart. Theodore works for a company that composes handwritten letters for people to send to friends or loved ones. Theo is so good at his job that he can put himself into the mindset of the sender and create a letter with personal details and affections for the recipient, feelings that people are usually afraid to say to each other. The point is that these letters should have been written by the senders which hired the company in the first place. This future setting is full of characters that have become so lost in themselves that they forget how to connect with others. At a couple points in the movie as Theodore and Samantha are talking to each other Theodore looks up from two feet in front of him, ignores his earpiece, and sees people walking by him talking to their own operating systems. These moments are actually quite jarring, because most of the picture has made us feel that the interactions between the two lead characters are very natural.

I don't think enough can be said about the acting in *Her* that allows the premise to really stick. The last time I saw a Joaquin Phoenix role he played a violent cult-follower in *The Master*. Here he is a gentle introvert who can either be giddy and playful or detached and sad. Scarlett Johansson acts with only her voice but really sells the character of a computer program trying to be an authentic personality. When Samantha and Theodore are talking the audience usually only has Joaquin Phoenix to look at, but his facial expressions along with Johansson's vocal nuances are more than enough to supply real character development and story in the film. Coming off her role as a scantily-clad con-woman in *American Hustle* (which I also highly recommend), Amy Adams is also good in her supporting role as a best friend to Theodore, a buttoned-up documentarian and game designer who supports his relationship as a means to find happiness.

Already there have been at least three parody videos that have been passed around on the internet, either dealing with the movie's premise if genders were reversed or the main character's self-absorption. I suspect that the *Her* might connect better with a single man who see the film rather than women, but overall I don't believe the film favors either gender. It depicts both men and women who are scared of rejection and loneliness, who would rather take the easier path than working out the petty crap that gets in the way of connecting with other people. The movie's explorations into our relationship with technology provokes the questions of whether using our computers for everything is the same as doing it with other people, but it wisely never chooses sides or says there is a wrong way. It just wants us to look up from our phones every once in a while.—TODD HANSEN





BEER WHILE PREGNANT

When my husband and I decided to start officially trying for our first kiddo, I swore I was going to do everything right. No booze, vitamins every night, and only healthy foods. What I did not count on was my complete lack of willpower. My last glass of beer was supposed to be on July 1st. As it turns out, my desire for a good beer outweighed my willingness to give up all alcohol for 40 weeks.

It started out well enough. I bought nonalcoholic wines, apple ciders, ginger sodas, and even a six pack of the dreaded O'Doul's. I probably should have done a little more research into the realm of nonalcoholic beers, as it turns out Guinness makes one that probably would have been more to my taste. My experience with them was mixed, at best. Suffice to say, there are still several bottles of O'Doul's at home. They will probably stay there until I get the motivation to clean out the fridge, along with all the leftovers my husband refuses to eat and the onion that inevitably winds up rolling around in the vegetable drawer.

It was October that killed me. I had been doing fairly well just begging the occasional sip of beer off of a friend. I'm a sucker for trying new beers and I couldn't resist at least getting to taste one when it sounded interesting. But October... October is pumpkin beer season. And with an opportunity to spend time at the Texas Renaissance Festival with friends arose, the siren song of Brigadoon Brewery's Imperial Pumpkin Ale was impossible to ignore.

It's hard to describe what that first sip was like. This break from my self imposed restrictions was one of the most delicious things I'd tasted in a long time. A little lighter than I usually like in an ale, but Brigadoon brews generally are. The balance of pumpkin and spice were spot on, though. More of an earthy pumpkin, rather than the pumpkin pie trap that some pumpkin beers fall into. I cradled my mug as I walked around the faire, savoring both the drink and the knowledge that the contents of this precious cup were all mine.

After that, I decided to loosen my rules. No more than one drink per week, and only if it were a small batch beer or if the occasion called for it. That occasion might be anything from a friend coming in from out of town, or a particularly stressful day at work, but I no longer just had a bottle with dinner or while hanging out with friends. I hadn't exactly been a heavy drinker to start with, so this middle ground was a good compromise for me.

As my pregnancy has become more noticeable, the condemnation I've been getting for drinking while pregnant has also become more prominent. Some of it considerably less silent than others. Ordering a drink out in public tends to lead to conversations about recent studies on fetal alcohol syndrome, what constitutes "too much" alcohol, and inevitably, someone will mention that drinking beer is supposed to be good for breast milk production. That last one tends to lead to a rapid change of topic, oddly enough. I haven't had anyone flat out refuse to serve me, but I've still got a couple of months to go.

There are some people who will probably take my inability to go without beer for 40 weeks as a sign of addiction. They are probably right to some extent, but I'm comfortable with the boundaries I settled into for my habits. In this time, I've come to a much greater appreciation for beer in general. Every one is a special treat, and so each must be worthy of being that week's one single beer. I've missed out on a lot of the wonderful craft beers made locally, and I feel a little sad every time I see a tapping event for something that sounds like it would be particularly tasty. I'm looking forward to putting my new found appreciation to good use, just as soon as the beer is the only thing in my belly.—
JENNIFER LOGAN

PROPHETIC BERRY



During the witching hour of this morning's dark, I experienced a bizarrely prophetic moment with a Wendell Berry poem so jarring that I feel compelled to parcel off bits of its haunt to the public. My apologies for heaping this restless burden upon your kind shoulders, but, darn-it, if this ain't the raw power of poetry!

The wife and I will soon laugh about this (perhaps as early as this afternoon) but I'm still a bit shaken by the horror of it. At some point around 1:00 AM, a picture frame secured in the window sill near our bed was provoked enough—by a spectre!?!—to slide off the sill and crash to the floor. Nestled firmly in the grip of sleep and an already disturbing dream, I shot up in bed and felt my chest cavity collapse, preventing me from inhaling air, which furthered my panic and increased the volume of my tirade. I began flailing atop the covers shouting "I cannot breathe!" while my wife yelled in response "You're screaming so you can breathe! Kevin, you're screaming! You can breathe!" My nerves required several minutes to calm sufficiently, but even then I could not quiet the absolute assurance that Death had come to collect me. All those narrow escapes over the years slipping through his/her foul clutches, only to come to this: ripped from this life in the night like a raptured saint in a bestselling Christian novel. Where's my glory? My red badge of courage? My great fish battle withering away my sanity but not my resolve?

I laid silent for—no exaggeration—two hours assessing my life, taking inventory of accomplishments and failures, counting friends and foes, having a real George Bailey time of it before I finally surrendered to my own fear-slicked adrenaline and decided, at 3:00 AM, to make coffee and read Wendell Berry. Poems are short, I thought. And, besides, Berry is a peaceful poet. Short and peaceful sounded prime to my haggardly weary soul.

That's when I came across the following verse in Berry's long poem "Boone". I read this verse several times, feeling both delighted and disturbed in equal measure by the sinister nature of such literary timing. I will allow Berry's final line to close this letter, hanging over our correspondences like the gnarly gothic fog it set about me only hours ago:

I approach death, descend
Toward the last fact; it is
Not so clear to me now as it once seemed;
When I hunted in the new lands
Alone, I could foresee
The skeleton hiding with its wound;
After the fear and flesh were gone;
Now

It may come as part of sleep.
—Wendell Berry—(and KEVIN STILL)

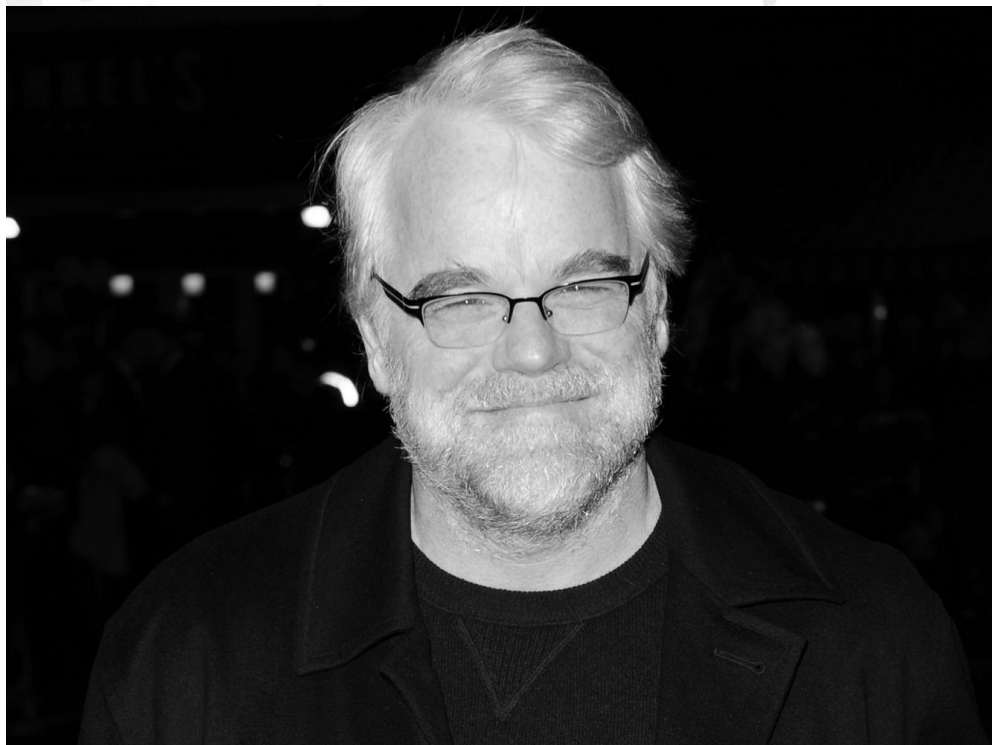
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IN MEMORIAM:

PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN



Early this month Generation X lost probably one of its two or three finest actors in a tried and true bullshit method. Philip Seymour Hoffman lost his battle with heroin addiction in a very seedy and final way, dying with the spike in his veins, overdosed. It is a very tragic coda to what appeared to be a fantastic career. Philip Seymour Hoffman was the consummate character actor who chewed scenery like nobody's business, often times stealing the show from some of the higher billed actors in his films. And when given a starring role, such as with his Oscar winning role in 2005's *Capote* or more recently *The Master*, it was clear that Philip Seymour Hoffman was an actor's actor, a man who rose to the occasion of portraying complicated characters in a human way. It is sad that this is the way we lost this

man, the tried and true star cliché...even sadder still that he had seemed to have beaten that rap and had been clean for a decade before a hard relapse took him out far too soon. It is even harder for me, as my best friend from high school also passed in recent years, far too soon. He and Hoffman could've used each other for shaving mirrors, and Hoffman's roles gained additional emotional weight from me as I was often reminded of Matt Adkins. Now both gone.

Throw on your favorite PSH movie in memory. For me, I am partial to his turns in *The Big Lebowski* and especially *Almost Famous* (he brought Lester Banks to life for me) and celebrate the life, the vibrant art, the utter humanism of Philip Seymour Hoffman.—*KELLY MINNIS*

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RENDEZVOUS WITH DESIRE

"Going up" the man says as he steps into the elevator unaware of its current vacant state. He mumbles to himself while he second glances to make sure he didn't miss any "little people". "... whole world is so goddamn politically correct now that taking a crap is now referred to as "expelling waste"...what a crock of shit!" - his thoughts reel in the tangent. Then once again certain of solitude he pushes his floor's number, and begins to hum a popular 80's tune about going on a "walkabout". If only we in the U.S. were permitted to do so, as the Aussies, he knows he most certainly would...The upward trip in the steel cable wire casket is just long enough for him to begin the second verse, before the elevator dings. The doors open and awaiting him is a seeing eye dog with a note, a rose, and a blindfold strapped in a satchel around it's neck. This must be from "her" he thinks. So without hesitation he removes the contents of the satchel and proceeds to read the elegantly penned note. It reads, "It's times like these, that it is a good time to take a chance... If you trust me and want to see what lies ahead awaiting you, simply tie the fold that makes you blind, grab the seeing dog's walking guide grip, slip the rose between your lips, and MOST IMPORTANTLY DO NOT PEEK! Once you're ready cough three times and the dog will know you're ready. He was trained for weeks just for this task. When you get where you are going—WAIT & REMEMBER TO KEEP THE BLIND-FOLD ON." Titillated to his core and without much hesitation, the man proceeds to do as the letter instructs. He ties the "fold that blinds", grabs the dog's guiding handle, slips the violet rose between his lips and coughs three times.

Like a bat out of hell, the dog bolts down the corridors of the top floor towards his programmed rendezvous. Zipping through the halls with the speed of a greyhound it's hard for our man to keep up—much less without injury. Eventually, after what must have been five minutes they come to a stop. He hears slow music faintly in the distance. He can smell scented candles. This must be the place. "Good boy" the man says to his guide dog while anxiously awaiting whatever lay next. He hears footsteps in the distance. The sound of which comfort him for unknown reasons, his trivial worries instantly disappear, and he is for the moment the happiest man on earth.

The door opens, before the man can move. He can smell her perfume emanating in the air. She is close, this much he knows. She sharply grabs the rose from his mouth with a quick sideways tug. "FUCKKKKKKK!" the man yelps like a mistreated dog. She has cut his mouth. The sides to be exact were cut from rose barbs sliding quickly out with no time for him to completely open his mouth. She lets out a chuckle and puts her finger to his lips. The blind fold remains in tact. She apologizes with strong sarcastic undertones and tells him that she will be his guide dog now. He hesitates—then complies. "After all, you only live once" he thinks to himself wiping his fresh dark blood from his lips.

The room he enters is thick with cigar smoke and various scents of imported hundred year wines. He knows he is not alone, but for his life he cannot hear anyone so much as breathe. The hairs on his neck begin to stand on end. This could only mean they had reached the bedroom. She tells him to wait a moment so she can let some fresh air in, and that very soon his blind fold would be removed and all will be see. This helps calm his nerves a bit, but not enough. His right hand is beginning to shake just enough to be noticeable. Despite his attempts to quell the shaking hand nothing works. His nerves are officially shot.

Again she takes his hand and reassures him that everything is fine. She begins to undo his belt and shirt as a calming cool breeze blows past his progressively exposed abdomen. She bites his side. He smiles inside. As she brings his pants to his ankles he cannot no longer suffice his desires on ambition alone, he needs raw passion! He flings off the blindfold to speed things up. Expecting to see his sultry lover and their midnight escapades, only to find he is not alone where he thought he was. Surrounding him with drinks and smokes in hand are all whom he had ever cared for. A gaggle of ex's as I assume they would be called—both female and male from youth to present, standing there with smug looks on their over painted and over groomed faces. A look of terror overtakes his eyes and he knows whatever lay next is certain to damn him here and now. The woman who's instructions he followed so blindly grabs his crotch firmly as though it is some sort of stress grip test machine from yesterday. His eyes flicker from the pain. Everyone laughs in an unsettling uproar that lasts a living eternity. She gives him a lipstick-stained smack on the chest and smears fresh blood from his still bleeding lips across his cheek.

The others start to mumble, then to clearly say things about his sexual inadequacy. All too soon the room is full with harsh critiques such as "he never even made me almost cum", "I thought something was wrong with me, but turns out it was just him", "he made me question my sexuality!", and the most cynical yet, "your dead father fucks better than you!" It was all too much. He'd had enough of this savagely cruel humiliation. Slowly he began to step progressively backwards—backwards—backwards—til tripping backwards out of the window his "guide" had opened for him. He fell ten stories head first, pants down, open shirted, blood stained and still partially blindfolded.

A brief uproar of applause fills the apartment, followed by a hearty "cheers!" The others were right—tonight was a good night for revenge and murder. And contrary to what others had speculated it was indeed a guilt free occasion. The incident was written off as an accident by the coroner and no one was charged with anything. So what's the moral you ask? *NEVER FUCK WITH SOMEONE'S ORGASM!* - WILLIAM DANIEL THOMPSON



ARTSENAL

I find myself staring into the sun again, speculating the fire of existence, the core of reason. There's something gnawing at my side but I am too distracted to look and investigate the matter. After all it doesn't hurt that much. Repetition numbs. As the sunspots slowly start to replace my actual view I suddenly find myself loosing interest in my gaze and avert my glance elsewhere. Not to save my vision—the mere timing is purely coincidental. If for any other reason to admire the fleeting enhanced view spotted with glowing orbs. They float like dust specks in my eyes, I'd try to follow them, but I learned long ago the dangers of doing so.

Instead, I merely walk about thinking to myself. Taking in the changing scenery, trying my best to see the innate beauty of such a desolate place. It's during these walkabouts that I actually somehow manage to catch glimpses of the hidden beauty that dwells in the pits of hell. The demon keeps allowing my wanderlust soul to tread these paths again for the time being. They say seeing is believing, and well I have seen enough to know that my "carrot on a stick" is an empty warehouse with stolen power, a spare cot, a view of the surrounding waters, a squatter's permit, and enough scratch to wet my lips. I've seen the sun rising in the reflection of the cool waters that fortify the "castle". 3000 miles away I dangle my feet in the waters of an unfamiliar ocean and feel right at home. The choir of morning birds chirp a tune from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and no one knows the words.

A stranger stops me and asks where I'm going and if I could use a ride. I smile and graciously decline, for if he knew there was no destination except everywhere and nowhere he would surely misunderstand me. The ivory halls of higher learning beckon forth again, but alas I am conducting my own brand of "higher" learning. It starts to sprinkle then pour, but the sun is still out shining as though it was just ignited. Instead of fleeing for shelter, I walk and play a nice game of kick the rock. Oh how I love the game, it never fails to amuse this muse. The rock continually gets submerged in puddles, and were it any other day I'd just find another and carry on, but I've been kicking this one for awhile now and have no problem retrieving it. After all, I'm already soaked from the hot rain and could care less. Someone spent a longtime connecting their puppet strings, but I grew tired of the dance and snipped myself free. "Welcome to Purgatory" I see a sign read. Gray blurry sulking faces pass me by, I carry on. It seems I was walking in circles, a spiral perhaps, before zig-zagging my way here. The spirals have been replaced with a grid here. Most of the roads seem to end in dead ends but I've found the arteries, and now it's only a matter of time before my supplies arrive and I find myself somewhere new.

I blink, and realize I'm still staring at the sun. I rub my eyes as hard as I can. They are dry and irritated. I glance around and notice my mud covered feet. My clothes are damp and there are random scraps of paper in my pocket that read various locales. I feel a smug smirk come to my face. I lick my chapped lips and belt a loud deep laugh from the bellows of my soul. I pull a flask from my pocket, take a swig, turn around, and walk indoors. The wolves croon and surround my dwelling. They are my brethren, my solemn protectors and my silent friends. Perhaps the beasts will join me on my next sojourn...My soul ultimately yearns to admire, create & entertain boundlessly. And admire, create and entertain I do whether I am "permitted to" or not I could care less. Petty differences of perspective will only serve as fodder for my *arsenal*...Tomorrow I think I'll stare at clouds instead and see where I end up.—WILLIAM DANIEL THOMPSON

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GOING DARK
BY: ELIZABETH KEEL

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THIS IS WATER
THEATRE

For the past year or so, New Republic Brewing Company has opened their brewery to the public for tastings and, recently, has also begun to host local music shows to help bring people to the brewery for a pint or three and to stick around and enjoy their back porch. This month the brewery is doing something somewhat different. It is welcoming This Is Water Theatre to the brewery for a six week run of *Going Dark*, a play written by Elizabeth Keel. This Is Water describes the play as:

"In a world much like our own, there exist Empathologists: people so finely tuned to a specific range of emotion that they can manipulate it in others. In a small school where Em pathologists are trained to use their emotions as a service and occasionally a weapon, the arrival of a new student brings a welcome change to the two professors and their protege. But after a recent loss, some emotions may be too close to the surface."

Going Dark is This Is Water's first professional theatrical run.

The play runs over four three-day weekends from mid February through mid March. More information about tickets and run times are at both <http://thisiswater.com> and <http://newrepublicbrewing.com>—KELLY MINNIS

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THE DAY THE DINOSAURS DIED



Three years ago The Ex-Optimists played Austin in early January during Free Week. Our show was somewhat early in the evening and when our portion concluded, we walked over to Red 7 where a friend of mine was running sound. We went out back to say hi and were completely blown away by a stoner metal band that were incredibly loud, sludgy and screamy. That band was The Roller and I knew I had to have them for Loudfest. So we made that happen, and Loudfest 2011 featured The Roller at The Stafford. Everyone who witnessed their set were completely astonished. The Stafford shook and rattled. But the band broke up several months later.

Then a year later, members of The Roller moved to Fort Worth and formed Solomon, a sort of expansion into similar territory as The Roller. They played The Stafford for Loudfest 2013 and moved folks in similar ways. In a moment of subversion, Atari-matt decided to invite Solomon to play Revolution in December for his birthday party show, but inclement weather forced Solomon to cancel out. Instead, Solomon came down for Niki Pistol's birthday party show last month and I've got to talk about how this show went down.

If you have never seen Solomon, let me break it down for you. Solomon is three guys: Augie, Jeremy and Miguel. There are two floor-to-ceiling bass amplifier stacks, two full guitar stacks, and a gigantic double bass drum kit. They have *A LOT* of gear. Revolution Café & Bar is like playing someone's living room, if that someone's living room had a cash bar on the side. It was a feat just figuring out how to squeeze all of Solomon into Revolution. But the band figured it out and quite quickly got down to business. And what glorious business it was.

For starters, it was loud. Duh, right? At 10 feet a full on hard pounded drum kit alone is good for 110dB. Add close to a 1000W

of tube guitar and bass amps run through speaker rigs taller than everyone in the building...and you were hearing Solomon alright. Not only were you hearing them but you were *feeling* them. Miguel's bass guitar pushed so much air that you could feel it pressing in on your chest, just as if you had instantly found yourself scuba diving in 100 ft. of water. It was breathtaking, quite literally. At times, if you concentrated on that feeling, it could begin to disorient you and make you just a tad bit nauseous. Amazingly though, it wasn't harsh. It was just a whole bunch of low end pushed out and my eardrums weren't the worse for wear after the set.

Solomon as a band definitely comes from the Sleep school of stoner metal. Loud, slow, sludgy, bass heavy. Where Solomon diverges from the Sleep formula is that Solomon is a bit more classic heavy metal than Sleep. Solomon is not afraid to pick up the tempos, not afraid to rock it out and not just be a band for bong nodding. That said, Solomon can totally rock a Sabbath 45 on 33 1/3 groove like nobody's business. And did so. The band's music is completely cinematic. At times hushed, at times straining to push everyone back up against the wall, and all times dynamic and, I know this word is overused but, epic. Listening to Solomon, feeling Solomon strike every chord, every bass drum kick...it brings to mind so many Judgment Day style images. They have been described by a Dallas/Fort Worth blog as being "tectonic", and you definitely get that. I feel as though listening to Solomon's set was like witnessing the Day the Dinosaurs Died. The plodding, slow elemental forces at play, the battles, the struggles, the enormous powers that must have been in effect that day to have destroyed myriad species, to move mountains, boil seas, singe forests, etc. This is some powerful shit we're talking about, both the day the dinosaurs died AND Solomon's music itself.—*KELLY MINNIS*

THREE FROM THE REGION: CLAIRE, THE CLARKES & HALLEYANNA

Claire Domingue's *The Shape of Sounds* is the only one of the three actually released in 2014 and the only album with a name. This is the second CD by the singer-songwriter who falls between Americana and indie folk-rock. The College Station native is headquartered in Austin now.

CLAIRE DOMINGUE
The Shape of Sounds

"The Words Inside" is one of the stronger tunes featuring Domingue's rollicking piano and powerful voice, but "Hold My Hand" is probably the best-crafted of the lot, anchored by Coby Tate's guitars and Danny Levin's violin. "In Her Way" is a deceptively-powerful tune about letting go, layered

with Domingue's mandolin and Tate's plaintive guitar. She rocks "Worse When I'm Alone" the most with Tate's guitar surrounded by her gutsy vocals. "Things I Can't Say" focuses on Domingue's own intricate guitar playing and some of her most passionate vocals.

Among the rock and country, Domingue mixes things up a bit by bracketing the album with a classical piano piece as well as one beautiful tune sung in French. Something for every taste among the 14 tunes, so listen up.

The Clarkes' eponymous album is their first, a husband and wife out of Temple that love traditional country music. Brandi Belle Clarke plays a mean fiddle, something she did for years with the Irish band The Blaggards while Bryce Clarke has been a featured guitar player with a number of Texas country performers. The duo have an uncanny ability to write old-school country songs that breathe new life into the format.

"Another Night Before" opens with one of the best lines about having too much to drink: "I woke up in the yard again/This morning". Bryce's dry rasp is matched by steel guitar and Brandi's fiddle as he evokes the confused bravado of one who has tied it on one too many times. "The Hard Way" has winsome lead vocals by Brandi in a tale that you've heard before about tough lessons learned in life.

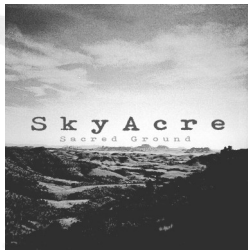
Two cute songs that have fun within the genre are "I'm Drinking for Three" and "You Met Me in a Honky-Tonk". The hilarious album opener likely has a kernel of truth as the Clarkes are new parents, but the second would have fit proudly on any Nashville country album of the middle 20th century. However, the Clarkes are more than mere revivalists as evidenced by the powerful "Collecting Dust" and the bittersweet "Moon Over Nashville." There's even a countrified cover of Bruce Springsteen's "I'm on Fire". There's hardly a misfire on the album's 13 tunes. Search it out.

HalleyAnna from San Marcos possesses this marvelously-rich voice born for country music. Evocative of everyone from Loretta Lynn and Tammy Wynette through EmmyLou Harris to The Trishas' Jamie Wilson. In addition to that, she is a cunning and often-wry songwriter.

Evidence of that intelligence is throughout this her second CD (*The Country* in 2011 is also excellent) in the pointed "You Don't Need Me" as well as the album's bittersweet opener: "The Letter," which takes the clichéd bridegroom-left-at-the-altar into an unexpected direction. "Tattoo" is just a funny take on what we do for love.

HalleyAnna is the daughter of Kent Finlay, the legendary singer/songwriter/club owner credited with launching George Strait's career and nurturing dozens of other Texas artists including the late Stevie Ray Vaughn. However, she's carving her own niche in country music now even though Dad helps out with vocals on the classic "San Antonio Rose" to close this one out in fine style.—
MIKE L. DOWNEY

RECORD REVIEWS



SkyAcres
Sacred Ground

Once upon a time my friend Little Jess told me that her then-boyfriend had this pretty cool band in Austin that my band should share a bill with some time. I said ok, but then nothing happened. She broke up with the boyfriend eventually and I thought that was the end of it. A year later, I found myself on the same bill as SkyAcres and I was flabbergasted. The band were good. No, the band were great. I made friends with the band that night and have brought them over to play in Bryan/College Station many times since.

SkyAcres comes off like the sort of band Trail of Dead could have become had they stayed true: odd time signature-ridden dark indie rock/math rock hybrid, the sort of band that post-Nirvana got a serious major label look and may even have been signed for a hot minute. Like a less anthemic Quicksand, a less effeminate A Perfect Circle: big drums, big guitars that purr and soothe as much as they screech and caterwaul, strategically dense song structures and the Failure-cum-Nirvana sing screams of Marcos Delgado. SkyAcres is easily one of my favorite bands in Texas right now.

Last month the band released their second album *Sacred Ground*. It is filled with 10 songs in a math-rock post-hardcore vein with songs going from moody to vein-popping intense...and that can be from second to second in a single song. "Puppet Emperors" starts off with a slinky 5/4 groove with the guitars arpeggiated, hushed before slamming hard into the choruses. "Terrance Yeakey" has the arpeggiating guitars playing counterpoint and harmony to each other in an almost Robert Fripp & Andy Summers way before the power chords take over. The song that sticks out the most to me comes at the end

of the album, "Final Fight". It is dark, dramatic, the tension in the song is thick, from the chord ostinato through the band's stop-start instrumental arrangement. This song is just the culmination of the entire album, one silk to gravel journey after another.—
KELLY MINNIS



Cool Piss
Cool As Piss

Houston's Cool Piss is a punk rock supergroup of sorts, featuring former members of The Cutters, Muham-madali, The Cutters, White Crime and Davey Crockett. Cool Piss's first cassette EP *Cool As Piss* definitely has the other bands' influence, but it really has its own thing going.

Singer Jonny at times has the deadpan Johnny Ramone thing down pat without really sounding exactly like Johnny Ramone. In fact, there's a definite Ramones vibe at play with Cool Piss without being an outright aping of The Ramones. The songs are short, keep the tempo peppy, are recorded on 4-track cassette in the red so the music is IN YOUR FACE. Opener "All the Way" cruises by with a sunny new wave guitar pattern that Al Hammond Jr. would've killed to use in The Strokes. Closer "Infiltrators" adds some guitar jangle, showing the band has a deeper record collection than just straight up punk.

What I like so much about *Cool As Piss* is that the band sounds so different than most Houston punk bands these days. There's no jack-hammer "Know Your Rights" Clash rigid rock, none of the older slinkier tattooed punk from the Cutthroat Records/Little T&A gang, none of the faux-agitprop from the little rich kid crust punks...just righteous tunes played hard and fast with more than a full serving of, well, coolness that is hard to fake.—
KELLY MINNIS



CONCERT CALENDAR

2/1—Ray Benson, Milkdrive @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm
2/1—Old Bridge Rhythm Band, Desdmona @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

2/6—Rock Hard Nippizz, Desdmona @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

2/8—The Black & White Years, Pageantry, Scientist @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

2/8—Mike the Engineer, Adults, Empty Hollow, Lightning Briefs @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

2/11—Fear & Wondering, Lion I Am, As Artifacts, Fire From the Gods, Nominee @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

2/12—The Weeks, Ranch Ghost, The Docs @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

2/13—El Ten Eleven, Bronze Whale @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

2/13—King and Nation @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

2/15—New Republic Brewing Co. presents The Hangouts, The Ex-Optimists, Funeral Horse, Brand New Hearts @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

2/15—Matthew Mayfield, Daniel Gonzalez @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

2/16—Bright Light Social Hour, The Ton Tons @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

2/20—Blue Bear, Walker Lukens, Harvest Thieves, Ideophonic @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

2/21—Hel-Razor, ASS, Galactic Morgue, Shflux @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

2/21—Rock 103.9 Homebrew presents Hindsight, Amongst the Living, JJ & The Stoneponies @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

2/27—The Vespers @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

2/28—Ishi, Sphynx @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

3/1—Aaron Behrens & The Midnight Stroll, Nic Armstrong & The Thieves, The Happen-Ins @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

3/9—The Svetlanas, New Red Scare, The Sharp Lads, The Hangouts @ Revolution, Bryan. 6pm

3/14—Black Actress, The Hangouts @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 9pm

3/17—Mary Ocher, IPOLE @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

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