

# STORERPRESENT



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*inside: welcome to aggieland - electric astronaut - bcs/houston covers -  
hydrogen jukebox - death sucks, dogs rule - todd lives in a film - still po-  
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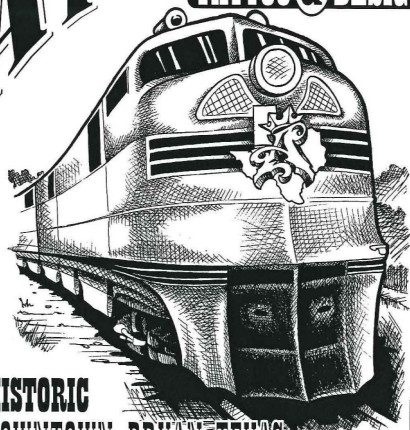
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## THE ASTRONAUT'S BORN



Space. Why space? More space.  
Was space? Now space. No faces,  
just space.

When I was young the computer used  
to tell me that mankind was good, that  
there was hope. We know better now,  
because there's just space. Everything is always space.  
The future is always space... The past is only space.  
And now is just ever expanding infinite space...

The life of an astronaut is not always just tests and  
procedures. There are many other things to be consid-  
ered. Like what it means to be alive in the ever expand-  
ing vastness of nothingness. The future saw the devel-  
opment of machines that could turn dreams into food.  
Of course, I hoped that with their im-  
mense imaginations, mankind would never need to  
starve.

Unfortunately, complacency set in. Ideas turned stale.  
Good people forgot how to dream. So generations of  
astronauts disappeared into the void searching for more  
to dream about to keep humanity alive. However, with  
time and distance the imagination ceased to be stimu-  
lated by the black void and turned itself off. Humanity's  
collective peeps grew very dim. Until finally generation-  
al astronauts were deployed to the edges of known  
space to attempt to stir the wildest dreams to keep  
what remained of the hapless saps afloat till something  
better could be devised. This never happened though  
as people starved themselves they allowed the dreams  
to become dormant and humanity eventually turned  
back to mud and dust.

Humanity let itself slip back into the dark ages, this loss  
of self eventually lead to a better tomorrow by creating  
more nothingness. This lack of something made noth-  
ing more valuable because the something always had a  
price, but the nothingness was always there. There was  
a sense of comfort in this nothingness no one saw  
coming. There was no tomorrow, no today, no yester-  
day, there was nothing. Nothing had a buzz about it.  
It liked to hum. It is was electric in sound and void of  
error. If people ever remembered how to smile, it is  
certain they would thrive. — WILL THOMPSON



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# YOU'RE NOT PUNK... : ON THE MEND

About two months ago, right on the heels of my 40th birthday, I had surgery. This was a big deal for me, because 1) I've never had surgery or been in any type of hospital before, and 2) up until now I had always kind of figured myself slightly invincible to life.

I know what you're thinking. Being invincible is something for comic books and not for an obvious towering intellectual and thought provoking artist like myself, but I assure you up until this point, I did. Not to say I have never been beaten, never had a bad day and never been hurt. Oh, I've had plenty of losses. I've been hurt emotionally, mentally, and I've had to bleed my own blood a few times growing up in the late 90's Oi! scene. But I still maintained a private understanding with some type of divine force that I was going to be alright.

I used to have this unspoken deal with the heavens that I was just going to do whatever I dared, and at the end of the day, even if I was a little bruised and battered, I was going to come back with all my fingers and all my toes. Somehow, things just seemed to work out... When I lost a fight, worse things would happen to the victor as a result of it, when I lost money I made it back double, when one door closed another opened. Hell, I even lost a wife and gained a better one.

Then, I turned 40. I got news from my doctor. We were going to operate.

Is this what Wolverine felt like when he lost his healing factor? What Samson felt like when he lost his hair? What Superman went through discovering kryptonite? (You know the drill).

Things go through your head when you find out you need to go under. There are questions the nurses ask during preregistration... What is your religious preference? (Jedi) Do you have a will? (yes, not to die thank you). There is the maze I had to walk through for the various EKG's, culture swabs, and Xrays not unlike that Legend of Zelda game I played years ago and that's all before the main event.

The day of, I'm in a room. My parents, my wife, her mom, they are all staring at me like I'm on television. I haven't even been wheeled in yet. Not the type of setting an antisocial person likes to be in. I'm wheeled down to a person who is supposed to put me to sleep, as he explains the process, he also likes to scold me for smoking cigars and being overweight. Says it makes his job harder. Poor guy.

I wake up in a room with some weird guy offering me water. He said he liked the tattoo on my chest. I had a dream about something like this a few years ago. It didn't end well for me. Luckily he wheels me to another room and my family joins me later. My guts are on fire and it hurts to laugh. That's hard for me because I'm always so damn funny, but today I'm not laughing. Damn quack must have removed my sense of humor while he was in there... I'd sue if I didn't see the funny I just made to myself. I chuckle, it burns, give me more drugs. On the way out, the nurse tells me if I have to cough suddenly to try to "splint my stomach" by holding my sides together firmly. "What am I going to rip open?" I ask. "If you cough hard enough, but whether you do or

not, it's going to hurt." Crap... what did they do to me.

The next few weeks were spent recovering. That meant I didn't go to work. Time off. Short term disability. That means I get 60 percent of my pay for doing nothing. That's cool except the missing 40 percent is what kept me eating barbecue and tacos. Not that I feel like smoking brisket or anything, I can barely sit up much less stoke a fire.

As the weeks progress I feel a little better every day. My range of motion gets better. I can laugh again. I can cough. I get pains when I do a little too much, but for the most part, I don't have to take pain meds anymore. This was the worst part. It sucks watching my wife doing the simplest things around the house that I used to do. The doctor says I can't lift anything over 15 pounds, so I can't play my bass, I can't even lift my cats.

I just sit there. Watching Netflix. How much Netflix can one person watch? Turns out a person can watch a lot of Netflix. I really get into Food Network shows. I should be doing other things... I try writing music (I'm not inspired), I try writing a new book (also not inspired) But I do drink lots of coffee, Cafe Bustelo is getting rich off of me.

I got the clear from my doctor a few days ago. I can finally return to work. TSS practices for the first time in two months. It's like I never stopped. I can wear the bass slung around my body and jump around again. I never felt so free playing an instrument and singing along. It's like I took the whole thing for granted. We played our first show back Saturday and it felt amazing.

I write this knowing that my last day of disability is tomorrow, and that I will return to my full pay then. I'm 100 percent. Even better in fact. I feel like I could punch out the globe.

I always thought that I was sort of invincible to life. Now I know I am. — *TIM OI*





Today I stood in the bathroom at work as my boss brushed out tangles older than some of my shoes. I never brush my hair. It's too time consuming and I oddly like looking like a mess. That's my anti-fashion statement carrying over from youth right? I just hate that we are all dying and people are worried about looking good for other people that fart and poop too. I guess under that category that could just open a floodgate of how far to take it.

I'm a pretty clean person. Yeah, maybe I don't always brush my teeth after I pack a bowl or I wear the same clothes repeatedly without washing in between but other than that, even though I may look like I've crawled out of a ditch most of the time, I like to smell good and keep clean.

My living situation is about the same. It doesn't smell bad and I keep stuff like the toilet and shower clean but it also looks like those sister tornadoes from the movie *Twister* came through cow and all.

Recently as you all know, I was diagnosed with Adult ADHD, Generalized Anxiety Disorder and an eating disorder. For someone with ADHD our brains literally are not like yours.

Per good ol' Wikipedia:

ADHD is associated with functional impairments in some of the brain's [neurotransmitter systems](#), particularly those involving [dopamine](#) and [norepinephrine](#). The [dopamine pathways](#) and [norepinephrine pathways](#) which project to the [prefrontal cortex](#) and [striatum](#) are directly responsible for modulating [executive function](#) (cognitive control of behavior), motivation, reward perception, and motor function, these pathways are known to play a central role in the [pathophysiology](#) of ADHD. With ADHD, there is a general reduction of volume in certain brain structures, with a proportionally greater decrease in the volume in the left-sided [prefrontal cortex](#). The symptoms of ADHD arise from a deficiency in certain [executive functions](#) (e.g., [attentional control](#), [inhibitory control](#), and [working memory](#)). Executive functions are a set of [cognitive processes](#) that are required to successfully select and monitor behaviors that facilitate the attainment of one's chosen goals. The executive function impairments that occur in ADHD individuals result in problems with [staying organized](#), [time keeping](#), [excessive procrastination](#), [maintaining concentration](#), [paying attention](#), [ignoring distractions](#), [regulating emotions](#), and [remembering details](#).

See those things in bold right there? Imagine living with *that* person. That's me. I'm *that* person. Yeah, I jokingly say I use my ADHD as a crutch to get away with stuff and not take responsibility. Responsibility is for people with 401K's and people that wash their cars and get their clothes dry cleaned. I'm a grown up child. A Peter Pan. Responsibility is not in my nature and why should it be?

The truth is, I am 35 years old and incapable of cleaning my room and understanding my finances. I have even cried out of frustration for not being able to do the easiest of tasks and feeling stupid and pathetic and lazy. I was told that. I was treated that way. I believed it. In time, I was the "loser" or the weird one in my family. Not being understood or even understanding myself, made it easier to just run with it. If I was seen as a fuckup, I was going to go for the gold and break the previous held record. I'd tell potential romantic interests early on, "People like the *idea* of me, but not the reality." It's a very true statement and has a completely different meaning now.

# ASK CREEPY HORSE: CH-CH-CH-CHANGES

This past weekend, my partner had finally had enough. They were tired of me always being late, never being able to find anything. I had trashed their apartment when I moved my stuff in and never put it away. They were left to do all of the cleaning, all of MY laundry, take on all the responsibilities and all I ever did was criticize them. I swear it didn't seem that way at the time, but that's the reality of it. The fact I cannot recall what even started the argument, speaks volumes. I just know as we were entering target they were mad at me about some shit and decided to wait in the car. So I let them have their space and went about buying what I needed to. I stopped by Starbucks on my way out and got them a small, ahem I mean "tall" frappuccino. I had the car keys so I know they were just standing outside.

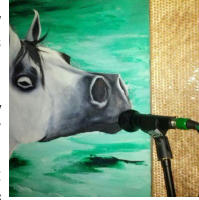
This time being cute and adorable and surprising them with a frappuccino wasn't going to repair the damage done I was completely oblivious to. I was told, "I'm done. I'm done. It's over. I can't go on with this."

I was jarred, but I *had* heard it before in previous relationships. Whatever I had done, must've been bad as they looked relieved to say it. I'd discover they had wanted to end it since the month prior but didn't know how as I drove us home. I wasn't going to beg, they had been very good to me and I would at least show respect to their decision.

They said they would give me until the end of the month to find another place to stay. I was devastated, heartbroken but somehow I could surmise this was also all my own doing. I accepted and recognized it was over, but I needed to understand what I had done. I told them I wasn't going to try and win them back and tell them everything would change because even I knew that would be lying. They told me, I had been very abrasive in "joking" criticisms of them. A highly educated professional with a career, gigging bands and a retirement plan wondered why I was constantly poking fun of them and what they thought were my perceived shortcomings of them. They were upset over spending their summer vacation reworking their apartment and even removing items that meant a lot to them for me to literally dump my belongings on the ground and leave them there.

I sound like such a piece of shit. Don't worry, I felt like one too. I was right back to being the frustrated crying teenager that couldn't simply clean their room, except this time it was my relationship.

Once I was truly aware, I felt like SHIIIIIIIT. I mean I felt like a maggot rolling around on festering boil covered feces. You're welcome for the visual. I don't know if I've ever felt so bad about how I've made a partner feel before. Thanks medication. Then I looked at ALL



of it. ALL of my relationships, I was ashamed. I didn't mean it and it was never my intention but I still did it and that really hurt and sucked for whomever had ever tried to love me. This time though, I was losing the Blue Ribbon, the grand prize. I was so in love with this person. They were so special to me and just an amazing person and because I couldn't put my clothes away or not leave food dishes laying around, I had lost them.

After they went to bed that night, I stayed up for a very long time. I reran everything through their experience in my head and what other's had said throughout my life as well. I began to recognize that the whole "Peter Pan" thing was bullshit. That responsibility isn't for people with stocks and bonds. My shunning of these things because it hurt to face who I really was had become toxic. I was poisoning the people that loved and cared for me by **not** trying, by **not** accepting responsibility.

The next morning, I wanted to crawl under a rock and die. My perceptions were totally fucked and the reel of reality that was playing didn't seem much better. I quietly asked my partner, what their biggest problems with me were. I knew I couldn't fix us, but I could at least work on me, knowing what affected those closest to me. So over the course of an entire day, I listened and actually thought very thoroughly to what was being told to me. I even encouraged them to make out a list of what I could have done and that I would take it to my therapist at my next appointment. I wanted to end this the right way. I didn't want anything left unsaid and I didn't want it to end with resentment. I told them how I felt about them and even shared issues I had had. My chest ached physically and I truly felt terrible.

I was presented with a list of just 8 things.

I looked back at them. "This isn't it is it? There's got to be more right?" No. Just 8 things. I typed them out in big, bold bullet points as we both looked on.

- 1) **Organize and straighten apartment**
- 2) **Put food back after use**
- 3) **Being punctual, if not early**
- 4) **Complete cleaning**
- 5) **END Pot & Kettle criticisms**
- 6) **Follow through on commitments and promises made**
- 7) **Use your own car and drive yourself when necessary**
- 8) **Sense of responsibility, not making your partner solely responsible for everything.**

I felt like a fucking twit. I am 35 and my relationship is ending because I didn't do these eight basic things. This person is far more important to me than me being late or leaving food out, but I didn't make them feel this way. Instead, I made them feel like they couldn't depend on me, that they had to be responsible for what I wasn't responsible for and I would still criticize them in

the end. I let them know exactly that, and that I knew ultimately the best outcome was me NOT in their life. So much as I loved them, so much as I cared for them, they were right and losing them was the best lesson I could ever have learned. The felt they were finally able to say what they felt they never could have, they had a better understanding as I had shared things in greater detail than they were ever let to know. It got through and they got to be heard. They also realized their own downfalls and that despite my shortcomings, I had never been cruel or malicious, I had put their needs before mine, I supported them and was always making time to listen to them. They also knew I loved them very much.

We agreed that we had both allowed a superiority/inferiority relationship. My partner admitted to looking down on me and feeling they were better than me and that I not only allowed it, but played the part of the loser. By not communicating with me as I had always wanted them to do, so much was left unsaid and both sides were left feeling cheated.

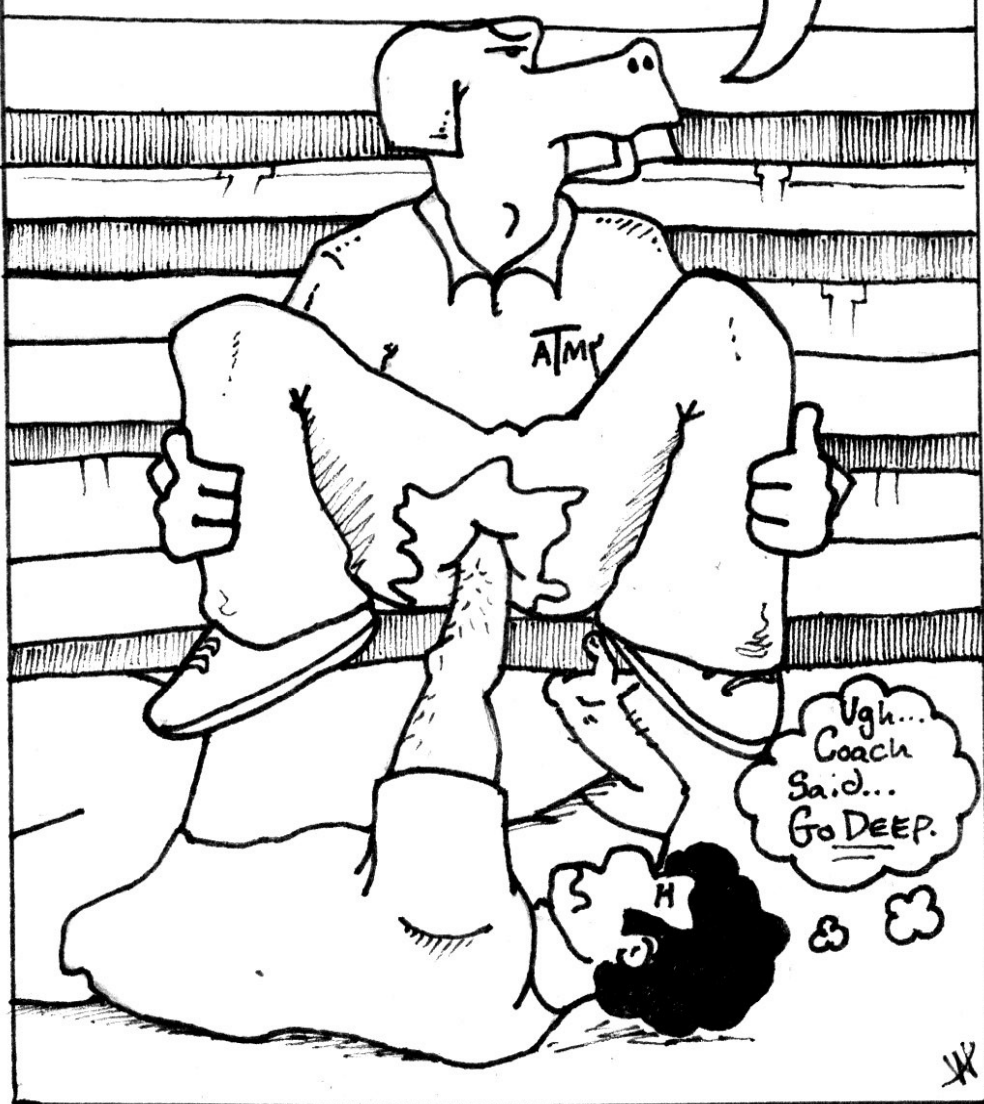
After 2 days and around 6-7PM at night, my partner decided they wanted to work it out. I felt as if I had a hand held blender shoved into my chest cavity and they are having this epiphanic moment of clarity. They could see this time was different. They could see I was being honest. They felt with once weekly sit down communication and both of us working on ourselves we could make this work and be better. At one point we were arguing with me saying "No! Don't take me back, that's a terrible decision! I'll only disappoint you!" and them saying "But I love you and I haven't been fair, we can do this!" It was ridiculous. I conceded but told them I would have to digest this and just be depressed and regurgitate thoughts that made me feel bad for awhile.

And I did take the list and show it to my therapist. She wrote each and every one down and went through what my partner had said and asked for my explanations. Then she laid her pen down and took off her glasses and calmly looked at me. "You know you are ADHD. You are on the highest dosage they can give because of how bad your ADHD is. Have you made your partner aware that this is what Severe cases of ADHD look like? That being said, they are completely right. Just because you have ADHD, doesn't make it okay to not accept responsibility for your actions or trash someone's home. Your brain isn't like most people and you are not like most people but that doesn't mean you can do anything and get away with it. I will be holding you to this list. You are to go online, and look for ADHD websites and learn how to clean and organize the way one with your conditions does. There are many resources and actions are what will show yourself and others that you mean it. You must simplify and learn to be aware of your actions. You must face what is hardest to look at and be willing to do something about it or you will continue to be unable to function."

I don't like what I see when I really take a long hard look at myself. I don't like how I've treated people. I don't like that I'm considered undependable. I don't like how I can act sometimes. I possibly have body dysmorphia and I honestly feel like the ugliest person I have ever seen and that in itself torments me daily. But I don't want this to be my forever, I don't want to choose this over people I love and care about. I don't want to feel this way anymore and I don't want another person to feel the ways I've made them feel by not valuing and respecting them because I felt bad about myself. It's time to grow up and take charge. It's time to change and I'm already running late.—CREEPY HORSE

...Meanwhile at A&M, those Aggies  
continue to take Football a bit too seriously...

...Just a little deeper Johnny,  
...the playbook must be  
safe from Spies...





Jorge  
Goyco





# TODD LIVES IN A FILM:

## DON'T THINK TWICE

When I first started going to see The Commune perform, I was completely in awe. Here were these ordinary people up on a small barren stage, pulling the kernels from lines of audience participation and create entirely improvised scenes with just-born characters and naturally spontaneous twists and turns. They were also absolutely hilarious at what they did, and I got hooked. Eventually I started going to enough shows and hanging out with the players afterwards that I got invited to take lessons on the side with a couple of them. Once I became good enough to hold my own, I was invited to actually *be* in The Commune, and it is the greatest thing that ever has happened to me. Performing improv is the ultimate thrill for me: simultaneously I'm in control of the room and all of the eyes laid on me, while also being completely out of control with what will happen next. I live for every Thursday night when we walk out on stage, introduce ourselves, and create scenes together in the moment. The best shows give you a natural high, and the bad ones don't last, because you just get you amped up to get back up there again next time.

Almost as good as that rush of being on stage is being able to perform with all of my friends. They're not the perfect group of people, we certainly argue and have creative differences about how to approach improv, scene writing, and other forms of comedy, and anyone has the potential in them to be an ass on a given night, but each one of them is brilliant in their own way. And I could do it every night with these people forever. We also hang out most every day when we're not slaving away at our hourly jobs that allow us to do comedy, and we get to talk about the craft while making each other laugh as much as we can. We almost always watch *Weekend Live* together every Saturday night and pick apart the show, how it's not as good as it used to be, and how some former folks from our group are now successful stars there. Even though we criticize it, every one of us would like the validation that comes from being on *Weekend Live*. It may not be pure art, but it's the pinnacle of what we do, and any time there's an outside chance a talent scout might come down to a performance of ours, it can make everyone a little neurotic.

We each have different reactions when we think there's a chance of making it. Some go a little nuts and show off, not doing pure improv but instead a rehearsed routine. Doing a celebrity impression may make the crowd like you in the moment, but it's not original

material, it's not what The Commune is about. Improv is all about taking someone's idea in the moment and running with it, and then they run with your idea, and so on and so on. Just because you have great talent doesn't mean that you should ever wield it so unashamedly, no matter who is in the audience. We're all part of the same team, but sometimes it's hard to remember that when individually we're craving success so badly and struggling to get by without it. Some of our more ambitious egos will make snide comments about the ones moving on, wondering why that person gets to shine, when they can't see they're not actually good enough to deserve it themselves. Why is it hard to accept that the ceiling is right here? What is wrong with what we have?

Others interpret the ascent of one group member as a sign to give it up, that this improv collective isn't meant to go on forever. It's true that when it comes down to a weekly show at a community theater is not that big of a deal, at least not as big of a deal as we'd like to think it is. For most people that attend it's just a little entertainment to pass the time. If we weren't doing our little show they would just find something else to do from the millions of other attractions competing for attention and dollars. But for us, for me, doing comedy is not something I think about once a week. I think about it at all times. I think about it when I'm at my actual job, even though in my mind comedy is my line of work. It's just so hard to walk away from doing something you love so much. What was it you said? When you're on stage you feel like a god, and then you go back to normal life and no one gives you the time of day. It's powerful, to be an applauded success in that moment, yet the moment is always fleeting. By the time the show is over you're already thinking about the next one.

But I like the routine for what it is. I like thinking about the promise of the next show and how it could good it could be, making improvements to your approach and technique through practice, not for the reason of getting noticed or being a star player, but to simply to make the performance better. To make the comedy—the art—better. I enjoy things the way they are. I just want to do comedy with my friends once a week forever and not worry about what the next step is, not worry about trying to get famous, not worry about whether other people think it's a waste of time. We should be doing comedy because we love it, not as a means to an end. I can't think about the end of it, because whenever I do I don't see anything there. — **TODD HANSEN**



# HYDROGEN JUKEBOX:

## SIGNALS

Some of you who know of me will be surprised that I am three issues into the *Hydrogen Jukebox* series before a Rush album appears. Rush has been one of, if not my absolute, favorite bands of all time. They aren't my first favorite band (that title goes to KISS), but Rush is a band that I've stuck with for well over 30 years.

The band has a varied discography that encompasses beer drinking freedom rock through stoned progressive rock, hardcharging riff rock, science fiction wonkery, through an odd new wave/new romantic inspired pop period, and then out the other side as a vaguely alt hard rock version of their original selves. No one sounds like Rush, though at times Rush has attempted to sound like other bands. Led Zeppelin, King Crimson, Ultravox, Big Country, etc have all been fodder for the Rush canon. While the band has many classics under their belt (including what is widely considered their best album and largest commercial breakthrough, 1981's *Moving Pictures*), one album stands atop their mighty mountain range of rock.

In early 1982 Rush found themselves in a weird spot. They had pop radio hits. They had spent the better part of the previous seven years writing album side-length epic story songs. By 1980 the band began to be inspired by punk and new wave and decided that it was possible to whittle down their grandiose designs into a five minute pop song, and from 1980's "The Spirit of Radio" towards their largest hit, 1981's "Tom Sawyer", that's the way Rush went. Along about 1977, the band began to incorporate the synthesizer into their sound. By 1981 Moogs and Oberheims began to be featured instruments. By 1982's *Signals*, it was THE featured instrument, so much so at times that bassist/singer Geddy Lee stopped playing bass guitar altogether for entire songs to focus on his synthesizing. *Signals* is Rush's new wave album.

It starts with "Subdivisions", a song that was a first for their lyricist, drummer Neil Peart. Gone were the songs about elves, snow dogs, hemispheres, and natural science. Instead was a simple ode to the awkwardness of high school. It was like Neil sat down to write a "Rock & Roll All Night" but instead of a party song that captured the essence of the KISS fan, it's a song about the essential Rush fan, being a nerd and getting shoved into a locker for wearing your *Moving Pictures* tour t-shirt to high school, which was pretty much how things went for Rush fans. It is only in recent years since the movie *I Love You, Man* that it has been cool to admit to anyone who's not a musician that Rush is your favorite band. "Subdivisions" leans heavy on the heavenly, gauzy pads of the Oberheim OB-X synthesizer, the tarted up Stewart Copeland bounce of Peart's drumming, and the occasional twangy whammy bar whirr from guitarist Alex Lifeson, who largely is a stranger in a strange land on *Signals*. The synthesizer eats up so much bandwidth in the band's sound that Alex really had nowhere to go.

"Subdivisions" sets the tone for the next song, "The Analog Kid", which is probably one of my 3 or 4 favorite Rush songs. Over a very breezy and showy unison guitar/bass run, Neil via Geddy delivers a story of a young man who dreams of going to the big city, it "moves (him) with your buildings and your eyes" but merely "pulls down his baseball cap and covers up his eyes". The middle 8 rushes forward with the narrator admitting his worry that "when I leave I don't know what I'm hoping to find/and when I leave I don't know what

I'm leaving behind". This song ALWAYS gets me. It also features Alex's most fevered guitar moment on the album.

Other songs tackle scientific themes, nuclear war, the inaugural space shuttle launch (the band was invited to watch the first launch from Cape Canaveral and the song "Countdown" features audio from the actual launch), but I hasten forward to "Losing It", the pinnacle moment of the album and most likely my favorite Rush song of all time.

The song revolves around the famous Ernest Hemingway quote: "For you the blind who once could see, the bell tolls for thee". Neil follows the parallel stories of two artists: one who uses words and one who uses movement to express their creativity. Both are aging, both are losing their edge. The words, the graceful movements now come painfully, if at all. "Thirty years ago, how the words would flow/with passion and precision/but now his mind is dark and dulled/by sickness and indecision" I am not exactly a young man, but I am not old. My body still mostly functions. I can still write songs, I can still play my instruments without the loss of ability. This portion of the song, while I find it poignant, doesn't really speak to me yet. I know there will come a time when I will know the characters' frustrations all too well. Neil was maybe 30 when he wrote this song. Considering that in 40 years of professional drumming he has barely skipped a beat or cherried a lick this can't have been autobiographical. However, as Neil and Rush wind down their live performance career I daresay this song has more meaning for him now than it did when he presciently kicked out those words.

For me, it's the chorus "Some are born to move the world, to live their fantasies/But most of us just dream about the things we'd like to be/Sadder still to watch it die than never to have known it." God, that nails what it is to be a musician or artist who will obsess and spend the majority of their lives' energy and purpose on the creation or the thought process involved with the creation of art that few people will ever appreciate or acknowledge. It is a blessing and a curse, it illuminates, complicates, enlightens and destroys the very lives it consumes. Musically, the song is hushed with rapid odd meter guitar/glockenspiel arpeggios, lush synthesizer pads, and the otherworldly electric violin of Ben Mink, more famously known as the fiddle player and musical arranger/producer for Canadian voice of God k.d. lang. Mink's supple violin melodies chase each other in echo, at times both languid and frantic. There is nary a bass guitar in sight, making the mix ghostly and empty in the right way. It is a thrillingly beautiful and aching song, and I feel it in my gut and tear ducts every time I listen to it.

*Signals* was considered a misstep upon release. Although "New World Man" would enjoy a brief occupation of the Top 40, the album mostly disappeared. The next few albums would see Rush double down on the synthesizer tip with technological leaps making advanced sequencing possible, freeing Geddy to play bass more. Sequencing meant single note lines and less pads, giving Alex had some bandwidth to play with, and the band were enslaved to the click track. In 1992 the band stepped back from the synthesizer and made guitar rock their effort and hasn't gone back since. This makes *Signals* an anomaly in the band's catalog and one that is certainly well worth the time to explore.

KELLY MINNIS



# SONGS I WANT COVERED

I go to a lot of local shows. I know some of these bands very well and some only an acquaintance. Either way, I've heard all of these bands and the thought crosses ones mind that if they were to do a cover, what do I think would make me shit my pants and why. Some bands you want to take at face value and just hear them cover a song of an artist you feel they are inspired by and other's you want to hear what their take on a classic would be. Here are my suggestions:

## **The Wheel Workers—Lou Reed "Satellite of Love"**

A few years ago, I was actually asked by Steven Higginbotham of The Wheel Workers what cover I would want to hear them play. Instantaneously, I knew anything Lou Reed. Anyone that knows me will know I am a huge fan of not just the music of Lou Reed, but the pathos of his lyrical abilities. Although The Wheel Workers are known for intricate electronic synth and heavy production, they don't rest their laurels on any particular sound and can be just as formidable with simple vocals and very little backing. The vocals fit and so does the poignancy of simplicity needed to make the cover work.

## **The Ex-Optimists—Wire "The 15th"**

This actually has been the hardest for me as The Xops are capable of making any goddamned cover awesome sounding and very loud. We know we can't throw Sonic Youth or Meat Puppets as that is far too obvious. The Xops want to hunt, not be fed. I had considered "Straight to Hell" by The Clash, but M.I.A. and "Pineapple Express" kinda fucked us with that one. The Xops are NEVER off. I have yet to hear a show where I walked away saying "well that sounded like shit." Honestly, I think they are lip synching and have a perfectly produced track playing while we all believe they are actually playing *this* well and they're all like "Haha dummies". I had even considered college radio and alternative of the 80s. "Head on" was in the lead for awhile and so was PIL. Anything that Xops do is going to have intensity. It's going to be very loud, very technical, have lots of distortion, pedals, guitars shaken aggressively in front of amps and those butterscotch vocals of Kelly's that magically seem to cut through all of the production like a ginsu knife through melted butter. I became frenzied. I was on the edge and in a maddened delirium when Spotify played this song on a mix I was listening to and I went "Okay, okay. I feel this". And now I really want the Xops to pretty please do this fucking song because it would sound hella fucking awesome.

## **Girlband—Poison Girls "Real Woman"**

Vi Subversa. One of the most prolific women of Punk rock and most of you never heard of her. Poison Girls was an ANARCHO RADICAL FEMINIST band living in squats formed in the late 70's by Vi at the age of 44 and included her two kids that'd go on to form Rubella Ballet. In case you didn't know, that's a big deal. That'd be crazy now, imagine over 40 years ago, the late 70's in England. So to sing a song taking a piss on women being dainty housewives and instead enjoying sex and making the rules, they were every bit as scary as The Sex Pistols and other various under 20 male lead punk bands. We need to remember groups like Poison Girls. After playing over 100 shows with Crass, they cut ties with them over feminist beliefs because Vi was a fucking honey badger. Girlband is perfect for this as they remind me of everything I wanted as a bright eyed teenage girl discovering punk as an outlet for my beliefs and what I could be. Before disillusion, before drugs, before it turned on us, we believed we would change the world. Poison Girls did change the world and Girlband reminds us of that. And come on. Can't we all kind of see Niki having her way with these lyrics?

## **Only Beast—Patti Smith "Because the Night"**

FUCK THE GOD DAMNED 10,000 MANIACS COVER. Fuck you, I hate it. A song of such beauty and passion and lust and fire and a monotone lackluster vocal performance against bored violin backup made me hate everything. This is a Patti Smith song. One does not do a flat performance to a song co-written by The Boss and "meh" their way through it. Not even you there, Tigerlily. Now, have you ever had the chance to see or hear a performance of Only Beast's singer Danielle Renee? HOLY FUCK ALL. If any single person's stage appearance alone could wipe the stagnant film of previous attempts at that fucking shit cover, it will be at the cost of Danielle Renee's vocal and expressive abilities. Her vocals are right in track with conveying raw emotion and sincerity of the story she shares with the audience through out her performance. She is one of a very few artist out there that could handle a song of this caliber from the delicate hesitant longing the song begins with, warming to the passionate roar of lust and desire encapsulated in one of the most honest and prolific of love songs written in the last 40 years.

## **Mutant Love—Husker Du "Data Control"**

In *Every Everything*, the Documentary about Grant Hart, he talks about having a son after a night with a fan on the road. If the Inators are the bastard sons of the Replacements, Mutant Love are the bastard sons of Hart's Husker Du. From Hart's all over the place loud and fast, yet precise and powerful drumming style to shrieks of damnation and wonderment, Mutant Love was meant to cover "Data Control". Personally I see them more the *Land Speed Record* version.

## **The Escatones—Tom Waites "I hope I don't fall in love with you"**

With The Escatones, it would be too easy to throw the Butthole Surfers, Uncle Tupelo, Captain Beefheart, early Soul Asylum and even earlier, way earlier Flaming Lips at them as they are the underdog of recognized talent. Yet, so much as their cover of any of those bands would exceed expectations, the greatest strength in this band lies in the honest frailty of lead singer Connor's vocal abilities. Anyone else singing this song would be someone trying to get their street cred and probably look like an emaciated lumber jack in a tie dye "original" tour shirt of some band of reverence. Connor's lackadaisical stage persona met with the true introspect of an aged and worn romantic would make this cover not only work, but a conjured statement of a moment forlorn.

## **A Sundae Drive—Mazzy Star "Fade unto you"**

I've been privy to hear the new album ASD will be releasing soon. Vocalist and bassist Jennifer is finally taking a more lead approach to singing in the band and it works beautifully. Since their sophomore release, the members of ASD have been through hardships, heartache and all kinds of life changes good and bad and those experiences haunt an overall feeling of growth and weariness in their evolution as a band. I don't think there could be a more heart rendering ballad delivered with such honesty and integrity as Jen's vocals and the backing of a band that has bonded in uncertain times and history alone, to be one of the more tighter knit of Houston bands. Suffice to say, this would be a tear jerker I'd be in awe of.

## **Project Armageddon—The Birthday Party "Release the bats"**

So when I read this cover choice aloud to my boyfriend he literally rose to his feet and wide eyed exclaimed "fuck yeah" several times while shaking his head. From that I can surmise this is as good of a match as I thought. If you haven't seen Project Armageddon, this is a band you need to see. From the opening thud of bass to shrieks and shrills in "Release the Bats", Project Armageddon has this covered. Literally. Lead vocalist and Bassist Doomstress Alexis simply put, is fucking awesome. The gusto of her bass strumming, the roar of her vocals, the ferocity put into every performance creates the ambience of this being a well paired cover. Her band mates are nothing to shrug at. Guitarist Brandon Johnson conjures wizards and demons with his guitar playing oh and there's like flames and lightning shooting out his guitar while drummer Raymond Matthews makes you wish you could play like him because it looks so goddamned cool. THAT FUCKING DRUM SET IS FUCKING AWESOME AND THAT MOTHERFUCKER CAN FUCKING PLAY.

## **Funeral Horse—The Troggs "Strange Movies"**

Poor Paul Bearer. A sentiment not commonly stated, the last time he saw me I was pretty fucked up. In conversation I was like talking to Anna Nicole Smith but I think I brought this topic up to him or at least hallucinated that I did. Since I heard this song in my teenage years, I always wanted to see a band cover this song. Funeral Horse not only has the musical chops to really make this their own, but singer and double neck guitarist Paul is one of very few local artists with the cajones to actually pull it off. Drummer Chris plays a style that is tight, clean and bright while bassist Jayson meanders his bass through something dark and forboding. It's easy to get distracted with a frontman like Paul yet both drums and bass not only stand out on their own but intersect in a balance exceeding many of their peers in Stoner Rock.

## **TSS—Dayglo Abortions "I am my own god"**

If ever I could truly have a pants shitting induced moment, it would be hearing TSS tear through this fucking song like we know they can. They would make this cover lick the curb, shit kick it into high gear and then piss all over it and that would fucking rule. I want abrasive, gritty, angry, confrontational disgust when someone covers Dayglo Abortions. That someone should be TSS. I am fucking terrified of lead vocalist Brea Danger. We've never met and never interacted but I know she could probably make me shit my pants she could hit me so hard. I like that. It's real, it's legit with TSS. Even though I'm sure bassist and 979 taco man Tim Oi can crush my skull one handed like an over ripened melon, front woman Brea is who we all need to be scared of. The whole band is really just a hardcore punk band from 1986 that traveled to the future to destroy the all of humanity and I'm okay with that so long as the only pants shitting I do is seeing them cover "I am my own god."

## **Jealous Creatures—The Church "Under the Milky Way"**

When you have the former drummer of Japanic, a bassist that played in New Jersey punk bands and a high energy guitarist, you could easily see why originally I had actually picked Icicle Works "Whisper to a Scream" but then that wouldn't be the best use for the voice of Sarah's.

Constantly compared to Cowboy Junkies, it can only be vocal sounds because I listened to Cowboy Junkies discography and fuck you, it's terrible even if they had the cover of Sweet Jane that Lou Reed actually loved. Dreadful boring twangy folk turds. So, I dug deep and thought if I had Sarah's voice for a day what would I sing other than the terrible 80s pop music at every Karaoke bar I could find and that was "Under the Milky Way".

## **Cornish Game Hen—The Screamers "122 hours of fear"**

Cornish Game Hen is a band made up of three guys that have already paid their dues through years of touring with several different sub genres of punk rock. Drummer Ken started playing in bands in the early 80s, had a moment with a 90's punk band that was something and found himself dabbling band to band until he finally met a couple musicians, bassist Tyler and Paul on vocals and synth in the later 2000's. They were Art Institute. Paul would go on to create Funeral Horse and pursue the Stoner Rock genre, Tyler would hit Ken up months after they disbanded and they started playing as a duo. Everything would change for CGH when they tried out a man in black named Doktor Shoen. The songs evolved and began to develop into something very original and very good. The Screamers are not a name to just throw about. They are a profoundly well loved and idolized band that were just ahead of their time. The music is incredible and within the first few seconds of "122 hours of fear" you can already see the Doktor with his beaker of whiskey maniacally playing his synths with his head and screaming into a microphone while Ken plays intense and experienced heavy early 80s era hardcore drumming and Tyler's all over the place rhythmic bass lines. This is a cover that needs crowd participation. Yell out "YEAH!" and "WHOOOOOO!" and raise both fists as you sing along.

## **Slow Future—Mission of Burma "That's When I Reach for my revolver"**

This is another band, if you have not had the chance, you have to really see these guys in action. At their last show, I was like wow, they were awesome and was in the middle of turning around to grab another drink from the bar when they broke into a Husker Du cover. It was fucking amazing, I mean really fucking good. Now I want to hear singer Joel belt this bad boy out. I have to be honest, I always listened to the song but never really heard it. The lyrics are pretty strong for the current political mood and social commentaries and Slow Future strikes me as just the band to take either approach and still this is going to sound fucking amazing.

## **Golden Sombrero—Gang of Four "Damaged Goods"**

The only time I ever had a chance to meet Golden Sombrero, the lead singer walked backwards while playing guitar and fell on me and kept playing guitar. Indie Music/Garage Rock types really have a hard time not falling on the ground it would seem. The singers are spot on one another vocally and I'd like to see this band do their indie garage rock stylings on the original music for something their own and still reverent to the original. This would be a real fucking awesome sounding cover if they did it.

## **The Inators- Bad Religion/In the night**

Now this is one of my longtime "I want a band to cover this one day" songs and this would fit The Inators like magnum condoms in a kiddie pool full of lube. The sound, the vocals, the style, the drums...it's all there and this would make me burn my clothes while I covered my entire face thick with hot pink lipstick and piddled on the floor.—*JUNKY LOVEDOLL*

# WELCOME TO AGGIELAND: A GUIDE TO THE COOL STUFF IN B/CS

OK, so you made it off to college. You've got all your stuff unpacked in your tiny dorm room with the smelly roommate from parts unknown, or maybe you've got all your stuff tight in your first apartment with all your bros and ladies. You've got your books, you know (for the most part) where your classes are, but you don't really *know* Bryan/College Station yet. You've heard vaguely about Northgate and you're pretty sure you can get back to the grocery again next week by yourself but you're pretty convinced that your friends are all right. You *are* pretty fucking dumb for having chosen to go to Texas A&M or Blinn instead of Rice or U of H or UT or somewhere much cooler out of state. Well, stop feeling sorry for yourself. You have something cooking right here in your very own backyard. You see, if all you do is stay on University Dr. or Texas Ave. then you'd never know that Bryan/College Station has some awesome places to patronize that aren't located on the beaten path right in front of you. We've got lots of tiny places full of character *AND* characters.

Every town has pretty much the same chain restaurants and stores. It's the homespun unique places in a town that make you want to stick around. We've got lots of restaurants and shops and they are all practically BEGGING you to spend your parents' hard-earned money with them. This map will help you find the cool places to shop and the cool stuff to do at night without having the inconvenience of stumbling around town. That's how much we love you...we'll do you this solid *gratis*.

I moved here in the summer of 2006 and it took me easily a year to find out that there was actually cool stuff to do here beyond the usual Aggie and Northgate stuff. And the usual B/CS stuff isn't bad, really. I've lived in many college towns over the years and I've never attended or worked at a university more rich in tradition than Texas A&M. Going to a football game here is as big a deal as going to see the pros play. I'm proud to be an adjunct Aggie. But if sports or redneck culture is not your bag, then please refer often to the map on this page and try out some of the cool and unique stuff Bryan/College Station has to offer. And then *why don't you maybe see about offering something up yourself!!* Start a band, even if you've never touched a musical instrument in your life. Paint. See a play or write and produce one. Sculpt. Make art out of trash. Hold a protest. Join the roller derby league. Make friends with someone your mama and daddy would absolutely freak out if they ever saw you with ...and then introduce them to each other at Parents Weekend!

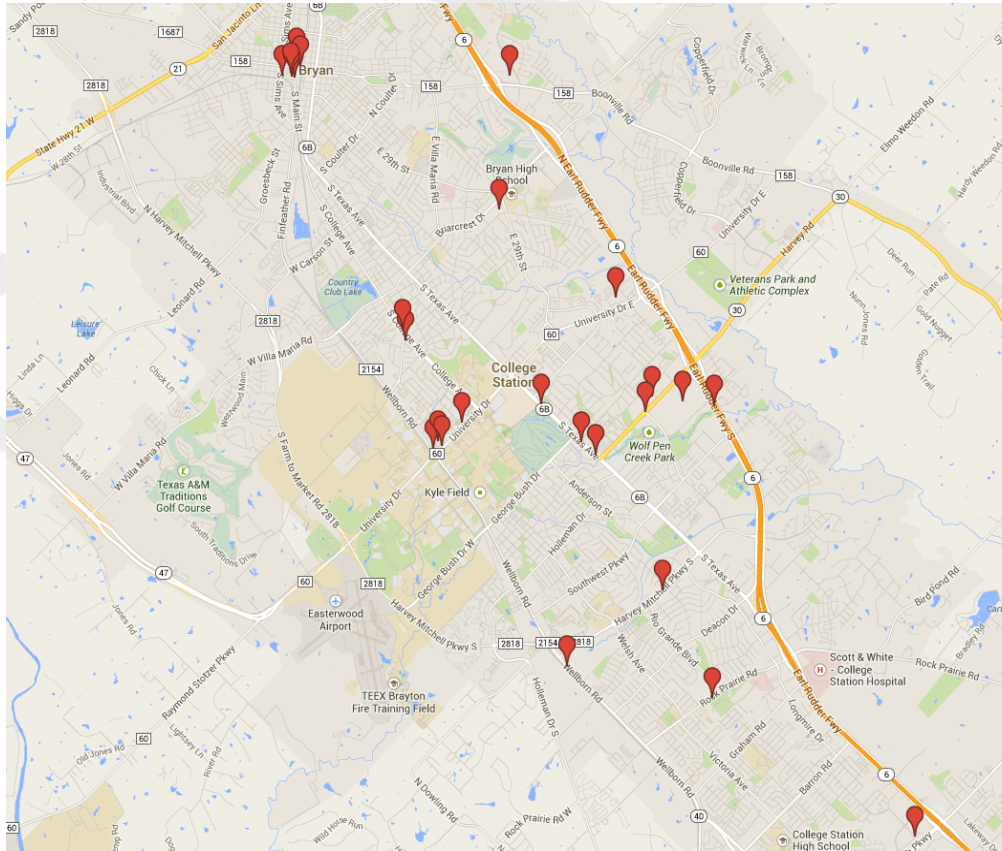
The point here is that college really is what you make of it. It's the magic time in your life when you have adult privileges without full-on adult responsibility. Whatever you do (provided it doesn't kill you or somebody else) will pretty much be excused away as "oh, that was just my crazy college years". Enjoy it, because it will pass you by quick. Bryan/College Station is full of memories waiting to happen. To let them go to waste is worse than failing Chemistry. I guarantee. —KELLY MINNIS

## Arsenal Tattoo & Design

<http://www.arsenaltattoo.com>

307 W. 26th St. Bryan (979) 485-9892

If you're looking to get inked, this is *the* place in B/CS to



get quality artistry, now at their new location in downtown Bryan.

## Blackwater Draw

<http://blackwaterbrew.com>

303 Boyett St. College Station (979) 703-6170

701 N. Main St. Bryan

Bryan/College Station's only true brewpub, featuring fine food, various Texas beers on tap as well as their own line of beers. There's now a location in downtown Bryan too.

## Brazos Running Company

<http://brazosrunning.com>

1667 S. Texas Ave. College Station (979) 485-9830

The area's first store to exclusively serve runners and walkers, from beginners to marathon pros. Shoes, clothing, accessories, etc. and staffed by runners.

## Carneys

3410 S. College Ave. Bryan (979) 823-1294

A bit of a local secret. Great beer selection, none of the Northgate douchiness.

## Clockwork Gaming

<http://clockworkgaming.com>

913 Harvey Rd. College Station (979) 703-1838

A gaming shop and refuge owned and operated by long-time Aggie gamers. Purchase cards, compete in video game tournaments or play pickup games with friends in a comfortable environment.

## Cutler 2 Salon

2551 S. Texas Ave. College Station (979) 764-3000

Finding a place to get your hairs cut in a new town can be a dicey proposition. Go see Niki at Cutler 2 and put yourself in good hands.

## Flamingo Vintage

212 N. Main St. Bryan (979) 538-5985

You know how cool you think Northgate Vintage is? Yeah, not so much. Nikki Neuzil scours junk stores, flea markets and auctions for hundreds of miles to assemble an eclectic collection of clothing and accessories.

## G. Hysmith Skatepark

<http://cstx.gov/skatepark>

1600 Rock Prairie Rd. College Station

Over 1600 square feet of bowls, walls, street courses, hips, and ollie boxes. All concrete, all rad.

## Grand Station

<http://grandstationent.com>

2400 Earl Rudder Fwy College Station (979) 696-1100  
Lazer tag, cash bar bowling, video games, etc. Like Chuckie Cheese for adults & without shitty pizza. Wait, no, they got shitty pizza too.

## Grand Stafford Theater

<http://grandstaffordtheater.com>

106 S. Main St. Bryan

The Brazos Valley's premiere live music venue, serving up rock, country, blues and other musics.

## Guitar Center

<http://guitarcenter.com>

1003 Harvey Rd. College Station (979) 694-6982

Gots pretty much whatever you need for music making, however you make it.

## Half Price Books

<http://www.hpb.com>

1505 University Dr. College Station (979) 696-2325

This is the closest thing to a cool record store we have...plus lots of other cool used movies, comics and books.

## J Cody's

<http://www.jcodys.com>

3610 S. College Ave. Bryan (979) 846-2639

The best BBQ experience in town. Other places have great meat but J. Cody has a great *meal*.

## Koppe Bridge Bar & Grill

<http://www.koppebridge.com>

11777 FM 2154. College Station (979) 764-2933

Local polls rate Koppe Bridge's burgers as the best in town. If it's not the best then it's definitely one of the top three.

## Liberty Tattoo

1933 S. Texas Ave. College Station (979) 694-6444

Tattoo Jeremy will see you straight, whether he's free-handing on you or tracing something onto you from your own design.

## Lippman Music Co.

<http://lippmannmusic.com>

112 Nagle St. College Station (979) 846-1225

The local's favorite hole in the wall jampacked with amps, guitars, and such. You can also get set-ups, repairs and gear rentals there too.

## Margies

320 N. Main St. Bryan (979) 822-8422

Margie's is an old school dive bar that's friendly as hell and they pat out one of the best burgers you'll ever have by hand right before your eyes.

## Mr. G's Pizzeria

<http://www.gotomrgs.com>

201 W. 26th St. Bryan (979) 822-6747

No college town is complete without a ripping local pizza joint, and Mr. G's is ours. We recommend the calzone.

*New Republic Brewing Company*  
<http://newrepublicbrewing.com>  
11405C N. Dowling Rd. College Station (713) 489-4667  
Get their line of beers fresh from the brewing tuns and enjoy live music on their back lawn as well as a host of food trucks.

*Proudest Monkey*  
108 S. Main St. (979) 361-4777  
The Paddock Lane folks' Bryan bar that has stellar food as well as a cool older urban bar kind of feel to it.  
979Rep staff recommends you try the chorizo burger.

*Revolution Café & Bar*  
211 S. Main St. Bryan (979) 823-4044  
The heart and soul of the local dirtbag community. It's get your favorite living room house party with a cash bar! Free wi-fi, good drinks and the best live music around.

*Riddle Gallery*  
207 Bryan Ave. Bryan (979) 255-7996  
Jerome and Ciele look at the world with a unique point of view and reassemble the images from their minds' eyes in differing media. They display and sell it in their own gallery, as well as work from other local artists.

*To The Point Piercing*  
[tothepointbodypiercing.com](http://tothepointbodypiercing.com)  
119 Walton St. College Station (979) 595-4153  
If you love it then you should put a ring through it...and if so then you should definitely let Jave and company be the ones to do it.

*Village Café*  
[thevillagedowntown.com](http://thevillagedowntown.com)  
210 W. 26th St. Bryan (979) 703-8514  
Great fresh food, cool atmosphere and the occasional singer-songwriter in the corner. Also plays host to the hottest salsa dance night in the twin cities.

*Village Foods*  
<http://www.villagefoods.com>  
3030 E. 29th St. Bryan (979) 846-8199  
The best selection of organic, free-range and gluten-free groceries in B/CS.

*World of Beer*  
<http://worldofbeer.com>  
425 North Point Crossing College Station (979) 985-5927  
One of the best selections of beers in both towns with frequent tap takeovers and interesting pub fare. Kinda douchy on the weekend nights but a great weeknight spot.

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**FredTechBCS@gmail.com**

## DEATH SUCKS, DOGS ROCK

I'm gonna start by saying that I had the best dog in the world. Ok, you probably do too. So, we all have the best dog in the world. Dogs are the best. We agree on that, don't we?

Well, a devastating and crazy thing happened. One of those things that you would categorize as a nightmare. Our family was on vacation, we couldn't take our dog, so we were having our neighbor watch over the house and let the dog in at night and feed the chickens and the cat. Well, Cassie (our dog) got hit by a car. We were in New Mexico. We got a call from the A&M Vet Clinic that they had Cassie. She was stabilized, but she was in shock and though on Methadone, was still in pain. We were at the Wal-Mart in Taos shopping for food for the week when I got the call.

Long story short, after radiographies and tests and consults with students and doctors and surgeons and stuff, we had to make the stupidest, suckiest, most crappy decision to put her down.

Ok, so, yeah, suck-fest. But that's not the point of this "Welcome to Aggieland" article. The point is how much love we've experienced from the peeps here. When we found out which of our neighbors picked her up from the road and took her to the clinic, we called him up. He and his wife loved Cassie. We knew that but we didn't know that they would often let her into their backyard so she could play with their dog. We had no idea. Later in the day, after the decision was made, I got a call from him checking up on Cassie. I told him what had to be done, and he offered to take their dog (Cassie's friend) to the clinic so Cassie wouldn't be alone in her last moments. He even said, "If they don't let me, I'll force them to. They can't stop me!" These are amazing, loving people. He said he believed the neighborhood wouldn't be the same. I agree.

The neighbor that was house-watching for us cried with me on the phone. He loved Cassie. Whenever he walked his dog around the neighborhood, Cassie would meet up and join them. He asked if we wanted him to take away her bowl and food so the kids wouldn't have to see it when we get home. He is a sweet, caring man. He even offered to go pick up Cassie's collar from the clinic. The A&M Vet Clinic was really great about it all. They kept me informed often and even sent a card that was handwritten by all the people who had met Cassie. Really felt loved and cared for.

It's been a couple weeks now, and it's been hard. We keep seeing Cassie in the corner of our eyes. It really sucks to lose a furry. We just yesterday went to the Aggieland Humane Society and picked out our new little one. A boy this time. The people at the Humane Society are amazing as well. We're very excited for him to come home and fill our hearts.

I think it's pretty easy to be swayed against people in general, and sure there are some bad apples...but we are not spoiled. We are not assholes. We are not hateful. All this to say that death sucks, dogs rock and the people in the BCS are amazing. We love our neighborhood. We love our town. Get to know your neighbors.—  
JORGE GOYCO



# IN MEMORIAM: GENE WILDER

Gene Wilder is gone, but he's not really. For many, he is permanently Willie Wonka or Frederick "Frankenstein" or Jim (*Blazing Saddles*) or maybe even Sherlock Holmes' smarter brother, forever emoting on television

My family is quite familiar with Gene Wilder's turn as famed chocolatier Willy Wonka in the original *Willie Wonka & The Chocolate Factory*. Sure Johnny Depp, you is weird and your version is definitely more unset-



screens (and tablets and phones). We'll be able to enjoy him for many more years, but we are undoubtedly sorry that he's gone now.

It seems like I've been watching Wilder at the movies for a long time, but it's just that I saw him so much in the Seventies and Eighties in the theater. Then, over the years, I watched some of those films again and again, and you can guess which ones.

I do remember seeing *The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother* when it came out the year after *Young Frankenstein*. I figured with three of the same comic actors and satirizing the famed Baker Street detective that it couldn't miss. However, it wasn't as funny, but then in retrospect, how could it be? Not much could stand up to a comedy classic. Maybe I'll revisit some of those old Wilder films now.

While he's remembered mainly as an actor, he wrote nine movies and directed five, and who could forget his singing in many of his movies, often of comic tunes he composed. Although he's best remembered as a manic comic actor, Wilder in real life appeared to be a gentle and kind soul. He loved and lost to cancer the amazingly-funny Gilda Radner, but he remarried and appeared happy for nearly two decades. It's touching that he had his family and friends keep secret his decline to Alzheimer's since he didn't want his fans to be saddened.

We don't have enough reasons to laugh, so it's fitting that so many are now quoting their favorite lines from Wilder's classics. It's a good time for watching some of those flicks too. "Destiny! Destiny! No escaping that for me!" Goodbye Gene.—MIKE L. DOWNEY

ting but you can't hold a candle to the subtle and snide comedy of Wilder's original performance.

Snide comedy. Not over the top ironic, not self-deprecating, not over-referencing. Just that easy self-aware cool. That was Wilder's style. While watching *Young Frankenstein* with my sons I was reminded of how subtle the humor is in that movie. Sure, there are some bits that are wildly over-the-top, but so much of the humor present in that movie is reserved, cool, intellectual. Even in *Blazing Saddles*, my admittedly favorite work of Wilder's, there's a certain coolness to Wilder and main character Jim (whose dialogue was mostly written by Wilder) that showed me at a young age how whipsmart Wilder was. Like the b-side to the same single as Monty Python. Often zany but just as often cutting edge, patient, insular, a New Wave of comedy that was not your parents' comedy but was your own.

I don't want to be the "we had it better in my time" guy, but so much of what makes the work of Gene Wilder great is that it didn't talk down to you, but it assumed you were smart enough to get it, and if you weren't you'd roll it around in your brain until you did. No cheap gags, no stunts...all high brow and arch. Though at times Wilder would go populist in his joint work with Richard Pryor (another criminally underappreciated comedian in the current atmosphere).

Some time in the late '80s after the death of wife and fellow comedian Gilda Radner Gene Wilder mostly disappeared from public view. In a way he pulled off the ultimate rocknroll death by Irish ghosting his way out of the spotlight and back into the role of normal human being. His death came as a shock to many of us because the last time we saw him he was younger and vibrant. He may have aged but his work remains timeless and trapped in amber.—KELLY MINNIS

It seems like only in the past year the eclectic indie rock vibes of B/CS quartet **Electric Astronaut** has come on, with plenty of local sets at the Grand Stafford and Revolution both in supporting and headlining capacity. But Electric Astronaut has a nearly five year history with its genesis in the ashes of the local metal scene of the mid '00s. This month the band releases its debut EP on local label Sinkhole Texas Inc. Electric Astronaut holed up in Old Oak with Ex-Optimist Wonko The Sane to record six songs that span from cool skanking reggae-inspired chill tones to full-on dual guitar denim-clad rocker dude blooz onslaught, with a singular knack for memorable melody and maintaining an overall chill party vibe.

I spent an evening at Launch Control with singer/guitarist Brandon Barnes, bassist/vocalist Drew Meredith, and drummer Charles Hopkins (second guitarist/vocalist Kevin "Kevric" Brown was on the lam in L.A. chasing chicks and Mac DeMarco with the same amount of fervor), drinking, smoking, and bull-shitting, learning the history of the band, where they come from, where they're going, and all about that new EP.

*K: The first time I heard about you guys was when you were playing with Chad Petty. Were you going to be a band without Chad?*

D: Brandon was playing in Walking Bear.

B: My old drummer Marty was in that project with Chad.

D: And Marty was mine and Brandon's roommate. Brandon had just got out of Legacy Fails and Marty was just out of BONNIEblue.

B: Marty and I played with Chad for a couple of years until Chad says "Oh hey, I'm joining the Army". So that was that. It didn't end it, you know, but it kinda ended it. Like if he ever came home I don't know what we'd do.

*K: Chad's out, heads off to the Army, and that starts Electric Astronaut. That's Brandon, Marty, then you too?*

D: Yeah, I started out from day one. And what's funny is that Kevin could've been in the band about that time too. He came over to jam and me and Marty got drunk and we got into a fistfight. He knocked over my motorcycle, and then Kevin went home and I didn't hear from him for like a year!

*K: That was, what, four years ago?*

D: We've been a band for three years. That was in the very beginning. Then our lease ended and the three of us lived together but Marty decided to move to Austin with his girlfriend. So we tried out a bunch of guys. And we tried out this guy Preston who played with us for a while. He was a really good drummer but he wasn't really the right fit. He moved around a lot like a nomad. And Charles was just always around with us. He went with us the second year of Mellowfest and was a trooper. Brandon and I were like, "we should have someone in the band we like to hang out with".

C: And I didn't even know how to play drums at the time.

*K: You played bass right?*

C: Yeah, I played with Close To Cashed, that band used to be called Hell's Conspiracy before. I was on bass for 8 years. Then I was gonna play guitar with Astronaut while Preston was in but then Preston left and I kinda moved over. I thought I'd try it. Borrowed a kit and they beared with me for a while until I learned what I was doing and then I got better and it just kinda worked out.

D: We had Dalton from The Docs for awhile and he recorded with us, but after that we just kinda jammed with our buddies. So naturally when we felt the need to get a 4th person we got Thomas from Close To Cashed, because he was my roommate and it felt good. And then Kevin popped back up and the vibe fit right and it all fell into place.



## interview by Kelly Minnis

*K: You've been playing a bunch around here. You've got the van, new record coming, what's the plan coming up?*

B: We definitely want to play out of town and get the songs familiar to people. We have seven new songs and we're getting ready to play and record them. I wanna keep moving and find some new bands to bring around and play with.

*K: You guys have a different sound for around here, especially considering the bands you came from. You all started out in metal bands. Where does Electric Astronaut come from musically?*

B: Metal's always been a big thing around here, but I went to Nashville for a bit and psych rock, good chill vibes was in up there and that inspired me. So I came back and started applying that to the more metal stuff I came up with, and it was a more chill vibe. But I'm used to playing metal and we still have a heavier hand. We play chill music but it's still kinda heavy.

C: It's heavy by vibe. It's not crazy distortion and big fills, not in your face it's got dynamics, ebb and flow, swells, you really feel it. That's what I dig about it. I get to chill out and let it vibe.

B: There's a place to play a million notes but not really in this band.

*K: I'm a real hardass about bands that write songs versus throwing riffs together or just aiming for mood. You guys write good songs. Where does that come from for you?*

B: Structure is really important, some storytelling too, but not in an obvious way. The music is somewhat arranged before the words come in. Like "Launchpad" is kinda gibberish, but it's fun to sing. Then some like "Korben" are storytelling, about a long distance relationship going sour. I flesh out the chords and these guys help with the structure and put their own thing on it.

*K: You guys have a rather nice studio here at home. What was it like making the new record with Wonko vs. making it at home?*

D: We were like kids in a candy store with all that gear! B: This is the first album that I didn't have to record while I played it. I didn't have to engineer as I went.

And it was nice being able to not have to worry about it, be perfectionist. There's more human element in it than had we recorded it here.

C: That was my first studio experience. It couldn't have been any easier.

D: It wasn't my first time but I thought it was really cool that we went in and didn't settle. If something

wasn't sounding like we liked, we'd do something else. Pull apart pedalboards until we found what sounded right.

B: Michael gets good sounds really quick. We trusted his gut and it went super fast.

D: The vibe over there is cool it's bring your own 6 pack and let's hang out.

C: And all those cool cookies Katie makes and stuff. Michael was so easy to work with and listened to all our ideas.

D: We split my amp with Katie's and I was kinda leery of how it would sound and I wanted it to be beefy, meaty and then I got the first mixes and it sounded just like I thought. That was the first time I recorded at the same time with a drummer instead of track over track with a click.

C: It had that live effect to it. It was kinda difficult but the album was kinda like the best live show you ever played. It has that push and pull. It has a real natural sound.

D: When Brandon records us I don't got to hear it without that "BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP" until the very end.

B: I'm a click track Nazi a bit.

D: If I could pick two things that I were super dope to use at Michael's was the Fargen. That's what a Marshall wants to be when it grows up, that's like the Ball Sack of ROCKNUROLL. And the Space Echo, man.

C: The Space Echo was fun to watch, man. I couldn't take my eyes off of it. It was like a lava lamp.

B: We kinda abused it with the lazer gun voices.

D: Sounds like a synth without being a synth.

B: It's so tempting to stack track on track. Something I'd done here might have had 90 guitar tracks on it, trying to sound like Smashing Pumpkins. It's a wormhole, man. But we didn't have to do that with this.

C: It was more about getting the vibe across.

D: Lots of people like that automation sound but this was more like capturing the moment.

C: It captures that moment right when we first started getting comfortable as a band.

*K: Charles, I can't believe you've only been playing drums for a year.*

C: Coming from a metal background and I'd see the double kick back there and it looked cool so I'd dick around with it. I'd always been a bass player but it came naturally. But I was barely on par with these guys when I came around. They were super encouraging and everyone helped me and was supportive and we'd do it again and again and again and it was chill and it was easy and it made me feel confident in it.

D: I'm excited for the album too but I'm really excited for the next 6 months. Kevin's really got his toes sunk in with us now. We got a bunch of new songs and I'm excited to play those now and it'll be cool to get this out so we can move along.

B: We've been playing and recording the same six or seven songs for the last three years. It's time to put those to bed.

*K: Do you guys just get together and jam or does someone bring in a whole song or just parts?*

D: It changes. In the beginning Brandon and I would get super stoned and pass stuff together. He would record a riff and then we'd loop it and build on it, or Kevin will bring a thing in. They bring the cool riffs and me Charles act like we know what we're doing!

B: They take some time, they don't happen overnight.

C: You hammer it out first and bring it ironed out before you show it. It's not rushed.

D: Most of the newer stuff has come from us just hanging out on the back porch with guitars throwing licks around until we push record to remember it.

**CONTINUED >>>**



K: I noticed you're playing a few songs with Kevin singing. Will he do more of that?

B: Yeah. I eventually want all of us to have a mic. Drew's singing with UnicornDog, fucking Charles sang the National Anthem at the derby match and that ruled hard.

C: And I was sober too! I was so nervous but I did it.

D: Brandon has a unique voice.

C: It's Kurt Cobain-y without being Kurt Cobain-y.

D: Kevin is way into Jack White.

K: I can see that. You guys are riffy at times, real heavy unicorn fuzz stuff.

B: That's the Sabbath and Zeppelin. We are all obsessed with Sabbath, that's where that comes from.

K: I think most people are used to hearing you at Revs and a lot of the detail gets lost in that room. I don't think people have REALLY heard you yet, and this recording is gonna surprise people.

B: I hope so. I love that bar, the energy, but inside it can sound harsh. We're ready to have this record out and can't wait to celebrate it. There's a certain element about recording that's been lost. You take a mistake and solve it in a really creative way instead of just autotuning it and making it too damn shiny. I like that this sounds still human and raw.

K: You think people expect it to sound like that now?

D: I think so. We talk about how in the 80s and 90s everyone had these big ass stereos and speakers and now it's like how it sounds through a cell phone or a laptop and I'm a bass player and that just kills my instrument.

B: I'm much more interested in live shows. I put effort into my records but I'm not gonna overanalyze my recordings. I'm excited people can hear this now.

K: What are the big records you guys hold up to the mountaintop?

B: *Siamese Dream*, *Relationship of Command* from At The Drive In, *Fugazi's The Argument*, sounds so much different than their other ones but I love those stereo drums

D: For me the album that kicks ass for me is Fidler's self-titled album, when they were still eating Taco Bell and living in cars when shit still sucked and the songs were about being broke and having fun. I relate to that. It makes me think of the nostalgia I feel at my favorite bar with my favorite friends.

C: I'm really influenced by Nic Menza, early 90s Megadeth. I come from thrash. I'm really big on early Pink Floyd, like "Ibiza Bar" all the way up to *Wish You Were Here*. I like the crazy dynamic psych rock vibes and the synth stuff.

D: I love the shit out of As Cities Burn. That's my shit.

K: You guys always look like you're having so much fun.

D: I get permasmile, man.

C: I sometimes just need to hit the shit out of things and I get to do that for fun!

D: I work my 9 to 5, whatever, but I just really want to make music with my friends. And I love it.

B: I'm glad it shows because we love doing it.

*Electric Astronaut celebrates the release of their new EP with a live performance at Revolution Café & Bar Friday, September 2nd, 9pm, with special guests Hand Me Down Adventure, Noble Age, The Ex-Optimists, and The Docs.*

# STILL DRINKING

Confession: I do not brew beer. Second confession: I have never brewed beer. Sure, a few times I've swirled a wooden spoon the size of a canoe paddle in a backyard mash tun, but I've never built a beer from the barley up.\* This is a point of great chagrin for me. As your locally outspoken beer nerd, I feel nude before you now. Due to my lack of brewing experience, I have gained a conviction against critiquing actual brewers in these here pages. Until I brew my own brews, sweating over my own boil kettles and tossing out my own fouled batches, I am merely a talking head as a critic.

So, there's my confession and here's my declaration: from here on out, in my monthly *Still Drinking* ramblings, I will offer less criticism and more recommendations. Fair? Although I do not brew beer, I love beer. I love beer so much I dreamed last night that I skipped church with Alec Baldwin (Jack Donaghey era Baldwin) to enjoy Pilsner pints and a German pretzel brunch at a nearby pub. (It was our favorite communion!) I feel, due to my tenure of consuming beer thoughtfully until I can no longer think, that I have good reasons for recommending good, solid, exciting beers for any season or occasion. So that's what you can expect in *Still Drinking* from now on: what to drink, where to find it, and what to expect from the experience. No more poo-pooing on Shiner, I swear! Besides, poo-pooing Shiner is too easy to be fun anymore.

However, even with all that said, I still need one final WTF-level beer rant here before I go total hoppadilis and drunk puppies on you. So, with the power invested in me by the power of Charlie Papazian and Kelly Minnis, I hereby commence my final (for the time being) 979 *Represent* beer rant: Why the sweet hell-corn do I have a photo saved on my Nokia flip-phone from JULY 27, 2016 of Blue Moon's Harvest Pumpkin Ale already on a local market shelf? Why the Richard-Skid-Marx is a fall seasonal—one with the tag-line "Here As Long As The Leaves Are"—on the shelf before the fall semester's return of students has given me a solid reason to get sloshed? Pray tell! But, get this: it wasn't just a single shelf or this one Blue Moon Seasonal that arrived early. Within a week, by early August, I saw Oktoberfests in various hues of burnt sienna all over the BCS metroplex. Bro! I haven't even worn myself out on Berliner-Weisse styles, fruity Goses or Tecate based Micheladas—all quite fine summer offerings—and you're already pouring nutmeg and clove and "spices" down my gullet? As they say in China, fuck that noise! I rue the day I'm offered to cap off the Spring semester in early with a Pumpkin spiced porter instead of a good old fashion Coors

Banquet in a tall-boy can. God made seasons for a reason! ! To contain the beer He intends us to enjoy seasonally! Quit jacking with that crap! Make America seasonal again! End rant.

Alright, let's talk recommendations. Last month I sang mega-praise for Goliad's Watermelon Gose (5.2% ABV). Since then, I've had several occasions to sip a Goliad alongside Independence Brewing Co.'s RedBud Berliner Weisse-Style Ale (4.5% ABV)—my favorite beer of Summer 2016. And, crap, those are both top-notch, next-level beers. With the RedBud, we're talking huge lemon tartness. Not a total pucker-up, but a solid sour ale that stands well on the wheat base without being dimmed by the malts. Truly, a grand jewel in our Texas craft crown. Still, Goliad's blend of sweet watermelon with the coriander/sea salt combo of the Gose style is a marriage made in craft heaven. Easily one of my top five beers of all time. Bury me with a bottle! And, sure, I admit it may be technically unfair to closely compare a Gose and a Berliner-Weisse—two distinctly unique styles with little commonality other than sour possibilities—but I am not comparing these beers on style alone. I'm sipping these suckers as my personal Gold Medal achievers: 2015's Gold Medal winner from Independence versus 2016's Gold Medal winner from Goliad. They are both Gold Medal brews! But 2016 shines a bit brighter. What can I say? I'm a sucker for that salt.

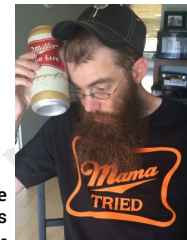
Speaking of Berliner-Weisse style ales, a word to those who love, love, love, and adore sour beers: New Braunfels has made a Berliner-Weisse ale with pickle juice. And it's amaze-nuts. New Braunfels' PKL FKR (5.2% ABV) is undoubtedly a pickle-lover's beer. The dull pickle brine here has to be directly on par with the ale portion. Huge pickle flavor! And, just like Goliad's Watermelon Gose, the saltiness of the pickle juice blends well with the zesty, sourness of the Berliner-Weisse style. I've found bottles of PKL FKR at our local Spec's and at World Of Beer. I'm sure it's elsewhere that I have yet located. Be on the lookout. If this shite is seasonal, you'll wanna stock up. Hoping to make Micheladas with one of these babies soon enough.

Around the home front, the wife and I are equally surprised that we cannot get enough of Deep Ellum's Dallas Blonde (5.2% ABV) or St. Arnold's Fancy Lawnmower German-Style Kolsch (4.9% ABV). It's summertime! Still! And these brews are mighty fine super cold and wrapped in a Shiner koozie. (Only thing Shiner's good for.) My non-beer drinking wife\*\* has fallen in love with Dallas Blonde. And I can't debate her having the stuff around. Although a bit too thick with the cracker-n-

bread maltiness to quench a fierce thirst, the honey hued sweetness makes this Blonde simply irresistible. (Sorry. Couldn't resist.) Upon a single trial, Dallas Blonde might be easy to dismiss, but this is a solid warm-weather brew to pair along side a Cobb Salad or some chilled melon. Personally, I've been digging hard on Fancy Lawnmower, smartly named with double-entendre title: refreshing enough to reward sweat inducing domestic labors, F.L. also packs a sharp, bright, grassy malt body. Those German Hal-lertau hops add a crisp bite on the sides that keep the palette's thirst in high demand. A solid offering from a brewery so locally ubiquitous they're often wrongfully overlooked. Dallas Blonde and Fancy Lawnmower both offer fine reminders of what the current season needs most: sleek, crisp, light-bodied brews as easy to pound as the skeeters are thick to swat. Hold your malts and spices till post-September.

\*This somehow got voiced at a public beer tasting in Kansas City, the fact that I do not brew my own beer because I do not have a space in my home that my wife would lend her olfactory permission to my homebrewing, and some old homebrewing fart, whom I was not even speaking to, said to (at?) me, scoffing as he sipped his beer, "If you really wanted to accomplish a task, you would find away." Alright fine, St. Dad. Thanks for the morality speech sans *Brady Bunch* French horns.

\*\*My wife consistently claims that she does not like beer, but that's horse shuck. The woman loves a gnarly Imperial stout. She loves big Imperial IPAs. She craves porters. She impressed the hell out of our bartender at Avery Brewing Company last summer, kicking back several 18% concoctions I sent back. Most recently, she's become addicted to Stiegl Radlers, that beautiful Austrian lager blended with grapefruit soda. With this recent passion still very much inflamed, it makes perfect sense that she would fall for a Dallas Blonde: it's practically a Radler without the grapefruit soda. I have not explained this to her, nor have I offered to play mixologist for her in this regard, but it goes without saying. She fell for Imperial stouts because she loves coffee and dark chocolate. She fell for Radler because she loves mimosas at brunch. And this Dallas Blonde, well, she likes this one because it's the base level schematic of what all the beers she really loves begins with a the ground floor. No, she can say she doesn't like beer, because she's really talking about domestic lagers. She doesn't realize that, in all actuality, she should be the one writing *Still Drinking*.—KEVIN STILL



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# A COUPLE OF JACKASSES REVIEW THE HANGOUTS

Loudfest's annual gang of musical debaucherists have finally recorded an album. Does shirtless sweaty man breasts and third day benders from B/CS's music scene's most wanted transfer or are we left with a bunch of tired ass showgirls trying to breathe stagnant breaths into a long dead musical genre?

Well, what the fuck do you think?

The album is fucking awesome and I don't really need to write shit but I will transcribe conversation my roommate and I made while listening to the album together. Really, Rented Mule tends to bogart the music and seemed entirely too excited to review this with me.

CH: Let's do this. Okay, I just got to download this to my computer and we'll...

RM: I have it! I have it on CD!

CH: Oh. Okay....well, I still want it so I'm going to download it.

RM: Fuck all, where'd I put it? Oh god damn, it's right around here.....

CH: I'm downloading it.

RM: (Still digging around stacks of CDs)

CH: It's almost finished download....

RM: I found it!

We both start the album at the same time.

RM: It's got a very Circle Jerks feel to it.

CH: Really? I see it as more spirit of '77 than early 80's hardcore.

RM: No. This is VERY Circle Jerks. I like the shortness of the songs. Very hardcore influenced.

CH: I could see that on the drums, but I think the bass is pretty late 70's post punk, guitar is 70's NYC punk rock'n'roll and Niki is goddamned Niki.

Track 1 is titled "Fuck Shit Up" and lasts only 39 seconds. That's less than most ringtones but the song carries so much energy, prowess and angst you'd be exhausted to listen to anything longer at our age. The song is already pit-ready and you either get premonitions or flashbacks of Loudfest and the smell of beer and B.O. steaming together in comradery of whomever you're arm and arm with in the pit.

Ever fuck doggystyle over a toilet in a bathroom at a venue during a show? Track 2 "Knives" is the song that would be playing while you bang away. Maybe it's just me.

Okay fine, I'll agree that Track 3 does sound very Circle Jerks but with an ending very reminiscent off an old Joan Jett cover chorus sinking into a Ramones style finish.

"Gotta Gotta", the fourth track, sounds like Cheetah Chrome, Klaus Flouride, Wendy O. and The MC5 got trapped in an elevator together with their instruments and PA and just jammed while they awaited rescue.

"Johnny Cool" sounds a lot like the song "Gotta Know the Rules" off Social Distortion's *White Heat, White Light, White Trash* album. Which I think is awesome. Chuck Biscuits was on drums from DOA at the time and it was a very short lived renaissance of the band before

Mike Ness would become a Hot Topic caricature that would dance with a Tommy Gun and sing on an album sold with a switchblade comb. Yes, at one point in time, Social Distortion was cool. This song is very cool and whereas musically it shares some connection to SoCal punk, it's the vocals that transition the song neatly into it's own gem. Her style of singing is very Cherie Currie for most of the song. Then Niki comes in with some Josie Cotton "Hey Johnny" 's over the guys chanting hey hey heys. One of my favorites on the album.

"So Sick" has a very Vice Squad feel to it. No, I'm not trying to make a checklist of referencing every woman of punk rock, it just works that way as this album tends to perpetuate on the heavy side of many facets to the genre that just work so fucking well. There's some Becki Bondage going on vocally and musically it also seems very "Vice-Squady". Niki does a great job channeling a sense of just being fucking done or over it. In a song only 1 minute and 20 minutes long, the lyrics may be simple, but the feeling is far from simple. Another pit ready tune, when is the next Loudfest again?

33 seconds for track "Super Scarborough Bros." I might have pulled a muscle listening to this hella fast song. It feels longer and I'm already out of breath.

I once had the Dr. Strange records sampler with Cock Sparrer's "Because you're young" and my friends called it my theme song. Youthful abandon and the feeling of being able to change the world. From Sham 69's "If the kids are united" to the Runaway's "Cherry Bomb", punk has always been inclusive of the kids, if not the ne'er do well kids. Maybe I am fuck all wrong but I get that vibe from the title track "Rule the World". Great backing and chorus.

RM- Holy fuck Wonko can produce. I'm feeling pretty good about recording my bands with him after listening to this. This is clean, cool and fun.

"Zombie Potluck" gets some head banging and reminiscent mosh pit times from Rented Mule as he listens along. The song once again is an amalgamation of punk sub genres dumped into one of those Ninja blenders. It starts out with a very post punk sound, then on to early hardcore and by the time we are at the lyrics, we are crowd surfing at a Turbojugend gathering. If there's a song where vocalist Niki is likely to stick her tiny foot to the side of your neck and hold you down while she sings in your face standing over you holding the mic, this would be the song. We've all thought that right?

We conclude the album with the final track, "I stole your love". Yes you did The Hangouts. This song is the perfect closer, straight forward rock n roll here and probably the most unique of all the tracks but also perfectly balanced on the album. This whole album is available for download. If you think I just threw a bunch of references on a wall and waited to see what stuck, then give it a listen to yourself and tell me what you think.

The Hangouts album ends as soon as it begins. Rented Mule thought it was perfect and seamless, I want to go back to Loudfest. — CREEPY HORSE + RENTED MULE

# STILL POETRY

## I LOVE

*Forever and Always*  
my wife  
my pugs  
my parents  
( & her parents )  
my friends  
their adoration  
our God  
( & country... well, ... ).

## A Torrid Affair

black coffee  
grey days  
bright ales /hops malts:Happy! /hours  
(repeat: Sweet Christ!)  
ginger /licorice /vinegar  
black high-top All-Stars  
words  
(tiding in /deepening out).

## It's complicated

teaching /time  
quiet /tunes  
used books /scary jokes /dirty movies  
(pontification of such)  
a pillow & a ceiling fan  
a dangling foot  
an atlas dog-eared & annotated  
(Yellow Sea to Arkansan boy).  
— KEVIN STILL

## THE GOSPEL OF THE FAT CACTUS

*"Poetry is as visual as are painting  
and the cinema."* - Charles Simic

If you are lucky, you will  
find yourself reading poems  
by Jim Harrison and Ted Kooser  
instead of watching television.  
In them, you will see fat cacti  
retaining visions on the landscape  
of time, and, if you are wise, you  
will embrace one, plucked through  
like Frida Kahlo's deer, wounded but  
stepping back so you may step back  
in - a dog-legged dance of stabbed  
precision. You'll need to decide  
each time whether to jab the damn  
spines in the same holes or cut  
new ones. Then you'll realize, because  
you are lucky and wise and time is  
who knows, that, wait, this is how  
you should handle all your people.  
— KEVIN STILL

## DANI DANIELS AT THE WELL

Remember when we thought  
"the pure in heart" of  
the Beatitudes  
had something to do with  
porn, so that every-  
time we relished our heads  
off to girls swapping  
fluids we feared we'd  
never see God?

I mean, that's crazy.  
Right?

Later, we learned about things  
like the GOP and the NRA  
and fracking, and, suddenly,  
those girls digging through  
so much flesh -(ours)- screamed  
the Blessing of "mercy" from  
the tiny arches of their  
curled toes.

I mean, maybe not  
in *that* moment. But  
they were

honest. Naked  
stones. Stripped  
grievances. Names  
contrived and combined  
in declaration of who  
they wanted to be. Ask  
any of them. Not  
themselves.

But watch: I can wash my hands  
one at a time. The pen  
clipped to my hip pocket  
unmoved.  
— KEVIN STILL



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B/CS ARTISTS. DOWNLOAD FOR FREE AT  
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# RECORD REVIEWS



**great unwashed luminaries/  
Charlie Naked split CD**



**Invasion Boys  
At Fairfax and Frederica**

I've been a fan of great unwashed luminaries (GUL is the electronica side of local multi-instrumentalist Kelly Minnis) since I heard him playing a myriad of keyboards and devices outside Rudder Tower at noon one day in 2007 on the Texas A&M campus. This split release features two tunes by GUL and one by Houston sonic collagist Charlie Naked, not bad for more than an hour's worth of instrumental music.

"Half Past Forever" by GUL is a measured, even contemplative, synthesizer soundscape that moves along without bombast to its quiet close—a nice finish to the disc. The GUL opener—"Parallel Lines"—is different. It features this sinister drone that layers synths and guitars during its aural exploration for more than 20 minutes. "Half Past Forever" and "Parallel Lines" are notable for the care that obviously went into the selection of melodies and effects that compose the tunes. Both tonal excursions function equally well as background gratification or as compositions to enjoy at full volume (or with headphones).

Charlie Naked's half-hour "Starvation Film" is something of a different animal...or machine. Primarily featuring what seems to be his own invention—a Kelly cellostick—the artist renders an auditory landscape that leaves the listener to find the pleasures of the composition. Perhaps it was the film in the title, but the first thing that came to my mind as the eerie sounds oozed out the speakers was the desolate (and ultimately doomed) planet that the adventure/horror classic *Aliens* took place on. "Starvation Film" could easily serve as a movie soundtrack except that it is unrelenting and ceasing for 30 minutes. Never boring and rarely uncomfortable, the song burrows into the consciousness even after multiple listenings.

One can't go wrong with two reliable electronica artists, so check it out. —MIKE L. DOWNEY

Invasion Boys' first album *Pennbrooke* felt like a driving record, with its garagey-yet-shoegaze guitars, frequently up-tempo percussion, and nostalgic songwriting. For their second album, *At Fairfax And Frederica*, the band opted for an entirely different approach by creating a cohesive group of songs from puzzle pieces that juxtapose each other at their ends. Many songs are barely over a minute long, which makes for an exciting, rapid-fire listening experience; just as one track ends leaving you yearning for more, another completely opposite one comes on and grabs your attention. There are songs with heavier punk rock energy such as "Sorry," album opener "Someone's Leaving," and "U.S. Drones," the latter of which makes a crazy little dance number out of airstrike warfare. Guided By Voices also influences the compositions on the album, perhaps nowhere more evident than "You Are Not A Map" as Kelly's vocals come in with Robert Pollard's punctuating force. "Commodity" has great shout-along lyrics and chugging-ly scratchy guitar, giving it a strange catchiness akin to a Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds tune. There are also moments of poppy weirdness in the songs reminiscent of *McCartney II* material, such as "Black Sabbath Towncar Driver" and "Liquid Engineer" with their synth pop usage. "Vegan Punk Rock," another bizarre pop song, has these great nearly out-of-tune chords and slobbering vocal delivery. Meanwhile the riff-melody and treble-drone of "Watchover Voodoo" makes the listener pretty damn uncomfortable before dropping off into the echoey resolve of "Albedo On Parking Lots in Summer." "Say Girl" is a straight-ahead rocker that is the most reminiscent of material from *Pennbrooke*, while "Pilot Lights" is a guitar ballad that would fit right into a GBV record.

The bonus tracks along with *At Fairfax And Frederica* go for a more traditional rock song approach, starting with "The Night The Escatones Broke

Rock & Roll," a great Neil Young & Crazy Horse rocker that tells a very true story (and I have the added satisfaction of being in attendance that very night). "I Ain't Ever Satisfied" has the Invasion Boys showing off their country rock side with a Steve Earle cover you can nod emphatically to. Following that is a rocking cover of Sebadoh's "It's So Hard To Fall In Love," which, understandably, is the track of the bunch that most resembles an Ex-Optimists offering. It bangs along with its fantastically fun riff and wall of sound that makes you want to hear it again as soon as it's done. Between the three bonus offerings and the eclectic collection of songs, *At Fairfax And Frederica* shows Invasion Boys expanding their palette to be more adventurous and unexpected while weaving in the different styles and sounds they enjoy. It's a brisk album that deserves repeat listens to let each short track get stuck in your head. —TODD HANSEN



**Sneaky Pete  
Excessity**

This is the last of Sneaky Pete Rizzo's trilogy of "...city" albums and his last from up north as the retired Aggie biology professor has returned to College Station where his shows used to draw hundreds during the 80s-90s.

Several of *Excessity's* tunes are aimed at Rizzo's favorite holiday—Halloween—but you don't have to wait to October to listen. This disc isn't a departure from Rizzo's low-fi novelty tunes in the vein of Weird Al Yankovic and Dr. Demento. However, "Dance of the Galaxies" is a keyboard-driven instrumental as is "Sperm Whale Nursery." "You Creep Me Out, You Creepy Creep" is pretty much what it sounds like, a peppy putdown. "Subconscious Paranoia" chugs along in a Creedence swampy groove. "Spooksterition" is another Halloween-flavored tune with a nice buzzy guitar. "Traveling Troubadour" is a slow lope of a tune about busking for a living. "My Oh My" is a lament about the decline of rock music, which is understandable from someone who saw the Grateful Dead, the

Rolling Stones, and Aerosmith live in their heyday. "Pros and Cons" is a light-hearted song composed of prefixes.

If Sneaky Pete returns to the B/CS stages, maybe we'll hear some of these live. —MIKE L. DOWNEY



**Dinosaur Jr.  
Give a Glimpse of What Yer Not**

This Massachusetts indie rock trio is legendary for being one of the creators of the genre, crossing over '70s classic rock into the early '80s hardcore punk the band learned to rock with. The original lineup of J Mascis, Lou Barlow, and Murph lasted three albums before Barlow left/was fired and Dinosaur became an ersatz J Mascis solo vehicle. In 2005 the band reunited and in 2007 released its first new album with the founders since 1989's *Bug*. The new LP, *Give a Glimpse of What Yer Not*, now puts the post-reunion output past the original output in number. In impact...well, not so much. But all the albums from Beyond on up have fantastic moments, and the new one is no exception.

"I Walk For Miles" is sludgy in a way that Dinosaur was never really known for, almost stoner-metallic with a thick coating of reverb on J's double-tracked vocals with an almost later '70s era Black Sabbath feel; "Lost All Day" has a bright, almost power pop lilt to it; "Knocked Around" is downcast until the drums take off in a near prog-rock poly-rhythmic pattern kicking the song into the next level; "Wasted Time" is ghostly and spare in a classic '70s rock fashion except the drums never come down to let the song breathe; and "LeftRight," the second of Lou Barlow's efforts, uses the simplest of chord changes for one of his more poignant world beater choruses, replete with analog synthesizers and a more angular guitar sound that would've been more at home on 1999's *The Sebadoh* than a Dinosaur album. It's an earnest love song that closes out the album in splendid fashion. It's unfortunate that Dinosaur are so good at this now that people are spoiled and forget. Appreciate it. —KELLY MINNIS



# CONCERT CALENDAR

9/2—The Canvas People, Strange Fiction, Keeton Coffman, Astrochimp @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 8pm

9/2—Electric Astronaut (cd release), The Docs, Noble Age, The Ex-Optimists @ Revolution, Bryan. 9pm

9/3—Isonomist (cd release), Aphotic Contrivance, Distance/Here, The Ansible, The Eureka Effect @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 6:30pm

9/9—Mississippi Shakedown, Sideshow Tragedy @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

9/10—Daggerwound, ASS, DethTruck @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

9/16—Ganesha, Crypt Trip @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

9/17—Deft1 (Deftones tribute), Smile Transylvania, Under Subsidence, A Deathbed Promise @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 8pm  
9/17—The Grundles, Pizza Planet, Unicornodog @ Revolution, Bryan

9/18—Seryn, Tow'rs @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 8pm

9/22—Bloody Knives, The Shut-Ups, Neu Division @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

9/23—Broke String Burnett, Ottoman Turks @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

9/24—Leavenworth (Cd release), Ben Ballinger, Chris Longoria Gonzalez @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 7pm

9/24—The Inators, Golden Sombrero, Mars Direct @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

10/1—Hopeless City Blues, A Sundae Drive, Cake Rangers, The Ex-Optimists @ Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm

10/7—Birthday Club @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

10/8—Boss Battle, Destroyer of Light, The Tron Sack @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

10/14—Slow Future, Jeremiah Johnson Band @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

10/15—Jody Seabody & The Whirls, Omotai, Tenino, Pizza Planet @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

10/20—The Schisms, Corusco, Electric Astronaut @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm

10/21—A Sundae Drive, SkyAcre, Salt Of Sanguine @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm



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