

# STOREREPRESENT



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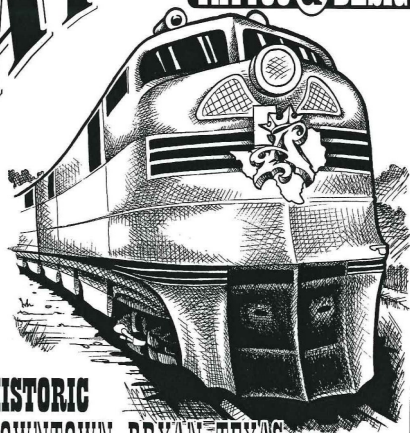
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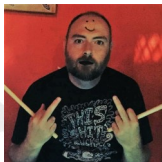
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## IT'S JUST A PHASE

My wife is currently living in a sustained state of panic. She feels like her America is under siege by the likes of conservative Republicans, that all the progress made towards an enlightened society during the

Obama years has been erased and deleted without a backup. To heighten this sense of societal invasion she is watching dystopian television like *The Handmaid's Tale* and reading Orwell. She watches Colbert and *The Daily Show* to try and laugh at it but it only underlines the fear. She spends a lot of time commiserating with complete strangers in Facebook groups dedicated to consoling each other over the current state of affairs.

I told her that I understood the fear. The transgender bathroom bill, sanctuary cities legislation, the siege on the Affordable Care Act, continued lying over collusion with Russia, giving up on Syria, the assault on nearly all good works by the federal government, reversal of financial barriers created to save the country after the Great Recession, and the full frontal embarrassment of the president in public has thoroughly demoralized many, even some who voted for him. Seems like a good time to drink heavily or smoke something if you got it, maybe do both.

But I also know this is how Republicans felt in 2008. Their country was on a bullet train towards increased centralization in Washington DC. Liberal mores were being forced upon them by the courts. Their disillusionment was capitalized upon by right wing media, conspiracy theorists, ginned up by those even more conservative than them towards a Tea Party revolution. It was less that they hated everything Obama stood for but rather they hated "Obama", a caricature painted for them to represent everything they feared about society racing past them and beyond them, leaving them behind towards a future they neither understood nor felt comfortable in.

The losers are always left behind, and in this Great Democracy today's losers were yesterday's winners who were the previous day's losers who will be losers again tomorrow. There is no prevailing wave for long in this country. Our political climate is like a tall blade of grass, leaning in whatever direction the winds of the times blow it towards, to sometimes get mown down and landscaped by a charismatic leader. These are trends that history is able to map, blips on the radar, "so this is what they were into during those years" curiosity. Not so easy to pin it down while you live through those "curiosity" years.

Every generation feels its ennui. Wars, economic ravages, xenophobia, moral outrage, and the bizarre gadgets and entertainments we use to distract ourselves are not singular to any one generation. I have overheard people in their 20's long for the relative glow and security of the 1990s, having not truly lived through those times to remember its wars, political battles, and uncertainties. Will my children remember the '10s in such a way? Is there anything particularly different about our current national upheaval that will warrant more than a subsection in a chapter on the 21st century in future history books? It is hard to say, but it sure feels really strange living through this particular blip in history, regardless which side you are on. In a 10 year period of time we've gone from post-9/11 Dubya through Obama and onto the Trump circus. That is enough to give anyone whiplash from trying to keep their eyes focused on the rapid contradiction of regimes.

I am trying to maintain my cool, knowing this is only a passing phase, but goddamn if this is one hard phase to pass through. — **KELLY MINNIS**

# POUR ONE OUT FOR SPICY BB

White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer resigned the other day over a disagreement with the Donald's newly appointed communications director, New York financier Anthony Scaramucci, a guy who's literally known as 'the Mooch.' Can we get any more fucking ridiculous? (That was rhetorical, I know it can and will.) Spicer served as the Republican National Committee's communications director from 2011 to 2017. His tenure as DT's press secretary was marked by general lying, wild inaccuracies, a bit of Holocaust denial, and complete disdain for doing his job.

So here is Spicy's top five moments from the past six months

## 5. That time Spicer made up a terrorist attack in Atlanta.

"What do we say to the family that loses somebody over a terroristic (sic), to whether it's Atlanta or San Bernardino or the Boston bomber?" Sean said during an ABC interview, arguing that the administration needed to implement Trump's Muslim ban. He repeated the "Atlanta, San Bernardino, Boston" list twice over the next few days. Seamus Hughes, the deputy director of George Washington University's Center for Cyber and Homeland Security, told The Daily Beast: "There has not been a successful jihadi terror attack in Atlanta."

## 4. The time Spicer told CNN that corruption is A-OK as long as everyone knows about it.

"Conflicts of interest arise when you're sneaky about it," Spicer said, when he was asked about the president's conflicts of interest, including the fact that he still owns his company and is letting his sons run it. "If you tell everyone 'here's what's going on, here's the process, here are the people that are playing a role,' that's being transparent." Remember, this from a guy who just resigned because he thought his new boss was going to be unethical.

## 3. That time Spicer literally hid 'among' bushes to avoid reporters after Trump fired former FBI director James Comey.

And then he obviously complained to The Washington Post for saying he hid in the bushes, leading The Post to issue this correction: "EDITOR'S NOTE: This story has been updated to more precisely describe White House press secretary Sean Spicer's location late Tuesday night in the minutes before he briefed reporters. Spicer huddled with his staff among bushes near television sets on the White House grounds, not 'in the bushes,' as the story originally stated."

## 2. That time Spicer had nice things to say about Hitler.

"You had someone as despicable as Hitler, who didn't

even sink to using chemical weapons," Spicer said referring to a sarin gas attack on Syrian civilians. "I think when you come to sarin gas, [Hitler] was not using the gas on his own people the same way that Assad is doing," Spicer said. "He brought them into, um, the Holocaust center—I understand that. But I'm saying in the way Assad used them where he went into towns, dropped them down into the middle of towns, it was brought—the use of it—and I appreciate the clarification, that was not the intent."

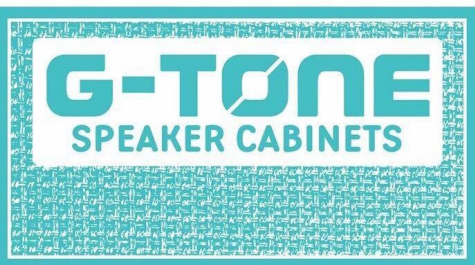
## 1. That time Spicer shamelessly lied about Trump's inauguration crowd.

"This was the largest audience to ever witness an inauguration—period—both in person and around the globe. Even the New York Times printed a photograph showing a misrepresentation of the crowd in the original Tweet in their paper, which showed the full extent of the support, depth in crowd, and intensity that existed," Spicer said. "These attempts to lessen the enthusiasm of the inauguration are shameful and wrong." It was not the largest audience ever to witness an inauguration. Period.

## Some honorable mentions:

- When Buzzfeed published an article about a comment by Reince Priebus and Spicer accused the site's editor of an "attack on Christ."
- When within the first week of working for this administration he probably tweeted passwords to the public, not once, but twice in two days.
- When he claimed that Trump was "just joking" when he encouraged Russia to hack Hillary Clinton's email.
- When he attacked Nordstrom for pulling Ivanka Trump's merchandise.
- When he turned a press conference into an infomercial for Trump's D.C. hotel.
- When he told April Ryan to stop shaking her head.
- When he accused a couple of teenage immigrants of rape (whose charges were subsequently dropped) to defend the Muslim travel ban.
- When that idiot of a president had to ask the news media of Spicy "Doesn't he own a dark suit?"
- When he and a select group of people knew exactly what "covfefe" meant.
- When even real reporters felt bad for him because DT wouldn't let him meet Pope Francis.

All this is to say, don't feel bad for the guy, fuck him. He's scum and a genuinely terrible human being. Then again, you don't become a part of this particular government by being intelligent, compassionate, or respectful.  
—STARKNESS







# HARESTOCK 2017

Organizing a music festival is a blizzard of details – doing it 10 years straight means commitment...or someone should be committed. Like Loud!Fest, the local Harestock music festival is turning 10 this year. Performances for the 100% non-profit charity event will be August 11-13 on three stages at the Beer Joint on Highway 30.

Local music promoter Bucky Bachmeyer, also drummer for the Great American Boxcar Chorus, has been the primary organizer of Harestock since the band launched the live music festival in 2008. Ben Morris, lead singer for the Boxcars, and bassist Chris Nichols (and wife Heidi) with guitarist/singer Eric Fisher also pitch in considerably.

Since 2009, over \$20,000 has been donated to Ready For Texas Relief Fund, Twin City Mission-Youth & Family Services, Bikers Against Child Abuse (BACA), Texas Tunes For Troops, God's Little Creatures Animal Rescue, and the Brazos County Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

"We decided after the first one to switch to Sundays and going non-profit to up our chances of getting artists," Bachmeyer said. In 2011, the festival needed to expand to three days. Bachmeyer recalls the second festival as one of the most memorable since they had to switch venues at the last minute from Hare, TX. Other memories include an amazing performance by Shinyribs in 2006.

"We also were lucky to have had Kent Finlay for two years," Bachmeyer said.

Another favorite memory is an acoustic performance indoors at the Beer Joint by the Reed Brothers and James Pardo. "It was packed, standing-room only, and it was so quiet when they were playing," Bachmeyer said. Last year's festival included "buckets of rain," Bachmeyer said, but the show went on.

For the 10<sup>th</sup> year, Bachmeyer is looking forward to celebrate the fact the festival is still ongoing. "I enjoy the collection of music we're able to put together every year," Bachmeyer said. "It's a good mix of different music, from rock and roll to bluegrass to singer-songwriters." Bachmeyer notes Harestock has a reggae band this year, "music all over the board."

This year's charities include BACA, Beau Means Business (combating Cystic Fibrosis), the Arts Council of Brazos Valley, and the Great American Boxcar Charity.

Since musicians donate their performances, the lineup and times can evolve. At press time, nine full bands have committed to play while 24 individual acoustic singer-songwriters have signed on. Musicians Mike

Ethan Messick and Britt Lloyd have played Harestock every year since its inception, Bachmeyer noted. (Personal note: I've seen more than half of these performers live at some point, terrific.)

A number of homegrown performers are scheduled including Magic Girl, Jerry McGee, Claire Domingue (now Boyd), Jon Dittfurth, Gabe Wooton, and the Great American Boxcar Chorus.

Sponsors range from Chicken Express to Boardwalk Spa to KTEX 106.1 to the Old Post Office to Armstrong Properties.

For the charity ticket prices and updated information, check out Harestock on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Harestock/> and the web: [www.harestock.com](http://www.harestock.com) . — MIKE L. DOWNEY

## HARESTOCK 2017 SCHEDULE

**Friday, August 11**

**6 pm - front gate opens**

**7-8:30 Doc Mojoe**

**9-10:30 The Broken Spokes**

**11-12:30 The High Mile**

**Saturday, August 12**

**12 pm - gates open**

**1-2 Keith Kallina & Coleman Weiderhold**

**2-3 Jeff Cooper & Claire Domingue**

**3-4 The Duke Brothers & Logan McCune**

**4-5 Jake & Ryan**

**5-6 Jamie Talbert and Band of Demons**

**6-7 Claire Domingue & Britt Lloyd**

**7-8 Joey McGee & Ryan Davenport**

**8-9 Britt Lloyd & Duke Brothers**

**9-10 The Reed Brothers**

**10-11:30 Shad Blair & James Steinle & Gabe**

**Wootton**

**11:30-1 Magic Girl & Joey McGee & Logan McCune**

**1-2 am Saints Analogue**

**Sunday, August 13**

**12 pm - gates**

**1-2 Jon Dittfurth & Nate Smith**

**2-3 Buster Ellisor & Dean Ferrell**

**3-4 Geoff Spahr & Donny Waits**

**4-5 The Great American Boxcar Chorus**

**5-6 Hank Schyma & Eric Fisher**

**6-7 Mike Ethan Messick & Hunter McKithan**

**7-8:30 Chubby Knuckle Hour**

**8:30-9:30 Matt Harlan & Daniel Thomas Phipps**

**9:30-11 Folk Family Revival**

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# WHAT THE SEA WANTS

Watching the boy walk out of the sea, the fishermen stood on their longboats that lifted and fell with each wave. He waded from the shallow water, passing their nets without notice. His body was bare except for what appeared to be a skirt of sea grass. A few would remember that a string of shells circled his head like a crown. As he walked onto the beach no one said a word. The sea, after all, brought in what it wanted.

From a small rounded house made of red clay and dried leaves, an old woman stared at the boy walking to her doorway. He took in the meager contents of her home before returning his gaze to her. She stared back, catching her reflection in his eyes—large dark pools that drown her in their depths.

"You look different," he remarked. His voice flowed a fine salt-tinged mist around her.

"I am old. It has been a long time."

The boy frowned, as if not understanding.

"You wouldn't come back with me," he said. The hurt and accusation in those words caused the water in a nearby earthen vase to ripple and froth.

"And yet, here you are." With a sigh she wrapped an indigo shawl more tightly about her, settling down with much effort onto the bundle of cloths and nettings she called a bed.

"Come back with me," he pleaded. "To my father's kingdom. We can be together again, like before."

As a girl, she'd loved to watch the fishermen of her village, perched like birds on their longboats, skimming the waves and casting nets. Her mother and aunts chided that girls didn't belong at sea. But her father, who could never resist her pleadings, had let her come with him that day. That was when she'd first seen Alil, his boyish face peering at her from beneath the waves, his dark eyes beckoning. She'd followed them, diving into the sea despite her father's cries. And there she stayed. Those memories with Alil were her most precious. The wonders of his world were endless. And for a while, she forgot that there was anything else.

Then one day, a young man fell into the sea during a storm. He would have drowned if she hadn't taken pity. Alil's help came reluctantly. *What the sea wants, the sea takes*, he was fond of saying. But he helped her bring the young man to shore. When her feet touched land again, all her forgotten memories returned. Alil pleaded with her to come back. But she told him she had to stay, to see what had become of her past life. Those watery dark eyes turned sad and rippled, but he agreed. She would stay for a while, and he would return for her.

But time passed differently in Alil's world. She returned to the village to find her family long dead, along with

everyone she had known. There was a story, however, of a girl who had plumed the waves to chase a boy and was never seen again. Mothers still used it to keep their daughters from their fathers' boats. With nothing left for her, she walked back to the sea and waited for Alil's return.

Ten years passed before he walked back onto that shore, as young as when she'd last seen him. However, time had embraced her outside of the sea, away from his magic, and she'd swiftly grown into a woman. The young man they had both saved was now her husband.

"Come back with me," Alil pleaded.

She'd shaken her head, but those dark eyes were as inviting as ever. When he extended his small hand, she took it. Time passed and, once more, she forgot. Finding a fishing hook nestled in a coral bed flooded her thoughts with memories of the life she'd discarded, and she rushed back to the shore.

She found the small home of her and her husband long crumbled away. All that remained was the story of the young wife who ran into the waves. Since then, men had been warned not to let their wives wander too close to the sea.

Once more she'd turned and gone back down to the shore and waited for Alil.

Finally, he walked back out of the waters.

"Come back with me," he pleaded.

She'd shaken her head, ready to tell him she was married again, and now had two children. But when she considered those dark eyes, her words disappeared, and she was running again to the sea. That time, the music called her back. She'd looked up through the waves to find a man in a small boat, playing a wooden flute. He was startled to see her but hadn't stopped playing. So, she climbed aboard to listen. When he began rowing back to shore, she stayed.

Alil came to her as the first bits of gray nestled into her hair.

"I turned around to find you gone," he said.

"All this time, and you only now noticed I was gone?"

"Come back with me," he pleaded.

"No," she said, careful to avoid those dark eyes. She'd married the man who played the flute. And following what had become a common custom in the village, he'd built a house for them far away from the sea—which old tales said stole wives from their families. Now he was blind, and couldn't fend for himself.

Alil placed a smooth rounded pearl in her hands. "When you are ready, throw this into the waves, and I will come for you."

Then he was gone.

Now here he was, once more. "Come back with me," he pleaded.

She shook her head, realizing those dark eyes no longer worked a magic upon her.

"But the pearl—you dropped it into the sea."

The old woman leaned forward, clasping his young hands in her own. "Alil, my husband took ill and died two years after I last saw you. I threw that pearl into the sea then, and waited for you to come. That was 36 years ago."

Alil stared at her in confusion.

"Come with me," he pleaded.

The old woman pulled away. "I cannot. I will not."

His dark eyes grew darker, like a storm. For the first time in his presence, she felt fear. Then without another word, he turned and walked away, retracing his steps back to the sea—alone. Releasing a breath, she remained in her small house, alone and lost in her memories.

It was night when a roar pulled the old woman from sleep. She climbed from her bundle and stepped into the darkness. People ran screaming, with children in tow, their faces carved masks of terror as they sped from their homes, heading into the jungle.

Rising from the sea was a great wave, black against the night sky. It rolled forward, casting a shadow across all below.

"Alil," the old woman said. In her memories, she stared into those dark unfathomable eyes and realized she was the one who had never understood. "Come with me" had never been a plea, but a command.

Settling down onto the trembling earth, she did not run like the others. Instead, with a heavy heart, she sat and waited for the sea that had come to reclaim her.

Seasons passed. A new village arose, with people who built their homes deep inland. Tales claimed there had been a village here once. Then one night, a wave had seized it away—every man, woman, and child. The fishermen had a warning that they passed to each other as they set their boats on the waves: *What the sea wants, the sea takes.*—STARKNESS

## A TRUTH ABOUT DRIVE-THRU



I've never worked a drive-thru. My first job was at a McDonald's and I still can't eat there 25+ years later. I get that old grease trap smell in my nose every once in awhile and it and it gets me all stressed and bothered.

Well, the other day, the wife and I were at Taco Cabana, and we drove up to the speaker without knowing exactly what we wanted (normal). I realize some restaurants have tried to alleviate this issue by placing a menu earlier in the drive thru line, but for distracted people like us, that doesn't work.

So, a crackly girl's voice breaks through, "Welcome...blah, blah, blah...can I take your order."

"Um, give me a minute, please." I say.

She says, "let me know when you are ready."

Only then do we begin the process of figuring out what the heck we want to put into our dry, hungry mouths, changing our minds several times, reminiscing about the last time we got something here, exclaiming about how thirsty we are, wondering if they still have the Baja Sauce, telling the wife she looks good in a skirt, wondering if they have flautas, and then finally settling on something and saying, "OK, we're ready!"

Then it dawned on me. This is not some high tech "replicator" computer listening in to a special series of words that will reactivate the girl taking out order. This is a real person on the other end. And this may be obvious to you, but I realized, the only way this whole thing can work, is if they are listening the whole time.

So I asked, "Hey, um, so, are you listening the whole time?"

There was a pause. Then, in what I perceived as a "lifting of the veil" moment, like I had just figure out the secret that was holding the atoms of this world together, the little crackly voice said, "Yes."

"Oh, shit!" I thought. My wife started laughing nervously. A movie montage of all the crazy shit and inappropriate things I had ever said while people in the car were deciding on what they wanted spun around my head. Incriminating stuff...Secret stuff...oh crap. Don't managers also have a headset they can listen in on? Are they laughing at us? Do they enjoy the fact that no one thinks about the fact that they can hear everything? Do they place bets on what people say when they don't know anyone is listening? This is crazy. I had so many questions. My mind was reeling. I was grasping for words. I couldn't put the brakes on any specific question. I finally settled on one...

"Can I have two chicken fajita tacos and a flauta plate, please." She said something about something and I pushed the accelerator.

Everything is different now.—JORGE GOYCO

# SERPENT SKIN WOMAN IN THE IVORY HALL WALKS WITH POISON DOVES (OR "WORRY HEARTS")

Into the wild she walked. The tides crashed on the dunes in the horizon. Alcohol mattered not at this point. The moon lit the way as she stumbled into his arms and his arms and so on so forth. She laughed for attention, and the laugh was just as fake as most onlooker's interest in her.

In her head she was beauty fleeting fast. She did not own it. Time had only allowed her to rent it. She had seen what a mere twenty years had done to her. That was enough proof for her that her "ravishing beauty" was in fact on borrowed time. So she partied, and learned to live more deceptively than ever—courting sometimes as many as five men at once. All the while being in a long term committed relationship for the sake of formalities. He was the guy she would show her family to keep them at bay. He was the guy that would fuck her, after everyone else already had. Of course, he didn't know any better. Though he assumed quite certainly from time to time based off of previous late night drunken romps with her post party that he was the rebound guy too. He was whom she would come home and settle for only after having been admired, fondled, perhaps even tongue kissed and then rejected at the bar for whatever reason.

She couldn't drink or handle her booze very well, and had a flare for the dramatic as a result which accompanied an unquenchable thirst for the stuff. She was going to be the smartest, fastest, hottest, loosest woman on the planet or at least in her neck of the woods—she figured—at least for the next few years. The lease on her beauty wasn't specific—there was a clause for an extension based on decent behavior befitting of a lady—but like most people she lived in the "NOW! NOW! NOW!" and never gave the thing a second look. Her fear of the ticking clock made her quite ruthless to those nicest to her, and her vanity saw kissing the butts of other insecure Cinderellas and Prince Charmings who she knew not, in hopes of being acknowledged by the other "beautiful people" for if but a moment. She would in just five minutes of conversation with such types, radiate a level of faux-sincerity and conviction that would make the devil himself blush.

If just she could remain sincere and full of compassion and not just passions of the flesh she may have had a chance to thrill later on in life too. But no she wanted it all regardless of consequence, and since being a good person had nothing to do with looks, she didn't bother. Why waster her time? That was for stupid ugly people who couldn't fuck right. The uptight dicks with their pussies in a bunch over folded towels. No thank you.

Hate could make her cum, just as much as greed. She ruled the scene in mind, but in reality it was only a series of strangers' dirty sheets. Despite her caution she caught syphilis at age 27 from a bad drunken truth or dare scenario with some business suits. They dressed nice, so no raincoats were needed and kissing was okay if they were "drunk".. "just having some careles fun...that's all", so long as there was spitting...

By 33 she looked 40, and by 45 she looked a mean 60. She still chain smoked and her voice was now as raspy as ever. Her yellow teeth and descended vagina were her calling card for when the number on the stall no longer worked. She had multiple degrees mind you. She was "worldly", and "sophisticated" and other fancy words for dirty slut. She wore only the most expensive whore attire, and bought only the nicest sex toys. Everything was leopard print and she didn't care. Her dungeon chest was full, but her child's room was empty. She was always too busy screwing everyone else over and having fun without regard that her womb eventually dried out and the only cribs full, were abortion cribs.

She was strong, she was woman. She was whore. She didn't need anybody, but money and a career. God be fucked. Her house was always empty and no one ever visited. It was too depressing. She was a good lay dried up and defected but the whore recall plant had shut down and left her running on autopilot.

Her breast now hung to her knees, and even flashing the pizza boy seemed to only lead to screams of disgust and panic. But she was still ready, single, and good to go...though her hips were now weak and her hearing quite gone. She may not have a family, or friends that respect her, but she has a career that keeps her from being too lonely.

She hums to herself and looks in the mirror, and again sees no one to take pride in any of her work. No one to look after her when she can no longer fuck worth a fuck. The animal graves in the garden grow, because the "good girl" was really just one dirty ho who didn't understand the meaning of things like trust, love, or loyalty. Instead all she knew was lust, deception, and mayonnaise. W ide empty stares, with a China doll smile, pink paleness for the horny masses man and woman alike to pick apart. So long as the vices flow and the conversation never moves past her. She'll fuck you for a compliment, and tell you you were shit. She's a business working woman with no time for silly notions of love.—  
WILLIAM DANIEL THOMPSON



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# STILL DRINKING



Allow me a moment here to nerd out. Although I possess a few good Happy Hour tales, I have zero "celebrity sighting" stories outside of spotting musicians in the crowd at *their own shows*. Sadly though, I'm loselier enough to ALWAYS be on the lookout for celebrities. If I'm in an International airport my eyes are scanning the cloud of fellow travelers for the likes of Sarah Silverman or Maria Bamford or Courtney Love (don't ask). With such a pathetic disclaimer in mind, you can see where this is going.

My non-beer loving wife and I recently visited **Avery Brewing Company** in Boulder, Colorado—her favorite brewery. Avery is responsible for awakening my wife to beer, although she still professes she does not like beer: she just likes Avery. Fair enough. After a few 5 ounce samplers—I went with two wine/beer hybrids while Latonya went with anything over 14% ABV, of which Avery brews several—we begin throwing a game of backgammon so shameful to me Latonya quickly wins a hovering fan-base among the Avery wait-staff. One waiter took to viciously clowning me, while another began suggesting Choctaw Casino level bets in Latonya's favor. Feeling the shame of board game despair, I scan the crowd for fraternal relief, and that's when I see him. Grey beard. Raybans. Hiking shorts. Tall, citrusy yellow brew in hand. We make eye contact (through his Raybans), nod a greeting, and he mouths the word, "Hi". Then he and his fellow grey-bearded compatriot cross the Avery patio and take their leisure among child athletes tossing a game of corn-hole on the grass. I turn back to Latonya as she moves her backgammon blots into victorious formation, and I say in an unnecessary whisper, "Hey, you see that guy down there with the grey beard?" She's unable to through the crowd. I say, still whispering but with force, "He's the old White guy in the hiking shorts!" She says, "All the old guys here are White and wearing hiking shorts! It's Boulder!" Touche! She asks, "What about him?" And then I say, whispering with intensity, "That is freaking Charlie Papazian!" Then she says, probably what most people will say hearing this story, "Charlie Pa-who?" I say, "Charlie Papazian! He literally—like, *literally*—wrote the book on homebrewing"—(look it up: *Joy of Brewing* 1976—the seminal work that launched American craft brewing)—"and he freaking pioneered both the American Brewers' Association and the Great American Beer Festival. He's the daddum Julia Child of craft beer!" Latonya was, of course, winning the backgammon game, so the most enthusiasm she could show was a mere, "Okay. That's cool. OOOO! A double-four!" For the record, Papazian and I washed our hands next to one another in the men's room, but the men's room is no place to fanboy gush. I let the moment pass, as Papazian slipped back into the Boulder, Colorado crowd of old White guys in hiking shorts. Still, he glowed in my eyes as a god among mortals. I will think of him each time I lift a glass of Avery gold.

But, seriously, to refer to Colorado brewing-native Papazian as a "god among mortals" is not a far cry. If a true Mount Olympus of craft beer existed in America, a solid happy hour debate could explore the merits of awarding such distinction to either the Pacific Northwest Seattle-Portland-ish area or the state of Colorado. Nepotism

would lead me to crown Colorado, but what do I know? This summer my brewery explorations remained almost exclusively local to the Denver area, but the new trends I found in Denver matched new brew descriptions I found from across the state. Namely, this summer Colorado microbrewers are overly enamored with cucumbers. I saw everything from Cucumber sours to Cucumber Berliner-Weisse ales to Cucumber Wheats to Cucumber Kolsch to Cucumber Lagers to pitchers of Cucumber water at the end of the bar. This sudden obsession with cucumbers, in my opinion, is a solid move, especially in those sours and Berliner-Weisse ales. Cucumbers offer a mildly refreshing fruit flavor to those tart sour notes. The cucumber flavor is not over-powering, but it's still distinct. Plus, I can only imagine that cucumbers are much cheaper to purchase in bulk than, say, another recent fruit brewing trend—the mango. Personally, I have never understood the mango in beer craze. I love mangos as a solo act. But mangos are chewy and the juice is nectar thick where cucumbers are crisp and light. You don't dry cucumbers and you don't brew with mangos—that's my new mantra.

Brewing trends are a funny thing that reveal the affections and competitiveness of the craft brewing family. For instance, over the past few years, sours, Berliner-Weisse ales, and fruit beers have flooded the craft market. Perhaps this sudden shift in trends is a response to shortages in the American hop market. Perhaps it is also a response to a collective fatigue with big, gnarly, palette assaulting IPAs and stouts. Whatever the case, it's almost humorous to watch a brewing trend, such as mango and cucumbers craze, ignite. One has to wonder if the reproduction of such specific trends is an individual brewer's move of competition ("We can do it better than them!") or a move of safety ("Well, it seems to work for them"). That's tough to say. The story of America as a nation is a dual narrative of melting pots (trend-followers) and out-liers (trend-setters). As much as we find comfort in debating the individual merits of the melting pot (determining who among many brews the best cucumber beer), America most fiercely celebrates the out-liers (writing gushy letters home about sharing a sink with Charlie Papazian).

This out-lier sentiment inspired **ODell Brewing** in Fort Collins to try something different this season. In fact, when the bartender handed me a glass of ODell's new **Green Coyote Tomatillo Sour**, she said, "This is our answer to the cucumber craze." Well, maybe. The dude who invented this tomatillo Berliner-Weisse has been perfecting it for over a year, but, still, the idea was that *nobody* has ever seen a beer brewed with tomatillo. So did it work? After sipping a full glass on the ODell patio in 90+ degree heat, beautiful conditions for a Berliner-Weisse ale, I can only say it kinda worked. The tomatillo fruit was nearly as thick as mango, which did not prove as refreshing as a heap of crisp, light cucumbers. In this case, the melting pot won. But such is the method by which new melting pots are born. So I tip my new ODell cap to ODell Brewing for attempting something new. —KEVIN STILL



Bryan/College Station has a long history of quality metal bands in its midst. **Dethtruck** is its latest addition, comprised of scene veterans Jacob Daniel, James Moore, Matt Ray, and Michael Brammer. Most of B/CS's metal bands are of the post-hardcore sort, but Dethtruck throws it back to classic mid '90s style death metal. The bass drums blur, the guitars harmonize, and the vocals grind. One morning last month Dethtruck lined up to answer a few questions about themselves and the music they make together. — **KELLY MINNIS**

**KM: Tell me how the four of you met.**

**JD:** My old band Galactic Morgue stopped playing when Mik (Espinal) moved to Denton. He was our drummer. I knew Matt because he used to go to our shows. So he called me one day and asked if we could jam. At the time I wasn't in a band so I said cool. We ended up writing "Gore Road" that day. A few months later we were playing shows just as a two piece. James heard us and jumped on board. Brammer was actually recommended by Mik. Brammer also agreed to join after seeing a live set. We currently have 8 songs that we play live, and one more that's complete, but we haven't started playing yet. We're trying to get enough material for a full length record.

Matt came up with the name Dethtruck, it was supposed to be an idea for a comic book, but never happened. So I took the idea and just started writing lyrics about this killing machine and different types of people that could possibly be in a violent comic type story.

**JM:** I met Jacob when he was playing in Galactic Morgue. We didn't really talk much until he asked me to join. I liked his straightforward and diverse style of songwriting, and he gave me a lot to work and experiment with. I met Matt at an ASS show at Schotzi's not long after he moved here. I met Michael about six years ago, when I was playing with my first band, Blood Magistrate.

**MR:** So I met Jacob at one of the Revs shows. The first time I watched Galactic Morgue play I had to tell him how his band was one of the best local bands I had seen in any city. At that point I knew if I wanted to get back into metal I would want to jam with him. At that time I was actually in a country band I was a founding member of.

**What is the overall goal of Dethtruck? What are you trying to accomplish in this band that you can't in your other...bands?**

**JD:** The point of this band is to not get lumped in any one genre of metal. We don't want any two songs to sound too much alike. Right now I think we're doing a pretty good job at that. It helps to have two singers who

# DETHTRUCK



both can do different styles as well.

The most important thing about this band is we don't write songs about politics or religion or pro this or anti that. What sets us way apart from other metal bands is all the lyrical subject matter is about a fictional character, "Dethtruck", and his disciples, and others who occupy his world...it's like a comic book, but with songs describing different aspects of a post apocalyptic planet.

**MR:** The whole Dethtruck idea came about in a discussion Jacob and I had about what we should call the

project we were working on. Somehow I got to talking about this horror movie script I was working on about this weapons designing engineer who was the lead for our government defense industry. Eventually the government screws him over and the last project he was working on was the foundational technology that would lead to Dethtrucks creation. Jacob was like that's it that is the name! Another aspect for me is to push my drumming to new heights and help contribute a unique sound to the metal world.

**JM:** I wanted to play something a little more challenging and diverse with a bit more room for creative input

than the Crossover Thrash I'd been playing for 4-5 years.

**Break down for me what kind of metal band you are. I don't know metal genres like I should. I mean, I didn't even know Dio was "power metal". To me, y'all kind of sound like Cannibal Corpse and that whole '90s Florida death metal thing.**

**JM:** Death metal for sure. Again, Jacob has a pretty strong sense of diversity, so there's also plenty of Thrash and Black influence present too. **MR:** I'd say the styles I strive for in my style of drumming follows in the path of Cannibal Corpse, Dying Fetus, Slayer, Decapitated, and Pantera. So the sounds of that style of metal will come through but as Jacob said we don't really aim to stick to one area but just let the music guide the style. He composes the music and then we put our twist on it. The one song which comes to mind is "Coffin Nail" which was composed of contributions from each of us. We had no idea how to end the song until Michael came along. Then the solo was written over the end part by James. It's one of the best songs we have worked on.

**Matt, how the hell do you play as fast as you do for 30 minutes without passing out?**

**JM:** He downs a gallon of Napalm before every show.

**MR:** Ha! As for the gas mask...it's hot as fuck but I have a high threshold of discomfort so I can survive. The mask actually stems from a character in the movie Lieutenant Colonel Rayge. He is part of the resistance and wears a gasmask to cover his scars from the radiation.

**Tell me about this new CD you guys. How'd the process work?**

**JD:** We purposely chose our more simple songs for the CD to make the process a bit easier, we knew we weren't gonna have multiple days in the studio, so we knocked em all out the first day. James and I met up a few days later and recorded all the vocal tracks. and re-did just a couple of guitar parts.

**JM:** Jacob wrote the riffs, song structures and lyrics for every song. He gave us his rough ideas of what he wanted us to play, but we were given free reign to build on his ideas. When we came into the studio, we recorded everything but the vocals and solos live, punched back in to fix mistakes, then went back and recorded the vocals, solos, and post-production stuff like the intros to "Sufferance" and "Gore Road".

*Dethtruck celebrates their new CD with a live performance Saturday, August 5th at Revolution Café & Bar in downtown Bryan with special guests The Shoobiedoobies, Aphotic Contrivance, and ASS. Show at 9pm, \$5 at the door.*

Time and space can masquerade as each other, but most of the time I think it's a trick. A pavane. A three-card monte. I've probably always thought that.

"Always" for us being, we think, about 8.8 billion Earth Prime years. And here we are, 86.9 billion light-years away from Earth Prime. We think. The dot in space-time of our departure is so distant it defies measurement or memory.

But this...candidate planet...I can almost believe it's where we started. It's present. As present as Frigg was in my bed, for periods of 18 months to 3 million years, at 45 times in our history. We've paired and unpaired, hated and loved.

Infinite possibility doesn't mean infinite truth. Yatha, for example, I only slept with once, two billion years in. One time too many.

Inside this ship, space is finite indeed.

"It's definitely a Goldilocks planet," says Frigg, floating to my side to look at the nav display.

"A good thing too," I say. "We're low on copper, oxygen, and salt, and we need to rebuild the cargo wing again."

There are, or should be, 11 other ships looking for Earths, each with a starting crew of 100 cyborn humans. Rebuilding their ships, rebuilding themselves, ad infinitum. They should each be in a different Hubble volume by now, each beyond the universe that once was known. I bet most settled for close-enough planets long ago, or died—radiation through a crack, starvation in empty space, who knows, we're not completely immortal.

But we've stuck to our orders: Find Earth. Fix it.

There must be another Earth, or so the theory goes, if the universe carries on much the same in all directions. If we find an Earth at an early enough stage, we'll travel backwards in history as we've traveled forward in time, onward in space. We can give one Earth a chance.

And will that matter, in the grand dance? *If it doesn't matter to get Earth right*, Frigg said once, *then nothing else matters*. Yes, I said, and kissed her, or was it the other way around?

As we watch this blue planet on the display, I don't say the words. I make her say them instead. We are a million monkeys with typewriters, only there are 34 of us and none of us know how to type. We remember the concept of typing. We cyborn remember a lot, although

# CYBORN

we replace our brains every few decades like the rest of our bodies. Tissue is printed with memories encoded, albeit in a lossy medium. A ship of Theseus, piloted by humans of Theseus. The Argobots, Ananke calls us. She makes the joke every millennium and we all laugh like it's the first time.

We can't remember everything, not 8.8 billion years, but we remember more than a human brain should. Things that happened eons ago, to us, sometimes lodge in a groove in our reprinted brains and remain, lacking

context. We treat most of them as if they were dreams, or else we get very angry, memories without context are terrifying. That's what happened to Gil, who died a galaxy ago in rage. We haven't all made it. We started out with 100.

What would I do if I lost Frigg forever? I can't say; that hasn't happened yet. In an infinite universe the only thing I know for sure is that it will.

"It's blue," Frigg says at last, her tone chastising me for being difficult. "The planet is blue. In a solar system"—"The 4,872th blue planet we've seen in this Hubble volume. That doesn't mean it's an Earth."

"OK."

"Let's just check it out, then, all right?" calls Yatha from the exercise bay. As if we were going to do anything else.

We do remember Earth, all of us. That memory is hard-coded.

I try to remember what Frigg looked like, originally. Not much different, if you blur the line where her ear was attached last month. We're organic, mostly; our ever-replacing parts built to function without gravity or sunlight. Synthetic and organic. We can be one or the other, according to mood.

In the second Hubble volume, some things seemed familiar—some nebulae and stars—but we couldn't be sure. We couldn't put names to anything.

In H3, we're seeing more that we recognize. The particles have arranged themselves in familiar ways. But we

know the nearest doppelganger universe could still be very distant indeed.

We get lucky, as all gamblers do eventually. As we approach candidate planet H3-4872, we see familiar continents, for the first time. We know it's the first time: the ship records our observations, but even so, it

isn't something we'd forget. We stop watching the nav display and crowd the port-glass, jostling for a view. All 34 of us. We know each other's farts and armpits like our own.

The Himalayas curve oddly, and there are smaller differences. But it's heart stoppingly close. No space debris, no signals. They don't know we're here.

Ananke is a meteor, her capsule landing in the Gobi desert. Six weeks later she returns, a rocket in the night.

"About 1675 Common Era," says Ananke, excited. "The civilizations are very similar. Japan has a Shogun and the Ming dynasty didn't hang on. I can't give you a delta

without a global study. At a guess, we're looking at five percent off. It's pretty close."

Frigg turns to me, because I've been the captain since Gil died, although most of the time, it doesn't matter. We carry on as we always have. "It's your call. We can infiltrate. We have 350 years to try to warn them."

I nod, slowly. In 350 years, this Earth will reach the point of no return, where cascading disasters will consume humanity within a space of the next four centuries. Long enough to build a dozen spaceships of Theseus, but no longer.

In 1675, this Earth still has time to turn it around. But look at those Himalayas.

I don't need Ananke to give me a delta to know this isn't home.

"It's a blip, really, 350 years," I say. "Afterwards, we can keep moving, keep looking for the real thing."

I turn to Frigg and smile, but her eyes are pained. Right now Frigg can't allow forever to be so brutally distant. I know that look. I mean, I've been there.

I do what she always does for me. I put my arm around her, as if this were our only chance. —*STARKNESS*

## THE CARBON RULE

If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world.—J. R. R. Tolkien

Whether we've heard it in its positive form: treat others as you want to be treated, or in its more prohibitive form: don't do to others that which you don't want done to you, almost all of us are familiar with *The Golden Rule*. All of the world religions posit some form of the *Golden Rule*, in philosophy and psychology it is referred to as the law of reciprocity, and some social scientists have gone so far as to suggest that without some concept of reciprocity, society as we know it would die.

However, perhaps we have made a mistake in calling it *The Golden Rule*. Gold is something that is rare, hard to find, a sign of financial prosperity. By referring to treating others in a way that is reciprocal to how we would like to be treated as *gold*, we may have unintentionally made it seem a thing that is difficult, uncommon, or unusual. Sure, it is relatively easy to have a kind word, a smile, or a compassionate shoulder for those who do the same for us, but most of us come up with all kinds of reasons for why we are justified in abandoning such niceties when someone treats us poorly, when we feel offended, or when we are angry.

And yet, it does not take an advanced degree to figure out how we like to be treated by others. We don't like to be ignored or interrupted. Harsh or unkind words can hurt our feelings. If others violate our privacy, our trust, or our bodies, we feel the anger and desire for revenge rise within us almost immediately. We have an innate sense of what is right and just when it comes to how we want to be treated by others while at the same time practically pleading ignorance of how we should treat others.

Please don't misunderstand. We all have those hypocritical moments where we do or say things that go against what we have proclaimed to be right, true, and virtuous. Most of us feel a twinge of guilt at those instances of our own speciousness. However, that kind of regret arises because we do have a sense of right and wrong, of how we should treat others.

Recently, though, it seems as though discourse (both public and private) has assumed an ignorance of how it is that we should treat one another. Some blame social media, some blame the political climate in this country, some blame millennials, and the list goes on and on and on. However underneath it all is a sort of fait accompli mindset that presumes that behaviors that follow the *Golden Rule* are, on the one hand, too difficult to attain, and on the other only the purview of the naive, the simple-minded, or the overly religious.

Pause for a moment though and think about it. What would our homes, our families, our places of business, our community, our nation, our world look like if we all took the time and made the effort to treat others—albeit others—the way we not only hope to be, but expect to be treated? What if, instead of thinking of such reciprocity as *The Golden Rule*, we insisted that it be more like a *Carbon Rule*, common, easily found, and the basis of life?

Sure, treating one another with kindness, with dignity, and with respect may just be a naive, unattainable pipe-dream—but what if it's not? What if you and I can change the world with our daily actions? What if we don't even change the world—what if we just changed Bryan? What if?—*PAMALYN ROSE-BEELER*

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# GOV. GANGSTER & CUCKOO IN CHIEF

What is wrong with our leaders these days? They seem to have no conception of how to lead at all, much less lead in a democratic society. Two cases in point: Texas Governor Greg Abbott and President Donald Trump.

Abbott's idea of leadership in Texas is to use his excess campaign funds (right, already, he's running again next year) to create a hit list of any state legislators who oppose him. Yes, he's going to go after any Texas legislator who doesn't bow to his bidding. The weirdest part of this is almost all of these legislators on his hit list will be members of his own party.

Leadership in Texas this year is centered around attack: the so-called bathroom bill and abortion rights are the top priorities of the governor. He wants to go after the marginal Texans who can't fight back rather than do anything constructive. All the caterwauling about protecting school children is really about just bigotry and sexism, pure and simple.

Abortion rights – let's protect the unborn. No one has a problem with that, but why does Texas lead the nation in infant mortality then? Abbott wants to make it even more difficult for women to make a choice about their own bodies and their children, but he obviously cares nothing about children, just like the bathroom bill.

Texas is 43<sup>rd</sup> in the nation in education – we are in the bottom 10 in education. That is criminal for a state of our resources. Childcare – hey, we are 31<sup>st</sup>, right there in the bottom half of the nation in caring for kids. Abbott doesn't think education is important enough to focus on – sure, he'll support giving teachers a raise; he just won't help school districts actually pay those teachers. Children don't make campaign donations.

No birth support, no education, and no childcare sup-

port from Abbott, but the state is Number 5 nationally in prisoners. Yes, he doesn't want to help families care for their children; he doesn't want to give those children an education; but he will lock them up as soon as possible. Also, he wants to make it as hard as possible for Texans to choose whether or not to bring a child into this world. This is leadership?

Enough about Texas – how about the decline of leadership in the United States? It's hard to believe it's only been six months since Trump's been in office, seems like six years. Trump does not want to lead; he wants to rule. A leader has to forge alliances and offer support to varied groups in order to accomplish his goals. Trump just blames everyone else for his failures.

What is going on in his head? How can someone reach his age without a filter? We all know his past misdeeds: the sexism, the bigotry, the racism, but look at what he's done as president. Shoving world leaders during photo ops, belittling his predecessor, bragging to the Boy Scouts about his election win last year (yawn, yawn), threatening members of Congress – this is what passes for leadership today?

The rate at which Trump is firing government officials, he must think that he's still a game show host. He doesn't seem to have a firm grasp of reality. Both houses of Congress belong to the Republican Party, and Trump, as head of the executive branch, is supposed to be a Republican. So why aren't we being dazzled by the new laws going into effect that the Republicans have been whining about for the past decade? Anyone name a major piece of legislation during this so-called "honeymoon" period? Nope, didn't think so. It's the absence of leadership. The Republicans have said no for so long that they don't know how to lead themselves. Trump hasn't a clue how to lead a country.

When are we going to see some leadership in this state and this country?—MIKE L. DOWNEY

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# TODD LIVES IN A FILM: *THE BEQUILED*

There's a newcomer in the house, and I am taken by him. The Yankee shouldn't even be here, but one of the girls found him with his leg badly wounded in the forest, where she was forbade to wander in the first place, and decided to lead him back to our school. I know we must demonstrate our Christian values and we must take care of those in need, even during wartime, but I wish she had passed by without noticing him. Now I find myself strained as to what is best to do to keep the girls safe while also not leaving the soldier to die. Quickly I sequestered him to the music room so that I could remove the scrap metal and stop any additional bleeding. Then I washed him with clean water for a long time. All this trouble because a little girl was gathering a basket of fresh mushrooms. We cannot tell the passing patrols that we're holding him, not just yet. They'll take hastily remove him and make him march to the prisoner camp before his leg had properly healed—he might even die before he makes it there. No, we will wait until his leg is strong enough to support his weight without any assistance. As much of a ruckus as he has caused, I have to say it's nice to have a fresh presence in the house. Once he had rested a few days and started to become gabby he was mostly an annoyance and difficult to contain within the music room away from the giddy eavesdropping students. He says he means nothing by his friendliness, but I can see there's more behind his words from the glint of his eye. Of course I would never tell him this outright, as he might try to convince me to let him stay longer, which simply can't be done. I can tell that I have begun to warm up to him, but I know that I mustn't keep going down this path. He will heal and then I will turn him over. It has to be done for the student's safety so Miss Morrow and I can get things here back to normal. And so I can stop to thinking about him.

There's a stranger in the house, and I want him. So badly that I've made every effort to get near him when the music room door is open and Ms. Farnsworth is away elsewhere in the school. I've never been thankful of that brat Sally before, but praise her for stumbling upon him. That afternoon she eased him onto the grounds before he collapsed on the porch I could hardly contain my excitement, though I somehow managed to keep myself together without the others noticing. What a beautiful creature he was, even as he laid there wounded, muddy, nearly passed out. I hardly get the chance to see a man here, and when I do it's usually an older unbecoming officer simply checking in while the company passes through away from the house. I've been so bored at this school since my parents sent me here, everyday a repetition of lessons, chores, and dinner. Other than Ms. Farnsworth and Miss Morrow there

are only 4 other girls here in the house, as the rest of them went home when the war came close. No boys here, no groundkeepers, not even any slaves. Supposedly it is safer for us to continue school here than to go home, but I loathe every lethargic day. I've barely spoken more than a few words to him so far, but it won't take long for him to notice me. The rest of the students are still young little girls, and my teachers are much older and homely compared to me. Yes, without question I am the most fetching woman here. All it will take is a smile at every opportunity, a well-placed but subtle complement during group conversation, and I will certainly catch his eye. At night I think about him, my body warm and throbbing, my hands trying their best to feel like his will. I haven't a care that he is a bluebelly, the fighting makes no difference to me. My struggle is right here, my captivity at the school, and I must seize this fortune in front of me.

There's a guest in the house, and I'm in love with him. Please don't take me for a fool, I am not mad in my feelings about him. It's true that I was immediately fascinated by him when he arrived, just as all the others were, but I was very guarded at around him at first and stayed away from him to tend to my responsibilities and lesson plans. The love I feel now is not some foolhardy impulse of lust, but what I've come to realize in spending time with him as I can. Fortunately I get occasional turns to change the badges on his leg, and he almost immediately began saying the nicest things to me. Yes he has general gratitude for Ms. Farnsworth and our school for caring for him, but the way he has specifically thanked me for my help as a caretaker caught my attention, getting to know me beyond a myself as a simple schoolteacher, how lovely and kind I am, things that no man has ever said to me before. And how he looks at me when he's speaks, I can tell that I am his favorite here, that even a kind word to the group of us is meant expressly for me. I've been at this school for so long, much longer than I ever intended to stay here. I feel into the position when it opened, for I had no suitors at the time, and it seemed the natural way to leave my embarrassment at home. But then I was obligated to stay here once the war started, and even though I'm not much older than some of the students here I sometimes have felt my spirit begin to wither. My greatest fear is that I will be relegated to this school forever, that my time to start a life of my own has well passed, and the world has forgotten about me. But that fear is gone now that Mr. McBurney has arrived to save me from this place. He is a handsome man, yet a fragile creature like me, and I feel we are healing each other as we spend more hours together. He is a godsend, and he belongs to me. — TODD HANSEN

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# TALES OF EXCESS & OUTRAGE (OR JUST PLAIN EXISTENTIAL ENNUI)—ALWAYS WITH A MORAL AT THE END

## Episode 1: The Case of the Blown-Off Toe

A long time ago, in a Lone Star State far, far away, I was the Mayor of Krum, TX. (You can check it out on the Intrawebs; 1993-95.) It's a long and involved story as to how I and my family had gotten to the aforementioned Krum, TX (named after A.R. Krum, former VP of the Santa Fe Railroad). Suffice it to say that, one day, living with our then two toddlers in a North Dallas apartment complex (Windridge Apartments: It Blows), my charming wife, Pam, and I had grown enervated with the vicissitudes of motherfucking Dallas. We wanted to buy a home, but seeing as how I worked a pay-for-shit corporate job, our domicile-purchasing power was the equivalent of a limp biscuit. So, I plopped down a map, drew a circle around a radius of towns outside the Metroplex from which I would be willing to commute, and said, "Zits and tits."

"What?" asked Pam.

I said, "Look for dots on the map that look like zit-sized or nipple-sized towns. We're tired of city living and need a decent place for our young 'uns to make their mark."

"You're weird," she astutely noted.

"Actually," I said, "These might be the only places in which we can afford a house payment."

We found several amenable zits and tits, procured a real estate agent, and settled on a 3-bedroom/2-bath mortgage in the bustling burg of Krum (then pop. 1,492, Salute!).

After a year and a half in that community, the Beelers had left enough of a trail of disaster (and birthed a third child) such that 91-year-old Blanche Dodd asked me to run for Mayor against a two-term incumbent home boy. What with my charm and Pam's political know-how (and several guns to the heads of innocent election officials), I won 56% to 44% of the vote—a real Tippecanoe-and-Tyler-Too, it was.

I ran on the promise of creating a Master Plan for Krum, seeing as how that minor armpit called Denton was encroaching upon Krum's idyllic bedroom-community setting. A Master Plan was just what we Krumites needed to keep from being overrun by land-grabbing Denton speculators. That, and it sounded official.

I had no fucking clue what I was doing, but I merrily got the City Council (5 grandmas) to okay the procurement

of a City Engineer to draw up the Master Plan. We looked no further than 17 miles down I-35E to the bustling burg of Corinth (pronounced "Cor-RINTH," and not to be confused with the attic city of yore) and found the bodacious talents of one Randolph Jeremiah [named changed to protect 979Represent from the ravages of litigation], Civil Engineer. Randolph was endowed with an abundance of engineering superintendency and precious little in the way of social skills. Let's just say he combined a multiverse of know-much with the exuberance of Mr. Spock and a sick Fort-Worth drawl.

I didn't usually parade Randolph in front of the City Council, given that the less they listened to him, the better off all of us were. Randolph acutely knew his shit, though—he just didn't have the savvy of a bag of doorknobs when it came to communicating it. So, I let the City Attorney spin it for the masses who regularly attended City Council and Zoning meetings. Otherwise, about once a week, I got with Randolph to figure out what the fuck he was drawing up.

And it was good, I must say. Hell, it made me think that Krum was a City with a real Mayor, hot damn!

Anywho, one day, Randolph and I did a walking survey of the City to determine the design of proposed future streets. It was as exciting as you can imagine. But Randolph was walking with a pronounced limp. I looked down at his dust-encrusted cowboy boots (one of his few concessions to the dictates of style) and wondered if he'd been bitten by a snake. I said, "Randolph, have you been bitten by a snake?"

\*Walks a few paces. Checks off something in ink on the underside of his left wrist. Spits.\*

"Nope," he said.

Did I mention that Randolph was a consummate conversationalist?

"Well," I scratched my head, trying to look as if I had a keen awareness of the City of Krum's future needs. "You're limping quite a bit. You alright?"

\*Stops. Pauses. Sniffs the air.\*

"Yeah. I'm fine."

"Okay," I conceded.

\*Keeps walking (and limping).\*

"I blew off my toe," he observed.

"You did *what*, Randolph?"

"I blew off my ring toe," he again observed.

"What!?! Did you misfire one of your guns?" I asked, now just wanting to pass the time of day, as men will often do.

"Nope."

The natural next thing was to ask, "Well, then, what happened?" Which I then did.

"I shot it off."

"Jesus Christ, Randolph!" I pronounced, dropping all pretense of Mayor-ness. "I can see *that*. Why the hell would you do that?"

\*Scratches self.\*

"It was infected and going to gangrene."

Of course. That's what all engineers would do in a similar situation. "Randolph, hell, you've got a hospital of sorts in Corinth—surely, they have a physician there who, while not possessing the virtuosity of, say, Asclepius, could have remedied the situation!"

"Naw. I just got my .22 and shot it off."

"Jesus, Randolph! What about the blood and risk of infection?"

"Naw. When you put the gun right up to your toe, the blast shears it off and cauterizes it. I put some neosporin on it, and band-aided it. I had told Mama so that she wouldn't be alarmed at the gunshot."

Needless to say, I had trouble pondering existing or soon-to-be-existing City streets the rest of that day. When I went home, I meditatively shared this life lesson with my family, and we rejoiced in the wonder and variety of human existence.

And the moral of the story is: *Your master plan might not be complete without blowing off your toe.* —RANDY BEELER

## STILL POETRY

### DEATH OF THE LIVING ROMERO

Have patience,  
and lock your doors.

—KEVIN STILL



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# THE ALARM IN HOUSTON 7/30/17

For the uninitiated, the Scout Bar is a Rock venue in Webster that mostly has shows with bottom feeder "alternative" bands such as Seether, Puddle of Mudd, Hed P.E., and Staind; and other bands that sound like—yes you guessed it—Seether, Puddle of Mudd, Hed P.E., and Staind. Rounding out a typical month at the Scout Bar are tribute bands (mostly metal and MTV era new wave with a few exceptions), an occasional B-team industrial band (My Life with the Thrill Kill Cult are playing there in October) or hardcore punk band (GBH is playing there in Sept) and a few satanic cookie monster death metal bands (I couldn't make out the names of the bands for that show as they were written in that dripping blood/"The weeds have overrun my garden" font that all those bands use). However, every couple of months the Scout Bar breaks offers an alternative to C- team "alternative" bands. This time it was The Alarm. Creepy Horse accompanied me; mainly I believe, to see an old cynical, music snob asshole like me turn into a ridiculous fanboy for an evening.

The Alarm are a Welsh rock band that has been at it in one form or another since 1981. The original line up of The Alarm released 5 albums and a few EP's before calling it quits in 1990. Though they had hits in the UK, in the US they received mostly college radio; though "The Stand", "68 Guns" and "Rain in the Summertime" received some mainstream radio play. Guitarist Mike Peters revived the band in the late 1990's and has continued to tour with a version of The Alarm. This version of The Alarm has put out consistently strong albums but since radio play doesn't break "rock" bands these days — unless they sound like Seether, Puddle of Mudd, Hed P.E., and Staind and/or could be played on an "alternative" station with "Buzz" or "X" in their call letters - you probably haven't heard them.

Musically, The Alarm share similarities with bands such as Big Country, The Call, The Waterboys (before they detoured with Celtic Music) and yes U2; catchy anthemic songs with some punk energy, and lyrics with some social commentary without resorting to sloganeering polemics. Though The Alarm sold enough records to have a decent musical career, The Alarm was mercilessly pilloried by the critics— particularly in the UK—unfairly slagged off as the poor man's U2, for having lyrics with a social conscience, and for big hair that made "hair metal" bands look as if they had a crew cut. Being the opening band for U2 on their USA tour for the *War* album probably didn't help matters; though it helped The Alarm sell some records in the States. I never understood or bought the Alarm comparison to U2 comparison. The Alarm used mostly acoustic guitars when they started out and their lyrics were much more grounded and less pretentious than Bono's

messianic shtick. But as anyone who has ever read any of my blurbs in 979 knows, "music journalism" is mostly an exercise in throwing shit against the wall and seeing what sticks. Unfortunately the U2 comparison stuck.

The Brandon Williams Band opened the show. The first two songs of theirs sounded similar to The Call mixed



with additional indie rock influences; an encouraging start. However the wheels of this fell off the wagon for this band when they played a bro frat "reggae" song that would have made Hootie and Blowfish blush. The other two songs I heard of the Brandon Williams Band were variations on the first two songs. On the plus side, the vocalist for this band has a very strong voice which at times reminded me of the vocalist of TV on the Radio. Additionally, he

was dressed in a sharp, almost mod, looking suit. Unfortunately, the rest of the band looked and sounded as if they had just rolled out of bed an hour before the show, hit the bong, and put a Coldplay CD on auto repeat to get "fired-up" for the show. Band uniforms are an all or nothing proposition. Either the entire band should go with the uniform or none of the members should.

The Alarm opened with the song "Unsafe Building" and kept the "hits" with coming with "Where Were Hiding When the Storm Broke" "The Stand" and "Absolute Reality" coming in quick succession. Mike Peters played every song as if it is going to be his last and the crowd responded in kind. He told a hilarious story about a meeting with Johnny Rotten that went horribly wrong and then played a part of "Anarchy in the UK" during "Spirit of 76". Later on in the set, during "Rescue me" (?) they started playing a part of The Clash's "Magnificent Seven". I would have liked to hear "68 guns" and about 100 other songs, but they encored with a new song "Two Rivers" and ended the set with "Strength". Although The Alarm were only a three piece band with only one acoustic guitar for this show, they had a full sound that filled the venue. That the Alarm could get 150-200 people to come see them on a Sunday, in a town like Houston (where it is difficult to get 150 people do much of anything short of a crawfish boil at a sports bar or to support a mediocre local sports franchise), having not played Houston in at least 20 years is a testament to The Alarm's strength as a live band and the strength of their catalog.

Mike Peters and Alarm have outlasted their inane critics and have consistently proven them wrong with album after album of quality songs. They may yet have the last laugh over their critics. To paraphrase an old saying; you can't keep a good band down. —RENTED MULE



# CONCERT CALENDAR

**8/3—VODI, Fellow American, LUCA @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 7:30pm**

**8/3—Okey Dokey, Beige Watch, The Blue Grooves @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm**

**8/4—The Shoobiedoobies, Goyko @ Arsenal Tattoo, Bryan. 6pm**

**8/4—Jake Dexter & The Main Street Sound, Odd Folks @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 7:30pm**

**8/4—Oscillator Music Series feat. Atarimatt, great unwashed luminaries, Wasp Und Pear, Gateslinger @ Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm**

**8/5—Dethtruck (cd release), Aphotic Contrivance, ASS, The Shoobiedoobies @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm**

**8/10—Roca Azul, Interracial Dinonyus, Yeeha! @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm**

**8/11—Coattails, Jay Satellite, The Cuckoos @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm**

**8/12—Punk Rock Flea Market @ Revolution, Bryan. 4pm**

**8/12—Ray Wylie Hubbard @ Lakeside Icehouse, Bryan. 8pm**

**8/12—Yeeha!, Catcher, Nightmare Nightmare, Nightmare, UnicornDog @ Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm**

**8/17—Little Image, Odd Folks, Honest Men, Leavenworth @ Grand Stafford, Bryan. 7:30pm**

**8/17—French & Bloem @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm**

**8/18—Kilter @ New Republic Brewing Company, College Station. 7pm**

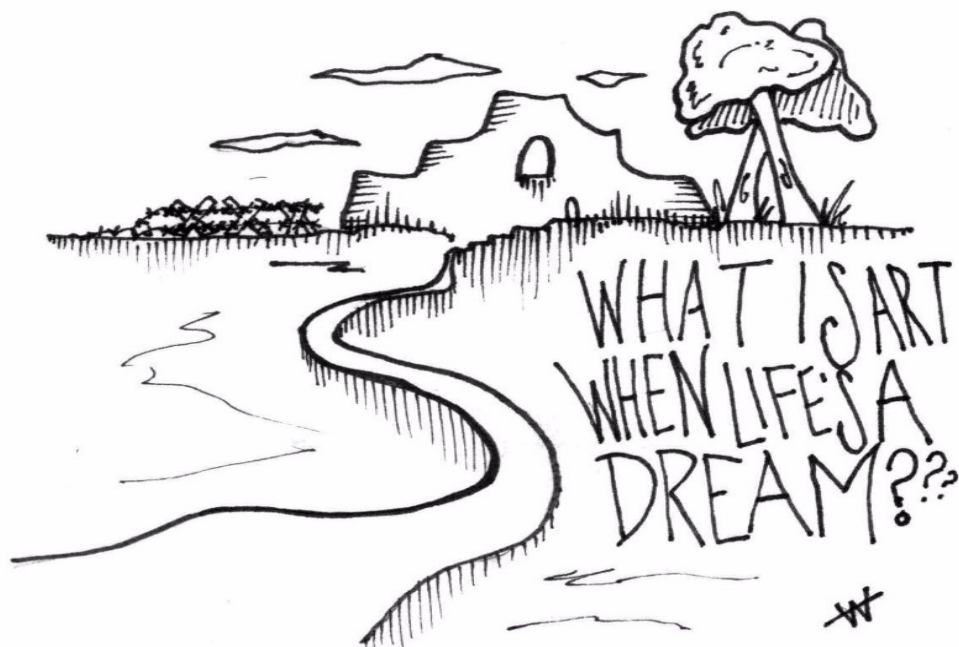
**8/18—DJ Skullbone @ Revolution, Bryan. 9pm**

**8/19—Ian's Birthday Show with Bloody Knives, Mutant Love, T.S.S., Thick Britches, Girlband, The Hangouts @ Revolution, Bryan. 8pm**

**8/25—Kingdom of Suicide Lovers, Honeyrude, Bruise From a Muse, The Ex-Optimists @ Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm**

**8/26—SARC Benefit feat. Mutant Love, Charm Bomb, LUCA, Mojave Red, A Sundae Drive @ Revolution, Bryan. 10pm**

**9/1—HYAH!, Cosmic Chaos, Wartime Afternoon, Beige Watch @ Revolution, Bryan. 9:30pm**



# REVOLUTION CAFE & BAR

ASH

TSS

GIRL  
BAND

BRICK  
THICKES

The  
Hangouts



MUTANT  
LOVE

8/19/17

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