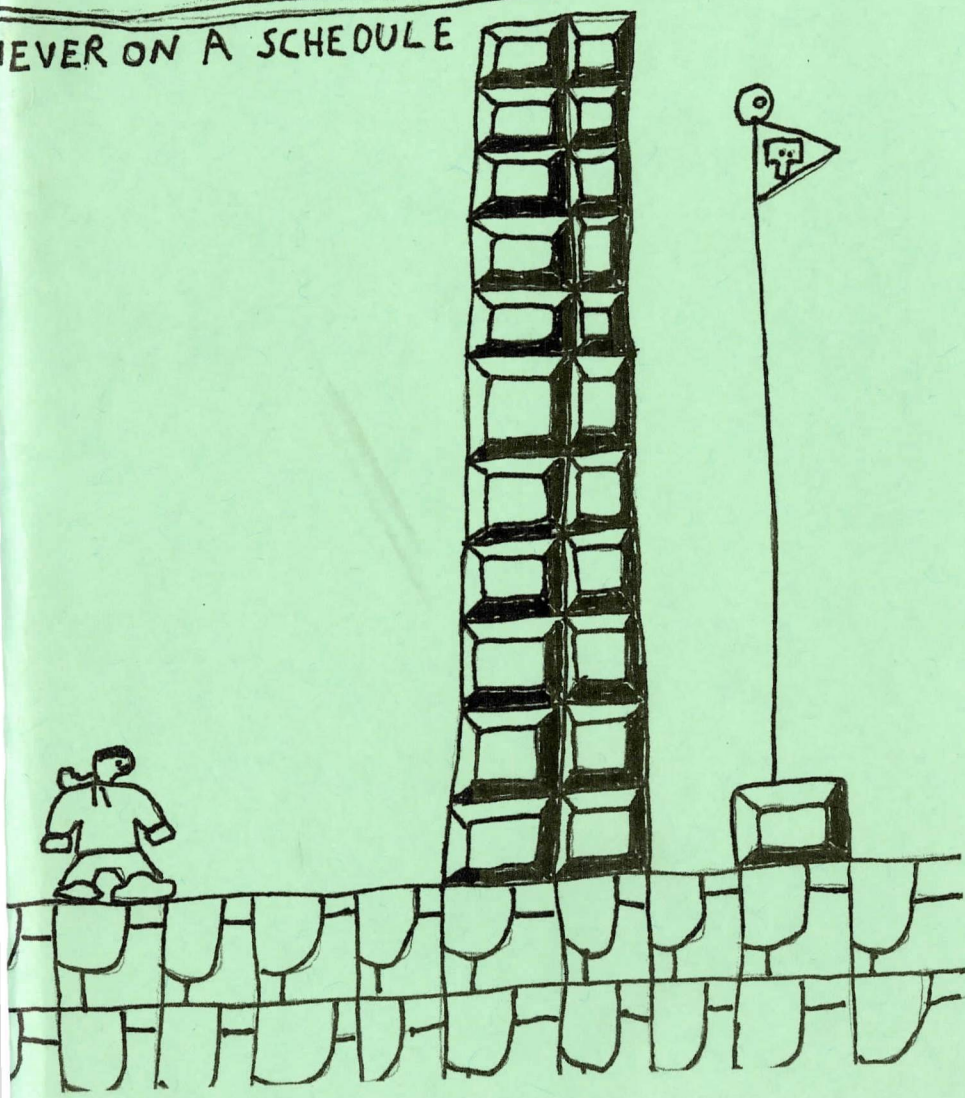


BUTTON MASHER.

#2

NEVER ON A SCHEDULE



Button Masher #2

Price(s): Please e-mail for info

Trades: "Interesting trades considered."

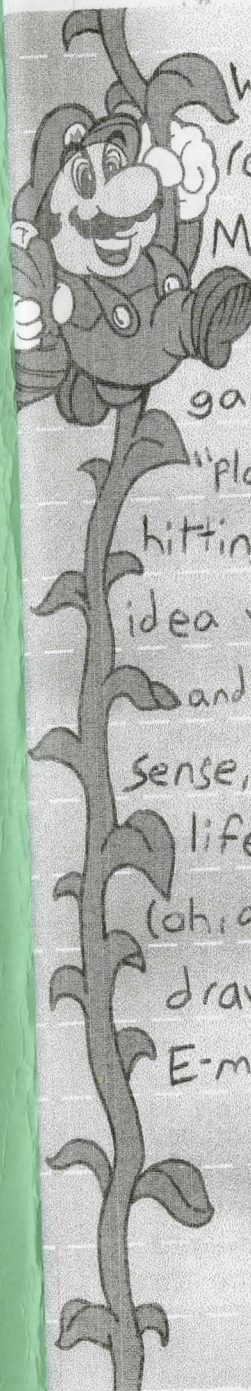
Size: 5.5 x 8.5

Printing style: Photocopied

Pages: 28

Contact info: Please e-mail
JoeWSTK@yahoo.com
for any/all info.

Thank you,
Joe Evans

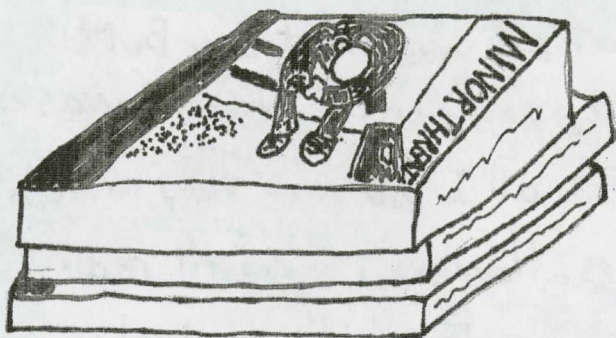


When I started this, everyone's reaction was "What does Button Masher mean?" When I was a kid, all I did was play video games. However, I wasn't really "playing", so much as randomly hitting the controller. Despite having no idea what I was doing, I still did ok, and had fun along the way. In a sense, it's kind of how I live my life, minus the power ups. (oh, and to everyone I tried to draw - sorry about that)

E-mail me at JoeWSTK@yahoo.com

Hope you enjoy,
Joe

Episode 2: The Story Takes Flight



I was just finishing up everything for my weekly radio show. I'd been doing it for over a year now, and I could honestly say that I felt I was really good at it. Most of the DJ's at the campus radio station played the exact same bands and songs that every other radio station played. Then there were the ones who didn't even play music at all, and had "talk" shows, which were nothing more than hours of inside jokes that only one or two other people knew about besides themselves. I didn't do either.

Every week I would go through my record collection, as well as find out about every upcoming album, show, or anything else that was going on. I had my agenda, and I stuck with it. Granted, I always enjoyed it, but it was no longer just for fun. This was a war, to be waged against anyone and everyone whose taste in music wasn't as good as mine.

I didn't have much else to do that day, so I decided to hang out with Jay while he was doing some work in the station's office. I'd met Jay shortly after I started school, because he was the head manager of the radio station for as long as I'd known him. He'd always been supportive, and not to mention helpful with all of the problems that inevitably came with going to school. He'd already heard about me moving back home, which probably surprised him the most out of everyone I knew. Even if only a few people had any idea of how I was feeling, he was one of them.

"So how are things back at home so far?"

"Oh, not bad so far - everything's going ok, though it kinda seems more boring than usual."

"Knowing you, that's pretty hard to believe."

"Well, there just hasn't been much going on lately. I've just been doing nothing but going to class and doing work. There hasn't been anything to do, I haven't done anything, I haven't even really hung out much lately. I just haven't felt like it."

"So why not just find something to do?"

"But that's the thing - it's like there isn't anything to do anymore."

"Well, I don't know about that..."

It turned out that Jay was in the middle of setting up the annual school band showcase, and told me he wanted to see me in it. Everything may have been boring lately, but at least they were starting to get interesting again. The only problem was that I wasn't currently in a band.

The school band showcase was essentially one of those "Battle of the Band" type deals, where all the people in a band at school could play. However, there was never really a "winner", because the radio station could never afford any kind of award anyway.

Now, I'd been into punk rock since high school, and was used to talking other people into starting bands together, coming up with songs, and trying to play shows, but with little success. I thought I would have more luck in college but I was wrong, as it seemed even fewer people were interested. However, I decided that I wasn't going to let this stop me.

I started off back at home, digging through old note books to try and find any old songs I'd written. Fortunately there was a gold mine within a pile of old notebooks that had been stashed away in the back of my closet. Amongst the pages were classics such as "Thong of Doom", "Office Make Out Party", and "The Gap Sells Shackles". I'd gone through and picked out some of the better ones that could fill a short set, and "fixed them up" so to speak, and figured I was already a step closer. I made some phone calls, and figured I couldn't do anything else, and decided to spend the rest of the night playing video games.

A short while later, I got a call. It was from Ashley. Ashley is the one whom I am never sure as to whether we are boyfriend and girlfriend or not. She wanted to know if I wanted to hang out, and maybe get something to eat. I wasn't planning on hearing from anyone else tonight, so I said sure.

I drove over to school to meet her. When I got to her room, Kathleen answered the door, and looked bent out of shape over something. I said hi, but she didn't say anything back. As I was about to sit down, Ashley stuck her head out of the bathroom, to tell me she'd be ready in just a minute. I looked over to talk to Kathleen, but she'd already gone into her room, and shut the door.

"So do I look ok?" Ashley was finished and had walked out.

"Of course!" I said. "I always think you look nice."

"Aww, thanks - I don't think it's true, but that's still sweet."

And on that note, we headed out.

First we went to this old movie theater that was showing a bunch of weird, foreign cartoons that night, and afterwards went to eat at a place called Banditos that we both really liked. The whole thing was somewhat cheesy, but still really nice. The thing about our "relationship" was kind of weird. First, she was a little older than me, but a lot of times I'd feel older than I really was anyway, and she often didn't seem to feel as old as she was. She didn't mind doing silly stuff like this with me.

We had just started eating when she asked me how I'd been feeling since I moved back home.

"Well, it's been pretty boring lately, but it looks like it may pick up soon. I decided to start another band."

She smiled at me, "Really? That's great! What are you going to play? What are you going to call it?"

"I don't know, it probably won't be anything too serious. We'll probably just play at school next week, and that will be it."

"Why? How come you're only going to play the one time?"

"Well, I figured it would just be some quick, stupid thing that wouldn't really last anyway."

"Oh."

"Oh? What's wrong?"

"Nothing, it's just that I thought you meant you were going to try something bigger, since you're really good with music."

That was another thing that I really liked about Ashley. I was always used to being the proverbial "black sheep" or odd man out, especially around here. But even though we were fairly different from each other, the thing about her was that she showed a genuine interest in what I did and the stuff I was into, and like now, was always supportive of me. And that's what I liked about her so much.

"Well, we'll see I guess. Maybe it'll turn into something bigger, who knows."

"I hope so. I think you could start something really good."

As we finished up eating, we kept kidding around and making each other laugh until we made it back to her room, which turned out to be empty. We went to her room and watched TV, and ended up doing things that frankly, were no one else's business but ours.

The next Monday, there wasn't much to do except to go to classes, especially since it was my busiest day. During a break, I was drinking soda and reading a magazine while sitting at a table by myself in the student lounge (which was also the "venue" of our "show" that was two days away). While I was there, Kathleen happened to see me and sat down.

"Hey you."

"Hey what's up - are you ok?"

"Yeah I'm fine. So what have you been up to?"

"Well nothing really, except getting ready for the showcase on Wednesday. Are you sure you're ok?"

"Yeah, why?"

"Well, you seemed pretty upset the other night when I came over to hang out with Ashley. I was starting to get worried."

She sat there and shook her head. "Ugh, I really can't stand her sometimes, and how she acts."

"Oh." I was a little confused, because Ashley and Kathleen were best friends since I'd known them.

"So are you all ready for your big show?" I couldn't tell if she was really interested, or just trying to change the subject.

"Yeah, I think so. We seemed to be in good shape the other day, but we're going to practice some more tomorrow night beforehand just to help with everything. That, and we should also probably come up with a name."

"Well that's good. At least you've got the important stuff taken care of already."

"Yeah. And not that it's nothing, but it's not like we're playing some huge deal anyway. We can just have some fun, and then depending how it goes, maybe keep working towards playing more shows, and doing more stuff."

"Really? That would be cool." She smiled a little.

"Yeah, Ashley said the same thing the other night."

She stopped smiling. "You know, you're pathetic. All you ever do is try to impress her. She's not even interested in you, it's not like you're even her type. You're just wasting your time with her, it's so ridiculous." And she got up and walked away.

I didn't get it. I wasn't doing this to impress Ashley, I was doing it because I liked playing music, and playing in dumb little punk bands. I also didn't get it because Ashley and I were pretty close to each other. Granted I had no idea of what our relationship was, but we spent a lot of time together, and that was ok with me. Even I, paranoid as I was, thought she at least didn't hate me.

Then again, I was always confused with people, no matter who it was.

Later on we had our second and final band practice before the show the next day. We'd lucked out, and they were showing movies in the student lounge that night so nearly everyone was there, allowing us to get away with playing really loud in the middle of all the dorms. It was a bit of a kick in the pants, because I did want to go and hang out. A bunch of my old roommates were going, and I really wanted to see them. If nothing, Ashley would be there. However, as dumb a punk band this was, I wanted to take it seriously, so I was still happy we'd be able to practice some more. That changed when I got to Dennis's room, and some guy who I'd never met before opened the door.

"Yo, what up bro?"

Oh, no. I still walked inside anyway, unable to acknowledge his "fist bump" or "pound" or whatever it was called, on account that both my hands were full.

"Uh, is Dennis here?"

"Nah bro, he went out with Nick to get some food." That didn't really answer my question, seeing as I didn't know who Nick was either. "Oh yeah, my name's Rob by the way. I'm going to sing for you guys."

I looked over at Mark, who was sitting with his drums over in the corner, and seemed just as confused as I was. There wasn't much else, so I figured the two of us would just get started. There was another amp, which I assumed was Dennis's, which he brought out so I wouldn't have needed mine. It was nicer anyway, so I just started using that one. Finally Dennis showed up, with who I assumed was Nick. Whoever he was, he wanted to make his presence known.

"Hey bro, you're using my amp."

I should have known that Dennis wouldn't have any equipment on his own that was as nice as this. Now I was confused, and starting to get mad.

"Yo what up, I'm Nick. You're all like plugged in my amp though, I'm gonna need it, you know what I'm sayin'?"

Apparently Dennis wasn't happy with just being in a band. Dennis wanted to take every action necessary to be in a band that would instantly be huge so he could impress girls, and that him and his two "bros" from work could quit their jobs at the mall. I tried to rationalize it in my head, that maybe I was just being a snob about the whole thing. But it was bad enough Dennis invited two other people to join without even asking Mark or I, let alone jerks like these guys. From there, they started making more changes to everything. They started small, but I noticed them, they were little things, in hopes of making us "cooler", and that hopefully "more people would be into us that way."

After we went through the "new" songs once, I said "Hey, I have an idea. We could cover an Otis Redding song. I'm pretty sure I figured out a simple way to pull it off." One of the bros looked at me (I was having trouble telling them apart), and said "I don't think so. Right now we should be concerned about not alienating out fan base."

Fan base?? Forget THAT, bro.

On the day of the show, I was still pretty upset. Here was one of the few things that normally still made me happy, and it was ruined. It's not like I could say I was an outstanding musician, but I'd just managed to come up with a few songs about things that made me angry about the world, and they'd been turned into nothing but background music for some jerk screaming about how some girls broke his supposedly so complicated and misunderstood heart, and that the only solution would be for OTHER girls to sleep with him. At this point I was afraid it was too late to do anything else about it but just play the show and get it over with.

That morning I went to class, even though we weren't really doing anything. I slumped down into my seat, next to my friend Aline. We didn't really know each other much outside of having classes together, but she was nice, and we got along well enough to talk to each other regularly, instead of actually doing work.

She looked over at me, "Good morning."

"Yeah, yeah," I mumbled.

"What's wrong? I would've thought you'd be excited for today."

"Not really. Dennis made all these changes, to the point where I'm not even enjoying it anymore."

"But didn't you guys just start playing together?"

"I know. That's why I really hate it."

"Well, I guess I'd expect something like that from Dennis. So what are you going to do?"

"I don't think there's anything else I can do, the show is tonight, it's to late now."

"Well hopefully it won't be all that bad. I'm still planning on going."

Then again, at this point I wasn't even sure I was planning on going. It was still fairly early in the day after class, and that was the only other thing I had that to do all day. At first I tried stopping by Ashley's since I knew she didn't have any classes either, but there was no answer. I figured at this point I would be in a bad mood no matter what, so I just went home. It seemed like the most constructive thing I could do with myself was to heat something up in the oven for lunch, and pass out on the floor of my room with the TV on all afternoon. So much for doing something constructive and fun to make myself feel better about everything.

Later on when it was time, I finally got my stuff ready and headed back over to school. I was one of the first people there, except for Jay and some of the other radio station staff who had to help out with the work. He was busy setting everything up so I couldn't really talk to him, but he let me put my stuff in the station, so I sat at another table in the back of the student lounge and read to pass time before anyone else arrived.

After a while more people gradually started showing up. It was mostly the other bands, but there were a few people there to see the show too. I didn't pay much attention since there was no one I recognized, but eventually some of my old roommates came in. We only talked briefly, but they wanted to see me play which made me feel a little better about everything. I told them it would still be a while before everything started, so they ran out to get some food and make it back in time. As they were leaving, I wanted to go with them, but I figured it would be best if I stayed. Then the rest of my "band" finally showed up, and I stopped feeling better about everything.

I didn't do much else once they got there. They brought in their equipment, one of the "bros" asked if I was ready, and I said "sure". There was actually a decent amount of people there to see the show at that point, though no one else I really knew so I stayed at the table in the back. Mark sat down with me, and even though I wanted to be by myself, I didn't mind too much since he was the only other person in the band I could stand anymore.

Finally, Jay brought all of the bands together to go over the order, as well as the few rules and other technical information that everyone was supposed to hear. Somehow it had turned out we'd be playing third out of five bands. It was as Jay asked what we were to be introduced as when I realized we'd never actually thought of a name for ourselves, but Nick had it taken care of: "ShoeHorn Section". Not that I had much left as it was, but I had officially lost all hope.

By the time things got started, there was actually a decent crowd. I walked towards the front to watch the first band once they started playing. They were ok, and pretty much just straight forward rock, like you'd hear on bigger radio stations. They weren't a band I could see myself listening to on a regular basis, but considering the mood I was in, I didn't mind watching them for about fifteen minutes.

After they finished up, I decided to go get a bottle of water from the vending machines down one of the hallways. It was actually getting crowded in the student lounge by this point. On the way back I saw Aline with some of her friends whom I didn't actually know. We walked back inside the lounge and she wished me good luck. As I was coming inside, Dennis saw me and yelled at me for leaving without telling anyone else. I didn't see much point in arguing, despite having been the only one who'd gotten there on time in the first place, so I just ignored him, walked back over to the front to watch the next band and drink my water.

When the next band started playing, I felt really weird. The band itself was great. They were a punk band that was fun, and were really good. They could really play their instruments, and you could tell they were having a lot of fun. But while I was watching, it just seemed like a reminder of how much I didn't even want to play in my own band. I wanted to enjoy it, but I just couldn't.



As they were finishing, I brought my gear over to start setting everything up. There wasn't all that much to do on my own, but I ended up having to help both Dennis and Nick. By the time we were supposed to start, there were a lot of people there, including people that I actually knew. Aline was there, as well as a few others I knew from classes or when I lived at school, and the rest of my old roommates as well. They'd all shown up and were cheering for (though it was more like yelling at) us. I looked around for another second, but I didn't see Ashley, or Kathleen. It was only for a moment though, as Jay then introduced us, and we began.

We played our first song, with no real problems. Everything sounded ok, and we got polite applause. Even still, I just wasn't enjoying anything. In between songs, Rob was telling everyone that they needed to move around more while he played. However, it only seemed to annoy people, which wouldn't surprise me since I'd been annoyed the whole time. We played another song, and everything went exactly the same. Everyone stood there and politely clapped once the song was over. This time, Rob made it a point to tell everyone how happy he was to be playing there, because music was his life, but I knew he was just making it all up, since he'd spent most of practice talking about how it's one of those things "you're supposed to say". So that's when I decided to say something.

"This next song is about working at our radio station. Everyone there works really hard, but it's like no one even cares. Even with everything we do, barely anyone pays any attention, and we barely get any funding from the school, compared to some of the sports teams even though most of them keep losing anyway. And that kind of sucks."

For a split second, everyone looked confused, especially my band mates. People started booing, but there were people applauding as well. I just started playing, and fortunately Mark recognized it from practice, and the two of us talking about it, and started drumming along to it. Rob put down his microphone and said "What do you think you're doing bro?", as if most of the crowd couldn't hear him that way. But I chose not to answer him back, and started yelling out the original song I'd written in the first place.

How we got through it, I wasn't entirely sure. Mark picked it up instantly, and Dennis played along the best he could. Nick and Rob had a bit more trouble and weren't really sure what to do, but tried to fake it, until the whole thing ended in a loud racket. At that point, everyone was making noise, be it cheering us on, or booing, cursing, and throwing stuff at us. All I knew was that it was loud, and it was great.

"Now, who wants to hear an Otis Redding song??"

Before anyone else could say anything, the director of school activities came up and proceeded to kick us off, in that "I'm going to pretend to be nice to you, even though I don't like you too much right now" kind of way. I was just laughing. I'd had my fun. While getting my stuff together and out of the way, Nick angrily came up to me.

"Dude, we're having a band meeting, RIGHT NOW."

I looked back at him, "That's fine. You don't actually need me there anyway," and walked away. I put my things back in the radio station when I finally saw Ashley. She looked at me, shaking her head and smiling.

an't you go one day without getting into trouble?"

The two of us walked outside and sat down next to each other on some steps facing the road. It was a nice, clear night, and we could hear the band playing inside.

"So I take it you won't be doing anything else with your band."

"Nope."

"That's too bad. Did you at least have fun?"

I laughed, "I guess so, yeah."

"Well that's the important part."

"So how much of everything did you get to see?"

"I ended up getting here late, so I only saw your last two songs."

"So basically you saw all of it!" and the two of us were laughing. "Is Kathleen here?"

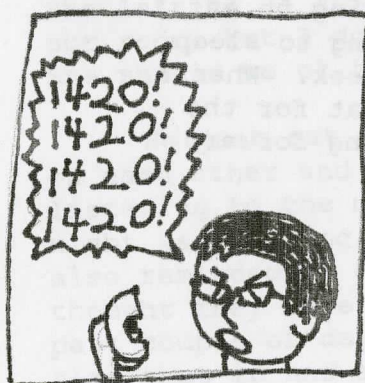
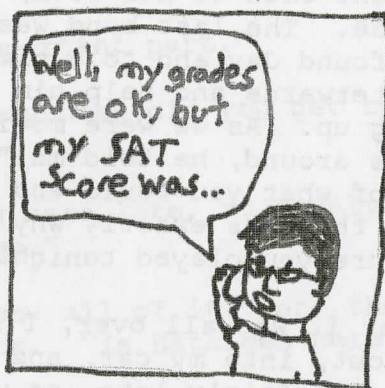
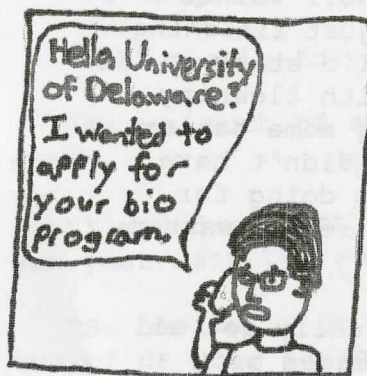
"No, she's been acting really weird lately. She left to go somewhere when I was still in our room, but I don't know where she went. She should be ok though."

We just sat there for a while, leaning on each other and watching cars go by, listening to the music. The last band of the night was playing, who were a bit jazzy, but also reminded me of The Minutemen, and I thought they were great. It had been a trying past couple of days, but at that moment I'm glad that it had all led to me being right there. Finally Ashley told me she had to go back to her room, and that she thought I did a nice job. We'd been holding hands up until then, and then she kissed me.

We got up from the stairs and hugged, and she went back to her room, and I walked back inside. The last band was just finishing up, so I found Jay and told him I'd stick around afterwards and help him with cleaning everything up. As we were moving some tables and chairs around, he told me "I didn't have any idea of what you would end up doing for this, but that was exactly why I really wanted to make sure you played tonight."

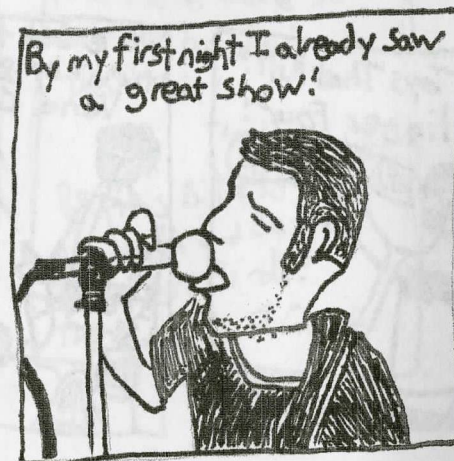
After it was all over, I finally got all my stuff out, into my car, and headed back home. It was fairly late, so when I got back I quietly brought everything back inside, and decided to relax by getting something to eat and watching television before going to sleep, not even thinking about the past week. When I finally went to bed, I realized that for the first time in a while, I was looking forward to the next day.

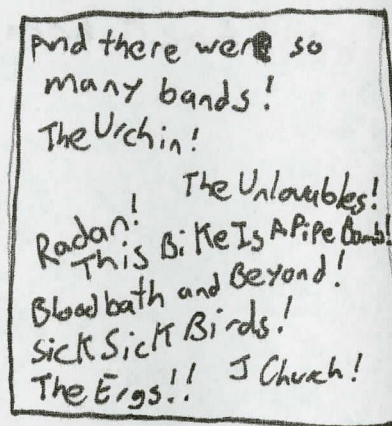
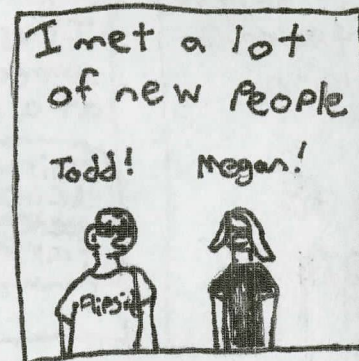
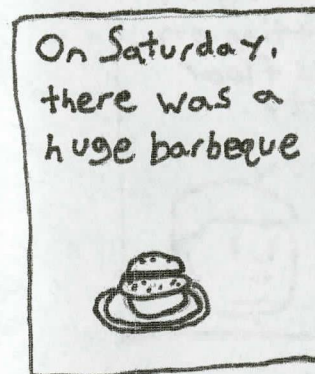
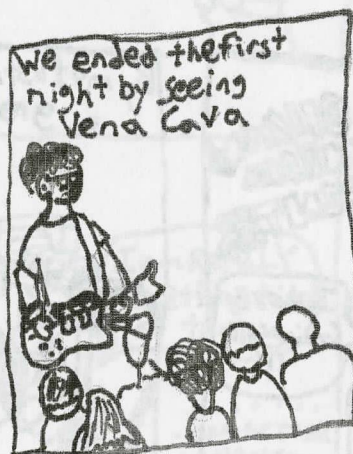
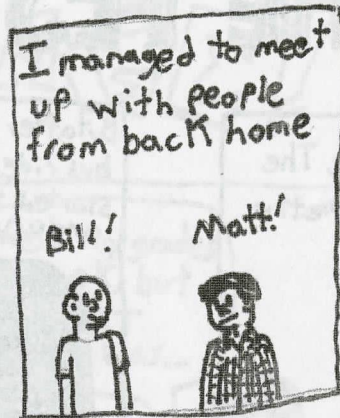
FRANK CALLAGE!



Now I spent

THE FEST 4







After it was all done, I got on the
bus and went back home

