Chinmusic

www.chinmusic.net

HANGING OUT WITH
DOCK ELLIS

THE STORY OF THE
MINUTEMEN

STEVE WYNN

HANK THOMPSON

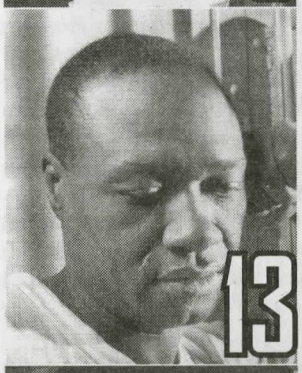
BASEBALL IN CUBA

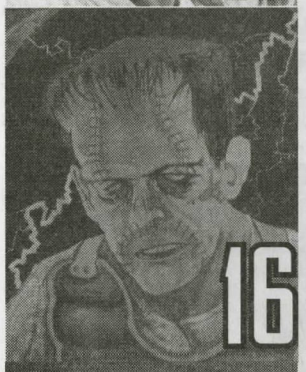
BASEBALL IN TAIWAN

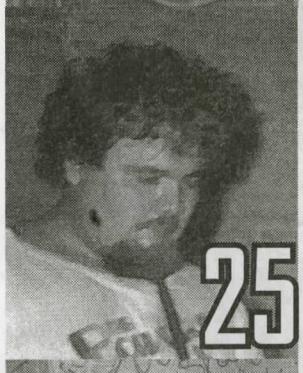
#7

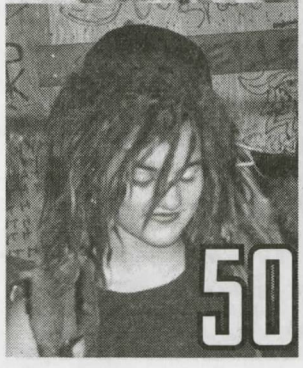
$4.00 US

CHINMUSIC! NUMBER SEVEN









¡MUSICABARBILLA! #7

★ *Kevin Chanel/Ed/Pub*

★ *Sunny Andersen Chanel/Design/ated Hitter*

★ *Angus Durocher/Ad Sales Mgr/Writer/Web Guy/Closer*

★ *Hap Mansfield/Contributing Editor/PR/1B*

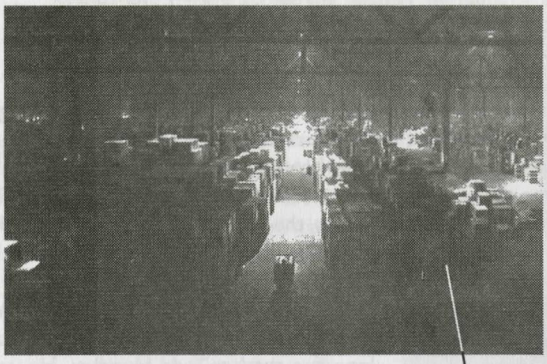
★ *Jon Gire/Cover Artist/3B*

★ *Mike Ahern/Pete Alexander/Jorrell Arquillos/Peter Berkely/Heather Bradley/Mike Faloon/Jeff Heermann/Tim Hinely/Hack Scribe/Andrew Milner/Greno Murrell/Squid Ouchi/Rob Trucks/Russell Wolinsky*

Thank you: Chenelle families. Ray Andersen. Nell Lopez. Danny Ornelas. Debbie Gallas. Jeff Fox/Barracuda Magazine. Meiko Arquillos. Todd Taylor/Razorcake. Josh Welf, Tim Wiles and the good people of the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Peter Dao at China Times. Anthony Bedard. Fiona Bruce and Miles Stegall. Mr. and Mrs. Bad Penne and Candypants. Nat Hays. Gary Hustwit. Erin McDermott. Pam Taylor. Everyone at Fat Wreck Chords. Jeff Kopp. Jason Wells. The Fighting Teherans. A huge thanks to Martin Lyon and Steve Wynn. Shannon Assad. Nate Tynan. Brian Cook. Rob Miller. Adam Gimbel. Coady Willis. Sean Brooks. Elliot Lange. And John January for the phrase "Live Fast Cy Young."

ChinMusic! Magazine, P O Box 225029, San Francisco CA 94122

Y'know, being the owner/publisher/editor-in-chief/Don/whatever of a magazine, no matter how small or massive corporate or even Xerox-12 pages-folded-over, has privileges beyond that of even the revered drunk in a sports bar, during the third game of a Fox/ESPN triple-header on the fifth games of three series.



File Cabinet #D6: Six issues of ChinMusic!

Firstly, there's the heaps of cash in the form of distribution sales, online sales, ad revenues and government kick-backs. After that, having borrowed enough money to buy a package of Top Ramen and print the magazine, there's the joy of knowing that I have cornered the market on the .00002% of America interested in a reading about baseball and music simultaneously. Thank you. All twelve of you. I sincerely appreciate it.

But nothing could've prepared me for the nutty surprise I woke up to this last March, when I was contacted by the National Baseball Hall of Fame. They asked for the full slate of issues. I figured for sure I was being sued...or being had. Wouldn't be the first time.

After a few weeks they got a hold of me again. They had convened for a meeting and decided that *ChinMusic! Magazine* would be a fine addition to the Hall. Right in between the Babe's last hot dog and Carl Yastrzemski's sideburns. Or most likely, a colored index tab in a file cabinet in a 10,200 square foot warehouse, sandwiched between dusty, spore-riddled copies of *California Angels Monthly* and *Colliers*.

Thanks to Tim Wiles and Russell Wolinsky for pushing us through to the powers that be. You've made my father quite proud. Special thanks to Phil Avalos. His sprightly "Things I Can Do While Mark Grace Runs To First Base," from #3 reportedly had the board members in stitches.

Since I began doing this mag, back in '97, one thing I have always wanted to do was get the full story of the famed "Dock Ellis-no-hitter-on LSD" in these pages. Can't say I really pursued the matter. Guess I just got lazy. Figured at some point a writer would contact me with an angle on the tale, or I'd get stuck in a bathroom-line conversation and a guy would say, "Oh, Dock?...*I know* Dock. I'm sure he'd love to talk about it."

In the time between issues #1 and #6, I've read about the 1970 Purple Haze No-No about a hundred times. From every acid-head website, Dock Ellis tribute page or High Times enthusiast corollary, references to Ellis' eight-walk, one hit-batter, no-hit performance against the pathetic second-year expansion Padres abound. Naturally, with such an array of sub-professional sources, the facts get muddled, folded, spindled and mutilated. Times are jumbled, circumstances reinterpreted.

The truth goes something like this: On June 12th, 1970, Dock and the rest of the Pirates arrived in San Diego for four games in three days, beginning with a "Twi-Night Double-Header," as the Padres dubbed twin-bills beginning at 5:00 p.m. Thinking he wasn't taking the mound until the next night, he drove to Los Angeles to see friends. Around 1 p.m. him and his girlfriend popped a tab and commenced frying. His girlfriend looks in the paper and what does she see? Something to the effect of "Hey Dock, you're on the hill for game one tonight!" After a spit-take, some eye-bugging and a comical "boi-oi-oing" noise, Dock grabbed a cheapo flight to San Diego (likely on the ill-fated PSA Airlines), making it to the clubhouse in just enough time to suit up and catch an earful from Pittsburgh skipper Danny Murtaugh (who quite possibly resembled a paisley crane fly or headless turtle-juggling griffin to Ellis at the time). Walking eight, hitting Ivan Murrell and striking out seven, he has been quoted as mostly "hearing" the pitches as they left his grip and doing the ultimate dugout superstition-breaker—constantly noting the fact to any teammate within earshot that he was working a "no-no."

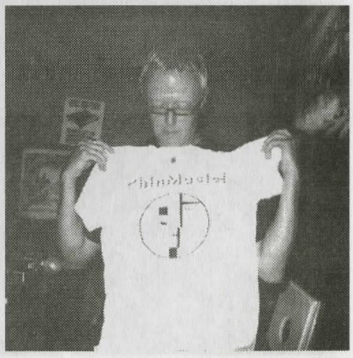
So there you have it. That's the story. If you've ever met me, or played drums for the Murder City Devils, you've no doubt heard me tell the tale at least three or four times. Why am I so enamored of this bit of diamond marginalia? Well, first there's the obvious; a guy chucking BB's whilst tripping balls and throwing strikes. Duh. But also because (and this has been verified by my father, so you know it's true) I was there. Sure, I was five years old and didn't really give a damn about anything besides the homemade burritos with which my mom sent us off to the game, but I was in attendance just the same. I also recall the fact that when we all drove back to National City (my hometown), my brothers, sister and dad were all talking about it.

Since that night I've been chasing the dragon on the no-no fix; coming close...VERY close, but always going home cigarless. In San Diego I witnessed many eight-inning no-hit outings and countless seven-frame jobs, and even the fabled match up where Pedro—thee Pedro—threw nine perfect innings against my Padres, only to give up a double to Bip Roberts in the bottom of the tenth...D'oh!

Anyway, to try and bring this back around, I gotta say, after last issue I tried to quit this venture. Seven years, seven issues, met some heroes, got stared down and admonished by Paul O'Neill...yeah that sounds about right. I mean what did I expect? Well, certainly not a career archival in Cooperstown. Heck, I'm one up on Pete Rose! Shoeless Joe?...Pfffblt!...What-*everrr*...

And as luck would have it, right after I decide to come back for more, I am put in touch Mr. Rob Trucks, writer extraordinaire, fresh from asking a bunch of ballplayers what they had been downloading to their IPods from the online Apple Store. Turns out he had spent time with Dock in 1989, cruising Spring Training and the lackluster Fatburger franchises of L.A. So with the integrity of Roger Clemens I return to the laptop, and six months later, bam, *ChinMusic! #7*.

Oh, and there is one more perk to helming this ship. Sometimes people send you the ironic image of Bauhaus' David J., holding up a ChinMusic! shirt and NOT immediately phoning his lawyer.

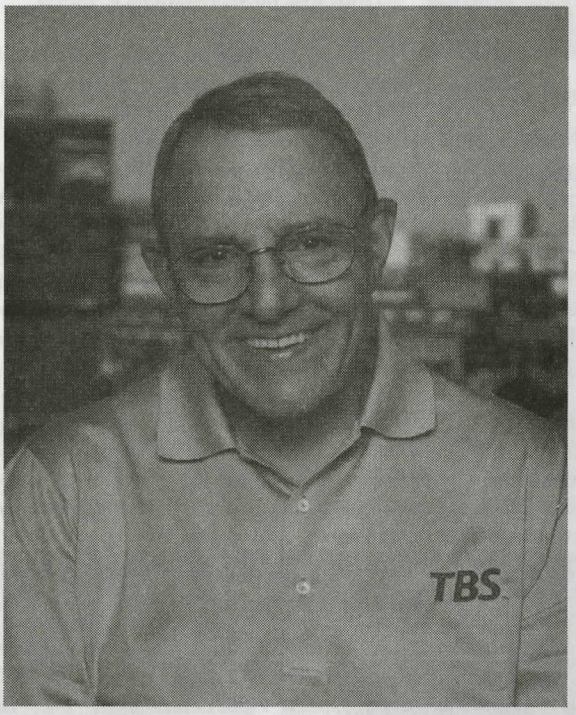


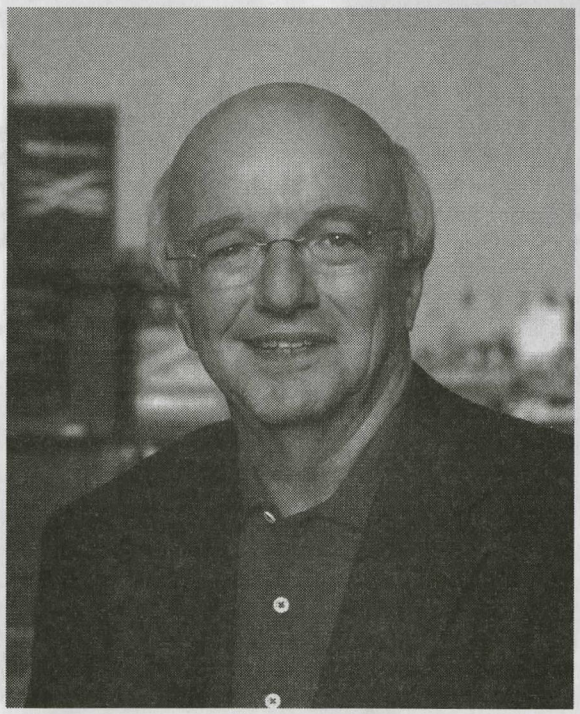
And if you're REAL lucky, sometimes people like Josh Welf (of New York punk stars Plastic Jesus) get themselves tattooed with the *ChinMusic*! phrase "Live Fast Cy Young" and send you a picture (see the faded background image on the Table Of Contents).

TURNER'S BABBLING SHILLS

by Mike Faloon

My brother and I love to talk about baseball when we're on the phone. We begin talking about our favorite teams—Red Sox for him, Mets for me—but inevitably we spend most of the conversation complaining about teams like the Braves; teams that always seem to come through for their fans while forever irking my brother and me. The Braves aren't the force they once were, but they can still tick us off. The other day my brother told me that the Braves have reserved a section of prime parking at Turner Field for Lexus owners. What a bunch of shmucks. The Braves are also, among many other things, the team that continues to push Chipper "Aw, shucks, sure I cheated on my former wife hundreds of times" Jones as an all-American boy. Nothing bonds brothers like a mutual hatred for the Braves.





But the team itself really isn't that much different than other MLB franchises. I'll never forget when my beloved Mets engaged in an ugly smear campaign against longtime catcher Todd Hundley. He went down with an injury early in 1998. Mets management swore that there was no rush for Hundley to come back, that they had no plans to replace him. After all, he was a fan favorite and generally recognized as the hardest playing guy on the club, and a good player, too. Then the Mets traded for Mike Piazza. They couldn't unload Hundley—other teams weren't certain how he'd recover from his injuries—so, in desperation, they leaked to the press a rumor that Hundley had a drinking problem.

Or tried to anyway. All of the New York writers knew Hundley well enough not to take the bait. Likewise for the fans. (Plus, the rumor only diminished Hundley's trade value in the eyes of other teams.) Needless to say the rumor died a quick death.

In terms of character, or lack thereof, the Braves are on par with everyone else. What has set them apart in my mind is the WTBS broadcasting duo of Skip Caray and Pete Van Wieren. Skip and Pete have been a team since 1976, and I first heard them in 1983. That was the summer our local cable system first offered WTBS. I took an immediate dislike to Caray and Van Wieren and their insufferable attempts to personalize the Braves' drab lineup of players. Team owner Ted Turner had labeled Atlanta "America's team," and decided that if every American household was going to receive Braves games via cable TV, then everyone in those households was going to embrace the Braves.

Skip and Pete, company men through and through, gave every Brave a nickname, because you know, nicknames are endearing. A discerning fan might not root for Glenn Hubbard, but once he's known as "Hubbie", who could resist tuning into TBS every night? You might feel distant from a mediocre hurler like Steve Bedrosian, but once he's "Bedrock" you'll be buying his shirts, tattooing his name on your knuckles, and begging him to come over for a backyard barbecue; he's your buddy, right? I always waited for the night when they called Bob Horner "Horny" but it never came, a rare sign of restraint the Skipster and Van the Man.

And it wasn't just what they said, it was how they said it. Caray and Van Wieren developed a unique style of disingenuous back porch ease, a country bumpkin take on Phil Hartman's Saturday Night Live character Unfrozen Caveman Lawyer. "We're simple guys with microphones, rooting for the good ol' boys from Atlanta. We know nothing about your big cities and modern teams. We're just working for a guy named Ted out of a little station from down South." They'd never come out and label the other team "the bad guys," (a habit of White Sox announcer Ken Harrelson, who's annoying in his own right) better to feign objectivity and insinuate insults.

When I was a kid, my brother wasn't interested in baseball, so I'd go over to a friend's house to watch games. Throughout junior high we followed the Dodgers, and with the Braves and Dodgers both in the NL West, TBS offered more Dodger games than anyone else. We'd tune in at 7:00 or 10:00, depending upon whether the game was in Atlanta or LA, and then we'd wait five minutes because of TBS's pointless practice of starting their programming five minutes past the hour. By the first pitch we were already worked up, ready to root for our boys in blue and curse

the combination of Caray and Van Wieren and the Braves. What riled us the most was Pete and Skip's uncanny ability to overstate what the Braves did while undercutting the opposition.

What we'd see...

Dodger 3B Ron Cey rips a line drive off the wall in left and slides in for a double.

What we'd hear...

Skip Caray: *And Cey manages to tap a soft liner into left.*

What we'd see...

Braves CF Dale Murphy hits a routine pop fly to center.

What we'd hear...

Skip Caray: *Boy, that looked like it was out of here!*

Pete Van Wieren: *It sounded like it, too. Almost makes you wonder if...*

Skip Caray: *...if Dodger pitcher Bob Welch is slipping a little something "extra" on the ball? I was thinking the same thing, Pete, I was thinking just the same thing.*

Listening to these clowns you'd have thought that the Dodgers, or any Braves opponent, were swatting at a 10" playground ball, while the Braves, playing with bags over their heads, were swinging yardsticks at a beeperball with dead batteries.

For years I wondered how anyone, Braves fan or otherwise, could bear to listen to Caray and Van Wieren. How could their shortcomings be so stunningly obvious yet they remained on-air for nearly 25 years?

Then, in the spring of 2003, there came temporary vindication along with clarification.

By then TBS had been sold to Time/Warner and the new owners wanted to reposition their baseball coverage. Rather than "Braves baseball on TBS," they were going to offer "Major League Baseball on TBS," even though all of the games would still involve the Braves. (I suppose repositioning is like handing out nicknames, labels override content.) The best part was the decision to cut off Caray and Van Wieren from national broadcasts and relegate the duo to a mere 36 games a year on the regional-only Turner South network. Word had it that the Time/Warner brass viewed Caray and Van Wieren as being "too Southern and too Braves-oriented."

Too southern? Tell that to nationally successful annoucers like Tim McCarver and Joe Morgan. I didn't buy that reason for a second. For god's sake, here in New York the best and most popular broadcasters, from Red Barber to Bobby Murcer, have been good ol' boys. Too Braves-oriented? Therein lies some of the truth—of course they were too Braves-oriented! Talk about exercises in the obvious, what took so long for such a realization? My friends and I were screaming such sentiments back in 1983. Is corporate America so out of touch that a group teenagers from Syracuse were 20 years ahead of the curve? Yes, as a matter of fact, that was the case. But at long last, the authorities behind TBS had issued a thinly-veiled confession: We know how grating Caray and Van Wieren are. We're sorry, we're going to take them off the air. Having less Caray and Van Wieren on the airwaves was an unqualified success.

Alas, it was not to last. A massive letter writing campaign had them back on TBS by the All-Star break. I was perplexed by the notion of people writing in to support Caray and Van Wieren. Then I came across their fans' online petition, credited to a guy named William Ebbing, which reads:

The following are (sic) a list of reasons why Skip Caray and Pete Van Wieren should return to TBS:

When Skip Caray and Pete Van Wieren where on TBS, its ratings were far higher.

Braves on TBS would be the associated with "America's Team".

There are many Braves fans all over the world that rely on TBS to bring them "The Braves on TBS".

A paltry three reasons, and only one which mentions Skip and Pete. That speaks volumes. They didn't claim to like Caray and Wieren, or that they were a quality announcing team. After reading this meager petition, I knew what I'd long suspected: Caray and Van Wieren appeal to dimwits.

Of course, their brand of bastardized broadcasting continues. Fortunately for me, our local cable system rarely offers Braves games—with Caray and Van Wieren or otherwise, so I'm far less tempted to flip over. It's not that Charlie Brown changed, it's that Lucy stopped coming by with the football, if you will.

All of which is fine, it gives my brother and me more time to complain about the Yankees.

Mike Faloon is the way impressive Brewster, NY publishing magnate behind both Zisk! and Go Metric! magazines. We do not know his opinion of microwave corndogs.

DON'T CALL IT SOFTBALL!

by Heather Bradley

That was the first mistake I made. My friend had been telling me about his baseball league, at which point, naturally, I tuned him out. I figured it was your standard post-work softball team, with girls in Juicy jumpsuits and kicky knit caps clutching Coors Lights, while guys in corporate logo t-shirts and backwards visors lazily tossed the ball around, Dave Matthews blaring from someone's Pathfinder. I was wrong.

Oh how I was wrong. This friend of mine plays in the Men's Adult Baseball League, or MABL. After attending a few of his games it became very clear that no kegs sat chilling in the dugout and cell phone use on the field was on par with announcing a deep affinity for the musical stylings of John Tesh.

The Bay Area MABL 18 + league is host to former pros, college all-stars, minor leaguers and the odd late-in-life fanatic. Its roster has welcomed porn stars, restaurant owners, Orkin men, lawyers, environmental engineers, delinquents and actors.

And this is by no means a San Francisco phenomenon. A quick googling brings up MABLs in Atlanta, Boston, Denver, Manchester, Charleston, Detroit and New Mexico. . .and something called the Mad Anarchist Baker's League, which I declined to investigate further.

As in the big leagues, MABL are divided between two divisions, American and National. (National being the stronger league) which compete in a World Series-like tournament post-season. Team names range from the traditional (Giants, Expos, Yankees), to the nontraditional (River Bandits, Mudhens) to the curiously non-plural ("Express", "Reign", "Bud Light"). Team stats, schedules and game recaps are meticulously calculated on the MABL website by dedicated (and unpaid) team managers.

Go out to a game and you're likely to see 80 m.p.h. fastballs, curveballs, stolen bases, and more than a little shit talk from the dugout. The teams are suited up, organized and passionate, which results in some very good baseball, and in rare but amusing cases, extremely dorky baseball.

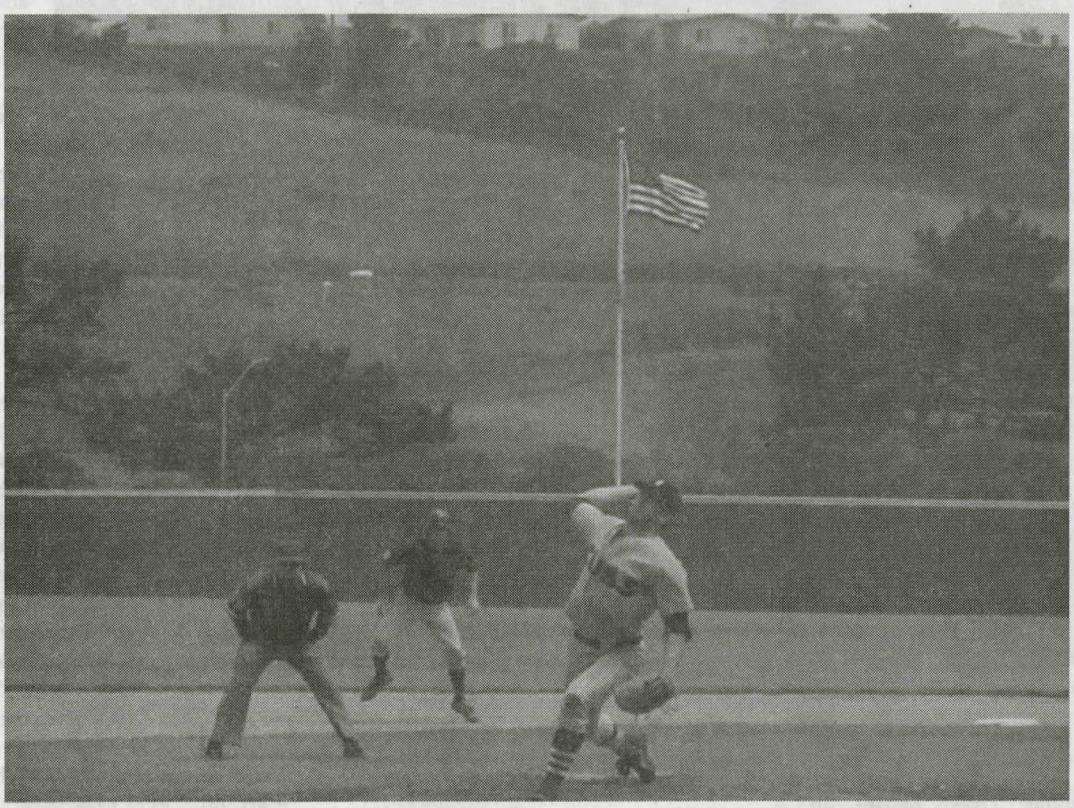
It was a clear day in Golden Gate Park, and the Bay Area Blues were out in force to take on the East Bay G's (names have been changed). Before each inning the Blues gathered together in a configuration I can best describe as a "spirit circle." The manager shouted "Energy! Energy, guys!" Similar to what one can imagine takes place before the opening act of "Godspell" at your local community theater.

A hit to deep center compelled the Blues' left and center fielders to run frantically backward yelling, in unison, "I got it, I got it!" Neither statement was true, and both outfielders fell violently to the grass while the ball rolled lazily not three feet away, a scene straight out of "Major League," which would be quite funny if it were an intentional parody.

When a climactic triple brought three runs in, I witnessed the excruciating sight of a man on man high-five-chest-bump in mid-air that didn't

quite succeed, as one guy didn't jump at the right time, so it was more of a "crotch-five". Then, to drive his point home, so to speak, the player pumped his fist in the sky, shouted, "Yes!" And gave himself a "self-high-five", something that is best seen live to believe.

Despite this grim view into the overly-enthusiastic fringe of adult men's leagues, I became intrigued, not only by the game itself, but also by the appeal of a sport that brings together social types not typically seen assembled in the same room without a parole officer present.



And so I became a regular fan of the Bay Area Cubs, a member of the National League. In its second year of existence, the Cubs had a strong season last year but were knocked out in the finals. This is a roster of dedicated, talented and multi-faceted players.

Take Lex Robins, for instance. Identified during tryouts as simply "The Beast," Lex stands 6' 4" and hits the holy hell out of the ball. A student, contractor and father of one, he became interested in the sport at a young age via his older brother, an insanely competitive player. Lex recalls, "I had to hit against a guy who was a lot bigger, stronger, and meaner than I was."

Lex's brother was scouted by the Phillies in high school, but missed his shot at the big leagues when he got tendinitis in his shoulder and a torn rotator cuff. "That really broke his heart," Lex explained. "I'm passionate about baseball but my brother was really planning his life around being a professional baseball player." Now he's a successful lawyer in New York...which happens.

Lex notes, "Last weekend he came out and played for us. He was so happy to be out there. I think he struck out three times but he still enjoyed himself immensely. I've been trying to convince him to join the New York version of the MABL."

Coming from an upbringing of constant competition, Lex seems to thrive on the aggressive nature of the MABL.

"You've got ex-professionals out there. We've had a long-standing nemesis in the Rockies, the team that won our league last year. They picked up a former minor league pitcher who made everyone look silly."

He notes with considerable pride, "We beat him last week."

Another colorful player is pitcher Ari Zagaris. Son of Oakland A's photographer Michael Zagaris *(see ChinMusic! #6)*, Ari grew up in the dugouts of the pros. As he succinctly puts it, "I've been around baseball literally since I was a sperm."

Signed with the Red Sox in 1999, Ari came to a crossroads, "Basically the way I saw it is that I could ride around in buses for 7-8 years of my life trying to make it as a ballplayer – or I could get into acting."

While for most people the alternative to launching an acting career is the day shift at the DQ, Ari looks at his decision with confidence.

"For me it just came down to: baseball is the life I knew, and I was lucky enough to know what was in store for me if I continued to play. It was a choice I made, here's what I know, here's what I want to do. And I chose acting."

So far Ari has acted in national commercials, including the cult classic "Tough Actin" Tinactin" (with John Madden) as well as music videos and respected short films. But his heart, it seems, still lies somewhere on the field.

"That's the great thing about the league: for someone like me, who's still very attached to the game, it gives me that outlet."

Indeed, such an outlet seems imperative for charismatic Ari, who stated, with an urgency that made this writer visibly nervous, "For someone like me...I NEED TO COMPETE. I need a place to go on the weekend and be an asshole. It gives me an outlet to release the tension and anger I have."

Quickly changing the subject, I asked whether he enjoyed the diversity of players on the field.

"Here, your third baseman could've played in high school, your shortstop could've played in

college, and your second baseman could own a restaurant, your first baseman has kids and works at a hardware store. It's real life out there, you're not just playing with nothing but ball players – you're playing with real people."

I then asked why this sport brings in so many different types of people so successfully, and he responded, "With baseball, you've got everyone out there, from midgets to freaks. It's an everyman's game, and is just as much of a mind game, a confidence game, as anything."

Finally, when discussing the possibility that his acting career will take off, Zagaris insists there will always be room for baseball in his life. "I want to be that guy who's 55 years old at the park, and the ball rolls over to me, and somebody's like, 'Hey, hey throw it back',' and I uncork an 85 mile-an-hour fastball back at them." It seems as though misplaced anger and a love of the game will be with him for the long haul.

Another Cubs pitcher, Doug Zeman, an attractive executive of some sort whose demeanor brings to mind a wittier Gordon Gecko, always knew he'd play baseball in some form or another.

He started playing in his community leagues when he was 7, played through both high school and college, and then, finding himself ensconced in corporate America, decided he needed to keep baseball close to the cuff. So he joined a league based in San Jose.

"It was ghetto." He admits.

I learned from another former player from the San Jose league that the teammates used to brawl a lot. Not with rival teams, mind you, amongst themselves. This was problematic.

When asked why the Bay Area Cubs are different, he is matter-of-fact, "The players are more mature and the people playing on the team want to be out there."

The diversity of the league appeals to Doug as well. "That's one of the best things about it. The Bay Area brings all sort of people in here, and you get them playing. Not like in the Midwest, where everyone's Midwestern."

And he seems happy to take a high profile role on the Cubs. "I didn't pitch until I got out here. As a position player, you want to pitch."

Doug's pitching has been solid this season. Cubs Manager (and Dwell Magazine editor) Andrew Wagner notes, "Too many teams in the league concentrate on hitting, but with weekly double-headers you need a solid stable of reliable pitchers. I've worked hard to develop that."

I asked Doug about their upcoming game with the mighty Mudhens, who they faced in the finals last year. "They demolished us last year, embarrassed me. They pulled my pants down on the mound." I wished him luck and suggested that they were on a roll. "We'll see", he laughed.

(The Cubs did beat the Mudhens in a game that was cut short in the 6th inning due to extreme fog. Such is the hazard of Bay Area play.)

Finally I tracked down Eli Kollman, who works for the State of California in Energy Efficiency and On-Site Management. Illustrating the range of experience as well as social background represented on the Cubs, Eli hadn't played the game since he was 12. "I was a typical American kid, played little league. By the time I got to high school I was..." he pauses, delicately, "...undersized. So I didn't make the team. That was the end of my baseball career up until recently."

Eli went to open tryouts and was drafted by the Cubs as a shortstop and outfielder. Now he retains the enthusiasm of his 12 year-old self. "It's so nice – the excitement on Saturday mornings, just like I'm a little kid, it's like, go out and play some baseball." But he acknowledges the serious nature of the league.

"Everybody wants to win. Nobody's getting paid, but everyone understands we're not there to lay down for the other team."

I asked about the competitive pressure, playing on a team with former pros and college stars, and he acknowledges this, with unexpected candor,

"I do get butterflies before playing in the morning."

And, like most of the guys on the team, baseball apparently looms large in his future.

"I have to play, as long as my body holds up."

Despite a desire to avoid clichés about baseball as an Everyman Everysport, a common bond that brings different social types, skill sets, attitudes and aptitudes together on the field, I nonetheless found a certain purity in the existence of these leagues, and the single-minded love of the game that unites the diverse players of the MABL.

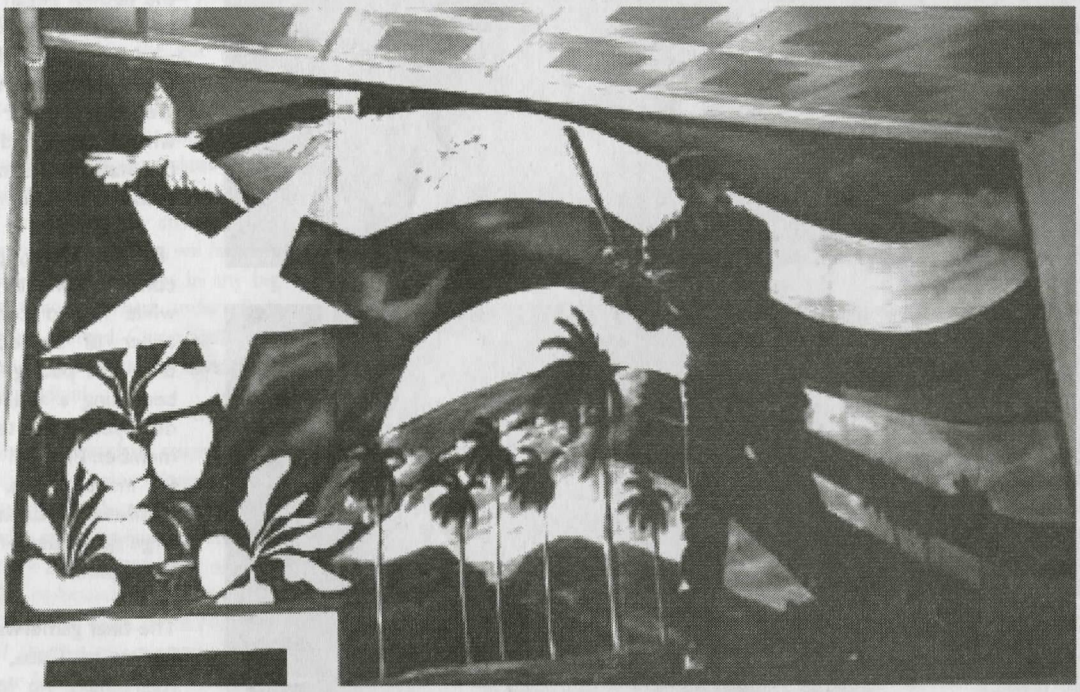
What other thing could so effectively dissipate the boundaries between people, rendering one's net worth, political opinions, race, class, taste in music and sexual proclivities completely irrelevant? Drugs maybe, but acid is for hippie losers.

Baseball, then. It's free, it's accessible, it hasn't changed in 100 years, it's challenging, it's fun and it's a helluva lot cooler than ultimate frisbee.

Pelotas, Putas y Peones!

Debauchery and stogies with the USC Baseball team

by Pete Alexander



We were still trying to scrub the Cheap Ho stench off our bodies after rolling in from a barnburner at the Body Shop when the damned limo arrived.

"Whattaya mean the sun is coming up? We just got started, man!"

"Shut up and get in the limo, Shemp."

Yea, it was going to be a thing of beauty, I could tell already. Somewhere out on the tarmac of LAX sat a TACA Airbus, waiting to wing us down Havana way… along with the USC baseball team and God-knows-how-many alumni. Knowing the specter of Tom Ridge would be watching our every move, we held out faint hope of even boarding, let alone departing. Yet after all the formalities were taken care of at check-in – and we had forced some rancid breakfast burritos down our throats, courtesy of the fine folks in the Bradley International Torture Terminal – we managed to board the fishy French A-320 Airbus. For the uniformed, all Airbus seats were designed using the guillotine as the comfort standard. But what did we care? We were going to Fidel's House! On a side note, legendary USC baseball coach Rod Dedeaux was with our group of 200-plus loyalist freedom fighters.

Through the crafty efforts of a former Trojan punter turned international trade specialist, a series of games were scheduled between the USC squad and the Cuban National team… or so we were led to believe. With visions of baseball, mojitos, Cohibas and mamacitas dancing in our heads, we surfed a phat tailwind direct to Jose Marti International Airport, arriving a mere 5 hours after departure, under cover of darkness.

Being Americans, we wouldn't have it any other way. It didn't take long for the wonders of the Third World to filter into our skulls. Customs lines were of interminable length and there was little logic to the process "flow". Things only improved as the hodad Cubano tour guide tried in vain to be disarmingly self-deprecating while attempting to build "group cohesion" on the bus ride to the hotel. Sit down, Shecky! Naturally, check-in was a fiasco, with most rooms not being ready. Yea, right… more like they wanted to make sure the bugs and phone taps were working. Fortunately, they have a great deal of experience with crisis management down there, so we were quickly shuffled off to the reception area. There, we discovered an unlimited supply of Cuba Libres standing at attention, like little soldiers of the revolution, awaiting their demise in the hands of the invading hordes. Eventually, we were situated and, despite the late hour, agreed to stage our preliminary urban reconnaissance mission on downtown Havana. We had but one thing in mind… a few drinks and cigars on the side would be an added bonus.

For the gentlemen in the audience, let me give you perhaps the best piece of advice you will EVER receive: Drop what you are doing and go to Cuba. RIGHT NOW! It makes Thailand seem as expensive as Milan, if you know what I mean, and I think you do. I was in and out of the Havana Café in less than 20 minutes, and it proved to be an adventure I will not soon forget. HOLY COW!!! This, as it would turn out, was just the tip of the iceberg, and over the ensuing 6 days, I would go on to enjoy some of the most beautiful (and affordable) companionship I have ever known – or could have dreamed of on the web. But I digress… it's baseball you're interested in, so lets get back on topic here, shall we?

Over the next few days, the Trojans would play some games against the Cubans. Unfortunately, it was not against their best but their second (or third) string. As we would discover later (on TV, no less), we had arrived in the middle of the Cuban League's season, so it was All-Star break. The first game was held at night in a small stadium about an hour out into the countryside. The USC contingent took over the first base side of the stands, outfitted in appropriate battle fatigues (Hawaiian shirts) and headgear (Che Guevara berets). As we ate fresh-carved turkey and pork sandwiches, guzzling smuggled beer, commenting on the pathetic state of dogs in Cuba, avoiding the so-called men's room (where you can be CERTAIN to find WMD's) and generally doing our best to ingratiate ourselves, we watched

our boys dismantle the hosts by a score of 12-3. We wrote it off as a cursory warm-up game, which was not far off the mark.

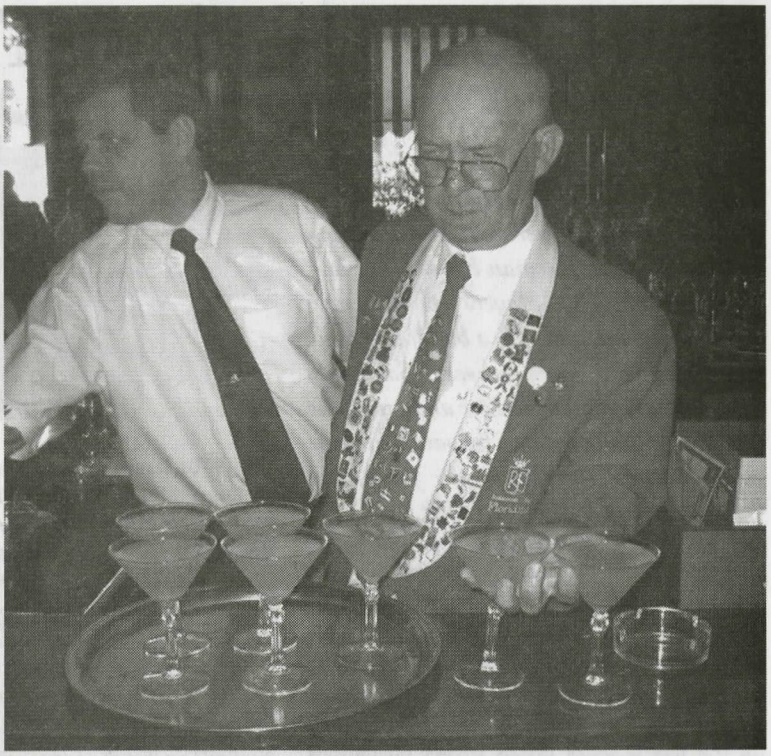
Game two, the next day, was held at a larger stadium in Havana proper. Once again, it was a massacre, with the Trojans coming out on top 20-10. USC third base phenom Joey Metropoulos enjoyed a career road trip, smashing everything he saw and flawlessly fielding everything he touched. The picture was getting clearer now, so most of the faithful began wandering off early to sample yet more 17-year old rum and freshly rolled cigars – to say nothing of 17-year-olds themselves. These three elements made up our three critical food groups during our stay. The earlier concerns about what could – and could not – be taken back to the States were starting to wane, and greed began setting in on the minds of the vulgarians.

By the midway point of the trip, average cigar consumption had reached 6 or more per day, while mojito consumption was easily on the order of two-dozen or more per day. And that was pacing it. "Havana Daydreamin'" was becoming a reality, especially for the forward deployed strike team, of which I was a founding member. Many of the faithful began turning to us for insight, leads, negotiating tactics and phone numbers. Fortunately, it was a seller's market, so large quantities of Jacksons were changing hands throughout.

The final game was held at the premier baseball facility in Cuba, the Estadio Latinoamericano. Regrettably, no local turnout was in order, so we essentially had the cavernous stadium to ourselves. Another fiasco in the making, the game was called in the 7th with USC on top 16-0. Wherever the great Cuban Baseball Dynamo was, we never caught a glimpse of it anywhere. It's too bad, because it seems pretty clear the Trojans could have likely taken on anyone the Cubans could field. But such is the way with Cuba and the avarice of El Supremo. Trojan baseball coach Mike Gillespie stood up and apologized to the fans, but expressed his appreciation for all of the support and had no regrets about taking the trip. Naturally, we couldn't have agreed more and shoved a mojito into his hand. At that point, we just saddled back up and took off for the Malecon and whatever further adventures awaited us.

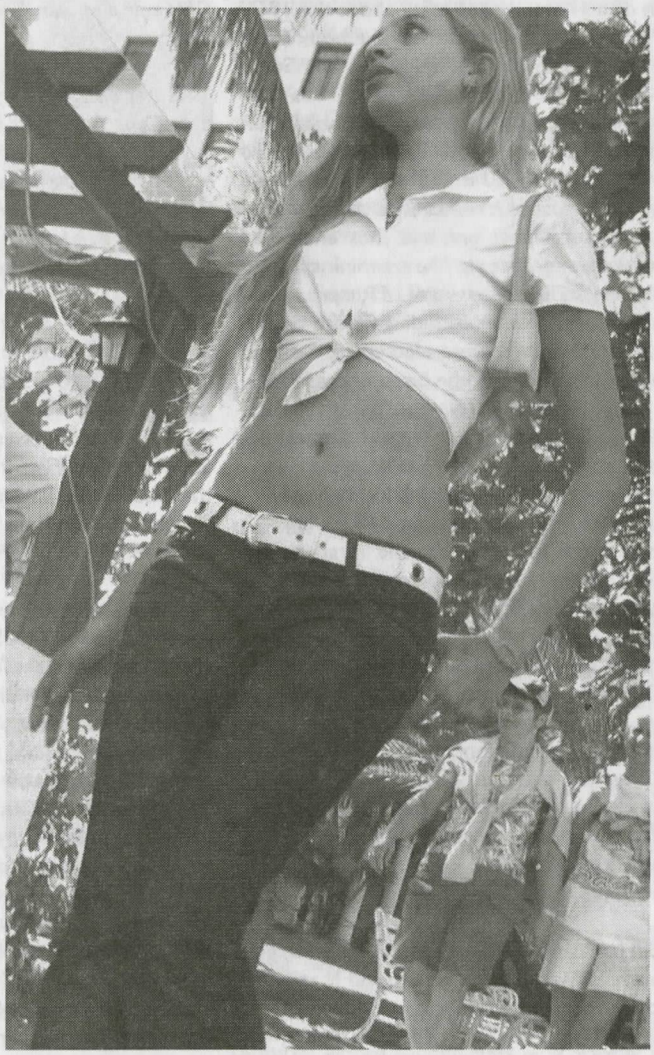
Our final full day in Havana was spent conducting every possible scam and grift we had become attuned to during the 5 days prior. In what can only be described as a noir film classic scenario, our constantly evolving wolf pack took over a small sidewalk bar/café, just off the Parque Central, near Havana's "gut", late in the afternoon. As the curvaceous skank paraded their wares along the walkway in front of us, I sat pensively, nursing a non-stop flow of cold Bucanero beers, sucking down a Montecristo, watching the drama unfold. Having just visited Hemingway's house, I couldn't help but notice the poetic timing of the storm

clouds rolling in from across the Caribbean. Some members of the crew were working black market cigar deals across the street in the plaza, while others were negotiating suitable fees for "service contracts" with some dusky dolls. The foreign tourists present – all shocked and deeply disappointed to find Norte Americanos present – just stared at us with total fascination and disgust. Naturally, we fed off their negative energy, until the rains began to fall, the winds began to whip and all hell broke lose. Not certain of the original catalyst, I returned from a head call to see the table breaking up and bodies scattering in all directions. I immediately went into self-preservation mode and beat feet for the taxi, patiently awaiting our return. In all honesty, it was more like a Blackhawk extraction from Somalia. Two guys split into the gut with a couple of gnarly hooks, while the rest of us held our own to the increasing slurs and catcalls coming from the ever-present Socialista broads who give Alanis Morissette a good name. Chaos ensued as the rain pelted us and blackened skies swept over the scene. Fortunately, we all got out without taking any hits and enjoyed a good laugh – along with our smokes – all the way down Embassy row back to our hotel. Yes, we had left two behind, but you've got to expect a few losses in any big operation. As fate would have it, they returned under their own power about an hour after we arrived. Once again, the Ugly American is alive and well, and I am proud to have done my part to keep an ancient tradition alive!



Unlike the University of Washington baseball team, which had been thrown out of Cuba four years prior when a player was caught stealing a box of cigars from a shop (typical Husky moron), we actually departed under more genial and civilized conditions. Eight long, tedious hours later – including endless ground delays in L.A. – we finally re-boarded our limo and disappeared into the chilly 2 A.M. night of the City of No NFL. We were filthy drunk, reeked of abusive cigar consumption, our clothes were tattered and our hair matted, we had open sores and viscous wounds… yet we waltzed through customs unmolested and had left no one behind. It was as if we had never left…

Cuba is, well… Cuba. A land of dichotomies, mixed metaphors and layered deceit, it remains a beautiful image in my mind, populated by some lovely people (unlike their forlorn brethren in Miami) and stuck in a time warp. There are the 50's era cars, the classic architecture and the images of decades long gone. There are also cops, security guards and informants everywhere, a noticeable lack of respectable dining establishments and a general population that is sick and tired of being bled to death by a government that long ago imploded under its own weight. Then there is the myth of baseball in Cuba, and maybe it is just that after all… a myth. Sorry, Duque – you may have been the last…



The Glory Of Their Times

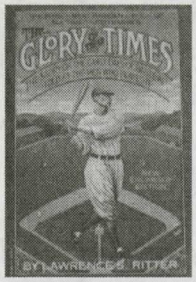
It was the summer of 1961. Ty Cobb had just died, and an NYU economics professor named Lawrence Ritter was commiserating with a colleague, Herman Krooss. The last of the great baseball players from the early 1900s was gone, and only a handful of their contemporaries were alive. "Somebody ought to take a tape recorder and tape their reminiscences," Krooss idly said, "because once they go there's nobody from that generation who's going to be left."

by Andrew J Milner

Ritter took him up on it. Five years and some twenty-two published interviews later, the result was The Glory of Their Times, one of the few baseball books to get unanimous praise from the critics. Roger Angell devoted much of his New Yorker essay about the 1966 World Series to excerpts from the book (that essay appears in Angell's collection The Summer Game). Bill James wrote in the '90s that Glory "is one of the best baseball books ever written...Everybody in baseball read it, in part because you can read it in about three hours, and in part because it paints a warm, fuzzy portrait of baseball that era, and thus embodies the way that old people like to think of their youth." He added that several of Ritter's once-forgotten interviewees, including Goose Goslin and Rube Marquard, were elected to the Hall of Fame in the wake of the book's popularity.

It's interesting to consider what the baseball landscape was like nearly 40 years ago. There was no Jack Smalling baseball address book in the 1960s, meaning Ritter had to scour national phone directories at the library to find out where retired ballplayers lived. According to Ritter, "Wahoo" Sam Crawford left postcards of his Hall of Fame plaque as calling cards -- imagine a current baseball immortal NOT trying to make a profit off their HOF status. Ritter accompanied Goslin to his 1968 Cooperstown induction, only to be told by the Otesaga Hotel desk clerk that Goslin had to check out immediately after the ceremony to make room for conventioneers. Today during Induction Weekend, everything in Cooperstown shuts down for Hall of Fame activities.

As Bill James noted, Glory has been "imitated to death." Baseball historian Donald Honig (who collaborated with Ritter on a picture book, The Image of Their Greatness, published three volumes of his own oral histories in



the 1970s, later condensed into one volume (A Donald Honig Reader). Film critic Danny Peary (Cult Movies) interviewed 65 players from the 1947-64 era for his 1994 book We Played the Game. No Cheering in the Press Box featured Jerome Holtzman's oral histories of 1920s-era sportswriters, including Maury Povich's father Shirley (yes, that was his name) and boy's book author John R. Tunis. Coming full circle, Ritter was himself interviewed by Spitball editor Mike Shannon, along with such other baseball authors as Roger Kahn, Robert Creamer and Dan Okrent, in Baseball: The Writers' Game.

Another reason Glory is important: It's been source material for many of the great baseball novels of the last few decades. Eric Rolfe Greenberg used Ritter's interviews with Giants Chief Meyers, Al Bridwell and Fred Snodgrass as background for his novel The Celebrant (1983), arguably the best baseball novel ever written. Ritter's chapters on Ty Cobb's teammates Sam Crawford and Davy Jones—Hans Lobert's recollections of the 1913 round-the-world baseball tour, and interviews with Edd Roush and Heinie Groh on the 1919 World Series—helped inspire Harry Stein's excellent Black Sox novel Hoopla. And the resurrected ballplayers in W.P. Kinsella's Shoeless Joe speak in the patois of Ritter's old ballplayers.

In the acknowledgments to The Great American Novel (1973), Philip Roth said that Ritter's interviewees "have been a source of inspiration to me while writing this book, and some of the most appealing locutions of these old-time players have been absorbed into the dialogue." Here's one example: Pirate great Tommy Leach told Ritter, "For sheer excitement, I don't think anything can beat when you see that guy go tearing around the bases and come sliding into third or into the plate, with the ball coming in on a line from the outfield at the same time. Now that's something to write home about." Roth's character Luke Gofannon says the only thing he loves more than his mistress is "triples... 'Round first and into second, and the coach down there cryin' out to ya, 'Keep comin'.' So ya' make the turn at second, and ya' head for third -- and now ya' know that throw is comin', ya' know it is right on your tail. So ya' slide. Two hunerd and seventy feet of runnin' behind ya', and with all that there momentum, ya' hit it -- whack, into the bag."

Ritter included five more interviews (most notably one with Hank Greenberg) in an updated edition of Glory in 1984. A 1970 TV documentary inspired by the book was released on VHS in 1986, though it's no longer avaialble. But in 1998, lengthy recorded excerpts from 12 of Ritter's interviews were packaged as an audio book by Highbridge, and can still be found on Amazon.com. It's wonderful to hear someone like Sam Crawford, who began his major league career in 1899, talk about playing for "Cincinnatuh" or to hear "Casey at the Bat" recited by Chief Meyers, who was already a boy when the poem was written.

Lawrence S. Ritter died in February 2004 at age 81. From The Glory of Their Times, which can be found on nearly every fan's bookshelf, some closing thoughts on baseball:

"In 1902 we won the National League pennant by 27 1/2 games over the second-place team ...That was the year, believe it or not, that I led the league in home runs. I really did. I hit six. The next year I did even better: I hit seven. But Jimmy Sheckard beat me out with nine." – Tommy Leach

"I don't know whether the whole truth of what went on there among the White Sox will ever come out. Even today nobody really knows exactly what took place. Whatever it was, though, it was a dirty rotten shame. One thing that's always overlooked in the whole mess is that we could have beat them no matter what the circumstances! Sure, the 1919 White Sox were good. But the 1919 Cincinnati Reds were *better.* I'll believe that till my dying day." -- Edd Roush

"I enjoyed playing ball. But it's a tough racket. There's always someone sitting on the bench just itching to get into your place... The pressure never lets up. Doesn't matter what you did yesterday. That's history. It's tomorrow that counts. So you worry all the time. It never ends. Lord, baseball is a worrying thing." -- Stanley Coveleski

"You know, baseball is a matter of razor-edge precision. It's not a game of inches, like you hear people say. It's a game of hundredths of inches. Any time you have a bat only that big around, and a ball that small, traveling at such tremendous rates of speed, an inch is way too large a margin for error." -- Rube Bressler

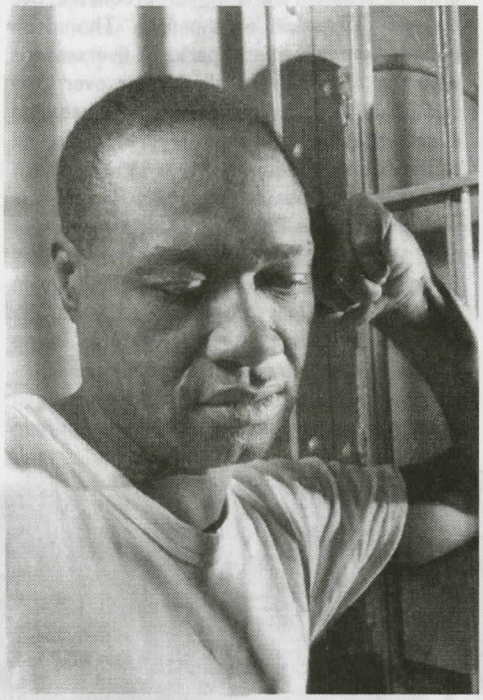
HANK THOMPSON

The Rise And Fall Of Youngblood

By Russell Wolinsky

This year, Major League Baseball has magnanimously elected to give itself a big pat on the back by commemorating April 15 as "Jackie Robinson Day," marking the date of Robinson's big-league debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. Hell, baseball wants to make this an annual party (who'll bring the dip, Bud?). But before we get too dewy-eyed looking back at the great, "liberal" history of baseball (which reads like an old Lenny Bruce routine, anyway), this might be as good an opportunity as any to reminisce about another early "pioneer" whose life has not been nominated for sainthood. For every Jackie Robinson, there's also a Hank Thompson (not the guy who did "A Six Pack to Go," although the song is appropriate); a player for whom "the great experiment" was not an unqualified success.

Hank Thompson was the first black player on two major league teams: the St. Louis Browns (making him the first black Brown) in 1947, and the New York Giants in '49. He was the first to play in both the American and National leagues. (Overall, he was the third black in Major League Baseball, which, to paraphrase Brendan C. Boyd and Fred C. Harris on Larry Doby in *The Great American Baseball Card Flipping, Trading, And Bubble Gum Book*, was like "being the third person to invent the telephone.") When Thompson came to bat against Don Newcombe in the first inning of the July 8, 1949 Giants/Dodgers clash at Ebbets Field, he represented the offensive half of the first all-black pitcher-batter combination in major league history (Roy Campanella was the catcher). In Game One of the 1951 World Series (October 4), Hank, replacing the injured Don Mueller in right field, teamed up with Willie Mays in center and Monte Irvin in left to form the first all-black outfield in major league history. This event occurred at Yankee Stadium no less, a land where a Yankee Negro would not roam until 1955 (when receiver Elston Howard "yahssir"ed his way to the Bronx, prompting the Old Professor himself, Casey Stengel, to



reportedly mutter, "they finally get me a nigger, and they get me one who can't run").

Though he only sported a lifetime major league batting average of .267, Thompson maintained a more-than-respectable, Billy Beanesque, .374 on-base-percentage over a nine year (1947, 1949-56) big-league career. Returning to Sportsman's Park in St. Louis on the night of June 3, 1954, this time wearing the orange and black of the Giants, he walloped three home runs ("[I] never did have a big time in St. Louis [with the Browns]. I always have been looking for it") off Cardinals' hurler Gerry Staley. He also drove in eight, for a 13-8 Giants victory (Mays batted in the remaining five New York tallies). In 1950, he established a National League record for double plays by a third baseman (since broken, but the on-field accomplishment Thompson was most proud of) with 43, topping the mark set by Hall of Famer Pie Traynor with Pittsburgh in 1925 (41). Thompson drew seven free passes in the 1954 Fall Classic, a record for a four-game Series that still stands. He also batted .364 in the Giants sweep, hitting safely in each contest as well as flawlessly handling 16 chances at third base.

Yet Hank Thompson's rap sheet is as long as his list of baseball accomplishments. He was arrested twice as a teenager: once for jewelry theft (acquitted), and later for truancy. The second charge stuck, and young Hank spent six months at Gatesville Reform School, outside Dallas, Texas. In 1948, he shot and killed a man named Buddy Crow in a Dallas bar. That time he got off on the grounds of justifiable homicide. November 1958 brought a felony arrest for auto theft (it was a friend's car—Hank was in a hurry to get to a party in Brooklyn and his own ride was "all the way in the back" of the garage, and blocked in-- the charges were dropped). Six months later, Thompson was picked up for striking a woman named Ruth Bowen (and accused of taking three dollars from her purse); a press agent for Dinah Washington, and wife of Ink Spots singer Billy Bowen. Again, he got off, this time the judge commenting on his "charmed life."

On February 26, 1961 at 1:30 AM, a drunk and depressed Thompson walked into a bar called Bill's Place, at 2787 Amsterdam Avenue in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan (a bar where he once hocked his 1954 World Series ring, for $250, when he was short of cash). "Do you know who I am?" he asked the bartender, Nathan Goodwin, while holding a .22 caliber revolver to Goodwin's head. (During Thompson's three seasons of winter ball in Cuba, his nickname was "Ametralladora," or "Machine Gun.") When the barkeep replied in the negative, Thompson said, "Good. This is a stickup. Put the money on the bar." The bartender handed over $37. Thompson was captured almost immediately after leaving the tavern. Despite pleading guilty to armed rob-

bery, Thompson's "luck" held out again. Letters of recommendation from Giants owner Horace Stoneham and baseball commissioner Ford Frick convinced Judge George Postel to hand down a sentence of probation, but with the stipulation that he leave town.

"Hank was a little bit off center. He had a drinking problem and a woman problem....But he was all baseball on the field."

Thompson's "luck" finally ended in 1963, in Houston. (He had intended to settle in Los Angeles, but woman problems led him to the land of Lightnin' Hopkins.) On Saturday afternoon, July 13, Hank stole two pistols from a friend's print shop. ("The friend called and asked me to get him a telephone number out of his desk drawer. I saw a pistol in there. I was short of money and half drunk.") He then walked into a nearby liquor store and ordered a fifth of scotch. With the clerk's back turned, Hank pulled out his pistol, put it to the counterman's head, and emptied the register. Thompson then stupidly waltzed over to the nearby Matinee Club, where he began throwing around money, drinking, and talking too much. Hours later, he was apprehended by a detective. Both Thompson and the detective returned to Hank's room at the Midtown Hotel, where both the stolen scotch and gun were in plain sight. He was then identified as the holdup man in a police lineup. This time, Judge John Barron sentenced Thompson to ten years in prison. At the sentencing, Barron claimed, "This is one of the toughest sentences I have ever had to pass on anyone....Keep your prison record clean and I'll give you all the help I can."

Henry Curtis Thompson began his professional baseball career in 1943 as an outfielder for the legendary Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro American League. The seventeen-year-old was nicknamed "Youngblood" by his teammates, one of whom was future Hall of Famer Leroy "Satchel" Paige. Teammate Sammy Haynes recalled, "He had a lot of little kid in him...but he had a temper and liked to play rough." Philadelphia Stars catcher Stanley Glenn was less kind: "Hank was a little bit off center. He had a drinking problem and a woman problem....But he was all baseball on the field." Thompson would eventually spend parts of five seasons with the Monarchs, usually batting over .300 and playing a variety of positions. In between stints with the Monarchs, Thompson served in the U.S. Army during World War II, played winter ball in Cuba, and spent his 30-plus days with the St. Louis Browns.

St. Louis purchased the contracts of Thompson and outfielder Willard Brown from Kansas City in July 1947, "to help lift the Browns out of the American League cellar," Browns owner Richard Muckerman claimed. "We have engaged these players because we think they will help our ball club," explained Browns General Manager Bill DeWitt. But The Sporting News saw a more cynical purpose: "Gates Rusting, Browns Rush in 2 Negro Players," was their read on the acquisitions.

Indeed, the Browns needed all the help they could get both on the field and at the turnstiles. At the time of Thompson's July 17 major-league debut (Willard Brown took his bow two days later), St. Louis stood at 28-50, 26 games out of first place. The Monday prior to Thompson's debut, only 478 bothered to attend a matinee vs. Washington (3,648 attended Hank's first big-league performance).

In his debut with the Browns, Thompson went 0-4 and committed an error at second base. St. Louis lost to Philadelphia, 16-2, that Thursday evening at Sportsman's Park. Thompson eventually got into 27 games for the Browns and hit .256 in 78 at bats. Both players were released on August 23, DeWitt announcing to the press that Thompson and Brown "had failed to reach major-league standards," although they were far from the only Browns for who that claim could be made. (Willard Brown never appeared in another major league game.)

As for the reaction of Browns teammates, when the announcement of their signing was made, Alabamian outfielder Paul "Peanuts" Lehner (who hit .008 less than Thompson in '47) quit the team and turned in his uniform,

only to return a few days later. Browns skipper, Muddy Ruel, in his show of support for the newcomers, would only mumble, "I'm answering no questions," when asked about the "Negro situation" (as the press dubbed it then). Thompson eventually did make a point of name-checking some of his Browns teammates who went out of their way to make the two feel comfortable, including future actor John Berardino (who would later portray Jake Wells in the TV-movie of Satchel Paige's life, "Don't Look Back").

After another successful season with the Monarchs, the New York Giants scouted Thompson playing winter ball in Cuba and liked what they saw. They quickly signed him (and future Hall of Famer Monte Irvin) to a contract (including a $2,500 bonus for Hank), sending both to their Jersey City, NJ, International League farm club (the site of Jackie Robinson's first game in "organized baseball") to begin the 1949 season. By early July, Hank had belted 14 home runs and was batting just under .300 for the Little Giants. He made his debut with the big club on July 8, and remained with them for the next eight seasons.

Thompson appeared in two World Series with the Giants, belted 20 or more home runs for them three times, and batted a career-high .302 in 1953. He was a teammate of 1951 National League playoff hero Bobby Thomson, and for a time, the press dubbed them the "Tom Tom twins" (not Club; no "Genius of Love" here). Hank was also a favorite of manager Leo Durocher, although "the Lip" constantly warned him about his drinking.

But by 1957, at age 31, Hank Thompson was through. His legs were shot, mostly the result of a lifetime of excessive boozing. "The liquor got to his legs," said Giants executive Gary Schumacher. Even Thompson himself admitted, "I was in terrible shape." The Giants sold his contract to their Minneapolis farm club that April. Although at first bitter about the demotion (he threatened to retire), Thompson eventually reported to the Millers of the American Association. But by July 20, Hank was batting .243, and he knew his baseball career was over. "I got to hang it up....I don't like making a fool of myself," he announced to manager Red Davis, after a game where he couldn't reach a simple fly ball in the outfield.

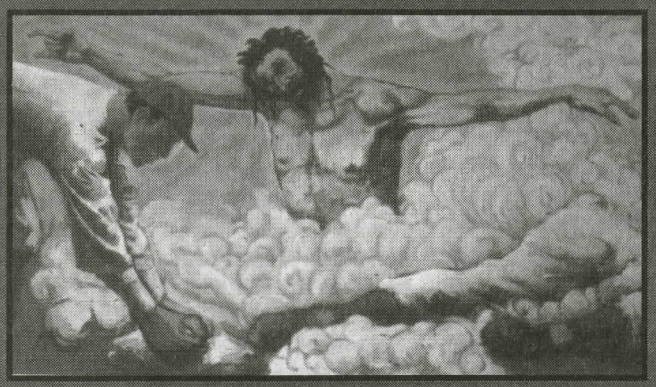
After his baseball retirement, Thompson began to drift. His drinking increased and his life spiraled downward. A series of jobs all ended in failure; bartender in New York, baseball instructor in Phoenix, and interior decorator in Los Angeles. Finally, on October 8, 1963, Hank Thompson entered the diagnostic unit of the Texas Department of Corrections in Huntsville to begin his 10-year prison sentence.

Thompson served four years of his sentence before being paroled. He then went to Fresno, California, to be closer to his mother. Hank remarried and found work as a playground director at the Frank H. Ball Playground, outside of Fresno, working with kids, trying to keep them out of trouble. A proposed film project based on his life (working title, Rough Diamond), to be written by James Baldwin and starring Sidney Poitier, never got past the talking stage.

On Monday night, September 29, 1969, Thompson suffered a heart seizure at his home. He was rushed to Fresno Veterans Administration Hospital, but never regained consciousness. Thompson died at the hospital the next day, with his wife and mother at his bedside. Hank Thompson was 43 years old. At his funeral, his mother wept, but few others bothered to attend to pay tribute to an unrecognized "pioneer." And no major league team will ever hold a "Hank Thompson Day," or retire his uniform number (7 with St. Louis, 16 with New York, if you wanna throw the party).

*Russell Wolinsky did time in the early New York punk scene of the seventies, heading the band Sic F*cks, (spelled with an asterisk because "All we need is U!"). He is now a technical services associate with the National Baseball Hall Of Fame in Cooperstown, NY. Much thank yous to Bill Burdick and Tim Wiles at the Hall.*

GREG JEZEWSKI



Text and interview by Squid Ouchi

Greg Jezewski is an artist whose work communicates primarily by using the imagery of baseball. For a while, Greg played for a semi-professional Southern California league and understands the fates of the day who make a great fielder miss a fly ball, a coach asking for a bunt when a full swing would have clinched it, and the doom of the call back to the minors which will never again lead back up to MLB. His love for the game shows throughout his work. Canvas scenes filled with midnight games illuminated by lightning bolts for horror show monster ball players. Real kinetic arcade automatons that tell the future for those who dare spin the wheel of fate from a werewolf in sheep's team clothing. Jewel-encrusted catchers' masks on a Pharaoh's afterlife playing field and a pitching arm like a gun that really shoots. This is the type of real sideshow carny stuff that one encounters when their De Soto gets a flat on an old country road and they are welcomed to the world of Shoeless Joe and eternal Jesus umpires and wood bat leagues.

Waiting for the parking lot to clear, ChinMusic! spoke to Greg while sitting in the stands of Dodger Stadium. It was Gagne's 83rd consecutive save; Final score: L.A. 5 (to Greg's favorite team) Giants 4.

Waiting for the parking lot to clear, ChinMusic! spoke to Greg while sitting in the stands of Dodger Stadium. It was Gagne's 83rd consecutive save; Final score: L.A. 5 (to Greg's favorite team) Giants 4.

CM: So Greg, why are the San Francisco Giants your favorite team?

GJ: Because Willie Mays is just the best that there is and ever will be.

CM: Who turned you on to Willie Mays? Your dad?

GJ: I just grew up that way. I found out about him on my own. My dad hated the distraction of baseball from school because at that time when I was a kid I wasn't studying or even getting C's.

CM: Yeah, and you saw Mays' 563rd career homerun at Shea Stadium and you still have that Giants pennant that some guy behind you spilled beer on. Why do you think your artwork always involves baseball?

GJ: Because baseball is a language unto America. I use the language of baseball to explain our culture; to talk about the American culture, because the language of baseball is so much apart of the American culture. And because in baseball you measure time by the erosion of your talent and there is no other sport you can do that.

CM: When did you first start using horror monsters in your work?

GJ: The first one I ever did was that drawing of The Phantom of the Opera during the 7th inning stretch; that "take me out to the ballgame" it was that line, "I don't care if I ever get back" that line made me think of using the image, because it really is "I don't care if I never get back." I really don't know why I do it. I look for things that really fit. Before I used the monsters I did a lot a lot of burning effigies of myself and I used a lot of bones.

CM: What was the first record you ever bought?

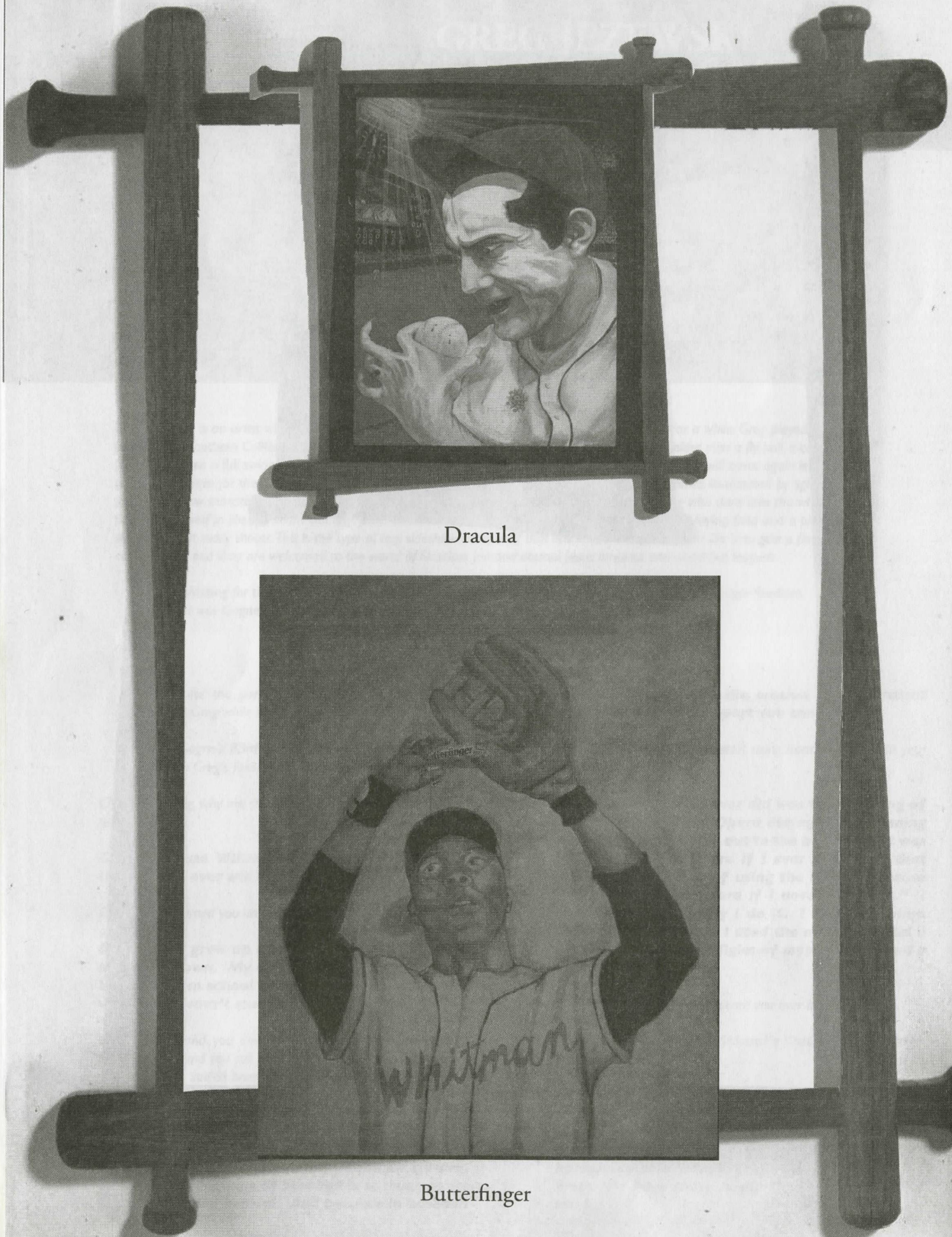
GJ: Alice Cooper's "School's Out," I was in high school.

CM: If you had one shot to play in a major league game what song would you like to hear on the field?

GJ: "The Good, The Bad and The Ugly" or the harmonica solo from Once Upon A Time In The West. I'd have those in my truck to get psyched up.

Tools Of Ignorance

Lefty



Dracula

Butterfinger

King Kong

I Don't Care If I Never Get Back

Dock Ellis and the New World Order

by Rob Trucks

In Los Angeles, Dock Ellis and I stop at a Fatburger. Dock is a baseball original, a former Pittsburgh Pirate pitcher best known for throwing a no-hitter on acid. This Fatburger, though, is not the original, Dock tells me. Dock is just back on red meat after his mother replaced turkey with ground round in his tacos.

"After you've been off the stuff for a while, you can smell it," Dock says. He offers the expression of a child who's just tasted liver for the first time. After one bite of the cheeseburger before him, Dock loudly hails the attention of the Asian cook behind the counter.

"Hey man, this is not a Fatburger."

"Yes," the cook replies. "This is a Fatburger."

"Bullshit," says Dock. "You may have that Fatburger sign up there but I've eaten Fatburgers and this is not a Fatburger burger."

"We use fresh meat patties," the cook protests.

"I'm not saying anything about your fresh meat patties. All I'm saying is that this is not a Fatburger burger."

The cook and Dock turn to face other business. "See, I understand what he's saying but he don't understand what I'm saying," Dock tells me.

This Asian grillman in a franchised Fatburger has no idea how much he and the institution of baseball have in common.

The antics of Dock Ellis have enthralled me since childhood. My obsession with the man goes much deeper than the average baseball fan who might view Dock as a perverse footnote in the annals of professional sports. This fascination, though abiding, has not been simple.

I grew up in Birmingham, Alabama, a fan of the Oakland Raiders in football and the Pittsburgh Pirates in baseball, the outlaws in black who always won in thrilling style. Like most of America, Birmingham operated without the blessing of a major sports franchise but somehow the personalities of the cities of Oakland and Pittsburgh filtered down to me as working-class, a strong symbol for my hometown. If I could not cheer for a home team as friends from larger cities did, I would hold close to me the clubs from cities most similar to my own.

Although the Pirates were known as a team of free-swinging hitters, I knew by this point that pitchers controlled the game. Pitcher was the position I had chosen since good control and a precocious curve compensated for my own weak bat, but Pittsburgh's rotation hardly inspired the interest even tiny Freddie Patek, a utility infielder and one of the smallest men to ever play Major League Baseball, could instill. The Pirate pitching staff, represented by such neutral types as Steve Blass, Bob Moose and Luke Walker, was, for the most part, a non-praiseworthy, white bread ensemble given the task of keeping the ballgame close.

And then there was Dock Ellis.

On the surface, a petulant, baby-faced black man from Los Angeles might seem to offer little for a young, white Alabama boy to identify with. True, he was a pitcher and he did display momentary flashes of brilliance, but Dock was also accused of letting the team down through what was described as "selfish behavior." Although I carried Dock's career in my memory for twenty years and his baseball card as my bookmark, not until this year did I realize why I latched on to Dock Ellis as my talisman.

I live these days in Dothan, Alabama, a city of 55,000 and a sense of isolation. After learning a hard lesson attempting to teach English at Enterprise State Junior College (alma mater of former Cubs' Rookie of the Year Jerome Walton) and its satellite campus on the Fort Rucker Army Base, I concluded that my life surely must have another end.

The first few weeks of the new year I applied for various part-time, minimum wage jobs in the hope I could exchange a decent living for selfish moments to read and write, peace of mind and freedom from the responsibility of dragging settled natives along a path they showed no interest in pursuing.

One morning, as I showered to interview for a job that would pay me $3.60 an hour to load and unload 110-pound bags of peanuts (the main industry here), I realized that I had to find Dock Ellis. For all our differences, here was a man who refused to fit in, an outlaw, an unrepentant fighter. I had to know the survival rate for players like ourselves.

When I first spoke with Dock, I felt I had made a mistake. The man on the phone sounded much too slow to be the reckless fireballer I had envisioned but I hadn't accounted for the West Coast time change. Dock's mother, who he lives with again in the same home he was raised, had gotten him out of bed to answer the phone.

"Why are you interested in my career?" he asked. "Don't you know I'm dangerous?"

This is how the story goes: the Pirates fly into San Diego on a Thursday in May of 1970, the day before a series opening doubleheader against the Padres. Dock checks into the hotel, rents a car and drives to Los Angeles where he drops acid and parties with friends. It is Friday afternoon when he realizes he is scheduled to pitch that evening. He takes another half hit of acid to keep himself awake and catches a plane to San Diego.

Dock arrives with just enough time to complete his warmup. A misting rain falls at San Diego Stadium and the game is sparsely attended, providing few witnesses for this peculiar bit of history.

The only video of the contest is one wide long shot, spliced and uneven, without audio, recorded by a single camera in the press-box. The tape contains only the deciding pitch to each Padre batter. The camera does not follow balls hit out of the infield and no Pirate batters are shown. The entire tape lasts less than twenty minutes and misses not only the final out, but the ensuing celebration as well.

The boxscore from the game does not do justice to its ugliness. Dock Ellis walked eight batters and hit one, loading the bases on two occasions in Major League Baseball's only no-hitter thrown on acid.

After lifting weights, Dock discovers he has lost the keys to his mother's so we move on to his sister's home so he can take a shower. One nephew is sick and home from school.

"You ain't sick," Dock says.

"Yes I am, Uncle Dock."

Uncle Dock sounds a strange address to this man but Daddy would sound stranger, and Dock is, three times.

"You upstairs in your mama's room watching TV."

"I'm sick, Uncle Dock."

"What's that shit in your hair?"

"Curl activator."

"What do you want to look like a

Puerto Rican for?"

The sparring is friendly but serious. Dock's nephew knows he's overmatched but looks for one good shot to gain his footing.

"I'll take you, Uncle Dock."

"When? When I'm in a wheelchair?"

"Yeah. I'll ram your legs in the wall."

While Dock showers I flip through the channels on the television downstairs. This is the day Marion Barry holds a press conference on his exit from drug treatment.

"Cokehead," Dock spews when he returns. "Look at him. Looks like he's been doing coke."

Mayor Barry asks the press not to come to his house, not to bother his family. "They were not elected," he says.

"Too quick," Dock says. "Too quick out of treatment to come out and talk shit. He didn't do the program right. He hasn't surrendered. The program says that I will be able to accept the things I cannot change, change the things I can and have the wisdom to know the difference. And he don't know the goddamn difference. Let's go," he says. "Later, favorite nephew."

"Get out of here."

"I was gonna give you five dollars and now you dogging me. Dogging your favorite uncle just cost you five dollars."

"There'll never be another Dock Ellis in baseball," Dock says. "At least I hope not."

But Dock suffers no loss of pride and offers no apologies. Even more, he wants back in. Dock wants to be baseball's drug czar ten years after being its most notable user.

"I could be the drug and alcohol counselor for all of baseball," Dock says.

"Have you actually talked to someone in the league about doing that?"

"Oh yes."

"And the response was?"

"Oh no."

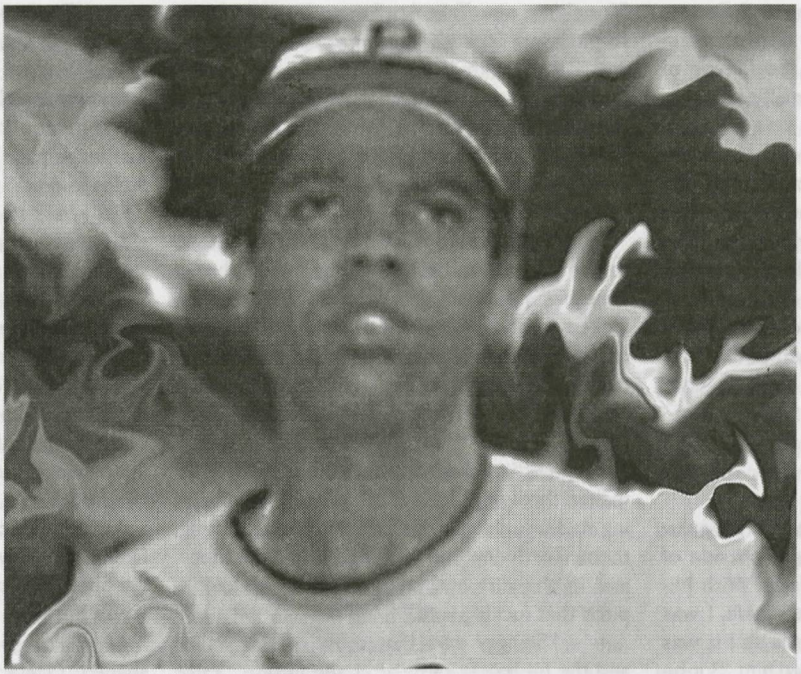
"Politely?"

"Oh no. They don't want to hear that shit. They cannot control me. They're afraid of me."

Dock Ellis wants another chance at baseball but he says, "Baseball will never hire me because they know that I'm no bullshit. I won't bullshit people, play their game."

"What about baseball bothers you the most?"

"The bottom line is, the way they treated me in baseball. It has manifested over the years. They knew I had a problem and never did anything about it. They didn't bring me up to the Majors when they should have. They were constantly trying to control me in all different ways, from where I went to who I associated with to the way I dressed and the way I combed my hair. All kinds of shit."



"So what makes baseball different from a regular job?"

"I don't know nothing about a regular job. I mean, I've had regular jobs but baseball felt that I owed them something for letting me play. They allowed me to play because of my talent. That's all and I knew it."

"Do you owe baseball anything?"

"I don't owe baseball shit. I don't owe them shit. Hey, we used each other. That don't stop me from having animosity towards baseball, but I don't owe them shit and they don't owe me nothing."

"But you're happy with who you are and baseball's a part of that."

"Why is baseball a part of me? I was destined to be who I am and known throughout no matter what I did. I had a predestination to be me. I could've been in politics and still been the same motherfucker. The same arrogant motherfucker. Charismatic individual, politician motherfucker."

"I'm not taking charisma away from you but isn't a lot of what draws people to you the fact that you were an athlete?"

"True. But I could've done anything if I had used all of my energies."

"Did you put all your energy into baseball?"

"No. Not totally."

"Have you ever put all of your energy into anything?"

"In my recovery."

"So what's Dock Ellis' biggest success?"

"Ten years of sobriety."

"Is talking to people about drugs a part of your recovery or an extension of it?"

"Part of it. Sharing my experience, strength and hope is part of recovery, to give it away. That's what they call giving it away."

Dock and I spend one day in Los Angeles checking on "the hoodlums," as he refers to them, borderline kids he's come across while helping out at the juvenile center in Pasa Robles. No one paid him for that work and no one pays him to check on these kids now. Giving fits the man but not Dock's image. Talking to kids is part of what he's best at.

These hoodlums, however, know little of Dock's image. They don't know that Dock Ellis threw a no-hitter on LSD. They don't know that he played on two World Championship teams and they do not know that in 1971 he faced Vida Blue in baseball's first All-Star Game to feature two black men as starting pitchers.

As much as the no-hitter is mentioned, starting that All-Star game is the closest one can come to a defining moment in Dock Ellis' baseball career.

"The reporters asked me if I thought I should face Blue in the All-Star game because he was a given that year. I told them that baseball was too racist to let two black men face each other. They had to start me," Dock laughs.

The hoodlums do know that Dock played baseball and had problems with drugs but the time he spends with them is devoted to other things than demonstrating how to throw a hard slider.

Scooter's mother, for example, called Dock because she was worried that all of her son's friends were gangbangers. She didn't know how much longer he could stay out. Scooter's mom wanted Dock to talk to Scooter so Dock and Scooter went for a drive, checked out the latest shipments at a local swap meet and, when they returned, Dock had one more pierced ear than when he left.

"Two is the in thing," Dock explained.

"Sometimes you wonder," Scooter's mother says, "who's influencing who."

But Dock knows more than "hoodlums" and family in Los Angeles. One afternoon we run into David Lander, the actor who played Squiggy on "Laverne & Shirley" and a longtime friend of Dock's. Lander is one of the few who actually saw the no-hitter.

At Fatburger Dock and I talk about

Ron Howard and Michael Keaton and George Wendt. Dock spent time with all of them, in South America no less, during the filming of Gung Ho, a movie Dock had a small part in.

"If I was on the other side of town then we'd be running into all kinds of people. If I was to run into Michael Keaton then you would really hear some shit because I would be all over his ass. I told him what Hollywood was gonna do to his ass and he wouldn't believe me. His family's busted up."

"When I did the movie with him, I didn't trust him. Anybody born white that tells me they wish they were born black, I'm not gonna trust that motherfucker."

"He said that?"

"Yeah."

"What was his reason?"

"Something to do with where he grew up. You know he was raised right outside of Pittsburgh. His mannerism is black. With Michael, when we were doing that movie, I was with him for almost three months and it was near the end before I really trusted him. But he was cool. I really like him now."

"But why did he want to be black?"

"I can't really pinpoint it. Had something to do with a DJ he listened to growing up. He's got that walk, you know, and he can't help it. He's got a hip to his walk and the way he talks. If he didn't say he wanted to be black, maybe he said that he thought he was black. Something like that."

"So how'd you get the part?"

"Ron Howard. They used to do those Hollywod star versus the press games before the Dodgers played and I met him there when he was Opie. I was flying first class somewhere and I looked back and he was behind me and I said, 'What's going on, Ron?' and he said, 'Do I know you?' I told him, 'Man, fuck you. Fuck, you don't know me. I didn't say that shit you when I met you.' Then he was all fucked up. When he was getting off the plane I handed him my card and he was like, 'Oh Dock, I'm sorry,' and shit like that. But then I remembered that he didn't know me with a beard."

"Why do you tell people you were on acid when you threw the no-hitter?"

"Because it's the truth. It happened."

"If the point is to get people off of drugs, how glamorous does it need to be? Doesn't mentioning the acid defeat the purpose?"

"No. Not if the story is told that when I took the LSD, I lost a whole day. The disastrous thing about that is, I lost a whole day."

"Sure, but a day out of someone's life to be one of 200 men to ever throw a no-hitter . . ."

"Let's go back. I said I missed a day. Acid caused me to miss a whole day out of my life."

"But there are those who would say, 'Knock me out. Take April away from me,' just to pitch in a Spring Training game."

"What does that have to do with drugs causing me to lose a day? The acid caused me to lose a day. That's not glamorous. Then I realize I got to pitch and I throw a no-hitter. So what? I threw a fucking no-hitter."

"Come on."

"I happened to throw a no-hitter. I remember bits and pieces about it but I threw a no-hitter. You can't take that away. I was fucked up and I threw a no-hitter but nobody can ever take that away. But you can't glamorize that. You can't say that that was a beautiful no-hitter. You've heard of ugly no-hitters? That was an ugly no-hitter. It was still a no-hitter, but something had to be wrong with this fucker throwing the ball all around the fucking stadium, hitting guys and shit, almost hitting them. Throwing one here and one over there and in the dirt and shit. Nolan Ryan didn't pitch that fucking wild."

"Squiggy says that most of the walks and the hit batter came after the fifth."

"I don't know. I've seen a scorecard but I haven't looked to see when the walks and shit happened. I know it happened."

"So if I ask you if you had a no-hitter going and you were pitching around guys . . .?"

"Fuck no I wasn't pitching around no motherfuckers. I don't know what pitching around somebody means. I know now, don't let them hit nothing, but fuck that shit, pitching around some motherfucker. Now you got me going on this shit about some motherfucker trying to teach some motherfucker how to pitch. 'You got to pitch around them.' Pitch around who? Get the motherfucker out. I had Bob Veale slap me up against the head in a meeting because a man asked me, 'Dock, how you set the hitter?' 'I don't set no hitter up, man. What the fuck are you talking about?'"

"So it's all about power?"

"That's right. Kick ass and take names. All this fucking shit about teaching someone how to pitch. If you don't know how to pitch, get your ass the fuck out of Dodge. Now just throw the ball and hope they don't hit it. Pitch around some motherfucker. I hear these motherfuckers talking on TV, Palmer and them, talking about pitching around some motherfucker. He used to pitch around motherfuckers. It happens but I never knew nothing abut it. Maybe if I did I would've won more games but those hitters knew I was coming after them with everything I had."

"But you got offended when I brought it up."

"The reason why is because you used the term 'pitch around.' 'Pitch around' is a term to get out of shit. You're saying that the walks in my no-hitter could've happened because I was pitching around guys and that set me off. You can ask anybody. Everything I threw was hard. You either kick their ass or they'll kick yours."

Dock is forty-five now and he's been into weight training for about a year and a half. Lifting weights, he says, takes up idle time and requires discipline, both strong needs fulfilled for someone in recovery. But Dock's idea of his image plays a big role in his motivation as well.

In Los Angeles Dock works out at Muscle Express, a converted warehouse on Long Beach Boulevard in the middle of Compton. Music so tinny it sounds wrapped in aluminum foil comes from a jambox placed next to half-finished changing rooms. The area is furnished with one sink, one toilet and a solitary bench that looks like it's been repossessed from a Little League dugout. The surrounding walls are plywood panelling. The gym is spacious and the noises of a weight room reverberate over a thin layer of crimson indoor/outdoor carpet. Even the mirrors, everpresent in weight rooms, are spaced. Dock points out the various men who enter.

"I'm gonna do my arms his size. V-shaped. Gotta work on this belly. They get on me about my sit-ups."

The belly is small by most forty-five year old standards and only sticks out on Dock because the rest of his body is so lean. Just the tiny beginnings of crow's feet hinting at his true age.

The environment is different in Florida. At the Gold Coast Gym in Pompano Beach, Dock pays his seven dollar workout fee to a young woman, maybe twenty-two, tanned and leotarded. The crimson carpet here is much thicker, nearly as plush as a surburban playroom. Mirrors cover the walls and to get to the weight benches one has to pass through a maze of computerized bicycles. More women are present at this facility and it goes without saying that the average age skyrockets over the Muscle Express. Only one other black man shows in the two hours we are there and this gym has recently gone to twenty-four hours a day, an impossibility in Compton where citizens escape the streets before dark. At Gold Coast, Dock is referred to as "Brown" after the World Wrestling Federation's Bad News Brown. Even here Dock carries something about him that stands out - the walk, the temperament, the demeanor that shows that he is somebody.

"I was on the phone in the lobby the other day and I said, 'Hold on man, we're on television. And it was this Bad News Brown. The haircut, the earring, everything. I mean, the dude looks just like me.'"

From what I've seen on television, Dock's in better shape, if not quite as large as the wrestler. Dock's stomach is flatter at least. He talks about his sit-ups, but I never see him do them. Dips are also listed on his daily workout schedule and he avoids them, even in conversation.

"How come you don't do those dips, Dock?"

"Man, those things hurt."

What brings Dock Ellis to Pompano Beach, a sleepy stretch of Atlantic Beach so filled with retired folk that hotel bar bands cover "Feelings" by design, is the hottest story of this Spring Training.

Dock is here to "counsel" Pascual Perez, a former Atlanta Braves pitcher, nicknamed "I-285" after missing a scheduled start because he was unable to successfully exit the interstate loop around the city to get to the ballpark. George Steinbrenner signed Pascual for close to two million dollars a season one year after he posted a 9-13 record with Montreal and now, with Spring Training under it tightest schedule ever due to the owner's lockout, Pascual Perez's appearance at camp is over a week past due.

The story making the rounds is that Perez was detained at the airport in his native Dominican Republic by a paternity suit filed by a woman with whom he already has one child out of wedlock. His delay also causes unvoiced speculations of drug use since Perez has already had two cocaine-based run-ins with the law during his career. The combination of the Yankees, George Steinbrenner, Pascual's unique personality, two million a year and now Dock forms an instant story. The beat writers have been circling for a week, waiting for Pascual's appearance. The Yankee pitching coach wears a button that simply asks, "Donde?"

The Yankees have placed Pascual in Pompano Beach rather than the team's facility in Fort Lauderdale to keep him out of the limelight. He is, in effect, in hiding. So Pascual has been complaining about the remoteness of his accomodations. Specifically he is not close enough to the malls for his liking, especially since he is still without a driver's license. But that, of course, is also the point. Dock and Pascual's management team would like to keep him away from the press until things have quieted down, so he and Dock can "focus," a big word here, on a plan.

Pascual and Dock and I are having breakfast in the hotel lounge and, as luck would have it, USA Today has a graph in this morning's paper listing the highest-paid and highest-rated baseball players by position.

Pascual is listed for a million this year even though his contract is for much more. Charlie Liebrandt, the Braves' most recent pitching acquisition, is making over a million a year, more than Tom Glavine, John Smoltz and Pete Smith combined.

"I bet Charlie Liebrandt isn't pitching five hundred ball over the last three years," I say. "And that's with a winning team." In my mind are the Braves' injured and out purchases of Bruce Sutter, Andy Messersmith and, worst of all, Len Barker.

"Shit," Dock says. "You pitch .500 ball and I'll get you two million a year. Isn't that right, Pascual?"

Pascual Perez does not appreciate the joke.

The skies are clear with absolutely no chance of the rain South Florida so desperately needs. At 9:30 in the morning, a full three hours before the scheduled start of today's exhibition game, as many as seventy fans crowd the gate to the already full player's parking lot. It is Pascual who must wave to the gatekeeper for our car to be let in, but it is a wave of dismissal.

"Let us go, beetch," Perez says, annoyed. Everything is a "beetch" this morning - the male gatekeeper, the twenty minute drive to the park, the stiffness in his shoulder from throwing the day before.

"I don't want to throw today. You got to talk to them, Dock."

But here Dock knows his place and shows uncharacteristic diplomacy. He knows he's not been brought in as a pitching coach.

"They're scared of you, man. They think you're a wild man doing all that crazy shit and stuff. Tell 'em you need a day off."

Pascual's "crazy" is no match for the pair's other topic of conversation, Cesar Cedeno, a former outfielder with the Houston Astros. Dock and Pascual have been searching for mutual acquaintances within the world of baseball; after all, Dock retired the same season Perez came up to the big leagues. A plethora of Cedeno tales form a bridge: Cesar screaming at managers, Cesar screaming at fans and UCLA co-eds screaming at Cesar which follows from a discussion of the dicksize of several Dominican ballplayers.

"Sonofabitch was almost late," Dock tells me after delivering Pascual to the Yankee clubhouse. "He told me he had to be here at 9:30 but that's what time practice starts. We should have been here at 9."

"Isn't this a little like babysitting?" I ask, knowing Dock's image of himself would never allow him to admit it. But the day before I lost track of Dock. He had taken Pascual for a haircut that somehow lasted four hours, and then to Hooters, a kind of sports bar without the sports where the waitresses wear halter tops and dayglo orange running shorts. The food is basically hamburgers and chicken wings and this was Pascual and Dock's second trip to the restaurant in Pascual's three nights in Florida.

The little boy syndrome that Dock mentioned has been in front of me all day long. Dock maintains that baseball players will have problems with drugs directly proportional to the average American except for the "little boy's syndrome."

"We're patted on our back and butts our entire lives because we're special when it comes to playing ball. And the closer it gets to the time when that's all over, we take something to fill the gap."

So isn't it wrong to treat Pascual this way, cater to him? Dock spends twenty minutes with a member of Team de Pascual, as they're calling themselves, discussing who will go to New York to find Perez a place to live.

"He's got somebody to find him a place to live?" I ask.

"He doesn't have a driver's license and all ballplayers have people find them a place in New York," Dock says. "I had a guy find me a place complete with directions to the ballpark. It's a big city."

"What about the haircut? Would you have taken Pascual for a haircut if he had a driver's license?"

"Hell no," Dock says and walks away.

Dock doesn't see his handling of Pascual Perez as an audition for baseball. He doesn't forsee any problems for Perez even though he insists twenty percent will fall back regardless of what counseling is provided.

"I told you. Baseball will not hire me because they know I will not bullshit people."

"Well, tell me what your plan is."

"Can't do that," Dock says.

"Why not?"

"'Cause it'll be published and, the next thing you know, it'll be implemented."

"So what's wrong with that?"

"I won't be part of it," he says.

"But it'll be documented as your idea. You help people for free. You don't think there's any chance you'll be hired by baseball. If you're going to help these guys anyway and you won't be hired to implement the program, then what's the point in holding your ideas back?"

"That makes sense," Dock says. "That makes sense. I'll tell you. I believe that if a guy gets busted or comes forward - they now say that he has to come forward but I don't give a shit if they come forward or not - they should be given a chance to go to treatment."

"Once a problem is acknowledged."

"Right. I feel, though, that they should miss baseball for a whole year, a whole year. And that the insurance policy for baseball players should cover more than just a twenty-eight day treatment program. I believe they should go in the program for six to nine months. Say six months and let that six months be devoted to aftercare. Something they can carry over to a baseball season."

"How much do they get paid the year they're off?"

"They don't get nothing."

"Let me play devil's advocate. You come to me and say, 'I saw you smoking dope outside the San Diego locker room, outside the Cincinnati locker room and now you're swinging late on curve balls . . .'"

"We're not talking about swinging late on curve balls. I would not allow them to use on the field performance as a basis for deciding someone's on drugs. There are people who drop fly balls who only drink milk. You know, Dale Murphy's not the best outfielder in baseball and all he'll drink is milk."

"I'm not going bankrupt, my wife still loves me and I'm playing well . . ."

"The clubs know who uses drugs. You

document and then confront them. I don't care if you're hitting .500 and got 500 home runs and 500 RBIs. If you get busted for drugs, you're gone. You did it, you're sick."

"But don't they resist?"

"Of course they resist. That's part of the process. But the year off is not punishment. It is to get the person's life together where they do not depend on baseball. But you have to get an agreement from the owners and the Players' Association and neither one will stand with me on that. And the other reason, besides the year, that they will not deal with that, is because they, and I mean the owners, is because they're drunks. And so many front office people are drunks. You go to the Winter Meetings and all you see are drunks. Deals are made when people are drunk. Writers write about 'how could they make this deal?' Because they were drunk. One organization takes advantage of another one because they drink too much."

"When we started you said that you didn't want to talk about your plan because baseball would take it. Now you say that the owners and and the players will never go along with it."

"They will take from it and do something with it. They did it in Atlanta. I took a whole proposal to Hank Aaron and he tells me he don't handle this. Now where in the hell is the shit that I gave him? In their drug program. I networked the whole thing for the entire minor leagues for the Atlanta Braves."

I'm back home in Dothan now and Dock is off doing whatever it is Dock does when he doesn't have an audience, which is rare, I think. I've decided to go to a temporary employment agency so one Friday morning I rise early, shower, shave - I'll leave the haircut for a real job - and put on a button-down and a pair of khakis. I go to the agency that has the most ads in the newspaper. They don't charge a fee and it's temporary I tell myself, a nice outlook for my relationship with Dothan.

There are two doors at the agency: one is marked Industrial Division and one is marked Clerical. With my background in English, I decide to go through the Clerical entrance. After all, I'm out of my jeans and in the back of my mind is an ad offering work "plucking, deboning, eviscerating and otherwise preparing chicken for market." I don't want to be talked into that one since chicken is one of my diet's staples. I have to think that there probably aren't many people who need that job who know the meaning of the word "eviscerating."

I wait alone in the clerical reception area for fifteen minutes, hearing voices behind a hall door, before I decide to knock.

"Oh, you're not supposed to be in here," the woman said.

"Why not?" I asked. At another office, a woman would not let me apply for a secreterial position ostensibly because I was male.

"We just do bookkeeping in here," she said. "You need to go next door."

So next door I went, a bit tired and confused about the set-up. I didn't need this job. I wasn't starving.

"How are you today?" the woman behind the desk asked. There were three of them in all, bouncy and smiling in matching bright pink T-shirts with the company logo emblazoned across the chest. This could've been the Amway of temp agencies. "Can I help you?"

"Yes," I said. "I'd like to fill out an employment application."

"I'm sorry, sir. We don't take applications on Fridays."

Their ad said nothing about not taking applications on Fridays. They were open, three pink T-shirted employees were filing. Why couldn't I fill out an application? Why didn't they take applications on Friday? They were an employment agency. Their lifeblood should be taking applications.

I stayed long enough to explain to the woman why I wouldn't be back on Monday as she suggested. I was there then and if she wouldn't take my application, well, that was it. I got up in her face, so to speak. Dock would've been proud of me, I think.

But on my way to the parking lot I realize that, at forty-five, Dock is missing the fastball that allowed him to command listeners to his version of the story. He no longer has the power that commanded enough attention to get the start in an All-Star Game or the talent to command significant change in his world. What baseball wanted from Dock is gone.

I'm younger than Dock, true, but I do not have the walk. I do not have the swagger. What I'm missing this Friday, as I walk away from a temporary employment agency in Dothan, Alabama, is a fastball.

In 1989, Esquire Magazine commissioned Rob Trucks to hang out with Dock Ellis, the retired Pittsburgh Pirates hurler most known for All-Star game appearances and reportedly throwing a no-hitter on LSD.

Esquire never ran the article. *"Whether it's true or not, I don't know, but the Esquire editor in chief did change between the time I was assigned the piece and the time I turned the piece in. Not unlike baseball general managers, the new guy wanted to do things his way and supposedly killed all sports features that were still alive (Esquire had been doing a lot of sports stories under the previous tenure)."*

"The acid no-hitter was more than likely Esquire's primary fascination when they assigned the piece to me, and I'm sure that was at the forefront of my consciousness as well going in, especially given that I was just some guy from Alabama and I was lucky enough to gain an assignment for Esquire. I wanted to at least try and give them what they wanted. But even though I might not have been able to place the events on a timeline I was also aware of Dock macing a security guard at Riverfront, Dock setting a record for most hit batters to start a game, Dock wearing pink hair curlers at Wrigley during the Saturday Game of the Week. And I was very well aware of the cumulative effect of these incidents on Dock's reputation."

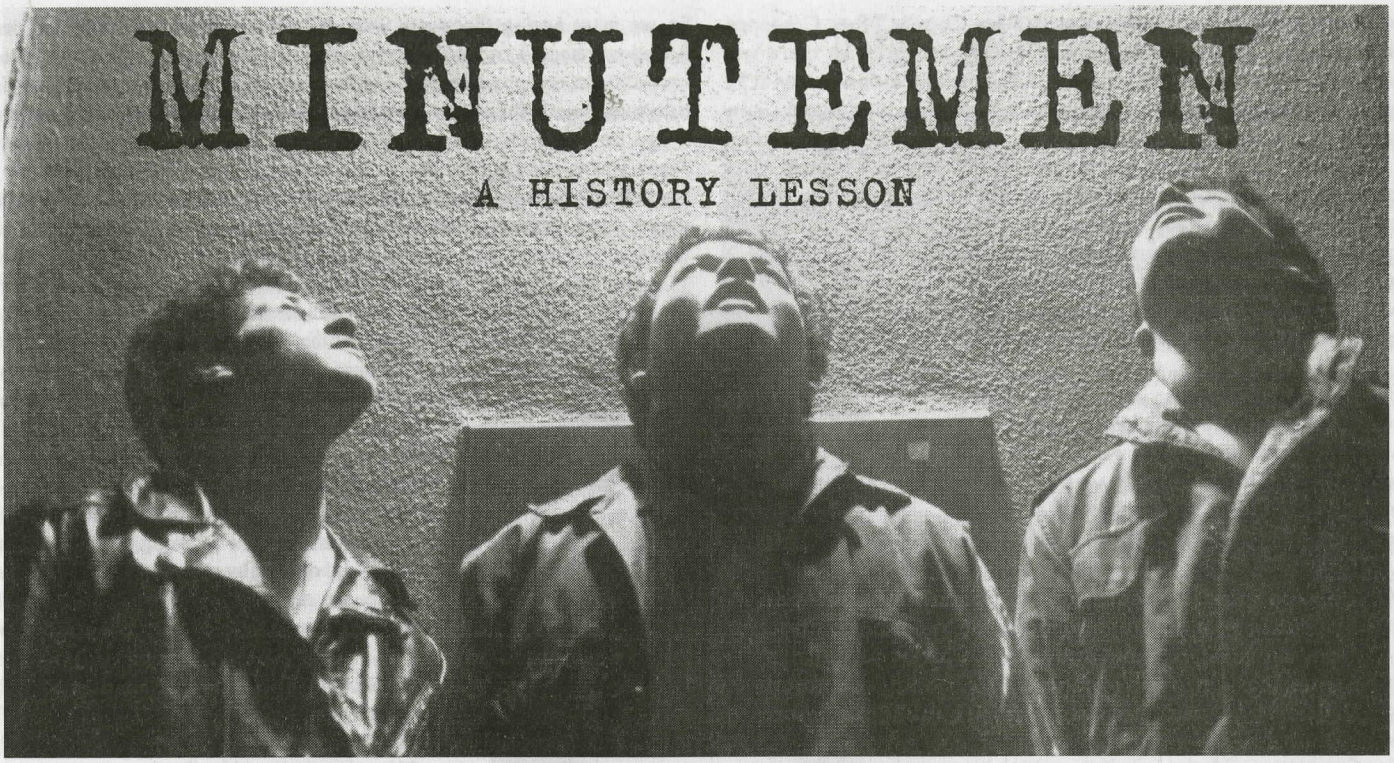
"There's little, if any, artifice to the piece. For some unknown reason the Pirates have always been my favorite baseball team–and had been for years before I learned that I was born on Roberto Clemente's birthday. I used to get in trouble during Little League practice for taking warmup swings a la Willie Stargell, but I was a very small kid–leadoff batter–no Willie Stargell. But I had a decent arm and usually played short or third when I wasn't pitching. But pitching, especially in Little League, always seemed to be "the" position to me and Dock was certainly the most interesting Pirates pitcher in my youth. Only Bruce Kison's sudden emergence a few years later even came close."

"I told Dock that I'd let him know when the piece was coming out (I got the sense he liked to tell people that he was being written about for Esquire–he introduced me to nearly everyone we ran into) and then there was an editorial change at the magazine and the piece kind of died without officially dying (that is, until they sent me a kill fee much later). I'm pretty sure Dock called about six months later and left a message. I didn't call him back. I didn't want to disappoint him, make him think that he'd wasted his time. I think I was hoping that if I waited just a little while longer I might be able to place it somewhere else. The sports editor at Village Voice was very complimentary but said it was way too long for them to run. And I kind of gave up on it after that."

Rob Trucks is older than he looks but younger than he feels. He writes about baseball and music for a variety of publications in his tiny apartment in Long Island City, New York. His interview collection, *Cup of Coffee: The Very Short Careers of Eighteen Major League Pitchers*, was published by Smallmouth Press in February of 2003.

MINUTEMEN

A HISTORY LESSON



Arguably the most influential and distinctive band of the 1980's hardcore era, The Minutemen grew from a couple of self-professed San Pedro, CA "corndogs" into a troika of organically acomplished musicians with a sound so unique and impressive that recognition of influence was a moot point. No one sounded like the Minutemen. No one. Their brief run was an exercise in growth, intensity, and an originality that eclipsed the sum of integrity and idealism. These guys were brothers. Brothers in the most initmate sense of intuition, cognition and cooperative disclipline.
I spoke to Mike Watt over two days and four-plus hours to cull the essence and hear the stories, mine the stench and dig the big crux.

interview by Kevin Chanel

ESKIMO

When I came to Cali I went to Navy Housing. But then after Navy Housing my mom didn't want to move anymore, she was sick of the shit the way the Navy is. We stayed in 'Pedro and moved to these projects, Park Western Estates and I was walking through Peck Park and this guy in a t-shirt and jeans jumps out of a tree on me. So he says "You're not Eskimo" and I say "No, I'm not", yeah, he was playing with his buddies but for some reason, you know, he stopped and we start talkin' and I say I lived in these proj's. We're walkin' and he starts recitin' off all these bits. And I'm thinking, fuck…*this dude!* You understand this was like the summer before 7th grade. It was during the summertime, we hadn't started yet. I had just moved, I had just fuckin' been on a first place team in Little League. I was always on last place teams, so that my last year in little league, I was on a first place team. Anyway, D. Boon is citin' off these things then he took me to his pad the next day and he played me the record, (George Carlin's) *Class Clown*. I'd never heard the record and so then I discovered he didn't make all that up. I thought he made all that up. He was just fucking going for it, without any pauses. Anyway, He made a big impression on me. I was just a boy…I know that's a weird thing, but it was like goddamn! I was impressed by him. I didn't know it was off an album! I thought he was makin' it up! So it was like, whoa! So then, he plays guitar, his mother had made him play guitar. She played guitar when she was young.

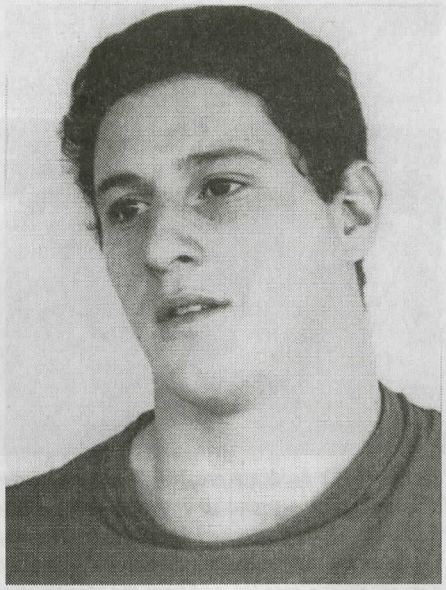
There was this guy, hippie guy, Roy Mendes Lopez, livin' in his car. He would show us stuff. Showed us how to learn songs kinda off records, How to hold our hands. How to not to play with a pick. And a lot of things he had an intense philosophy on life that was wide open and enlightened. You know, it was just comin' out of the hippie times. It didn't seem like he belonged to anything. He was very autonomous, this guy. He lived in his car, man. This guy. He was a trip. And he would tell us all the time, "Practice. Practice", you know? He showed us how to put glue on the fingers for picks. That's what he would do. He ended up makin' his own guitars and stuff. Teachin' himself Vivaldi out of books. This guy had a big effect on us since we were boys. I learned about him from D. Boon who was goin' to him, because his mother. I can't remember how much it was. Five Bucks? I know it was econo. She got the idea, "Well, you guys gotta be in a band."

She was a beautiful woman, kinda looked like Rose Marie from the Hollywood Squares…and had a raspy voice like that. She was intense. She nurtured it, you know, big time, and his pop did too. Well, we got in a band. At first it just meant after school you practiced songs you tried to learn off records. For hours. But you know, we were in the house. I think she was concerned about…I mean there was no guns and stuff, it was projects.. …his proj' was heavier than mine, but still she wanted us in the pad. So playin' the tunes. Practice for hours. And it was terrible. It was noise but we were tryin' to learn, you know, we were idiots. We didn't have that much to go by, except for Roy Mendes Lopez.

This guy had this kind of enlightened approach, about playin'- about playin'like you're very much into it, on a "really mean it" level. And don't be afraid to be individual. This guy took white shoe polish and painted his clothes. He got really good with Flamenco and got D. Boon into Flamenco so there's Flamenco style in D. Boon's playin' 'cause of this guy. I don't know what happened to him. God, I wish I could talk to him again…I mean, it's been so many years.

So we make a band in the last year of Junior High School, first year of High School, called Bright Orange Band. B.O.B. And that's with Dale Caldwell singin', Chris Key on drums and Danny Salvador on whatever kind of guitar… I remember when we had Danny first play with us it's because he had a loud amp, man. Our amps were tiny, we hadto put them on the dresser. We just fuckin' didn't know what was goin' on. We make Bright Orange Band. We play a couple gigs and stuff. We don't write

any of our own songs. We were copying Alice Cooper, T-Rex, Credence, Black Sabbath...playin' Doors without keyboards. Yeah, then there was this cat Mark Weisvasser. He rented a pad at the recreation center at Ft. McArthur just before it closed down, he was renting out the pad...now it's carved out and it's marina for boats...in those days the rec room, it had a ceiling that was all painted up, kind of psychedelic stuff. Mark rented this thing, and he had a drum set. We had actually played with him goin' back to age 13. 15, sorry. 15 was when I first played real bass, not guitar with strings...cause I didn't know...I couldn't tell the strings were bigger. Cause (live) it was so fucking far away. You couldn't really see right. You could tell on the album covers it only had four keys but...



B.O.B. actually did a Bar Mitzvah for Mark's brother at 15. And it was outside on the patio and they closed the sliding glass doors so it must've been stinkin'it up. It was just like a din...we didn't have it together. I know we didn't know how to tune to each other. Your A note had to be the same as the other guy. We tuned, by just, by yourself playin' "Down On The Corner" and if it sounded right, you were in tune. We didn't realize that your "Down On The Corner" had to be in tune to the other guy's "Down On The Corner". We couldn't hear the difference. It must've been a fuckin' horrible thing. Same thing with the bass. You couldn't hear it on most music except for Jamerson and Larry Graham, John Entwhistle, Jack Bruce. Some of that Alice Cooper I could. Man, a lot of that shit was blurry. Alice Cooper was blurry. T-Rex is blurry. Couldn't learn the lines. I didn't have any sensitivity to it...I didn't know. When I hear the records now, though, I hear the parts. I just didn't have a feel for it. I'm not a musical guy. I got into music to be with my friend. I don't have a natural ability for it. It's like a bicycle. After a while you don't fall down as much, I mean, fuck. Everybody who can ride a bike...so would you say, hey, that dude is talented? D. Boon learned the skill. But it's not that fuckin' far removed from anybody. This Roy Mendez Lopez, this guy was intense. And some of it rubbed off on D. Boon.

REACTIONARIES

Anyway so we're jammin' with Mark Weisvasser and stuff...we graduated in '76. Then punk comes on. Nickey Beat, he was walkin' around at this Fort Mac place with a Kotex around his neck. And he says he's in a band up in Hollywood and they write their own fuckin' songs. He's a nice guy though and he's the one that turned us on to it. He says "I got a band, we write our own songs, we play gigs." I'd never met people like that. And he was, yeah, dressed wild. He told us there were these fucking bands in Hollywood. I'd only been to Hollywood on my bike as a big fuckin' adventure. I'd never like, drove there and went to clubs. I didn't know clubs. Me and D. Boon come from arena rock. So I said yeah and I went and checked it out and...it was some badass shit. I told D. Boon we can do this. It took a while to make a band. It still took another year. We were still jammin' with Weisvasser for another year doin' shit like "Tie Your Mother Down" and "Dust In The Wind." You fuckin' couldn't believe it. Just to play. We liked playin'...we weren't tipped off or enlightened to the fact that you could write songs and make a band. Nickey Beat was in at the beginning. Shit, this was at the beginning. That was at the beginning of Punk in Hollywood. It was a tripped out thing to see. We saw some other bands too, out of town bands when they first came through...the Talking Heads when they first came through and The Jam when they first came through and I guess The Clash came again.

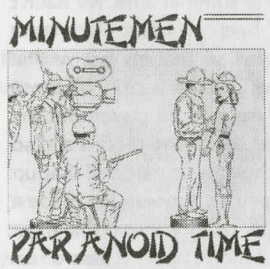
So we start seeing these, we want to make a band, we called it The Reactionaries. You know. I wrote the tunes, ain't too good. We made one recording in the practice pad which was Georgie's shed in the back of the house on 17th Street across the street from San Pedro High. Had a sign on the door that said U.S. Bonging Team, no Olympic Bonging Team. This is right across the street from the fuckin' school! Okay so lunchtime, you can imagine. So we get this band goin', Martin's the singer...and three, you know, The Minutemen, the rest of the guys.

We're in the parkin' lot at a Clash gig and Greg (Ginn) and Chuck (Dukowski, both of Black Flag) are handin' out flyers and we couldn't believe there was a gig in 'Pedro and they couldn't believe that there was a band in 'Pedro. So we get to open up. With The Descendants and The Plugs and The Alley Cats, Black Flag. This is January of '79.

Didn't really know about the gig thing. Started getting' turned on to it by seeing it at punk shows. We got up the nerve and just by the fat chance accident and we do some gigs with Suburban Lawns at their practice pad in Long Beach. We bring in another guitarist, Todd Apperson, for a little bit but D. Boon wants the band to end. So it ends, maybe that summer, '79. Georgie joins a New Wave band called Hey Taxi!

And in '80 me and D. Boon start the Minutemen, we write a bunch of songs, get a uh, we need a drummer, we'd never lived in a place where you could really play drums. Frank Tonche lived in the backyard of his sister in a little house and he could play drums there, he's from the Polish Flying Eagles Polka Band. He played Oompah already and that's two stepping...kind of ignored by the punk scene. At that time the punk bands were pretty varied, you know. We were obviously coming, from learnin' off records, guitar rock. But man, the punk bands we saw in Hollywood they weren't all like that. We thought well, we can do this.. So we start the Minutemen again, and we do these two gigs, at Vanguard art galleries.

PARANOID TIME



And then May of '80 we do Harbor College and Black Flag doesn't play the gig this time but Greg's at the gig anyway and he asks us to be SST 002. Which turns out to be *Paranoid Time*. Now what happened at that gig was Frank Tonche got freaked out over punk, thought it was too weird so he ran off, left his drums there everything, I didn't talk to him for years..never saw him again...disappeared. So here Greg asked us to make a record and now we don't have a drummer. But right around that time, too, Hey Taxi! broke up. So Georgie said, he'd do it and he learned the songs in three weeks and we recorded *Paranoid Time*, I think, in July of '80. In one night. three hundred bucks, I payed for it.

We had written the first batch of tunes, even without Frank Tonche. Georgie had to learn 'em. Georgie wasn't part of the thing yet, you know, not 'til later on, he started writin' words but shit, come on, he'd just been brought on board. We wrote 'em together, D. Boon had an apartment, above Joe Baiza's apartment where he lived- between 19th and 20th St.

of 'Pedro. Joe Baiza later would tell us he heard all this stomp 'cause we didn't use amps we just had the bass and the guitar unplugged and would stomp with our feet to keep the beat. We came up with these 15 tunes and that was the idea, like to make all the tunes into one big tune-- that would be the set.

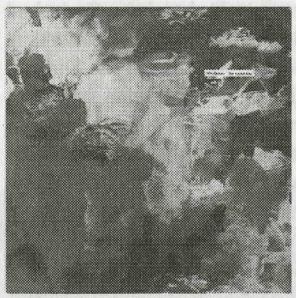
One thing we were really conscious of is that we were really embarrassed that we had learned off records. Like we were old fashioned. There was a big deal about not bein' rock and roll, and thinkin' it was old fashioned...we kinda felt that way too...It wasn't only the gigs. The gigs showed us, whoa, you can fuckin' do this, like these cats are. The punk wasn't just that. Because punk was shit from things you never see. They were only known to us from records and fanzines. So that had a bearing on us, too. It was a weird kind of movement. Yeah. It was a movement. We were caught up in a movement. We had already been playin' before, it had nothin' to do with that and you could see where that was goin', it was just to go over it, like buildin' models. Hey, lookit, that looks like the real thing... so those punkers that we saw live showed us that. Then the records showed us how much different things you could try. So we never saw Pop Group, we never saw Wire...just as much as Germs, Dils...we were trying to be the Minutemen. It was a certain kind of emotional, pent-up and at the same time it was fucking outside whack shit. That's why it was called a movement, no one is taking any orders from anyone. It was weird osmosis and we were a part of something. Then we start our own label (New Alliance), we put out *Cracks In The Sidewalk*. We find out punk is more than just having a band and writing songs, it's puttin' out your own records. And start puttin' out a little magazine called *The Prole*. Start puttin' on our own shows. There's a place in 'Pedro called the Star Theater, but D. Boon changed it's name to The Union so with the early gigs you didn't have to drive all the way to Hollywood, wait 'til eleven o'clock for the band. You could be close to where you lived, see an earlier show and then be able to work in the mornin'. So shit like this, all this was extensions of the same funk vibe we were getting. And then learn by, people like Raymond Pettibon and stuff. Learning punk was connected to all kinds of things goin' as far back as Woody Guthrie, Dada, Surrealism, John Coltrane. Raymond played John Coltrane for me.

JOY

Three songs in pert' near the same vein as those on ***Paranoid Time****. A swift, if not as diverse sampling of Boon, Watt and Hurley laying it out in short form.*

Okay, so we start our own label and we write a couple songs, "Clocks", "9: 30 May 2". Actually, the record comes out before *Paranoid Time*, in December. And I think *Cracks In The Sidewalk* comes out in September. So then the next thing we write is the *Joy* EP, we record this with Mike Patton, after doing the first one with Greg Ginn and Spot. We go and do this session in Orange County with Mike Patton who played bass for The Middle Class, great cat. He also used to play bass for Eddie And The Subtitles and he sang for them. Anyway he recorded this, three songs, little ones, Dezo even wrote a riff for one of the songs, "More Joy." It was kind of a James Brown thing...that's what he said. And two songs were written with words from George Hurley. Georgie started writin' words for the band. He ended up writin' a third or a quarter of the words in the early Minutemen.

THE PUNCH LINE



If **THE PUNCH LINE** *were a stand-up comedian, it would be Henny Youngman. If it were a baseball player, it would be a line-up of Bucky "Fucking" Dents, Bernie Carbos and gimpy Kirk Gibsons, showing up for one glorious moment to blast their way into history. Compact flares set out into shallow center, dropping ten feet in front of the speediest outfielder or clanging the right-field foul pole on a rope. The lead-off man here sets the table with the hi-hat swoop of George's "Search."*

Well, in high school Georgie was very popular, He was a good lookin' man. He wasn't a hambone, though. Georgie was intense. He's good people. He was inspiring he was somebody who was excited, who had a great fuckin', uh, what do you call it? *esprit de corps*. He's the guy you want in your fuckin' corner. He really wanted to play drums, so he bought a set. He got the "Happy Jack", the first Who albums. He taught himself drums. After makin' surfboards and doin' this shit. He went to Hawaii twice and lived on the beach. He was almost killed by mean-ass coral basher waves. He quit all that shit to play drums. He was very motivated.

He was unique in a lot of ways, man. He stood out. Yeah, he was with some square johns who maybe wanted to be around him. Georgie was pretty autonomous. He wasn't such a fuckin' hanger-on-er. He was respected a lot more than just...where me and D. Boon were just fuckin' weirdos; we were more misfit types. Especially when Georgie started playin' with us, then these other cats, they weren't as afraid to get to know us and stuff like that. We got to know a lot of them. He'd know guys that weren't really hip to the punk scene, but listened to the music, we'd play these records at Georgie's pad and stuff and had an influence.

So we just did that on a lark, just to try it and it ends up on the next Minutemen release. We even put it on our own label, New Alliance. And we recorded *Punch Line*. Greg wanted us to do another record after the first pressing of *Paranoid Time*, which was 300, it had sold out. So he said why don't you do a bigger one because it's easier to get in stores if it's a 12 inch. So we did 18 songs for *Punch Line*. And we recorded that, maybe in the winter of '81. We record these songs, a batch, we do eighteen songs, Georgie wrote a quarter, maybe even up to a third, of the words on that. Trippy thing about D. Boon is he wrote the words, he wrote the music and used the words. Only rarely did he take some of Georgie's words and he never took any of mine. I probably wrote more songs with D. Boon words, or as much, I used his words to my music. D. Boon sang my words a bunch. He never made music for it but he sang my words a bunch. Yeah, I hardly sang any of my songs. Recordin' that was a trip, we did at Media Art with Spot. We did it in a couple of days. All down time where we would start at midnight...because it's more econo. We used tape because it was only thirty bucks a reel. It was econo that we'd practice it up bigtime. At the time we were practicin' with Black Flag in a dental office in downtown Torrence. Practice big time so we'd just have to go in there in front of the mic, just like it was a gig. We were doing gigs at this time, opening up for Black Flag, playin' little pads on our own...Anti-Club...Anyway we were getting into gigs, doin' gigs. Openin' up for say five or six hardcore gigs...it was pretty intense, too. In a way Anti-club was neater...it wasn't always a mass in numbers of people. The Minutemen just loved to play, man.

So in a pinch, the first, you're headlining on a Tuesday or a Thursday...but I'll tell you the SST guys were there all the time, the Flag guys...these guys were all sittin' there, cheerin' us on, very enthusiastic, a lot of

support from them cats. So we do Punchline. I use a pick. It was the first time I used a Fender. I bought a P bass from Derf Scratch of Fear –he was stayin' on the beach in Santa Monica…So I go from the EB3 that I bought after high school to the Fender P. D. Boon is still playin' the Strat. And then Dezo sells him a Melody Maker and we put the strings onto that. that's what you can see on the inside of Double Nickels On the Dime. A year after that he got his first Telecaster and he played a Telecaster after that. One of the first econo, Jap-made ones, the strings didn't even go through the body, it was an econo thing. It's not the good stuff now that comes out of Japan from Fender. You know, it was just econo, you know, they've changed owners and that was the first one. The first thing I did was drill a hole through the body to put the fuckin' pickups in. We put in a fatter pickup and stuff. Then we were on tour and outside of Nashville he got the custom. The purple one with the fat neck and the big pickup, with the EMG. I went to EMG too, because our sweat was so intense, we'd shunt out all the high end halfway through the set….that's why we're using the fuckin' Meat Puppet Les Paul P Bass reissue when we had bald heads on The Tour (SST tour with Meat Puppets, SWA, Saccharine Trust and Hüsker Dü).

THE POLITICS OF TIME/ BEAN-SPILL

So then we go…Flag starts havin' – they get into this thing with Unicorn and and makin' an album called Damaged and MCA's involved with distributing Unicorn and it's a bunch of legal mess and it's a nightmare. So SST is kind of a little bit on hold and stuff so we make a record for Joe Carducci's label called Thermidor and we make Bean-spill and it's five songs. But we had 10 left over so we made a compilation of those, or not 10 leftover, seven leftover, so we make a compilation of those with a bunch of live recordings from cassettes and shit with songs that had never been released and we put it out on our own label called The Politics of Time and D. Boon drew the cover on a fuckin' grocery bag. There's over thirty songs, only one Reactionaries song, "Tony Gets Wasted In Pedro." All the other ones are all Minutemen – they're at gigs, but they weren't on any records. They were like econo-ass recordings, not the best stuff but you could tell about the Minutmen. The first stuff you could tell. There were some jams off the radio, live recordings on the radio. And that's on our own label. It actually came out after What Makes A Man Start Fires which was recorded not too long after those Mike Patton sessions.

Mike Patton is *Bean-Spill* and that's the record we did before *Fires*, but it's not too far away from Fires, and you can hear it in the sound. In fact, one song is shared between the records, called "Split Red," and then one

FUTURISM RESTATED*

of 'em "Futurism Restated," goes back to the first batch of Minutemen songs. I think it was Joe Boon, Joe Boon wrote the words about futurism, he read a book on Futurism, there, we were all talking about it.

Pettbon's an artist; he knew about this stuff. Talked about it. There was other people talked about it too, if you read *Slash,* Kickboy (Claude Bessy) would write things, more about the thing like Malcolm was involved in, which was the Situationists in the sixties. Futurism was maybe fifty years before the Situationist shit but I think he was involved with it personally. Kickboy was a little older. I know Malcolm McClaren was. And that was...you create a scene to make people think. That was the idea, there, I guess. So there's that part of punk, too. Other parts of it, too, were really kind of inside and secret. And there was a lot of that then. Futurists seemed very much like punk rockers, confused and way, into like somehow, in the name of the future, not bein' so freaked out about the past. So uptight. All this thing about motion and manifestoes. That manifesto they wrote that *Blast First*, it was.so intense. You know it was like bein' a young person and readin' Nietzche and stuff. It fires ya up and stuff. And so these art movements…and I saw a lot of parallels with punk, it was like punk was just another form of this same thing that had been goin' on for a hundred years or eighty years.

"The wheel's an extension of the foot."

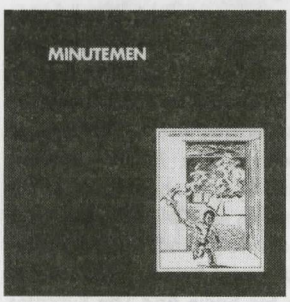
Marinetti said that, I think it's a direct fuckin' quote. He was a big Futurist guy. He was a newspaper man so he got stuff out. "The strobe is an extension of the eye." That's the real words, in that studio they're missing a bunch of words. And the other tune was somethin' Martin wrote. He gave us some songs, "Games" on *Punch Line* and, on the first record, "Validation." I don't know if we got into this in the *Double Nickels* talk but I was telling you I need people to inspire me or I'd write the same song over and over again, like tract housing… So I used a lot of people's different words.

SHIT YOU HEAR AT PARTIES

You know, "Sophia Loren said this...Merv Griffin said that". Literally what happened. We thought, yeah, you capture certain moments. We're tradin' lines. There's like, five songs like that, "Split Red", "Case Closed" is one of those, "Big Lounge Scene", "Base King". It's when D. Boon lived with me for a few months. We'd write songs together, one line each. But that was really rare, that one period. "...wring your head out like a filthy washcloth." That was like takin' LSD and after all these hours it just wrings your head out. That's what it was from…Used to listen to Richard Melzer's radio show midnight to six on Saturdays.

(Politics Of Time) They were like econo-ass recordings, not the best stuff but you could tell it was the Minutmen. The first stuff you could tell. There were some jams off the radio, live recordings on the radio. And that's on our own label. It actually came out after *What Makes A Man Start Fires* which was recorded not too long after those Mike Patton sessions…

WHAT MAKES A MAN START FIRES?

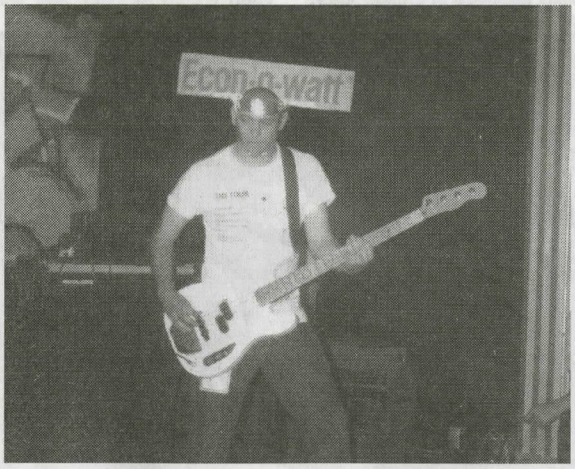


Though sequenced along the lines of logistics rather than straight aesthetics, ***What Makes A Man Start Fires*** *paces perfectly. A distinct mood and emotion is established early on, ebbing and flowing with the volume and tempo of each tune. In the scope of their existence, this album marks the maturity of both musicianship and lyrical tone that sets them forever apart from their "hardcore" contemporaries.*

What Makes A Man Start Fires is a weird record in that it's the only Minutemen record where I wrote all the music. A quarter of the words are Georgie, a quarter are D. Boon's and half are mine.

Trippy thing about D. Boon is he wrote the words, he wrote the music and used the words. Only rarely did he take some of Georgie's words and he never took any of mine. I probably wrote more songs with D. Boon words, or as much, I used his words to my music. Especially on *What Makes A Man Start Fires*. This was just shit he was doin' on an old notepad in the van from his van pool job for Nichols Institute. He

drove the van for the employee van pool. You listen to D. Boon words- they kind of rhyme and stuff. He doesn't just have like these stream of conscious things. Same with Georgie. Georgie had a job at five in the morning, with a mill, a lathe…mill lathe grindin' needle valves, and so he wasn't all the way there, you know? But the lyrics are submerged and stuff. D. Boon's, they're not really made to be given to me but he was not against it. He was into me makin' songs out of 'em. Or sometimes, he would sing over my music.



The basic goal of the Minutemen, we talked about this much, was, no matter what we played we wanted you to know it was us. So we didn't want to be tied to one kind of thing, certain sound, so much as maybe, structurally, have a signature but not so much with the licks and stuff. We wanted to play slow, we wanted to play slow, wanted to go fast, fast. If we wanted a lot of chords, a lot of chords, few chords, few chords. We didn't want to be hemmed in that way. But we did have a structure as far as the economy of hemmin' in the parts. I mean there are songs. like "The Product" with one part…but we still knew. And that one was like a three minute song, which was a fuckin' opus for us. But still. We wanted you to know it was the Minutemen. Same with the lyrics, we wanted you, if you talked to us before or after the gig, you could tell that we were the same guys that up on stage.

We worked with Georgie to develop parts. It wasn't all about just getting a back beat goin'. We wanted him just like he was a guitar or a bass, doing interplay and having specific stuff written out. That's funny, like, a lot of people think that a lot of the Minutemen was just jammin' but it was all very much worked out. We spent a long time. At the time, well, we had uh…like *Fires*; we were practicin' with Black Flag in the old SST, old downtown Torrance but the cops came in, there was a whole nightmare over that so we were practicin' in Long Beach at that time sharing a space with a Long Beach band called Secret Hate. After work and stuff we'd come in there and show Georgie the fuckin' dealios. Even if they were Georgie's words. We'd still have to work out the parts for his drums, get in there, show him. Yeah, 'cause with me and D. Boon it was really like osmosis, it was so easy, in a way. Because we had grown up and learned. Maybe even from *Paranoid Time*, we had got the template in our heads how much to give a song. How much time to give a part. to do it four times or eight times…that's about it, move on to the next part or end the song…So what it was, was to get different feelings that would describe somethin' about what we were singin' about.

FAKE CONTEST

I wrote that about this argument that was goin' on in *Flipside* magazine where readers were pro-TSOL and anti-us. We liked the guys in TSOL and it was strange…it was like we were in a contest with them. Like comics, fanzines were very heartfelt things. People wrote in them were the salt of the earth kind of thing, you know…and Pettibon's first thing was called *Captive Chains* comics, seemed like a good metaphor. Thing is these guys were writin' these letters, you know…And we were the same kind of guys in a way, we just did it different. We had different styles of music, we came from different life, some of us were younger than others but I didn't feel it necessary to say TSOL and Minutmen.

It's like Wittgenstein, I was readin' him, semantics and the whole word game notion that you can't know anything you can only believe things because words get in the way of the understanding, in the mind as an idea. It's too depressing to think about. I was intrigued by that because I was also learning things through words, you know? Like the literature of James Joyce and insights that were kind of positive and uplifting for me. It was inspiring me, they fired me up. They did. "The time monitor/ The space measurer"- that's all I did with Bloom (from Joyce's *Ulysses*).

BEACON SIGHTED THROUGH FOG

"Beacon" is like Joyce's thing…I was readin' *Ulysses* and it had a big effect on me. The notion of who made the safe man. I shoulda put it in quotes, it's the notion of who the hell made the safe man. That's the notion. Living your life as a normal person, whatever normal means, as a human being. (On the phrase in the same song: "Syrup...lacking...totaled...") I get feelings like that…everyone does. Thinking man, it's Bloom, Leopold Bloom walking through Dublin. I was really influenced by that book and on Double Nickels I have song called "June 16th." That tour with Black Flag we stayed at Henry's ma's house she had a bunch of concordances on *Ulysses*. *On the Liffey*, (*Ulysses On The Liffey*, by Richard Ellmann) I read that. It struck a chord to me. It's like Mark Twain. He's on the raft with Jim, he's walking Dublin with Daedalus. He's goin' through hell and purgatory with Virgil. Same idea….a companion, another person. To get out of your own head so you're not always in your own head. All my songs are about your in own head. They're all jokes on me…my style of writing…

D. Boon thought I wrote too spacey. You know, I did. I don't think he knew what the fuck they were about. He would take everything to heart, he was amazing that way. He always gave of himself. Yeah. So you'd give him spaced out words like that and he'd still put everything he had into them. Well, "Beacon Sighted Through Fog", "Tin Roof", stuff like that, I mean what the fuck is that shit about? He still sang his heart out with it, it was great. "History Lesson" is a little more obvious, you know? These hardcore kids, I think we scared 'em a little bit with the music, like we were Martians from planet Jazz, or something, I don't know. And we were just tryin' to tell 'em, we're just like you—friends makin' bands with each other.

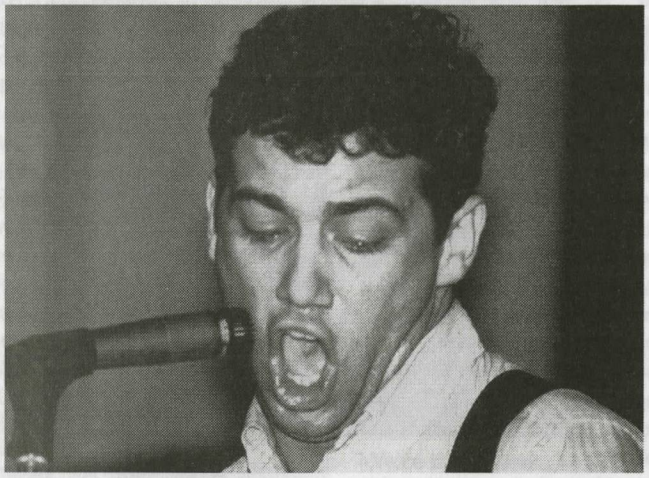
You got big interplay between the bass and the drums, too. In fact there was a lot of times, D. Boon, when he sang, which made this gig last week very hard, he just stopped playing. Singing it through on the off-beats. And playin' the bass is fuckin' impossible. That's why D. Boon played really treble-y, give me a lot of room, Georgie always starts his drum parts, when he composed 'em, he'd always start with the high hat. High hat, cymbal interplay, the kick drum was always the last, which is weird because that's the closest things to my notes.

Fires is the only one where D.Boon wrote the guitar part first for one of my words. He didn't write the words for "Mutiny In Jonestown", I did. So if you look at it, it's my words, Georgie's words, D. Boon's words, my words. So it'd be circular. I had the fuckin' most songs, half the songs. I couldn't put all mine together. So I put 'em at the beginning and at the end and I put Georgie's and D.Boon's in the middle. In blocks so you would get a feel, they wouldn't jump all over the place, you'd get a feel for us. This way it would look like it was beginning and ending again. It was all mobius, all circular.

The original concept, the Minutemen, was one song. The set was supposed to be one song. They weren't really supposed to be little songs. It was one fuckin' song, all parted out into this thing, you know? Remember,

the whole idea of the band was like, so if you met us before the gig or after the gig you'd could tell we were the guys who were playin' it. That was the whole idea, that's what we thought, since we thought we were a little fuckin' weird and different. That would reflect itself and that would in reflect the music and we would make the music reflect us. Then they wouldn't know that we were learned off of Blue Öyster Cult and Cream and shit. We had a big guilt complex about that.

I wrote more words at that time. And that was a weird situation with D. Boon, it was the only time he didn't live in 'Pedro. He lived in Culver City; it wasn't too stable for him. He was still writin' stuff; he put in his quota of words. It was just a rough time for D.Boon. First part of it, I was home a lot since I had two knee surgeries. So that's why you can hear some of the demos like on *Politics of Time*, like "'99". Georgie's words and turns into "Times" from *Time*...same music.



(Looking back) I like "Beacon Sighted Through Fog." I like "The Tin Roof" I think there's interesting conversations between the instruments there. That was our goal, you know? And I still look back on it as a noble goal that we were trying to attain. I love D. Boon's simplicity in, like, "Sell or Be Sold" and very bizarre bass playing...I mean, up to that point I'm usin' the pick, almost playing rhythm guitar. But it seems like I'm kinda, uh, I don't want to say proud, but I'm kinda into the idea that I wasn't so worried about what the bass should be. Whatever would work in the song. So on something like "Sell or Be Sold", I'm literally playing rhythm guitar. I'm really doin' it in "Bob Dylan Wrote Propaganda Songs".

THE ANCHOR

I'm tellin' you, George Hurley–what a drummer, what a unique voice. A trippy approach to drums. He's really a treasure. He really is. I've played with a few drummers since fIREHOSE and Minutemen but man, George Hurley, much respect for him. So, those songs, on *Fires*, there's something to be said about the tunes I wrote with Georgie's words. Like "The Anchor". "The Anchor" was the first two minute Minutmen song. He said it was about a dream. We asked him right away. We said what the fuck is this and he said it was a dream where he thought he was somebody like Mick Jagger. He's in the bathtub. He's actually asleep and dreaming all this, you know? These girls and you know he's like Mick Jagger some superstar rock and roller or something. But the reality, you know, is wakin' up...that's the anchor. The anchor is the reality...it's not real. This is just a dream.

BUZZ OR HOWL UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF HEAT

buzz or howl under the influence of heat

After the more structured and "adult", if you will, ***Fires****, the Minutemen kicked out this nine-song EP, a mixed bag of more experimental, immediate and bare tunes, clearly not confined to a theme or attitude. If by now you thought you knew the Minutemen,* ***Buzz or Howl*** *provided a keener portal to that which made them tick. An appreciation for finding nuance and freedom within structure, and a few raw nerves left open.*

Let's see, after *What Makes A Man Start Fires* it's very strange for me too; the way I used a bass guitar because I'm usin' a pick and I'm strummin' it almost like a rhythm guitar...which is bizarre. Well, no, not yet...Because. we do a tour with Black Flag in U.S. and Europe. And we're usin' their stuff...all ten of us ridin' in the van in the U.S...pretty intense. But first big tour, we get to go around. First time for us in Europe, ever. And it was very excitin'. They had the version with Dezo on guitar, Billy Stevenson on drums. Henry singin'. That was the first tour for Henry.

Then we come back and we cut our heads bald for the first time. We go to Mexico for Fourth of July. We get all sunburned on the head and stuff. D. Boon writes a song called "Corona" and I write , "I Felt Like A Gringo." Then we do *Buzz Or Howl,* and one of them appears on there. There were soldiers handing out bread, young guys. Teenagers handing out bread for the pre-party, you know.. Which was unusual. I'd never been to a Mexican election before. And being on July 4th, which is like U.S. patriotic thing, and here is another land doing their political thing, it was kinda trippy for me so I wrote a song about it. I didn't understand a lot of things. I sure as hell didn't understand a lot of things about the U.S., let alone Mexico. But it was very profound on me and then D. Boon wrote this song about this lady pickin' up bottles after all this partyin'. All these U.S. people would be down there, throwin' their bottles around and this lady's gonna feed her niños with the money collected. So he writes a song called "Corona".

They were wrote on the same day. Two different angles of the same moment from guys in the same band who grew up together, are friends, you know? If it shows you anything...there's no one straight line on any kind of event. That's why history is kind of...well, it's a good word, ain't it? 'Cause it's his story. Not my story. It's even funnier on another level of abstraction because a friend of mine, Spike Jonez, did this pilot called *Jackass* and he asked me to use that song. So a lot of kids, that's how they know Minutemen, the *Jackass* song, "Corona", but it has very little to do with what the song is about.

(*Buzz or Howl* is) a huge record, another turning point for us, because half of it is done with Spot, live to two-track. But then the other side is done with Ethan James, the guy who was in Blue Cheer, known as Ralph Kellog. He offered to give us a song. We put three songs together and told him it was one song, and he couldn't tell the difference because they were so short and it became "Self Referenced" and "Cut." And then, that's really the last record where I played pick. D. Boon overdubbed guitars. It's an eight track recordin'. We loved the way it sounded. We liked Spot's too. His is live to two track with only two mics and two pezios and we'd just learned the songs so we didn't even have an ending for "Little Man With A Gun In His Hand" yet, so that's why it had to fade out ... just usin' McDonald's SVT bass amp. The last time I used a pick was fuckin' *Buzz or Howl...*

Ethan James had a profound effect on us. Just as Spot had a profound effect on early Minutmen. But the later Minutemen period was very much influenced by Ethan James. He had a studio in Venice (Radio Tokyo). He used an Atari 8 Track, and the drums, the toms are in stereo, there was a kick snare, that's four of the tracks. Bass in those days with Ethan—I didn't even use an amp. I'd plug right into the desk with EMG pick-ups. Ethan passed away last year from liver cancer...it was bad. He was a great cat. Not some guy who would beat you down with the way

things should be. Very interesting cat, very well read. Very easy to work with. Had a huge effect on the Minutemen. And, in fact, because of that experience with *Buzz or Howl*, we decide to do the *Double Nickels* thing with him.

Joe Baiza did the cover because I wanted to use these colored frogs from Scientific American but the bones ($) were so much for color separations that we went black and white and Joe Baiza did that in one night. Baiza, he drew some Charlie Parker and John Coltrane on the back of *What Makes A Man Start Fires*. D. Boon started his little comics, like he'd do at lunch at noon.

"The Product"

If you listen to ("The Product"), the one riff guy is mainly the bass because there's this huge interchange between D. Boon and Georgie, you know. After the words they have this whole thing between the guitar and drums. Georgie double-timin' it up. All these kind of things where I'm the guy who's kinda doin' the traditional holdin' it down role. Also it happens in the middle of "Little Man With A Gun In His Hand" too. Where Georgie and D. Boon have the interplay, I'm on the third and the sixth (notes of the scale). "Bee-boom... bee-bohm..." Set up kind of an aural thing that D. Boon can jam all inside. We were very influenced too by a band in LA called the Urinals. In songs like "Surfin' With The Shah" there's this huge jam out in the middle, they're just in one chord.

That's a big part of the middle of "Little Man With A Gun In His Hand". We were influenced by all the punk bands that we saw and played with. The Minutmen thing was, don't copy 'em. You can be influenced but don't copy. Although I would never be afraid to acknowledge any of the debt about the influence, I still think it went through the Minutemen strainer enough that it became our band. Our sound. Not so much with the Reactionaries but with the Minutemen, yeah. I mean it took time to develop, you understand...me and D. Boon did not write any songs as kids. I wrote one whole song before Reactionaries. I actually wrote all the songs in the Reactionaries.... and they were terrible!

DOUBLE NICKELS ON THE DIME

Arguably the zenith of the Minutemen's recorded history, ***Double Nickels*** *stands as testament to one of punk's best groups at their creative peak. 45 songs enveloping all aspects of the band, from influences to fortes. A classic in any genre. The story has been told and retold: Originally conceived as a single recording, they went back into the studio after catching wind of labelmate Husker Du's double-opus* ***Zen Arcade****. The rest is history.*

March of '84 is when *Double Nickels*, the second record, was recorded. The first record was recorded in, I guess, November of '83. We had an album done in and then the Huskers came to town, did *Zen Arcade*, and we said, "fuck, we should do a double record, too!" So we wrote a bunch of songs and then we had to invent this concept. 'Cause they had a concept for theirs—a kid playin' in a video arcade or somethin'. So we came up with this idea; make fun of Sammy Hagar and Pink Floyd's *Ummagumma* at the same time. And nobody got it. Yeah "double nickels on the dime" means driving exactly 55 miles an hour. So what we thought of was a double album by Pink Floyd called *Ummagumma* where each guy got his own solo song. And then we also made fun of Sammy Hagar where he won't drive 55 but he's playin' all this tame-ass fuckin' pedestrian shit. So we said we'll drive 55 and then we'll play insane music. In fact on the label we put the 55 speed limit sign because Hagar had it with the fuckin' red line through it.

We drew straws and then we picked songs. Each of the three guys got one pick each, in turn, and it went in order they picked 'em. And the shitty ones would hug the label and the good ones would be on the outside—the way you wanted a vinyl record to work because that's where the needle goes first, is on the outside. So Georgie got first pick, he picked his own song, solo song. D. Boon got the next pick and he got Anxious Mofo, then I got "Michael Jackson". Then Georgie picked "Roar Of The Masses Could Be Farts". Then D. Boon picked...

let alone possess? ***THEATRE IS THE LIFE OF YOU*** *as the revoluti*

Dirk Vandenberg words. The guy who's landlady had the "Take Five, D" words. Like I said, I really didn't fuckin' want to do tract homes so I did these strategies to keep myself fresh by usin' other people's words. I even used Jack Brewer's (of Saccharine Trust) cousin, Joe Brewer's words. A guy I didn't even know. Who wrote the song called, "Please Don't Be Gentle With Me."

I had a problem with feelin' I was writin' what I call "tract housing". Just writin' the same fuckin' song over and over and just movin' the garage. So to me it was very important to have D. Boon and Georgie words to steer the music so I wasn't just writing the same song. So, I mean, I write more than half the music on that record although D. Boon was comin' back and stuff. He'd moved back to 'Pedro, had a more stable situation. But a lot of the words he would write for me, he never even meant 'em to be songs he was just writin' things down you know, on paper. Like at the time he was driving the van pool van. So at the time he'd write, like, "Let the products sell themselves. Fuck advertising". Those were never meant to be songs. They were more like just observations and things he was thinkin' about. And that's actually the only song with a pick on that record and that's actually the last song I recorded with a pick,. To me, they're very inspiring. Of course the sentiment and stuff like that but also musically. 'Cause, the rhythms, I would fucking get out of my own head and write new songs. Writin' songs. Writin' stuff. So it was very important to me to take Georgie and D. Boon's stuff for source material and help me get out of that "I Love Lucy" re-run shit.

It's like theater and I'm doin' little dramas. That's the way I look at the totality of it. The words and the music. I'm creating these little scenes. You know, I tried to learn more about grooves and stuff like this, but man, it's...as far as me creating and stuff, there's a period where I was doin' a bunch of copy songs again. Not too long ago. Something I did as a teen-ager. This is not that kind of period. This period was, uh, I had D. Boon with me...I could be very very bold with my ideas. I could write all the shit I could think of. So that's what I was tryin' to do. There's fuckin' times when I had D. Boon say shit that had nothin' to do with the rest of the song, I just wanted to hear that then, like it was drama. When he saw me write my songs, when I was doin' it, not Reactionaries—tryin' writin' rock and roll songs, but Minutemen, I found myself doin' it like a lightin' man or a stage director doin' a play, you know. You put the lights over here, change the color and have him stand right here. So like there's this song, "I'm Expected I'm Gone" where I have D. Boon say "Big fuckin' shit, right now, man" and that has nothin' to do with the song. I just wanted him to say it there...

On Double Nickels, there's a lot of classic songs like "Anxious Mofo", to me are like the Minutemen distilled to its essence. D.Boon plays a solo on there that is so great, it's so econo. The same with the solo he does on "June 16th", there's no fuckin' waste, you know, there's no filler. He's just got the fuckin', boiled it down to the bare nada, no showin' off.. Everything's to serve the song, to serve the mood, the idea, the feeling

leaf-like, you and me baby twinkle-twinkle TWO BEADS AT THE END
DO YOU WANT NEW WAVE (OR DO YOU WANT THE TRUTH)?
T FROM AN OLD NOTEBOOK let the products sell themselves fuck ac

It's like Wittgenstein, I was readin' him, Wittgenstein semantics, the roles according to nouns and the whole word game notion that you can't know anything, you can only believe things because words get in the way of the understanding, in the mind as an idea. It's too depressing to think about.

here on the beach I only had a Corona (5¢ deposit
ny, the flame child) TAKE 5, D. hope we can rely c

"Take Five, D" is in response to D. Boon sayin my lyrics are too spacey. That's the reason we did the Steely Dan song. Because what the fuck were Steely Dan lyrics about? We never understood. So that was another kind of joke on Watt's spaciness, from his words. Which actually, for me, were not spacey. I always thought my words were clear cut but ...Well to me, they're really defined but the slang was so heavy people didn't know what the fuck I was talkin' about. But I was tryin' to write songs like D. Boon's songs I just didn't have a knack for the straightforward and easily comprehendible by other people.

sponsible ***THIS AIN'T NO PICNIC*** *working or*

D. Boon wrote it on the job at auto parts counter. He was tryin' to listen to K-DAY the soul station and the boss didn't want to listen to "nigger shit." That's what he told me. So it was anti-racist, pro-free speech, you know, listen to the radio you want-issue. But no-one has ever told me that this is what they understand "This Ain't No Picnic" to be about...So a lot of times, you know, there's the artist, the creator and then there's the listener and then in between them, the Grand Canyon.

tim of my choice ***TOADIES*** *N7 on the chump list*

"Toadies" I wrote after reading memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich, called *Stalin's Little Fuck*. A lot of this stuff is from written references of mine. They strike me; they make a strong impression on me. Then I write songs for people too, because people put a huge impression on me. So that's where my sources come from. I'm not really a music person. I got into this to be with my friend. But I wrote "Toadies" from Shostakovich and then the music I got by twistin' up Bowie's "Fashion." And fuckin' "Retreat" I was trying to get the drum part in Sex Pistols' "Problems." It's three over four with the kick drum. I wanted a real dynamic thing with softness and loudness. The last part on it is like "Problems," with D. Boon jammin' lead guitar.

So we got these songs left, now what order do we put 'em in? It was like one side of a regular record. The other sides got picked by pickin'. So that's like 36 of the songs, 35 of the songs picked by the guys likin' 'em. But we didn't wanna throw those songs out because you had a whole side. So that was it, all 45 made it on there. We even redid a version of "Little Man With A Gun In His Hand." It was shittier...but it had an ending. The one on *Buzz Or Howl*'s much better. We had just learned it, the week before.

Side four is just side chaff and it's got songs no-one picked. (laughs) Yeah, that side had picking for that side. The fourth side is done with more reasoning. But the order was totally unconscious. I'm just pickin' the best ones that I like—the best—every guy is. That's why I knew we'd have a three strong sides. It wouldn't be all put on one side.

LOVE DANCE

"Love Dance" was picked on purpose to be last. We wrote that in the basement of the Minor Threat house. Ian McKaye's pad. You had to stand with your head between the slats, real low ceiling. We wrote that song there. Boon did a guitar lick and me and Georgie played under it.

I paid for that record. $1100.00. That's the best record I ever played on. It came together as a big collection of accidents. But to me that's really the defining Minutemen record. That's where we kinda really put our ideas where we wanted them. Without bein' really calculatin' and shit. It was just circumstance that put us in a position to be able to do that there. And Ethan mixed that thing in one night. 45 songs. One night.

PROJECT: MERSH

"Now after Double Nickels we try something with Joe Carducci (depicted on cover as mastermind behind the marketing sesh'), ***Project Mersh****. Which is us kind of us really makin' fun of ourselves. We got fade outs, longer songs, songs with choruses."*

I think people got the idea that we were tryin' to be kind of ironic. The thing about the Minutemen too—our audience wasn't so huge that we had to, like, listen to their demands, you know what I mean? Shoutin' out in the wilderness and doin' whatever. That's one great thing...I think why even today I have a sense of self-reliance is because of those days, man. We just did things because we wanted to do it and force the issue. We weren't really beholden to any kind of audience or whatever. You know? It was all up to us. And Carducci presented us with this idea and we say why not? We'll try it. We'll make some fun out of this. I mean we weren't gonna make fuckin' 30 *Project Mersh* records. We did that. And we had Crane on it. He played trumpet and sings on all the songs 'King of the Hill", "Cheerleader", "Take Our Test" and "Tour Spiel", along with the Steppenwolf cover ("Hey Lawdy Mama"), which was Carducci's idea. Steppenwolf was a big band for me and D. Boon when we were teenagers. And we also did some psychedelic take on "Tour Spiel" called "More Spiel".

We recorded it at the studio where Dokken would come out of, later. Redondo Beach, Total Access. So we weren't in Radio Tokyo for that. But we brought Ethan over along with Carducci. You know, just to see what would happen. And this is when the Minutemen started tourin' a lot more.

3-WAY TIE (FOR LAST)

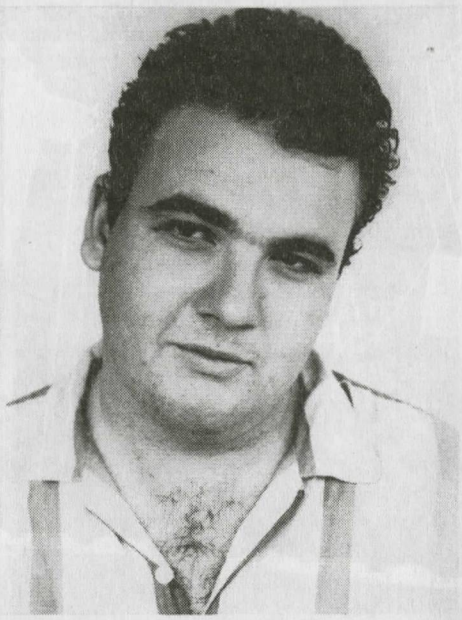
Another distinct direction in the career of the Minutemen as three songwriters/ musicians/pals. Their tragically-destined final installment portrays long-time pals Boon and Watt as fully-realized personalities, with clear social and personal influences, developed and honest. Concept and formula are sidelined for a more straightforward exchange of ideas and idealisms, rants, nods and collaborations.

That's a weird record. I started to collaborate with Kira; there are no Georgie songs. Georgie had stopped writin' words by then. He just stopped. I don't know why but I kind of miss it. I missed it. One reason why I collaborated with Kira.

D. Boon was involved...by that time he had joined CISPES, with the Committee in Solidarity with the People in El Salvador. So I know that had a big influence. If you listen to songs like "The Big Stick", I think that's partially due to his involvement with CISPES, he wanted to do somethin' to help the movement, in an artistic way, So he wrote songs like that. Which I very much supported.

"The Price of Paradise" is about his half brother, comin' back from Vietnam...me and D. Boon were gettin' much more intense with our

songs again. Because *Project Mersh*, you know, having fun with our own image, wasn't as serious with the songwriting in some ways. Although his songs had very serious subjects: "Cheerleaders," "King of the Hill." Again, the CISPES experience. But musically not as intense, and I think we were coming back around to get into a head space like where we were at with *Double Nickels*. With a lot more interplay and a lot less separateness…bringing the songs to practice.



We were more separate, as a thing. Ah, you know, things go through different phases. But we were comin' back intensely. We talked about it those last two tours. The "Co-conspirators" tour in the fall of '85 and then R.E.M. tour, ends up our last tour. In fact the last song I play with D. Boon was on guitar, on stage with REM was D. Boon doin' Television's "See No Evil" in Charlotte, North Carolina. But we're talkin' that whole time about this new triple album we're gonna do. And I know it wouldn't have been an extension of the Three Way Tie or the Project Mersh. I think it would have been doublin' back around to, like, Double Nickels….

The Minutemen always worked. Never made enough at music to live off of, so we all had jobs. So we jammed econo. We never really hung out in the studio. We would get everything worked out at prac. The studio's very expensive for us. I worked as pot and pan boy at the hospital. Me and D. Boon were Jack In the Box guys—graveyard shift, 11-7 weekends, $1.65 an hour. Washing pots and pans, $1.20 an hour. I ran the parkin' lot at the Catalina terminal in 'Pedro. You know, you sit in a booth. I was puttin' myself through school, too. I got a degree in Electronics. Long Beach State, Harbor College. In fact I gave myself pneumonia, I was doin' so much, burnin' the candle at both ends. I worked for an old lawyer, named Mr. Hanley as a paralegal getting orders signed and stuff like that. You know we all…Georgie worked in a machine shop milling on a lathe. D. Boon towards the end there he did construction, helpin' Greg Ginn's dad add on…build another house. Add on rooms and this stuff. Throwin' hammers. We all worked the whole time. Not only our fathers were working class, we were too. But you know, everybody's born in a situation and you get dealt a hand and you play it. That's what we were doing.

"BALLOT RESULT"

To quote the telling in-flight update from ***3-Way Tie (For Last):*** *"There are still lofty dreams, meager desires and still silliness." At the point of conception, "Ballot Result" was to be their most ambitious project yet. Included in the* ***3-Way Tie*** *package was a ballot sheet with every Minutemen song released to date. Thirty top songs were to be voted on for performance and enshrinement.*

"Three Dudes, Six Sides, Half Studio, Half Live" was a provisional title for what was the final Minutemen project. In December of 1985, just weeks removed from the release of ***3-Way Tie****, Dennes Dale Boon died from injuries incurred in a van accident (he was asleep in the back) in the Arizona desert.*

ACTUAL "BALLOT RESULTS" **(from ballots received by SST Records between January and April of '86 in descending order):**

1. **THIS AIN'T NO PICNIC**
2. **IF REAGAN PLAYED DISCO**
3. **JESUS AND TEQUILA**
4. **BOB DYLAN WROTE PROPAGANDA SONGS**
5. **KING OF THE HILL**
6. **LITTLE MAN WITH A GUN IN HIS HAND**
7. **THE PUNCH LINE**
8. **NO ONE**
9. **COURAGE**
10. **THE CHEERLEADERS**
11. **HISTORY LESSON - PART TWO**
12. **POLITICAL SONG FOR MICHAEL JACKSON TO SING**
13. **JOE McCARTHY'S GHOST**
14. **SHIT YOU HEAR AT PARTIES**
15. **PARANOID CHANT**
16. **I FELT LIKE A GRINGO**
17. **SEARCH**
18. **BADGES**
19. **ACK ACK ACK**
20. **JOY**
21. **SONG FOR EL SALVADOR**
22. **DREAMS ARE FREE, MOTHERFUCKER!**
23. **THE PRICE OF PARADISE**
24. **CUT**
25. **TAKE OUR TEST**
26. **TOUR-SPIEL**
27. **PARTY WITH ME, PUNKER**
28. **TENSION**
29. **HEY LAWDY MAMA**
30. **SPLIT RED**

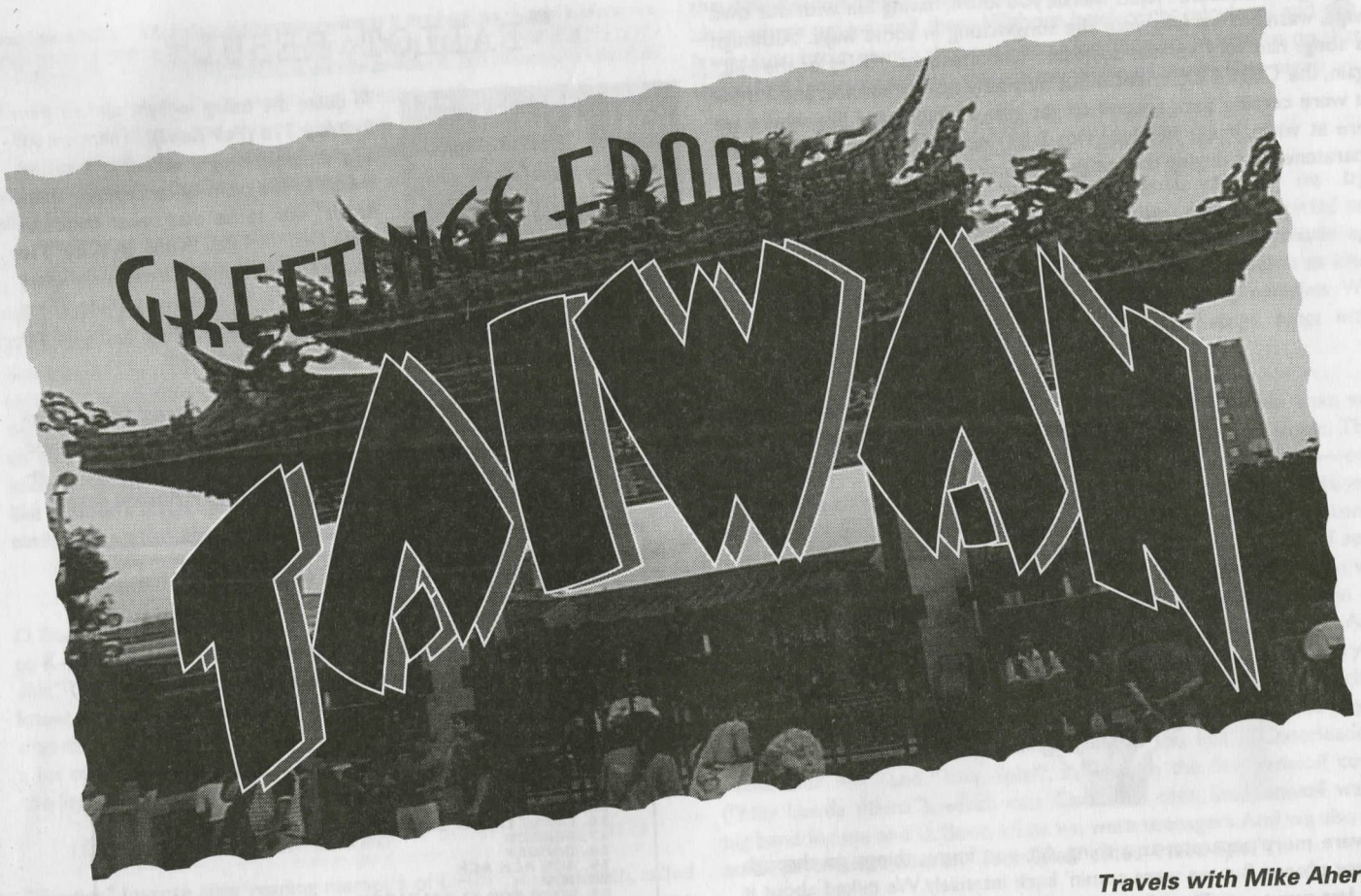
(note: JOY and PARTY WITH ME, PUNKER were inadvertantly omitted from this record, sorry)

Many many thanks to Martin Lyon for the excellent pix. Please visit his site at http://martinlyon.com. He also has some great shots of the Firehose years and Sonic Youth.

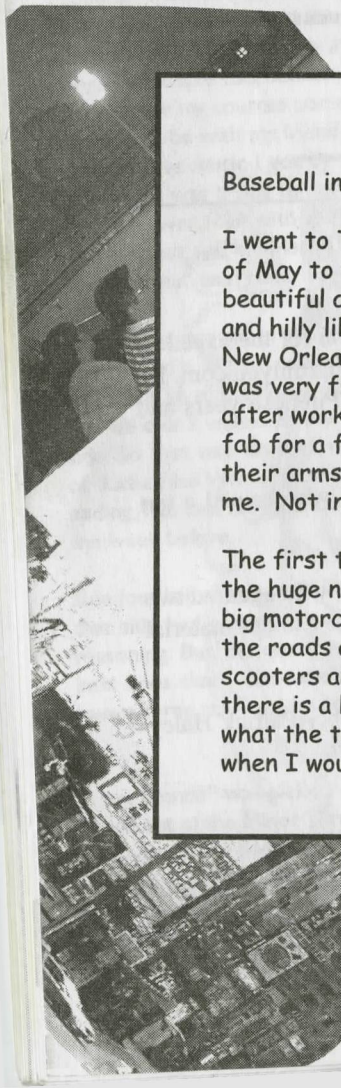
A serious debt to Hap Mansfield, who helped a ton with the research and editing.

Big thanks of course of Mike Watt, who endured two sessions of 2-1/2 hours each to get enough material for this retrospective.

Thanks also to Jeff Fox and possibly Patrick Haley for their pictures.



Travels with Mike Ahern



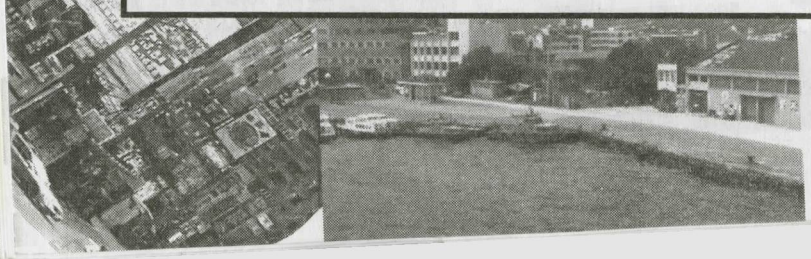
Baseball in Taiwan

I went to Taiwan for work from the middle of May to the first week of June. It was beautiful and interesting. It was very green and hilly like Seattle, but hot and humid like New Orleans. The food was great, everyone was very friendly. Even to the point that after working in the TSMC semiconductor fab for a few weeks, coworkers were putting their arms around me when they would talk to me. Not in a weird way either.

The first thing I noticed about Taiwan was the huge number of scooters. Not too many big motorcycles, not too many bicycles, but the roads are packed and have about 70% scooters and 30% cars. At intersections, there is a lot of merging going on no matter what the traffic lights' color. Sometimes when I would turn right or left, there

Baseball in Taiwan

could be scooters passing me on the right or left. It is a little disconcerting. But I realized after a while that although the scooter drivers seemed reckless, they wouldn't actually hit my car if I just proceeded forward at a moderate pace. Some Americans drive around Taiwan angrily honking their horns at everyone, I just got used to it and assimilated.



The Baseball League

There are 6 teams in the Chinese Professional Baseball League (CPBL). They are all Taiwan-based, but they play in a total of 10 stadiums throughout Taiwan.

The Teams:

Tainan Lions
Brother Elephants
Makoto Cobras
Sinan Bulls
China Trust Whales
La New Bears

Each team has a sponsor. For example "Brother" is a hotel in Taiwan, "La New" is a shoe store. The teams have historical geographical homes, but now they tour around the island playing at all 10 stadiums.

The Baseball League

The teams play 100-game schedules, 50 games for each half, and at the end of the year the winners of the 2 halves play a best-of-7 for the championship. If the same team wins both halves, that team plays the team with the 2nd best overall record, but the series starts 1-0 in favor of the first place team.

The Fields

I was working in the town of Hsin Chu, which is about an hour south of Taipei, the capital and largest city in Taiwan. The first game I went to was in Hsin Chu. It was the Cobras against the Bulls. The sides of the stands were divided by team alliance. I went to the merchandise area and looked at which team had the better merch. The orange and black Cobras had the better stuff so I rooted for them and sat on their side.

The ballpark at Hsin Chu is old. It looks something like a bullfighting stadium or a soccer stadium, with no seats, just stepped concrete to sit on. The infield is dirt, (one of two stadiums with dirt infield). I would guess it would hold 25 thousand people, and the night I went it was half full. The crowd was noisy from the start. Many fans have plastic noisemakers they bang together

The Fields

in rhythm with a band. Each team has a small band which plays songs and starts chants with their drummers. The Cobras had a chubby guy with a long goatee and a shaved head who lead one cheer that went "Anda la anda ...Chin Lai Da." Which I think translates into something like "Hit, get a hit.... Home Run". The band played "Popeye the Sailor" and other funny recognizable tunes that I wouldn't expect to hear at a ballpark. But they were good and the crowd kept the momentum going by banging their noisemakers.

The Players

The Players

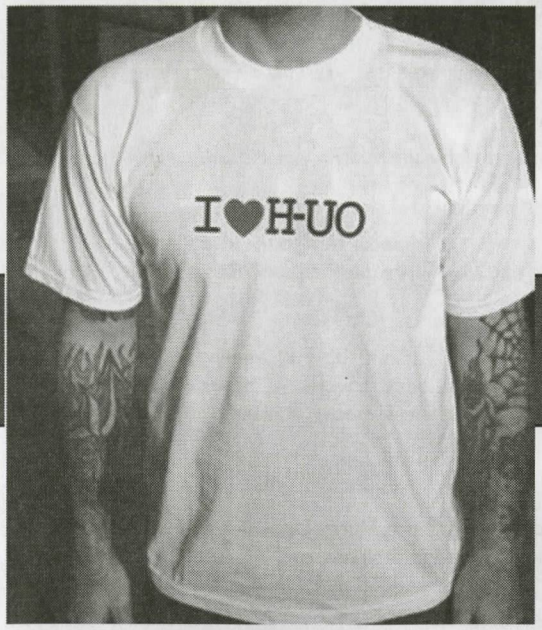
The first thing I noticed about the players was their defense. Both teams took some incredible infield practice, whipping the ball from base to base at a blindingly fast pace. These guys are better with gloves than major leaguers. It was like a whole infield of Omar Vizquels and the catchers were all little Pudge Rodriguezes, all with cannons for arms. I was thinking that if a player from Taiwan was going to make it to the majors, it might be a middle infielder or a catcher. They were all pretty small guys; they can play. The bats, not so much. Not a lot of pop in these guys bats. I didn't see any homers in the 2 games I went to, I think there was one long foul that could have been a homer. So they play a lot of small-ball. I made a friend at the Hsin Chu game who told me his name was Joe. After a pitcher walked the first 2 batters to start an inning, the 3rd guy up showed bunt on the first pitch. I told Joe, "He shouldn't give away that out if the pitcher can't throw a strike." Joe didn't speak much English and I don't think he understood my subtle point on strategy. I am preaching the gospel of Billy Beane even in Taiwan. Well, that batter DID eventually bunt, and then the pitcher walked the next batter and the next one after that. Then there was a wild pitch. Score: 2-0 Cobras, but they had no hits. The Bulls pulled that pitcher and put in another and got out of the inning with no more runs. Joe taught me some words:

"cho" = the word for the ball
"how cho" = strike (good ball)
"why cho" = ball (bad ball)
"chuchi" = out
"anda" = hit,
"chin lai da" = homer

American Ball Players

Americans Ball Players in Taiwan

The 2nd game I went to was in a Taipei suburb of Tien Mu. I met a guy on the internet via a site called Baseball Guru. He got me in touch with a guy in Taiwan named Paul Huang. Paul contacted me and invited me to go to a game with him. I learned that Paul works for the Taipei Times. Not only did we go to the game, we went on the field and met the players on the Lions and the Whales. It was great. I was a member of the press! CPBL rules say each team can have 4 foreign born players. The Lions have a closer named Mike Rodriguez who is from Riverside, CA. The Whales have 2 Americans and 2 Dominicans. The Americans were pitchers, Rusty Meacham and Denny Harriger. Both have spent a little time in the Majors. Rusty told me all about how he was in the game when George Brett got his 3000th hit, then got picked off of first base. Denny showed me how he holds the changeup and we swapped stories about how Taiwan was similar and different from America. These players spending time to talk was the highlight of my trip. Even the Taiwanese players who couldn't speak too much English were happy to take pictures with me and shake hands. I decided to root for the Whales based on talking to Denny and Rusty, but the Lions won. The games feel a little like AAA ball, and the ticket prices are reasonable and the food at the park is good and inexpensive. In the immortal words of Harry Carray: "Come out to the ballpark, you win, great, you lose, so what, you have some food, you have some drinks, you have a good time at the ballpark."



PUNK LIFE

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, BOY?

BACKYARD BARBECUING WITH MAX FROM HURRY-UP OFFENSE

On a beautiful sunny Sunday in San Francisco this last Summer, ChinMusic! editor Kevin Chanel met with Hurry-Up Offense's Max Leavitt at a friend's backyard barbecue. In attendance were Nat Hays of Plus One Music, Floyd from Fat Wreck Chords and about twenty other people.

Max Leavitt: "Note to self: Blue couch fabric."

ChinMusic!: "...Sell Amalgamated at plus-3."

ML: "Take it to the Zurich account. Account number 'XJ29.'"

CM: "...Make sure he uses the red boat–NOT the blue boat, because security..."
(much laughter)

ML: ...*I wish* I was a spy...

CM: I wish I had a job...

ML: I'm in a band, and it's cool...but I wish I wish I was a SPY!

CM: (after another round of Sierra Nevadas are opened) How do you get around, being a band in New York?

ML: It's a bitch! It's such a bitch. I mean, it's got its goods and bads, I guess.

CM: So you're living in town then?

ML: Yeah, I live in Manhattan, the other guys live in Brooklyn. There are some really tough things and some really cool things about it.

CM: I would think it would be logistically tough.

ML: *So* hard...

CM: I mean with all your equipment—

ML: That is like, the *biggest* pain in the ass, I would say. But like, it took us at least two years just to figure that shit out. Once you do know how it works you figure the ins and outs of it. But, all of the equipment is stuffed in my apartment. My little apartment that's just packed—

CM: Is it like the Ramones did it, where you have to take your guitars on the subway, in paper bags?

ML: We have to call and get this weird hippie, with a van, to pick us up, take us to the show, drop us off. Come back at like, midnight, pick us up, take our shit back...you can't have a fuckin' vehicle in New York.

CM: There's a hippie van service though?

ML: Yeah! There's a man with a van. Bob, dude. Bob is so crazy. Bob...shaves the front half of his head. And he's got really long hair. And he shaves it this way...he looks kinda like Gallagher. It's like so weird...like "I can't come to the phone right now, I'm shaving the front half of my head."
(laughter) "Leave a message."

CM: Cuz you know what happened was, he was shaving, and just fucked up, and somebody said "hey, *that's* pretty cool." And he had to stick with it after that. For like, twenty years.

ML: –"Everyone shaves the sides...why don't I...shave the front!" I think he probably lives in that van, too. He's got like the microwave and the TV back there, with all our equipment—

Nat Hays: Fax machine...deep fryer...

ML: The man with the van though, that's how you do it in New York.

CG: So what happens if you and some other of his clients have a show on the same night, on opposite ends of town?

CM: Yeah, does he have you scheduled? Are there spreadsheets?

ML: Well, the other, the good thing I was going to say about New York is that all...*most* of the clubs in the rock...are all in the same area. And you just can coordinate it; so if one band's playing at nine, he has to drop them off at like six, and pick them up at...ten. But we're playing later, so he can drop them off, pick us up, blah blah blah...it's like fucking Southwest Airlines.

NH: "Uhhh, we're departing in six minutes...

ML: Be ready at 7:40, your flight leaves at 8:10, kinda shit, you know?...The only time he ever gets surly is every now and then he'll be like "Yo, can I *come* to the show tonite?" And so you put him on the list, and then seven Maker's Marks later he's like "Load up the gearrrr!...Let's go!...You fuckerrrs!" Fuckin-A, dude. And he just gets full of suggestions too. He's like, "Now when Nirvana started the first song in their set...you know you gotta do it like this, you gotta..." And we're just in the back going, "uhhhhh..."

CM: Well you gotta understand, that was back when he was just "*Mini*-van Guy"...He was just starting out, just kinda going—

ML: "Back in '85, in Buffalo, they were..."

CM: "There was a Goo Goo Dolls van ethic that started in Buffalo, see...It actually started with Rick James, but that's beside the point."

ML: "My friends owned the restaurant, and you

shoulda seen who came in there..." Uhh...just drive the van.

CM: And a hippie shall lead the way. That's enterprising, at it's hippie best.

ML: He's the main inspiration. Van, no van...as long as he's there rootin' me on.

CM: Well that's cool, cuz someday he's gonna lose that van, cuz he can't pay the tickets, and he's gonna be Rickshaw-Guy. Cruising around the Lower East Side...

ML: —With a big SVT cabinet! It's got wheels; you could just bungee-cord the SVT to the back. It would be heavy though. I'd be yelling "Faster! Faster!...You rickshaw-mother-fucker."

CM: So why did you go with Hurry-Up Offense, instead of, say, Two Minute Warning, or Prevent Defense, or...

ML: —No Huddle Offense...people have suggested—

CM: —Run and Gun...

ML: —Dude, don't tempt me, cuz if I'm in the van, I have too much time to think about it, You know, like if you start to say a word, or your name, over and over again...like, "My name's Max...I'm Max...Max...Hurry-Up Offense...our name sucks! *God* it sucks...we oughta' our name!" The first show we played in New York. We basically had been rehearsing for three months, and we had these three songs that we wrote, and we just started walking around to all these cheesy bars in the Village. We showed up at this one place and we were like "Hey, can we play here tonight?" And they were like, "No, you can't play tonight!" So finally we bothered the club owner enough, so he let us play three songs. He was like "Alright, but hurry the fuck up!" And he kinda sat there, at the side of the stage, like, "Okay, three songs, GO!" So we just did it like that, and that's kinda how we got our name. Cuz that's like the style we play. It's this last-minute, extremely urgent, highly-aggressive situation. It's how we play; it's like a hurry-up offense. It's like "Quick-quick-quick-quick!"

CM: So there's like an "Elway Factor."

ML: Or the uhh, Kelly. Jim Kelly.

CM: So besides touring, when are you guys coming out with something new?

ML: Well, we have all these things we wanna do, and we just, we wanna do it properly. Not like, fuck..."Mom?...can I get some moneeeyyyy?! I wanna make another record!" But right now it's too hard to have your brain in two places. Cuz right now, I'm on tour. I'm just concentrating on playing great shows. Not getting lost...not running outta gas. Not getting sick. Getting laid. I mean, there are things in one brain, not in both, but you gotta do both. But really, I just wanna work on just playing, and writing good songs, and getting everybody psyched. We book our own tours, and that takes so much time. We spend like six or eight months just booking a one month tour. So once we're finally on the road, it's like just...kick ass. Cuz we have one chance to do it while out, and we don't ahve to worry about jobs and girlfriends and New York and shit, so let's just do it and see what happens.

then he remembers

steve wynn on the dream syndicate era

"Former Yankees beating other former Yankees with help from current Yankees while other players avoid repeated questions about the prospect of ending up on the Yankees. Believe me, I can see why people hate this team."

interview by kevin chanel

ChinMusic!: We're you a Dodger fan around the time you were at UCLA and starting The Dream Syndicate?

Steve Wynn: When punk rock came along it kind of just took me out of sports for a while. Up until '77 I wanted to be a sportswriter. That was completely what I was into. I was following every sport, and I think at that point I was still a Reds fan. When punk rock came along, that was it. I maybe would look at a World Series game or look at a sports page now and then, but all I cared about was what the b-side of the new Jam single was gonna be. Or what Richard Lloyd was up to. And I guess when I moved to L.A., and when I started playing with Karl, who is a sports fan, I kinda got excited about it again. But what got me back into baseball was Fernando Valenzuela. His rookie year the whole city was excited, was completely galvanized. It was this complete cross-cultural phenomenon that was so much the anti-thesis of the 70's Dodgers that I hated. He was the anti-Garvey. He was of indeterminate age...couldn't speak English, he was overweight...and amazing, and...it was just really exciting. So that kinda got me back. I started listening to Vin Scully...every time Valenzuela pitched. Reading the papers and talking to people about what Valenzuela did last night...and that kinda got me back into baseball and into the Dodgers.

CM: So did you guys start going to games then, during the Fernando era?

SW: I started seeing more games then. I can't remember if I saw a lot, but I saw some games. We were really poor then. We just had no money. We were rehearsing in my dad's basement. I remember the way we lived then was Karl and I would go to happy hour at this bar in Hollywood. We'd buy one margarita and gorge ourselves on free Mexican food. Then we'd go back to his place and watch TV, and we'd each get a 40-ounce of Colt .45 and jam on guitars all night. It was kinda luxurious! (laughter)

SW: I don't know about you, but I don't remember ever hearing about a ballplayer who was into music. Todd Benzinger, I knew was really into the music thing. I had a really good friend in L.A. who worked for Geffen Records. And they ended up kinda palling up, so I went to a couple of games, through him, on Benzinger's list. I met him one time.

CM: So that was when he was on the Dodgers, right?

SW: At that point he was on the Reds. So it was just when they would come to town.

CM: He was really good for a couple of years, then just sucked. Then retired.

SW: He was listening to all that bad music. Rob (Trucks, writer. see *Dock Ellis* in this issue) was telling me about all the ballplayers on the road, taking their IPod and their laptop and downloading stuff. I love any kind of demystification of baseball stars.

CM: It completely takes them down to a level of "regular guy."

SW: In music you get that more. Especially in the post indie-rock era. There's been all this demystification of musicians. You learn where they hang out; the wall between the rock star and the fan has been broken down. In L.A. there was a whole series of Sunday softball games with a lot of musicians there. Phast Phreddie Patterson used to have these weekly pickup games over in...Mar Vista, kind of the West side of L.A. And they were sort of a tradition. I'd play every once in a while. The kind of sloppy, beer between every inning kind of stuff. The one thing I do remember about those games is, there is a really great writer in L.A. named Don Waller. He's written a few books...very good guy. And, he'd never written about The Dream Syndicate, or about me, and it did kinda bum me out, cuz he was such a good writer, and so cool. And I remember we were playing one game, and it was the final

inning and I was playing catcher—which was where you put the guy who can't play. And he was rounding the bases, coming for home, and the ball was coming and I just blocked the plate. Which of course is not necessary in a Sunday game, but "fuck this, he's not gonna score on me!" And I blocked the plate and he came down and the ball came in and, it was one of those great, ESPN game of the week highlight reel plays where he came in and I held onto the ball, and he knocked me over and I didn't drop the ball. *(laughter)* At that point on I had his respect, and to this day he continues to write about me. Somehow, blocking the plate and hanging onto the ball earned his respect, as a musician. "Hmmnnn...I better go back and listen to his records, *in light* of his plate-blocking ability..."

SW: Baseball kept the original lineup of the Dream Syndicate together much longer than it would've otherwise. Karl Precoda and I were both big baseball fans. We were really best friends when the band started, but just for various reasons kinda drifted apart. I think we both dealt with success in a very different way. He dealt with it by wanting to embrace and become a hard rock guitar god. He wanted to go toward the Scorpions, UFO, and I responded by wanting to push it further and further outside and destroy any success we ever had as a form of credibility. *(laughs)* They're both pretty bad responses to success; I wanted to be Big Star and he wanted to be UFO. Somewhere in the middle might have been good.

CM: Having seen you guys back then, that's pretty much the last thing I would've expected from Karl Precoda.

SW: He enjoyed that. I think he enjoyed it as a 50/50, half irony/half serious-wanting-to-be-that kinda way. (laughter) Whatever the motivation, that's the way it came off. And that kind of terrified me, and I'm sure my whole wanting to take everything good that has happened to us and then wanting to destroy it as a badge of honor terrified him.

CM: I'm sure it happens that way quite a bit. I bet a lot of the big metal heads are like "Well, we started out as a joke..."
(laughter)

SW: And then it was like "Oh wait, we're starting to get chicks."

SW: So with Karl, we started not getting along because of that, and if we talked about music, or the band, or records or shows, it would end up in a fight. But we could watch a game, talk about baseball...even if at points we weren't speaking, we could talk about baseball. So we'd go on the road and writing out the set list was impossible, but talking about the pennant race was easy. We could talk about Robin Yount, but we couldn't talk about, like, (Blue Oyster Cult and Clash producer) Sandy Pearlman. So we'd go from aguing about which song we should cover, to just putting on the Brewers and Cardinals in the World Series and shutting up for a while.

CM: I still can't believe Karl had this predeliction for the metal. I got the impression you all had been assigned particular personality types by the media at the time. With Karl being the art/noise non-structural guy and you as the–and I apologize cuz I know you've had to hear this forever–Lou Reed tunesmith.

SW: (laughs) Mmm-hmmnn. Over and over and over.

CM: Yeah, I'm sorry. I really didn't wanna mention it—

SW: That's okay, that's okay...

CM: So with Precoda given this artsy noise guy—

SW: Well he was playing that way. Early on he was playing all feedback and freak out stuff. And he *was* a freak; he was some sort of weird mixture of this free-form, avant-Sonny Sharrock kind of guitarist, and uh, uh...Michael Schenker. *(much laughter)* It's pretty funny, cuz when I told Rob Trucks about how me and Karl got along, he said that he and his dad couldn't speak about anything but baseball. That's one thing about being a sports fan is that you instantly have this common ground with so many people. And there's no shortage of things you can talk about when you get into that. You can go on and on and on.

CM: In your experience, over the years when touring, would you be at the club, probably hours before the show–at sound check or whatever–and you'd find there was often one guy to talk to, so you'd end up talking baseball?

SW: Well a lot of clubs you'd get to and there'd be games on TV. A lot of clubs you'd play on this level, on the indie club level, they're bars. So you'd get to a club and a game would be on TV. You start watching and talking to people about it. And the thing is, also, I was trying whenever possible to see games. And on the road it was tough. I remember in 1983, the first time we went to Boston, we played at The Rat. In Boston that was *the* place to play there. And it was around the corner from Fenway. I was really bummed because the Sox were out of town, and I had tried to plan (the tour) around...cuz I had never been there and I'd always wanted to go to Fenway. So I was hoping maybe there was some way to see a game. So I was kinda crushed. And that was right around the time I had just met Thalia Zedek, who'd ended up in Come and Live Skull, and she's a fan. So we decided after sound check to go walk around Fenway. I mean she had seen many games there, but I hadn't. Anyway, we ended up talking to a security guard there. I started telling him my tale of woe, y'know: "Look, I'm a huge baseball fan, it's my first time in Boston, I've never been to Fenway, just my luck they're out of town..." He says: "Well, I could lose my job for this, but follow me." He took me in the stadium, showed me all around, took me down to the dugout. Gave me little anecdotes and everything. I said "Look, you've been very generous, but just one last thing, Can I go touch the Green Monster?" And he just says: "Go ahead." So here I am, just two hours before my gig, standing, leaning against left field, and thinking, "This is pretty cool..." It was a good show that night.

CM: That *is* pretty cool. I take it Karl didn't go with you?

SW: He didn't, but he was very jealous.

CM: So whatever became of Karl?

SW: We split apart at the end of '84, after *Medicine Show*. And he went back to school and got his Ph.D. in English Literature. And did very little music; I think he did a few co-writing things, with Blue Oyster Cult; I *think* with Albert Bouchard.

In ChinMusic! #4, a review of Wynn's "Sweetness and Light" album compared his career to that of 1989 rookie of the year Jerome Walton; that being a spectacular debut followed by years of less than MVP-quality campaigns. I suppose at some point we should've expected he would see the review... (–ed.)

SW: It was like "How cool, I got reviewed in this magazine." And then it was like "oh, not for *that* record." That's just not my favorite. I got compared to Jerome Walton. *(laughter)* I love the kind of "musician-as-player" analogy. And that was a fair enough one, but that's not accurate. So I've been thinking about this, and I think of myself more like a Kenny Rogers. Like, y'know, threw a perfect game early in my career...drifted away, became sort of, not-so-noticed. Then I fixed a few flaws in my delivery and now I'm back to Cy Young status.

CM: Well there were a few years of defeintely getting your arm back into shape.

SW: I did an interview a few years ago for the All-Star Game program. It was like '92, I think. It was an article on musicians who are baseball fans. They talked to George Thorogood, and Aretha Franklin, and that guy from Hootie and the Blowfish. And I remember they asked me

what player I would be...what player's career most matched mine.

CM: How about Dennis Eckersley?

SW: See, now that's a great one. I would take that. I went from being a substance-abusing starter to a sharp reliever.
(laughter)

CM: But a starter who threw a no-hitter...*then* had the substance-abuse problem, then *redefined* the position of closer.

SW: That's it! Any "career-redefinition/ resurgence" I'll take.

CM: And then there is the concept of players trying careers in rock. Like Jack McDowell lives down in San Diego and plays with his band (Stickfigure). So one day you hope to see Trevor Hoffman checking him out at a club and going up to the stage near the end of a set, removing Jack's guitar and saying "Sorry Jack, you just don't have anything left. I'll take it from here..."

SW: *(laughs)* That's a great scenario. I'd talked to my girlfriend Linda (Pitmon, ex-of Minneapolis band Zuzu's Petals) about Jack McDowell, and she told me that the reason he had went to all of her band's shows, was cuz their singer was Paul Westerberg's girlfriend, now his wife (Laurie Lindeen). And he was a Replacements groupie. So he went to their shows just to be that close to Paul Westerberg, one step removed.

CM: And of course, Paul Westerberg, many people are looking at his 10-10 seasons, and 9-7 seasons, and wondering if he's gonna come back...possibly to be a star closer.

SW: Exactly. That's a perfect example. He's Kenny Rogers, pre-fixed flaw in his delivery.

CM: Yeah, Rogers, wasn't he just mired in these awful seasons in New York and—

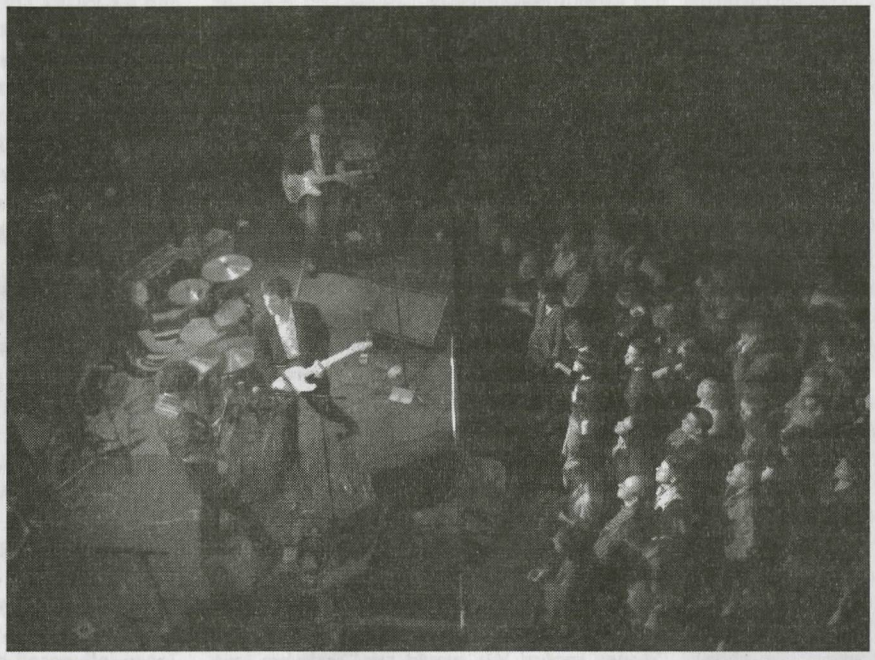
SW: —Now wait, are we talking about Kenny Rogers or Paul Westerberg?
(much laughter)

CM: Good point! You can get lost in the analogy.

SW: But it's interesting, it'd be funny to think of any given musical career and liken it to a baseball player. You could easily do that. Like, uhh...Bob Dylan as Walter Johnson.

CM: Well in that case, then who is Jonathan Richman?

SW: *(laughs)* Ah-ha, that's right! He sang about Walter Johnson. *(laughter)* ...Ohh, that's too hard. This doesn't click with my Rhetoric Ph.D.



Steve Wynn rocks Paradiso. Amsterdam, 2003

CM: Oh yeah, I wanted to get to that. But now you got me thinking. Jonathan Richman...career minor-leaguer...occasionally comes up to the bigs with moments of brilliance...

SW: That's right, exactly. His "Something About Mary" thing would be the surprise no-hitter or perfect game thrown.

CM: Like Wilson Alvarez or...Ed Halicki.

SW: Or like, Shane Spencer. There's a freakish career. Except now he is the freak troubled drunk for the Mets. He's the same guy that with Karim Garcia, tag-teamed a pizza delivery guy in Spring Training in Florida. Maybe *he's* the Westerberg guy. He's the shining moment and then devolves into drunkeness.

CM: Which reminds me now, what did you end up doing with your Rhetoric degree?

SW: I went to UC Davis to study Rhetoric. And found out that having a Rhetoric major means you sit in a circle with a bunch of people and sort of discuss your motivation for writing. But you don't actually write anything. You just *talk* about writing. I got tired of that pretty quickly. It was sort of like a step up from being in EST. That's when I transferred to UCLA and became a literature major, as a junior. And then I started playing in the Dream Syndicate. Started doing that while I was dj-ing in local music clubs, *while* I was working as a clerk at Rhino Records...and something had to give. I was staring at a Shakespeare mid-term, realizing I just couldn't get past putting my name on a piece of paper, and I quit college at that point. So when I switched from being a sportswriting junior literature major working in a record store, and become a rock star instead, I remember my father saying "Well, you're an adult, I can't tell you what to do. But I think I should let you know, you're probably throwing your life away.
(laughter)
About twenty years later, he advises me on how many ballads I should put on each record.

CM: "Well, y'know, how Dylan did it..."
(laughter)

SW: Exactly! Exactly."Well y'know, people are playing more of the standards now, you oughta' get into that." *(much laughing)*
"I see your friends in R.E.M. are doing well..."
"Yeah Dad, I know..."

CM: I know the ad nauseum comparisons to Lou Reed at the time had to have gotten under your skin, but in your opinion, were there ever any perhaps blatant influences that you thought the media's infatuation with the Velvet Underground, uhh...obfuscated? Anybody else back then that you may have listened to a lot that you weren't compared to?

SW: You're hitting my major frustration...you're hitting a nail on the head there. I was really defensive...I mean, we got compared to the Velvets all the time, just every single article. And I went from being really defensive to eventually denying I'd ever even heard the Velvets. And not because it was untrue, cuz I actually was a big Velvets fan, and I thought they'd done something similar to what we were trying to do. But my point was, yes, we rip off the Velvets, *and we rip off lots of other bands too.* Don't just be so boring and unimaginative.

CM: (The writers) were going for the easy way out on that one—

SW: It's absolutely the easy way out. The point was, we were borrowing liberally from Dylan,

Creedence...every band on "Nuggets," Black Flag...uhh, *especially* The Fall. That was a *big* one. Oh man, you listen to *Days Of Wine And Roses,* it's plain as day. I mean left and right, we were borrowing from all the things we loved and we thought were great. We were trying to make *our favorite record.* And so when people would reduce something that was very important to us, and something we had really felt passionate about, something that we knew how to connect the dots, and people just had no imagination and just said "It's the Velvets" and nothing beyond that, we kinda bristled.

CM: And virtually every review—I don't think I even read a review that didn't mention it.

SW: Yeah, and I kinda overdid the response. You know, I could've said, having the maturity—well, whatever maturity I have 22 years later—I would say "Yeah, the Velvets were a great band, thank you for the flattering comparison." But at the time I just went: "Yeah...never heard of 'em. I don't know what you're talking about." Y'know it just got so annoying after a while. *(laughter)* But the thing is, back then to be compared to the Velvets was a really unusual thing. Now, 75 of the top 100 bands on CMJ are really into the Velvets. But back then it was kind of unusual. And I remember, before we formed, that if I would read a review of a band and they were compared to the Velvets, that I would buy the record. So I would buy Human Switchboard, or The Feelies, or—

CM: So now that makes me wonder, you hear bands sometimes say they were influenced by The Feelies, so are there second generation, Velvet Underground influenced bands?

SW: Well sure, there are bands that were influenced by us. Bands that have told us...bands like Yo La Tengo., or Eleventh Dream Day, or Luna. Or even like, The Black Crowes have told me, or the Afghan Whigs; these are all bands that have said so in interviews or told me directly that they were largely influenced by what we were doing. And I think that, well, first of all that's extremely flattering, and it's great to hear. But also, all those bands I'm sure were also Velvets fans. It probably was inspiring back then to hear another band come along and maybe take some of the same ideas, and the essence of what the Velvets were doing and making it their own. And that's the beauty of the Velvets, and Lou Reed. You hear them and you get the feeling "I can do that. And I can stamp my own personality on that." You know, you can't listen to Yes and do that. *(laughter)* At least not without a lot of training at G.I.T. Anyway, it was just, the main thing that the Velvets did that we tried to do as well was just play hooky, melodic traditional, kind of '60s influenced pop songs. And then having no reverence for the form whatsoever. Just blowing it up, just trashing it. And I think a lot of people would approach whatever genre they would approach, whether it be 60's pop, or soul, or this...and they'd try and get everything right and try and get the sounds right. And a lot of the other bands in that movement, the Paisley Underground, were trying to get the clothes, or the sound and the guitars, and get the look and the poses right. And we just thought, "Look, we love this stuff. And we love this so much we're gonna just...destroy it. We're gonna take the same reckless attitude toward it that our heroes took. And there was no careful reverence shown by Lou Reed or Bob Dylan, so we didn't either. We basically took our models and just trashed 'em.

CM: Like you grabbed the chassis of the Revell '55 Chevy and glued it to the body of their '64 Falcon—

SW: —and drank a bottle of Thunderbird before we did it. *(laughter)* I think that one of the keys to what we were doing, and what I still do, is having really good knowledge of all the good things that happened in music, and having a love and enthusiasm for music, and really not having the ability or the desire to get it right. I think we were excited by the elements here and there that made up the most exciting music we'd ever heard. So we were excited by it and influenced by it, then we'd forget how to do it. So I think a lot of people would say "We just *love* the Rolling Stones." And they would sit and practice and practice and practice, and they'd learn every part on every Rolling Stones record. We would say "Yeah, we love the Rolling Stones, and uhh, let's do something kinda like that...How does that go again?" So I think that came out...y'know, we really were fans. And I would think, I would *hope* that most people that play music would have some kinda passion for something that came before them. And we were definitely nerdy fans of all the overlooked music. And the Velvets were an overlooked band back then, as were The Stooges, as were the Modern Lovers, as were Big Star. These were bands that nobody knew or cared about back then. And we loved them and wanted to carry on the tradition of these forgotten bands.

CM: So you all were on the same page as far as directions to take the band, and interests?

SW: That was the cool thing about the band, at that point, the four of us were really all in the same place. We all loved the same thing. It didn't last for very long, but for a good six to nine months we were all excited about the same things and all wanted to do things in the same way. And that was a real rush.

CM: So then taking things on a larger scale of influence, since Bob Dylan and Lou Reed are still making music, putting out albums, how possible is it for a band coming out now to be really influenced by Yo La Tengo—who says they were influenced by Dream Syndicate—and then for that band to influence a new album by Bob Dylan or Lou Reed?

SW: That's pretty funny.

CM: Just for it all to come full circle; for essentially Lou Reed to inadvertently influence himself.

SW: Well it probably happens all the time, and it's freaky. I'm sure a band like the White Stripes have had some sort of influence on a lot of their heroes. I mean, not the old dead blues guys, but some of the rock bands and stuff like that. You know that in some William Randolph Hearst-like mansion, Mick Jagger is trimming his fingernails and listening to the White Stripes and thinking "How do I do this?..." *(much laughter)*

CM: —Trying to hire a personal trainer to find out how to rework that muscle he hasn't used since he was 21 years old.

SW: I see Mick Jagger, as being played by Howard Hughes...

CM: Long toenails and Kleenex boxes—

SW: "Jeeves, bring me that first White Stripes album!" *(laughter)* And that happens, albeit on a much lower lever, to me. Bands will come along...and I don't want to overplay the "Yo La Tengo-influenced-by-us", cuz we're really from the same generation. We started around the same point, and we were friends back then. But the first I ever knew of Ira and Georgia, they were covering "Days Of Wine And Roses" in a party band, before Yo La Tengo's first record. And now I hear their records, like *Painful*, and *Electr-o-pura*, and I go, "Man I gotta figure out what they're doing and rip *them* off!"...And it does go back and forth. I've never found anything wrong with that. I mean sure, if all you are is just an imitation of your record collection, I guess that'd be old after a while. But really, there's nothing wrong with loving music. I think all the best music was made by people who passionately love music. and wanted to somehow do the same thing; to capture the same feeling that their heroes captured. And make music that would make somebody else feel the same way that they felt when they heard their favorite records.

CM: I would think to some degree, the very fact that you were in L.A. and weren't subject to the same influences that Bob Dylan, or say, The Electric Prunes...or that you were experiencing the same things that they were at the same time they were doing what they were doing, it's going to take it in a different direction; it's going to give it its own imprint.

SW: Right, right. Being done in a different time, in a different context, with different technology, whatever. You can't duplicate a moment. The reason *Days Of Wine And Roses* happened the way it did, the reason we made that record, the reason we were the band we were, is because of what was happening in those times. Which were really, really difficult times to be playing that kinda music.

CM: Which I would imagine gave you that freedom to do it.

SW: Well, it was a freedom in that everyone was gonna hate us. We thought, we were playing this music and *no*body was gonna like it. Maybe ten people were gonna like it. And we didn't care. In fact we kind of reveled in that fact; we wanted people to hate us. Now, if you play that kinda music, or really almost anything, you know that *some*body is gonna like it. I know that I can go to a website and find someone that's into this...Albert Ayler crossed with Melanie, crossed with...the California Raisins. There's an audience for that somewhere. And I'll find the people who dig it, and they all will live in Guam. But back then it was really hostile toward people playing *guitar*, and electric guitar, let alone with feedback. And we were kind of shocked to find out there were actually people who loved it.

CM: It's funny, when you think of all those Paisley Underground bands, there weren't really more than one or two that sounded particularly similar. Yet there appeared a sense of community.

SW: You're right. Everybody had their own slant on it. It all kind of...well, the bands—like The Long Ryders, the Salvation Army/Three O'Clock, The Bangles...Rain Parade—we all sort of happened independently; none of us really hung out or anything. We all found out about each other and got excited. At that point, anybody else just playing natural, traditional...guitar music...through amplifiers, through old gear...with any kind of a sixties kinda bent to it...without any kind of regard for what was on the last Soft Cell record...it was kind of thrilling. And we were all each others' biggest fans at that point.

CM: Did any of the influential LA semi-luminaries of the time take to you and lend a hand, like Rodney Bingenheimer, or Ethan James with his Radio Tokyo Tapes records, or someone like that?

SW: Yeah. Across the board. We were everybody's darling for a time. It was a really good feeling too. We went from, thinking everybody would hate us, to—within a month or two—being everybody's favorite band. Rodney was playing us. John Doe would talk about us in articles. Mike Watt...people who we really dug, loving *us*. And that was exciting. And I'm sure it fucked us up in a lot of ways. We were the 21-year old phenom; y'know, we were the...Todd Van Poppel. *(laughter)*
We were the rookie that just came up and threw a no-hitter in our first outing and went 13-2 by the All-Star break. And then we...y'know, we started messing with our delivery, and sprained a hamstring, and had to work our way back from the minors.

CM: And I'd imagine that works the same way with the sophomore jinx. The saying goes, you had your whole life to write that first album, but only nine months or so to come up with an equally astounding second outing.

SW: Yeah...but actually we wrote the first album in about two months. *(laughs)* We weren't a band that rehearsed for years and years and paid our dues and played the circuit. We went from not being a band to being the toast of the town in three months. That's not to say we hadn't all paid our dues in other bands before that.

CM: Was it the full four of you when you first got together?

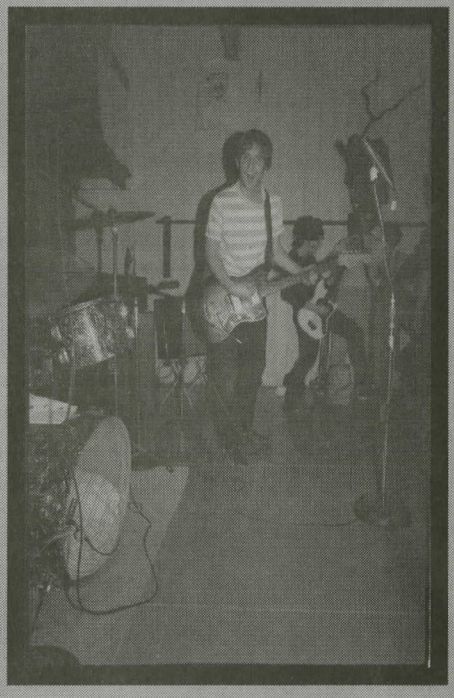
SW: Pretty much. It was Karl and Kendra and I right from the start, but we had another drummer. We got Dennis in the band within a couple of months. Human Hands (Dennis Duck's previous band) had just broken up. And the funny thing, now Human Hands is now back together and they're recording again. Anyway, Kendra knew Dennis, just from around and parties, and told him what, who she was playing with and what we were doing, and she asked him to come out and rehearse with us, and we were kinda shocked. "Why would he wanna play with us?" He came out, he drove from Pasadena to West L.A., which is a good jump. A 45-minute drive, in the rain, with his drums. We played "Suzie Q" for an hour. He left, didn't say a word. And we thought, "oh well, so much for that." And a couple days later he called and said, "I listened to the tape I made of that rehearsal, and it's my favorite thing, and I'd love to be in your band."

CM: And then fame and fortune, right after that.

SW: Something like that. Infamy and paying our bar tab.

A kind thanks to Steve Wynn for the use of Dream Syndicate pix from the www.stevewynn.net site.

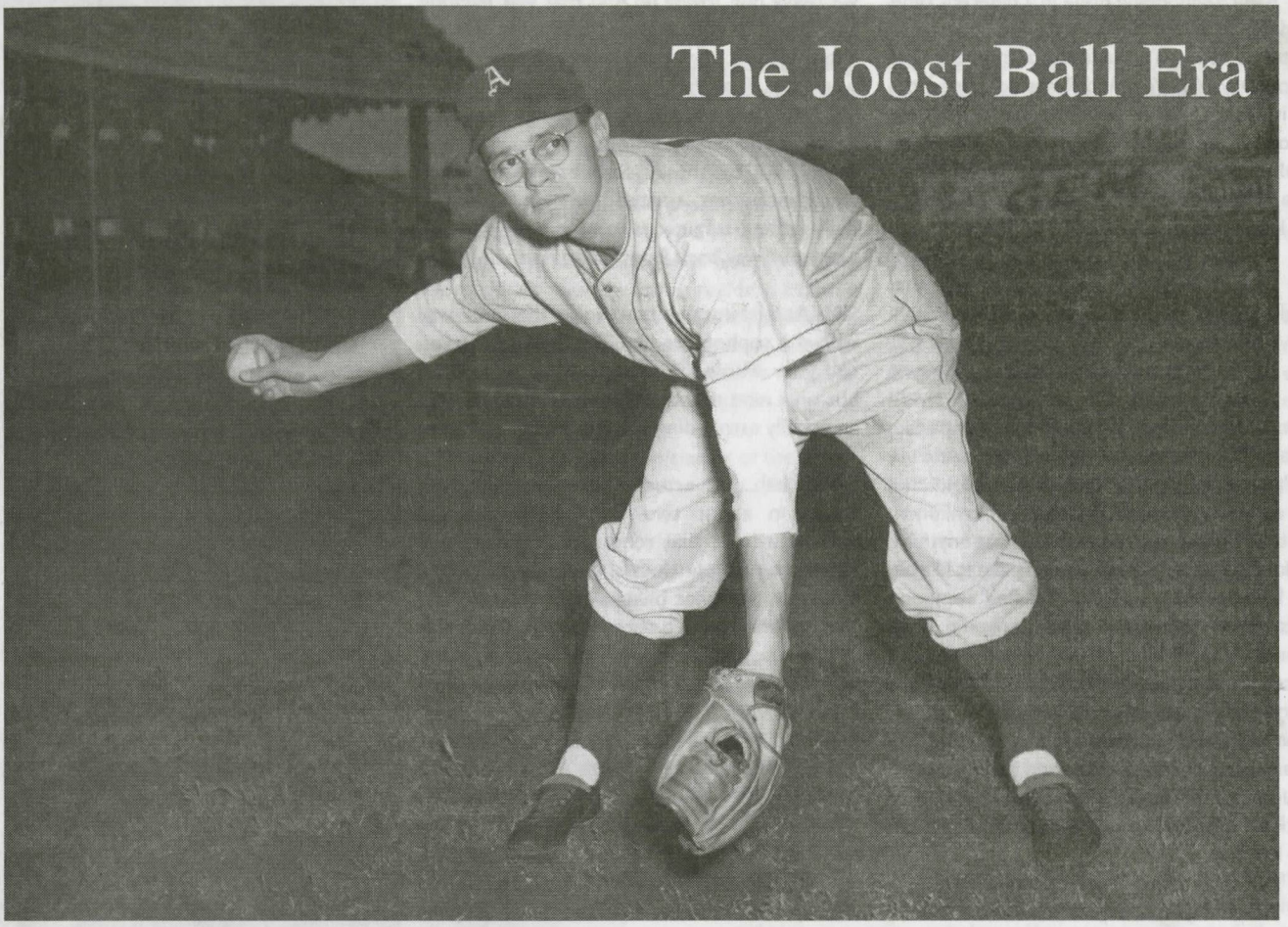
Dream Syndicate, 1982. Clockwise from left: Karl Precoda, Steve Wynn, Denis Duck, Kendra Smith.



From an early Dream Syndicate live show.

Steve Wynn & The Miracle 3's latest release is Static Transmission (DBK Works). Visit www.stevewynn.net for more releases and 2004 Dream Syndicate re-releases.

The Joost Ball Era



Interview by Glen Murrell

At 88 years young, Eddie Joost still speaks of his days in the Major Leagues with great enthusiasm, almost like it all just happened a few years ago. The truth is, Joost played in the Golden Age of Major League Baseball(1930s-50s), which is the reason he couldn't answer my questions about who was the best player and/or pitcher he ever faced. Understandably so, he played against some of the best of all time. And during the last eight years of his career, Joost had developed into a fine player himself.

On a sunny afternoon this past July, Mr. Joost was gracious enough to lend me an hour of his time. Mr. Joost's residence overlooks a golf course (he still plays) in the beautiful Sonoma valley. And though I had a dozen or so questions to ask him, instead, he told fascinating story after story as I let the tape roll. So, instead of the conventional question/answer session, here is Mr. Eddie Joost in his own words.

On his beginnings in baseball

My first year in baseball was 1933. I was given the opportunity to play in the Coast League, which was Triple A. I was able to stay there and it was just something I had looked forward to because I had not intended, of course, to become a baseball player. It was just inadvertently I was playing American Legion and playing in all the different playgrounds in San Francisco (he was born and raised there) and also playing in high school. I became pretty adept at what I was doing and when I was sixteen, the Mission Reds of the Coast League called me up and said they wanted to talk to me. So, I went there, sat down with my dad and they said we think that you would possibly be a good baseball player, especially here in the Coast League. We'd like to sign you to a contract. We'll give you the top salary for a rookie, $150 a month. This was in 1933, which was the heart of the depression. I just could not believe that now I was able to take care of my family. In those days, everybody in those conditions were on welfare. We had five children, including myself, and so doing it was a big boost and I was very happy to do that.

On starting out with the Mission Reds

I didn't play every day in '33, but from '34 on I played regularly at short and third. I did a good job, saying that I improved each year and I enjoyed playing, it was something that I liked doing. In 1934, they raised my salary to $500 a month.

On to Cincinnati

In 1936, I was sold to Cincinnati. I joined them in New York and was very happy to go there of course. It took me seventeen hours to fly to N.Y. at the time. I got there and didn't know anyone there except for the manager, which was Charlie Dressen. He introduced himself and said happy to have you on board, we'll see you tomorrow at the Polo Grounds. The next day, I went down to the ballpark and was asked to work out at short. After batting practice, Dressen called me over and said "Well, kid, I just want to say you got possibilities but I don't feel you'll ever be a major league player". And I said, well, I think it's kind of early, I think maybe I can improve. He said "just go by what I say". From that day on, Charlie Dressen and I were miles apart.

On the Reds team that went to back-to back World Series

I didn't play much that year (1939), some utility, got into the World Series. We had McCormick at first, Frey at second, Billy Myers at short and Lew

Riggs at third, a good infield. We had a good ball club with good pitching; Bucky Walters, Derringer, Vander Meer. A great defensive ball club with good pitching. Well, the Yankees beat us four straight. We didn't get any base hits that counted and we didn't win. So, the next year, fortunately, we went again, 1940, and won the World Series. I played in all seven games. I contributed, didn't excel in anything but did a good job.

A call from the great Connie Mack

So, one day I got a call from Mr.. Mack and he explained to me that he had purchased me with no reservations. Mack said "go onto Philadelphia, you'll be our shortstop, that's where you're going to play. Just do your job and I'll pay you". So, I went over there and became one of the best players in the American League for nine years. I was very proud to play for him, I did well over there. Made two All-Star teams and enjoyed playing there but we ended up in trouble, our pitchers got hurt. Pitching and defense is the name of the game. If you don't have it to begin with, that is the pitching, you're going to be in trouble. So, it ended up that's what happened the last two or three years, we just didn't have the pitching anymore.

Manager for the '54 Philadelphia A's

After Mack retired, Jimmy Dykes became the manager. I was good friends with Jimmy, we got along real well. At the end of the '53 season, Jimmy comes up to me and says "Well Ed, the difference in our ball club is you, you know that. (Joost was injured at the time) When you're in there, it's an entirely different ball club, everybody's alert, everybody does their job". It was quite a compliment from Jimmy Dykes also. Dykes said "You're going to be the manager here" as he left for Baltimore".

Managing is all getting along with the players and getting them to produce. And if you have players who can only produce so much, hey, that's as far as you can go, you can't do any better. Unfortunately, we had a bad, bad year. We finished last and I said well, that's it. And they came financial straights and the ball club was sold, went to Kansas City. I was told I would not be picked up as a player or manager.

Last at-bat in the Majors

Going along, couple of weeks or something like that, I don't know how many games I had played (he was with the Boston Red Sox now). Harry Byrd is the pitcher (former teammate of Joost before traded to the Yanks). I go up there, he threw a ball inside and I backed up, hit me right there and broke my hand. I was out, couldn't even catch the ball let alone swing the bat.

Reflections on his career

Baseball was very good to me and I enjoyed every minute of it. And because I was given the opportunity by Mr. Mack to play every day, I wasn't perfect but I led the league in fielding nearly every year. I hit home runs, one year I hit 23 and drove in 81 runs leading off. Every year, I'd get over 100 walks for six or seven years in a row. That was my job, you know, get on first base but also drive in 70-85 runs per year. I was considered one of the best shortstops overall in the league.

CM: Who was the best player you ever played against?
EJ: I won't be able to answer that. Throughout my career from 1933 to 1955, I saw so many great players, you'd have to go through baseball's Hall of Fame, so to speak. I played against DiMaggio and Williams, if I wanted to pick one of those, I'd pick both.

CM: What about pitchers?
EJ: Again, I played in an era that pitching was outstanding for years. Every ball club had two or three great ones and guys to back them up. 'Cuz in those days, pitchers went nine innings, that's how they got paid. We had Bucky Walters and Paul Derringer over at our place. Every year 250-270 innings, 20 win seasons.

CM: Any players from today stand out to you?
EJ: I said this when he first came out, Eric Chavez. I said this guy is going to be a hell of a player. I don't know him but they say he's a great guy too. So, I'm glad to see he's become so successful.

CM: On the money today's player make.....
EJ: I'm not saying they shouldn't get it if the owners and ball clubs have that kind of money to be able to pay the players. Give it to them.

On All-Star games

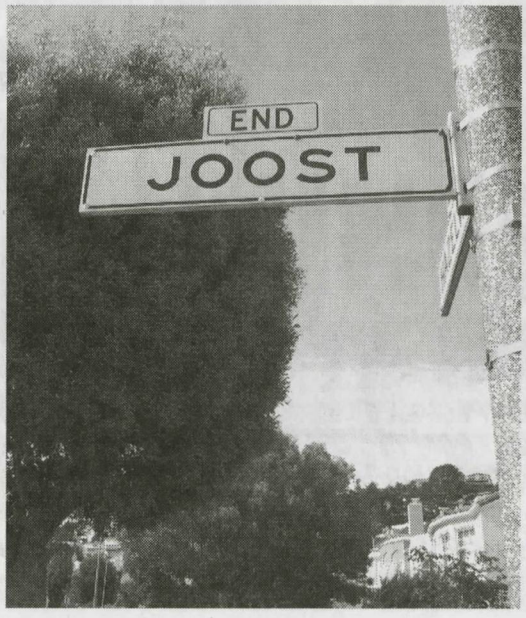
All-Star games were something that you looked forward to, I did and I'm sure the players of my era did also. And it was something that there's no doubt in your mind you're going to go there and play. I'm only saying this because of the fiasco a couple of years ago, when they call the ball game a tie. It was ridiculous and they (some of the players) didn't even want to go. A lot of them didn't even show up. What a wonderful honor it is to say that you're one of all the best players in the major leagues.

On the All Star tie-game (just so they can market it now as "This One Counts!")

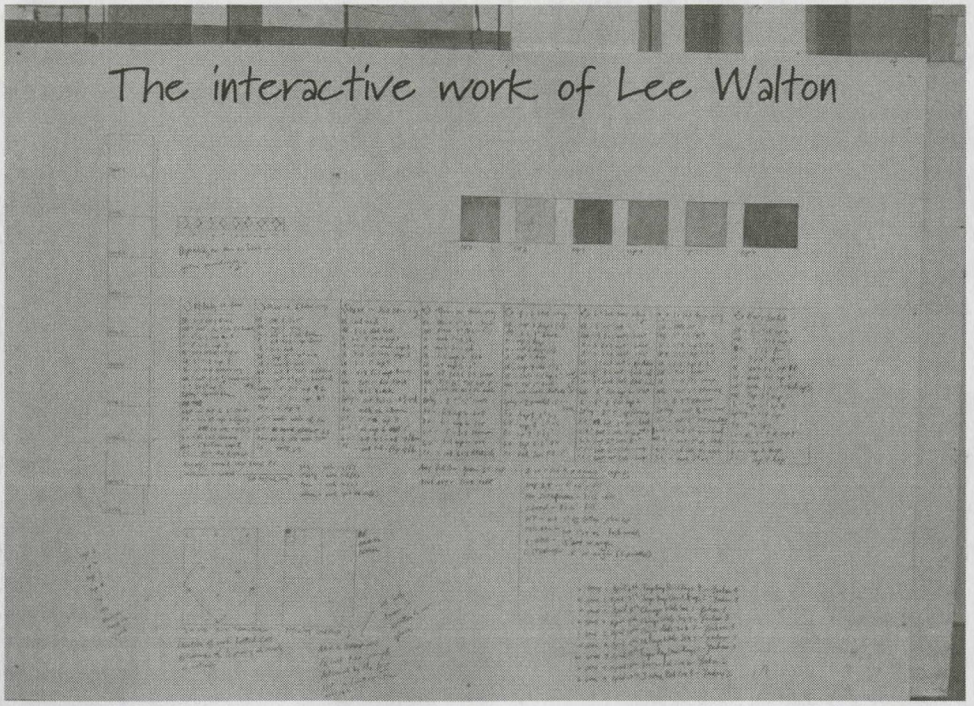
The managers and the commissioner made a mistake. In retrospect, they should never have called that ball game. The fans hated it. It was the greatest mistake any of them had ever made. What's the difference if you put a catcher out there to pitch? It's an All-Star game, people want to see those guys perform, whether they catch it or boot it or hit a home run or pop it up, they want to see the players.

EDDIE JOOST: STATS, RECORDS, ETC.
Played in 1,574 Major League Games
Two Time All-Star (1949,1952)
World Series Champion (1940 Cincinnati Reds)
Record for most chances by a shortstop in one game - 19
Drew over 100 walks per season (1947-52)
23 Home Runs, 81 RBI in 1949.

References
baseball-reference.com
Complete Baseball Record Book 2001 Edition



"Bonus Life": The Art of Baseball



by Joel Arquillos

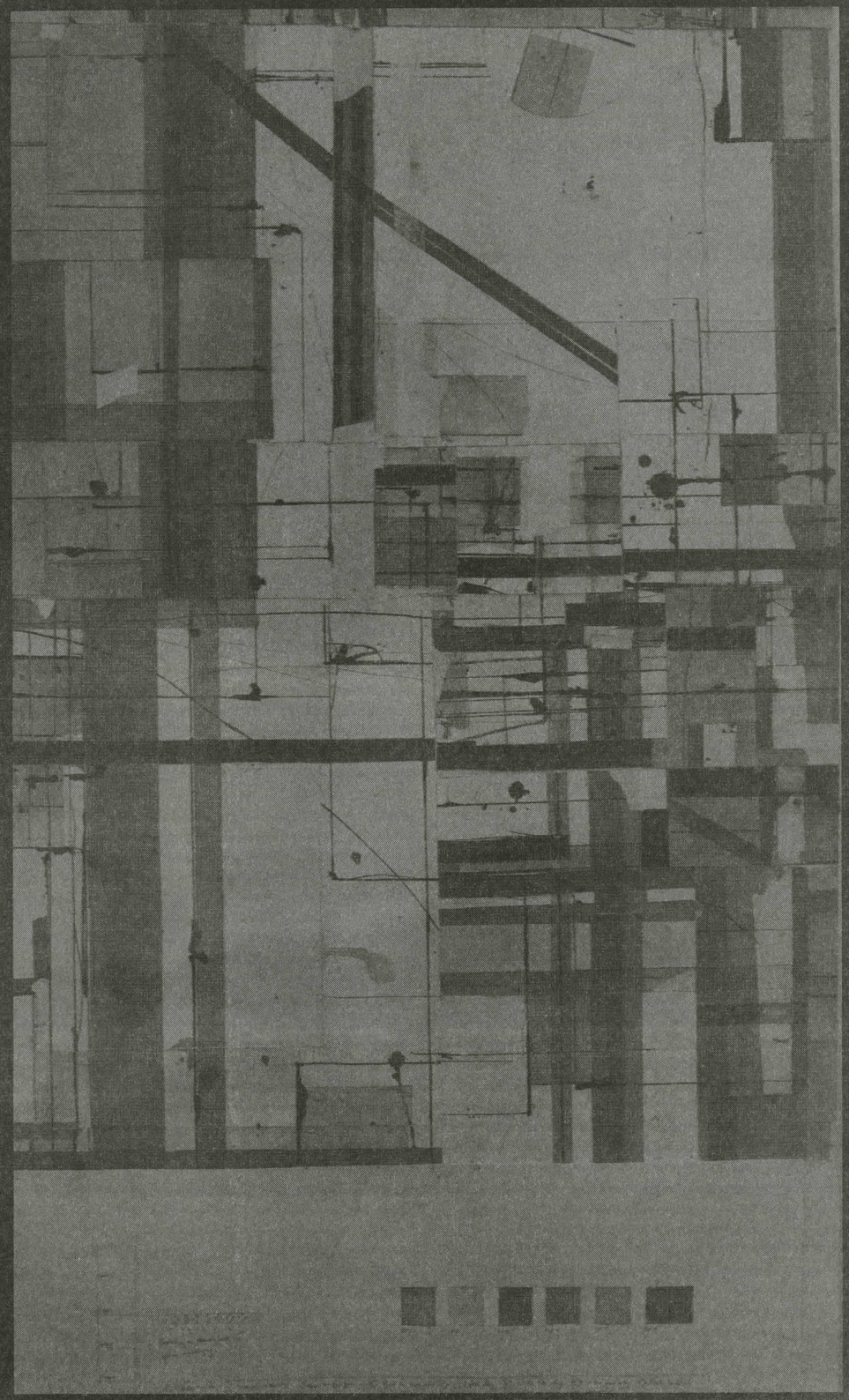
I recently came across an artist named Lee Walton, who has found a way to make baseball into art. He's a performance artist, musician, painter, educator and art mover (day job) whose passion for baseball and life are quite unmatched. My friend Mike who lives in SF commissioned a drawing by Lee that caught my attention. The piece was in four parts, made up of watercolors and pencil on paper. The piece was composed of a series of lines and imperfect watercolor drops on the page, cleanly spaced like a subway map or an architectural draft of sorts. No distinct form that I could decipher, just shapes and quickly scribbled writing at the foot of the piece serving as some sort of legend. Turns out these drawings were an interpretation of a recent three game series between the Giants and Dodgers and an extra Giants game from a later date when they won, "I couldn't give Mike a total loss", says Lee as we slurp our frozen happy hour margaritas at Benny's Burritos in the lower West Village of Manhattan.

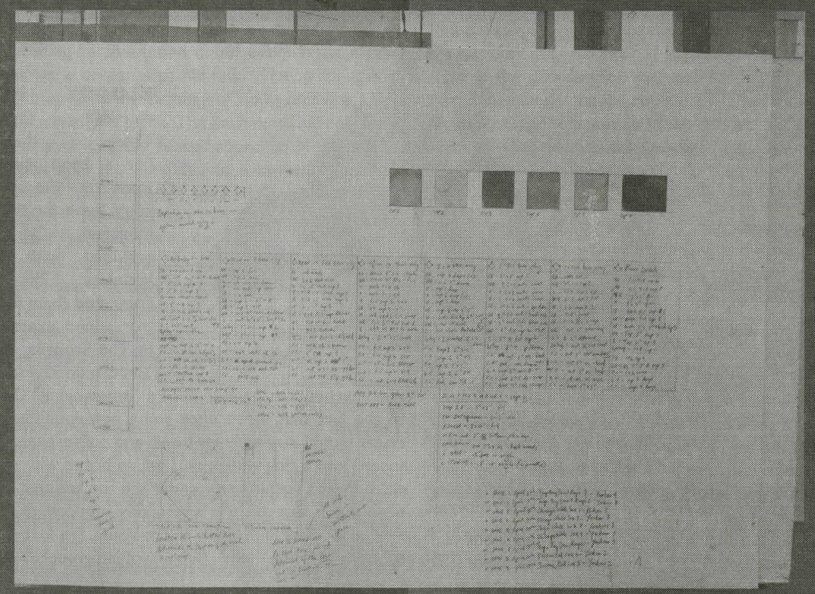
One of his baseball pieces is hanging in a gallery called White Columns, not too far from the margarita joint. It stands about 15 feet high and three feet wide. His art is a combination of baseball statistics and a geometry of which he alone is the controller. He describes his approach to his art to "going on a trip... you sit shogun and let the person get you there". In Lee's world, baseball is the driver that will determine his course. "I try to set myself up for an experience that is unpredictable. I don't have an idea and then execute it... I don't go get it". Unlike many artists and even musicians who want to create that perfect work of art, Lee lets chance decide. He creates experiential art or as Lee prefers "bonus life".

Before a game Lee creates a series of instructions for painting according to a handful of game outcome possibilities. For example, a double will be displayed as a blue line in the direction the ball travels, while a homerun will have whatever property Lee decides to assign it that day. He then listens to the game (his preferred media) and paints accordingly. "I wanted to find a way to listen [to] baseball and make drawings at the same time". Sometimes he takes down stats while listening to a game and paints afterwards. Another approach is he makes an imaginary diamond on paper and takes stats by marking where a ball lands on the field. The end result is an abstract depiction of a baseball game. No broken bats or fans or some romanticized depiction of Pedro Martinez pitching, just a collection of lines and boxes that characterize the symbiotic nature of man and motion rather than the momentary bliss of a great play. But best of all, for Lee at least, "when the game is over, I'm done". Done until the next game or the next project.

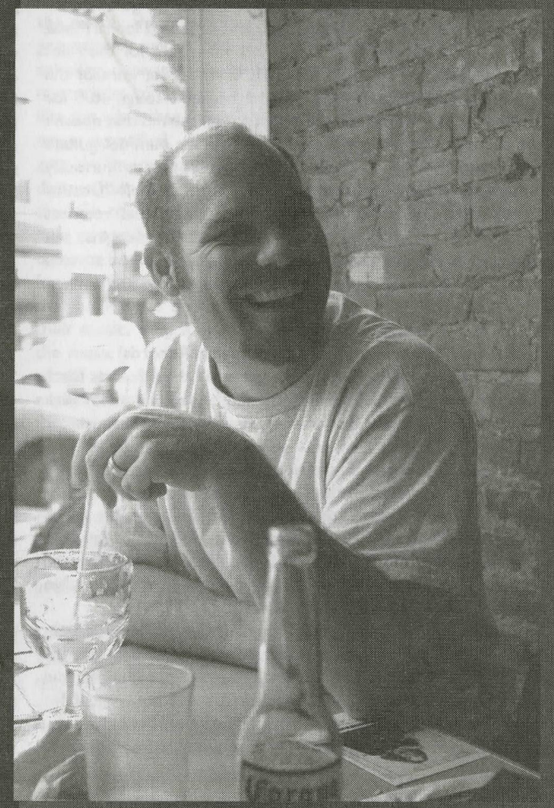
Lee believes that art is more than a solitary act, it can be a game in itself. He's created projects where he and a group a friends will follow a game on the radio and move about NYC according to a set of pre-arranged instructions. For example, if Jeter gets a double that might mean that the group will spread out and each will have to find a nearby mailbox and stand on it until the next play, In the end, the group becomes scattered throughout the city, each having experienced the game and the environment in a totally new way. This approach to art is not new. Similar activities took place in France years ago where a pair of dice would motivate the players movement in a "chance walk". Lee's approach does take away from the simpler, passive, sitting at the game, munching on peanuts and sipping copious amounts of beer approach many of us prefer, but it could be fun for a change, or not.

Lee grew up playing baseball in Carmel, CA. He was recruited by Sonoma State University to play ball but preferred rocking out with his band "Greasy Spoon" and partying. He eventually got his BA without making it into the big leagues. So instead he decided to go to the California College of Art in Oakland where he received his Masters of Fine Arts. While in grad school he felt he shouldn't be wasting his time watching baseball since so much money was being spent to become an artist. So he figured out a way to combine the two things he loved most. You can check out more of his art and bio at his page www.leewalton.com.





The beauty of baseball is in its imperfection. Every game, like life, is susceptible to millions of factors, some of which we can't even conceptualize due to their quantum nature. Whether it be rain, a beam ball, a drunk jumping out of his seat and rushing an ump, or a young punk reaching out to grab a fly ball souvenir that ends a teams chance of making the playoffs, baseball never seems to stop providing its audience with a reason to hate the sport or love it even more.



Reviews for ChinMusic! #7 by Sunny Andersen Chanel, Jorrell Arquillos, Peter Berkeley, Kevin Chanel, Angus Durocher, Jeff Heermann, Squid Ouchi and Hack Scribe.

To submit music for review, please write to:
ChinMusic! Magaine
P O Box 225029
San Francisco CA 94122

...unless it's a promo. Then keep it to yourself.

THE SOVIETTES *II* (Adeline Records)
Finally, a band who makes you wished they lived in the same town as you, so you could go see them all the time, even on Wednesday nights when you have to work early the next morning. Not like that band with your friends that you know are a good band, even a really good band, and you totally wish they gave you the urge to see them all the time cuz they're good people, and you love to hang out with them, and heck they even rock a bit. But not to where you would drop an engagement or even a hangover to make it to their show.

A band comes along like this once every couple years, but you never know just when or from what city. The Rondelles were like that when their second album came out. The Smoking Popes had that for a while. Annie, Sturgeon, Susy and Danny have it in droves. They bring it like Jack Morris in 1991. Unstoppable. (www.adelinerecords.net) –KC

100 DEMONS *s/t* (Deathwish Records)
100 Demons are the kinda band that drive grown men to golf, women to Jesus, and kids to lives of substance abuse and defaulted loans. Metal, man, metal—played at a breakneck speed, with no regard for the rules of the road. Lyrically they're all about death from above, wars of the gods and divine punishment visited upon the wicked—tough stuff for troubled times. 100 Demons is, at least, an entertaining band that doesn't labor under the idea that it's crafting great art. Drums pummel, guitars drill, and the astoundingly-deep-throated vocalist groans furiously at the lower end of his register. Tracks like "Time Bomb," "Destiny Never Came," "Something Terrible" all sound like virtual rewrites of each other—but 100 Demons are about bustin' noggins, not expanding the vocabulary of musical expression. If you've got a metal past buried under the floorboards, you just might be amused by 'em. (www.deathwishinc.com) –JH

BLACK CROSS Widows Bloody Widows (Initial Records)
Yeah, Drive Like Jehu was a really good band, weren't they? So was Black Flag. So then you remove Rollins from 'Flag and replace him with Rick from Jehu and what do you get? Black Cross; a band named after a classic song by 45 Grave. Oh well...

The key to this release is the one element that neither band could grasp: Brevity. It is the soul of wit and the essence of sexy ("thong th-thong thong thong"), and Black Cross just plain GETS IT. If you're gonna blast fire in someone's face, let 'em up for air every couple of minutes. Have a nifty set of breakneck riffs? Wanna show off the ol' expertise, the snappy drum fills? Great. Do it. Just don't drag it out for five minutes. No one is interested. Like I said, Black Cross just plain GETS IT.

On a side note, it should be side-noted that Initial Records from Louisville Kentucky is becoming the most killer label in the country. Everything I've heard by them since the Black Flag covers comp they did a couple years back has been completely shredworthy. Don't know if this is a 100% direct result of the influence of Ryan Patterson, but either way, mad ups to you bourbon country badasses. (www.initialrecords.com)

–HS

BLOODY HOLLIES *Fire At Will* (Sympathy For That There Record Industry)
For a band named, seemingly, after icons from the original British Invasion, you'd hope for something a little more intelligent. On the contrary, you're provided with something entirely brainless. The one feat you can commend them for is creating 11 songs that sound exactly like original works by The Stooges. Good job! Hats off! You can do it! Hoorahs to the fact that you reached the heights of the Streetwalkin' Cheetahs. Raspberries to the fact that, albeit after some pompous chest-beatings, your lead singer would inevitably fall down and collapse into a fetal position when tossed into a ring with Iggy. I get so bored with those cynical folk who claim there's nothing new under the sun and that everything has already been done. But this trio inscrutably supports the hackneyed argument. And, after listening to this shitty album, I'm forced into the position to spouting it. Fuck them! (www.sympathyrecords.com) –PB

CANDY BUTCHERS *Hang on Mike* (RPM Records)
I expected butchery, but got helium-filled marshmallows painted with treacle. The Candy Butchers play light-headed pop that touches base with Billy Joel, Hall and Oates, Steely Dan, and Supertramp—heavyweights all, remembered fondly from the heyday of Solid Gold at its solidest and goldest. Keyboards plunk gently, male voices reach for the rafters, and a kind of aural lint gathers in the air as the band dishes out "Nice to Know You," "Superkid," and "Sparkle!" Piano man/singer Mike Viola is a youthful Paul Simon type with wide eyes and tousled locks, and he's the star of this show. The man sneaks in the odd lyric about masturbation, adult angst and New York City stress—all strangely at odds with the 1981 AM radio pop purveyed by the Butchers. It would be easy to dismiss Hang on Mike as a mere exercise in irony, but it still raises my hackles and triggers strange reflexes I'd forgotten I had. "Not So Bad at All" is an upbeat number that has my toes curling in spite of themselves; "Let's Have a Baby" edges the band's cabaret pop into willful parody (and may be their brightest moment). It's here if you want it—but my Air Supply is nearly depleted. –JH

THE C*NTS *Eat My Nuts* (Disturbing Records)
This is by far the very best of the three C*nts akbums to come our way since ChinMusic!'s inception. Fully-realized garage-y punk blasts with healthy lean to the '60s side of the garage, where the bolts and screws are all in baby jars, screwed to a pegboard. If you didn't catch the other two releases (no longer in print...sorry), they politely jammed a few of the better tunes—like the truly ripping "Life Is Stupid"—in the margins for your pleasure. Hope for the future of Illinois punk, you bet. (3238 S. Racine, Chicago IL 60608) –KC

DESTRUCTION UNIT *s/t* (Empty Records)
The other day, my mac froze up for the zillionth time in a row after trying to auto-contrast a digital photo in photoshop. I was so close to throwing the fucking machine through the office window that if I had been listening to Destruction Unit at the time, well, there likely would've been a very angry Network Coordinator the next morning as he sorted through the shards of teal-green macintosh littering the tight nap of the office carpet. As it was, I was listening to My Morning Jacket instead and therefore was much more inclined to control my rage by simply bruising

the top my foot against the seat of my non-ergonomic chair. Note to self: Wear steel-toed combat boots when trying to auto-contrast a digital photo in photoshop using OS 9. If punk was defined as rage expressed through music, then Destruction Unit could easily be classified as the ultimate punk band. Listening to them, one could easily argue a case asserting that The Pixies were on par with Menudo. The strike against Destruction Unit lies in their unfailing strategy of using bubbling, UFO synths to close out every screeching track. The hash mark in their favor lies heavily on the side of their unprecedented approach in the studio. Vocals and rhythm section alike are relegated to a low-end fogginess reminiscent of a loud stereo heard through thick walls, while the high end synths and guitars pierce the muddiness like sharp thorns against fragile skin or angry studded jewelry breaking into drywall. The resulting effect is a hybrid of extreme-core punk, no-wave thrashing and post-prog electronica. A hybrid that I believe had, before this album, never been attempted. Their Futurist approach to creating music reaches an apex at the finale of the album as they succeed at a task that many bands before them have tried, yet most have failed at: establishing approachable music from the mayhem of chaotic noise. The last track of the album finishes in an orgy of bats against pipes and rocks against windows and silverware against disposals and maniacal laughter against the darkness and china against ceramic flooring and trash cans against masonry. Yet the inherent madness falls into a subversively tidy rhythm that plays well underneath the heavy Kraftwerk synths, establishing a musical sound that transcends mere industrialism or noise rock and delves into a realm of its own craftsmanship. Look out, ye groups who claim to produce the sound of Punk to come, for Destruction Unithave come to shove your empty promises back down your throat into your bleeding gut. (www.emptyrecords.com) –PB

The DIRTBOMBS *Dangerous Magical Noise* (In The Red Records)
There are some really great combinations out there. Chocolate and peanut butter, steak and potatoes, and something much less caloric and just as tasty…the cover of a favorite song by a favorite band. The musical feast that I still thrill to digest is the fantastic version of Brian Eno's "King's Lead Hat" by those beautiful musical maestros from Detroit, The Dirtbombs on their latest offering *Dangerous Magical Noise*. Sure you can get full with just this one hit but the album has so much more to consume. The whole record is like a party that you can't believe your luck to be invited to. Even though the keg is empty, the floors are dangerously slippery and the cops are on their way, you continue to boogie your butt off all with a wide grin of euphoria on your face. (www.intheredrecords.com) –SA

ELLIOT *Song in the Air* (Revelation Records)
Deliberately vague sounds from a band that offers little biographical information beyond a lyric sheet. They hit all the right notes, but it's tough to sense the real Elliot behind the wall of very-produced guitars and dead-weight lyrics ("Reflex of a man, cut off his arms, just to drop all his heartstrings."). Songs in the Air builds slowly and bears a self-conscious whiff of importance—call 'em a modern-day Fugazi with most of the rough edges shaved off or sanded down. The tunes swing from loud, to soft, to softer still, and loud again—driven by steady beats and vocals squeezed out from the depths of the diaphragm. The band plays pretty-sounding music and back it with the required amount of muscle, but don't display a lot of personality behind the slick riffs and Big Rock Moments. (www.revelationrecords.com) –JH

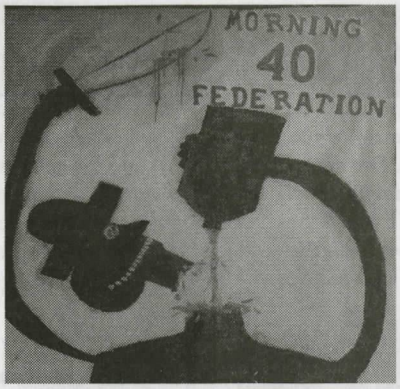
THE FIREBIRD SUITE *Archives—The Firebird Suite 1996-1998* (Lucid Records)
The Firebird Suite's motto: humility in the service of Indie Pop. Archives collects extant recorded material from this Midwestern group that survived multiple line-up shuffles and an equal number of name changes (from the Firebird Suite to the Firebird Project to the Firebird Band—all in two years). Their oldest tracks churn along in a low-stress, low-impact mode, bearing some resemblance to the gang of Pavement soundalikes that littered the landscape in the early and mid-1990s. Taken within that context, tunes like "Waiting for You to Come Back from Barcelona," "September, or "Nothing to Blame but Your Fame" have a mellow, simple appeal that's only heightened by the lure of nostalgia. It's a sound that's close to the speakers, intimate, and free from much of the melodramatic posturing that so many acts rely on. The Firebird Suite were a scaled-down rock and pop combo with a modest set of goals: this CD captures them at what must have been their finest hours. (665 Timber Hill Rd., Deerfield, IL 60015) –JH

GRIS GRIS *s/t* (Birdman)
An unexpected treat, the Gris Gris are a band that write neat songs, show a lot of untapped potential, confound expectations and inspire curiosity. What's the true story behind the Gris Gris? They're named after a kinda rural bayou folk magic spell, suggesting that they also work behind the scenes to inspire love and/or hate. This CD starts almost inaudibly, layering fragile pop with audio buzz and hiss (I sense the influence of the Jesus & Mary Chain, but there's more to 'em than that), moving on to dangerously catchy pop and beat, then downshifting to quieter, softer and weirder melodies and matters. The opening three tracks—"Raygun," "Everytime," and "Mary #38"—were all it took to hip me to their party platform win me as an admirer. The Gris Gris are a rare band that are simultaneously rock, tease and creep out a willing listener. It's a promising record, and one that offers the suggestion of many cool things to come. (PO Box 50777, Los Angeles, CA 90050) –JH

HAPPY *Sincerely, Without Wax* (Doubleplusgood Records)
Viewed macroscopically, our universe is glued together by the weakest of four forces: gravitation. Without it, everything we know would spiral outwards into oblivion. Yet, all the matter that exists in our universe cannot, alone, create enough gravitational force to hold together all the matter that exists in our universe. What, then, creates the extra gravitational pull that we need to keep the world, as we know it, from spiraling outward into oblivion? Why it is, of course, some sort of mysterious and sexy "dark matter" that evades our perception and, like the wind that sways the trees, can only be indirectly detected and never quantified. Listening to Happy's "Sincerely, Without Wax," one gets the impression that there must be some sort of unaccounted-for dark matter that glues their sounds together. When the vocals take the high road and the melody takes the low road or when the drums beat at one frequency and the guitar and the bass each pulse at oddly different frequencies, when these things happen, the only way to account for it is by suggesting some sort of powerful and invisible dark matter that unifies the disparate, atonal matter constituting the universe of their music. And it is precisely that dark matter which emerges from the music as a dark energy and a bold sound. Borrowing from some of the principles of free-form jazz, Steely Dan-esque prog rock and experimental noise-punk, Happy manages to maintain a coherent sound that bounces along through the weeds of a path less traveled. The hero of the story is guitarist/vocalist Andrew Johnson (of H.Chinaski), who sings with passionate expression, but doesn't scream, and who plays chiming guitar, but doesn't jangle. The two-person rhythm section consistently maintains this functional schizophrenia of beautiful noise and stripped-down punk. This is the sound of dark matter particles colliding with each other and the singular sound of the music they make in the wake of the collision. (www.doubleplusgood.com) –PB

LANGHORNE SLIM *The Electric Love Letter* (Narnack)
The Electric Love Letter is a too-short five-song CD EP, equally appropriate as a soundtrack for reading, writing, driving, mixing grape and grain, and sinking to the floor face-first. Langhorne Slim is a hip New York City kid possessed of a tremulous, nervous voice—perfectly suiting the homespun blues and roots tunes his band belts out. Incorporating accordion, tuba, and tenor sax, the group impresses with

its range, flexible energy, and—dare I say it—soul (no kid). An ace cover of Willie Brown's "My Future" opens Electric Love Letter on the perfect note—cramming a houseful of musicians and their instruments, relatives, and household pets into a whoop-and-holler barn raising that launches the record on a perfect note. "One Sunday Morning" is both inspiring and sinister, with Slim callin' up the ghost of Jeff Lee Pierce and leading it by the hand into the spotlight. Music like this is easy to attempt and tough to get right—but Langhorne Slim is boy enough for the task. Real vivid stuff. (381 Broadway, 4th Fl., New York, NY 10013) –JH



THE MEANS *The Divine Right of Means* (Doubleplusgood Records)
The actress Charlize Theron won her academy award not only due to a spectacular performance, but also due to the effect that her transformation - a delicate beauty into a homicidal monster - had on audiences. Makeup artists spent hours applying a leathery hide to the former fashion model to complete said transformation. The power in the role and in her performance lies in the fact that somewhere, underneath that monster, there lived a scared, vulnerable, delicate beauty. Track 12 of The Means' "The Divine Right of Means" is named in honor of Ms. Theron and plays out like a hardcore CD stuck on skip. A true monster of a song deformed into a demented version of itself; fractured and pieced back together before being electrified into life and stumbling around after local townspeople. At first listen, this track, along with the rest of the album, appears muddled and monochromatic: heavy guitar, pounding rhythm section and a screaming lead singer all producing a wallpaper of noise. Upon further listens, however, the songwriting blossoms into something a little more sophisticated. There's an ugliness and a sloppiness to the music that spills out and then is neatly reigned back in by a contrasting minimalist approach to production. A spastic, freeform hardcore jam transformed into a single drum beat counting out a low-voiced incantation. A bossa-nova beat here, a Hammond organ there, a gothic swampiness here, a French children's song there, and then here, after so much thundering noise, a piano ballad worthy of Billy Joel. Throughout, sonic ingredients such as chatter from a television, banter from the recording studio or a muffled snippet of a movie soundtrack are thrown in to fill in the holes and fuse the album into a complete experience. One suspects The Means have more in store for us than the cold, hard front they project. In fact, the general impression is that with many of the pieces there is a delicate melody living inside the monster, clawing its way out through the leathery hide. (www.doubleplusgoodrecords.com) –PB

MONDAY'S HERO *Love Carries an Axe* (Lucid Records)
Rock moderne with a handmade, learn-as-you-go quality to it. Like many up-and-coming acts, they drape their music with lyrics that could either be taken as wistfully introspective or dangerously self-absorbed (depending on which way the wind blows). The band sounds like earnest kids set loose in a cold, cruel world—to their credit, they dispense with lengthy introductions or extended guitar jam freakouts (believe me, it helps). The tunes have a kinda nervous, propulsive energy that serves them well. The fire is there. Only gripe: Monday's Hero display a tendency to break into vocal harmonics when it suits 'em the least, stalling the tune and dissipating the momentum the group's worked so diligently to produce. (665 Timber Hill Rd., Deerfield, IL 60015) –JH

MORNING 40 FEDERATION *s/t* (M80 Music)
The Crescent city hasn't added much to the pantheon of rawk. What have we got, Red Rockers?...ooohhh...Better Than Ezra?...screw that. The fine people of New Orleans have been stuck with the trad. quank and hammer of piano-based jazz for ages. Imagine that, you want to bring the noise and hoist a 40 with yer pals, and the only soundtrack you get is Professor Longhair and Dr. John. Zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz....

So how do you rectify the situation? You wanna represent, sure, but you can't just perpetuate the same ol' Bourbon and blues formula, with its Caledonias and endless beadery. So you gather up your pals, find the common bond (40 oz. beers at breakfast) and hit the stage. To solidify a national identity, you get some bros. that have no preternatural option but to grind out that Dirty Dozen Brass sound. Marry it to a not-as-kooky Fishbone party funk, write a flask fulla anthems and lay it the fuck down. What these gents ended up with (besides potential cirrhosis of the liver) is a likely successor to the frat-rock throne. Yeah, it's actually a lot better than that sounds. See these guys drunk. (www.morning40.com) –HS

MOUSEROCKET *s/t* (Empty Recrods)
It says quite a lot about an album when the worst tune you can find is an ill-advised and haphazardly-rendered sketch of the Love standard "Alone Again Or." Ill-advised because: (1) It has already been remade flawlessly by the Damned, Calexico *and* UFO. (2) To deviate from the well-defined structure of the original serves no purpose except to deviate from the song's inherent power and feeling. That said, there's some excellent strings on this version, which almost makes up for the sacrilege.

But as mentioned, the above is the *worst* aspect of this very good project by Lost Sounds' singer Alicja Trout. Not content to merely rehash Siouxsie-isms or other previous punk incarnates, Alicja takes the carcass of punk and brews up a hell of a spicy stew. leading off with three tunes which squat residence in humming part of your mind, Mouserocket then chucks a few sliders and strike out the side with compelling forays into the atmospherics with piano and Sabbath-like drudgers. Good to know that versatility and eclecticism are not lost. (P O Box 12301 Portland OR 97212) –HS

THE NATIONAL ACROBAT *TNA: The Complete Recordings* (Initial Recrods)
The final testament for this turn-of-the-century Louisville-based, Sabbath-named group. Much better band than the Sabbath tune. Louisville is probably much nicer than Birmingham, UK. Let's compare: Birmingham? Black Sabbath. Louisville? Muhammad Ali. Case closed.

The music?...Angular, with screams. Chords jutting and chugging from odd directions. Drums that fit in where they can. This reviewer refuses to compare/contrast them with previous L'ville bands whom were critical faves. But a crooked line could be drawn. Wouldn't it be funny if a study was done and surmised that ALL of the music from Kentucky was noticeably influenced by bourbon? It would explain quite a bit. This is how you feel after three hits of Maker's and some jerk cuts you off on the freeway. Same yelling anger. These guys could have done more shaded and subtle music, but it appears they didn't want to. So there. (www.initialrecords.com) –HS

OCS *Two* (Narnack)
You ever get so caught up in cooking that you add some weird spice you didn't want to use, so you end up adding one more main ingredient and three extra spices to even it out, but it still isn't right so you throw in some red wine and maybe Tapatio, and then some crushed red peppers? What you end up with might be edible, might even be kinda good, but you know it's just wrong, and any chef worth a damn would probably puke at the sight of it and/or laugh you out of the culinary academy. The Coachwhips' resident hummingbird (at least six bands in 2003, still counting for 2004...dude...take a breather) has cleaned out his spice rack and veggie crisper to create a varied cornucopia of mishmashed hash. Centered around some basic acoustic guitar pricklings, quite reminiscent of Jack White's more pensive shit, the backdrop changes

with each number, giving it a "Nick Drake tuning up on a street corner in rush hour" sound. A nice smorgasboard here, with lots of dripping wet strings and mistakes turned into appetizers. An Icky Boyfriends cover. Better than ramen. (381 Broadway, 4th Flr #3, New York, NY 10013). –KC

THE ORPHANS *Everybody Loves You When You're Dead* (Unity Squid)
Remember when punk rock was merely rock and roll, stripped of bullshit and posing and backstage passes and MTV? It was a lovely time of heavy beer drinking and low-budget recordings which above all else sounded immediate. The rock was right there. Just sitting on your turntable spouting back at you and you felt like the damn thing was recorded yesterday, sounded just as rocking as the band did when you saw them at the VFW or Lions Club and you took a header from a flying bottle of suds. The guitars ripped and seared like a ton of water hitting a cheap hot frying pan and the singer shouted like she still wasn't used to hearing herself in headphones while singing. The best punk rock sounded like that. The first Circle Jerks album, the first Damned, The Misfits, they all had that. Those days are pretty much gone now. Not a lot of honest riff-rock anymore.

A year or so back we received a four song demo cd from The Orphans after a few LA pals told us they'd seen the light. Like us, they were all too skeptical about the punk rock until the saw this group in a scummy makeshift club. We listened, and we've been waiting for more songs like a junkie who hasn't seen "The Man" in two days. We feel much better now. Much much better. Now we just gotta jones for the next one. (P O Box 1235, Huntington Beach CA 92647) –KC

PIGMY LOVE CIRCUS *The Power of Beef* (Go Kart)
The three-ring Pigmy Love Circus have been laboring in the trenches for 15 years, according to what I've read—and they're still working the bottom-heavy murder metal schtick that they minted back in the halcyon days of the late 80s. The Power of Beef brings to mind all those overwrought and underpaid prop-metal bands popular during Bill Clinton's first term—like Haunted Garage, Green Jelly, or Gwar—and sounds pretty much exactly the way you'd expect it to sound. Throat-shredding vocals duel with barrel-scraping guitars (which will survive?) The song titles betray their interests: "Swamp Creature," "Bone Orchard," "Murderer," "Headless Horseman," and "12 Gauge Kiss" are samples. I share their interests in grade-Z horror-movie Americana, but I wish they'd backed 'em up with something a little more convincing than the generic mid-tempo metal found on The Power of Beef. (PO Box 20, Prince Street Station, New York, NY 10012) –JH

PULLEY *Matters* (Epitaph)
Feh. Some pretty generic and standard-issue modern-day punk. This is clean. Very very clean punk rock. So clean you could almost put the phrase "punk rock" in quotes. This fits right in with anyone's conception of which music belongs in a Fox Sports "Extreme" montage of skating mishaps, BMX flips and some dude in a Hurley long-sleeve waving a "shaka" sign into a fish-eye lens. This is the fifth album Pulley has done for Epitaph, and it sounds exactly like the other four, but better. It's easy to root for Scott Radinsky, as he has been through a lot. From a nomadic baseball career which eventually brought him to his hometown Dodgers, through his victorious bout with Hodgkin's, chucking that life to return to his punk roots. This is a man whose cred cannot be questioned. I want this music to be tons better than it is, but this is a ten thousand foot pole away from Scared Straight. (2798 Sunset Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90026) –HS

REVENGE SF/DJ SHITBIRD & THE ULTIMATE PARTY MACHINE *Welcome to the Party* (Narnack)
Two misunderstood side projects join forces to combat evil and reap the spoils of victory. The theme: party until the cows come home, or until the downstairs neighbors call the noise abatement squad. Revenge SF feature members of San Francisco's lovable pocket calculators the Numbers and basement creeps the Coachwhips: the band sport the Numbers analog synth and keyboard shrieks and the bent metal guitar drone of the 'whips. Both of their parent groups rank high in my book, so the Revenge SF tracks are soothing music to my dented ears. It's nervous, jittery, modern and real scientific new wave that fires first and asks questions later. The Ultimate Party Machine may very well be that—featuring an eight-year-old girl on vocals, they might break child labor laws but still make loud noises in the service of art. The dance combo/group feature personnel on loan from Big Techno Werewolves and Comets on Fire: add 'em up and you get noise and drones infused with a keen appreciation of the stupid. Fine stuff, this. (381 Broadway, 4th Fl., New York, NY 10013) –JH

R'N'R *The Infamous and Notorious* (Manic Ride Records)
Five Clydes and no Bonnies wage war against John Law, the Man, and the uptight society scions who stomp all over 'em with wing-tip shoes. Music-wise they're a hybrid of slow-burning hardcore and biker-bar rock—I'm guessing there's an ongoing struggle between a metal guitar player and a singer who wants to keep things on the punk rock side of the fence. Lyrically they're pissed-off and proud of it, as evidenced by "I Am Not Impressed," "Weak-Ass Shit," "We're Fuckin' R'n'R," and "12FU." Call them what you will, R'nR are tough kids trapped in troubled times—and this outlet is probably the only thing keeping 'em out of the pool halls. (PO Box 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101) –JH

ROOKIE CARD *Near Mint* (Blanco Niño Records)
Wow. Really surprised by this semi-debut. The Rookies are JUST under the wire on innings pitched and at-bats; just enough to still consider them for Rookie–Of-The-Year status, a la Khaili Greene or Mark Teixeiera. They have been heralded in the San Diego local press for some time now; winning awards and golden handshakes and accolades and snacks. But if you've read the press, which mostly consists of comparisons to The Replacements, you are either put off by a retro feeling of nostalgia, or you can't wait to relive "Tim."

Now here's the scroogie. They may be reminiscent of The 'Mats in some, perhaps many, ways, but a substantially more accurate comparison would be the horribly underrated Young Fresh Fellows. The Rookies have a lot of direct correlations to the early, non-Kurt Bloch Fellows. The country overtones, the witty and pun-ishing lyrical twists, even head-Rookie Adam's lax vocal melodies. Hook-laden, well-constructed melodies sync with twangy guitars and an overall roadworthy weltschmerz. Songs like "Escalator To Heaven" and the Cars-injected "After The Beep" bend and stretch like Willie Montañez snapping at a bad throw. Even with all the quirky bits and between-song dot racing, the tunes here more than bring the goods, forcing you to listen without a hint of joke-band prejudice. These guys bring the heat and savvy like Jake Peavy. (www.rookiecardthemovie.com) –HS

SPLIT LIP RAYFIELD *Should Have Seen It Coming* (Bloodshot)
It's been said that the aggressive sod-forming nature of bluegrass is attributed to its vigorous rhizome development. That being said (again), I'm here to write about the fucking bigrockaction, maybe bringing to the attention of hardball fuckup punks across this great land of ours the beauty of a newfound hardcore gem. It pains me to no end that I will not fulfill that dream with this review.

Goddammit, This is fucking bluegrass. I mean, there's no question it's good bluegrass. Prolly even badass bluegrass. And the fucking bassist plays some one-string beater pickup gastank stuck to a stick (and four feet of weedwhacker line). But the average song length here is like two and a half minutes, there's not so much as a fucking kickdrum on the entire album, and some guy's playing a mandolin on every track.

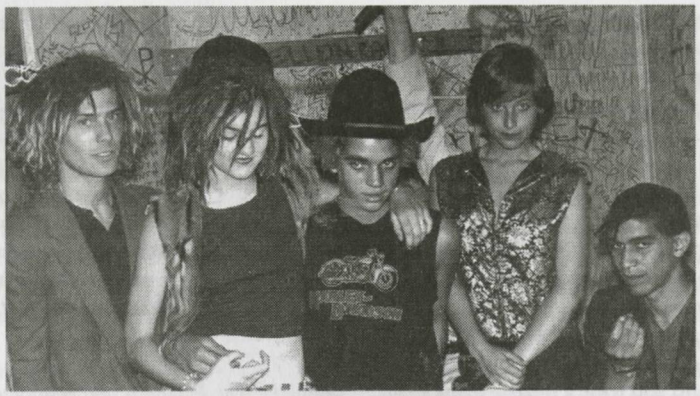
But shit, I mean he is playing hell out of the mando'. And the guy on the banjo—did I even mention the fucking banjo? Dude's fucking sick on the banjo. They do have songs like "A Little More Cocaine Please" and "Redneck Tailgate Dream", rhyming "we'll fight you now, goddammit" with "where are my Skoal Bandits", and lines like "We got Ford, Dodge,

and Chevy trucks, And we keep 'em on high beam." –AD

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS *Guitar And Drum* (Kung Fu Records)

Man, some people just know how to write anthems. Fists in the air, singalong, "Oi oi oi!"...the whole McGilla. But you'd think after 25+ years, one would have run out of rally-'round-the-flag platitudes and slogans. Apparently not Jake Burns. As the old vaudeville crack goes, he's got a million of them. And not unlike the old vaudeville, he can whip up a batch of hackneyed chord progressions and melodic chants to entertain the whole family. This is not to say Guitar And Drum is bad, by any stretch of the imagination. It's quite good, in a classic way. Like W.C. Fields, or Abbott And Costello, it has a universal appreciability which aims right for the heart...the "Achilles Heart", if you will.

If you have ever owned an SLF album, you know what this sounds like; 1st/2nd album Clash without the socio-political agility. Catchy-as-all-hell tunes built for walking around at midnight, drunk with your pals. Plenty of major chords and yelled pathos. But where the earlier SLF took mostly from the Strummer/Jones till, the inclusion of ex-Jam bassist Bruce "The Freak" Foxton shows up more so on this album than their previous ones. So much so that at its best it can make the listener wonder how much influence Foxton had on those great Tory hits like "Man In The Cornershop" or "This Is The Modern World." His involvement is a lot more integral on this album, and it's really great to hear his walking bass lines alongside some big guitars again.



Twisted Roots (c. 1981)

Although SLF is widely perceived as a punk nostalgia act, this cannot be sloughed off as a mere cash-in. This is a damn good album on its own, that should win over even the most elitist critic or crusty punk nihilist. Strong. Slightly inventive. Semi-infectuous. Worthy. Oi. (www.kungfurecords.com) –KC

STRAIGHT OUTTA JUNIOR HIGH *Kiss of Deaf* (Mindset)

If Blink 182 ever gets tired of spewing two-dimensional power-pop-punk targeted towards high school snowboarders on the fraternity path, then there is just the perfect group out there poised and ready to carry on the legacy. My friends and family, this group is known as "Straight Outta Junior High." Already, I know you're thinking, "that's a name to go down in the record books!" 'Cause you know anyone who uses a colloquial conjunction in the name of their band is cool. I think it's a little easier to text message, or sumfin? Or maybe it's just clever? But truly clever bands, like Weezer or They Might Be Giants, tend towards a topical humor that references themes such as KISS, Mary Tyler Moore, obscure Belgian artists and James K. Polk (our eleventh president.) Whereas "Straight Outta Junior High" (SOJH) prefer to rely on songs about Britney and Shakira, random groupings of quasi-oriental words and multiple references to girls being, in general, big sluts. Go out and do the world a favor. Burn any and all SOJH albums in the store racks. And if the punk behind the counter gets all angry and stuff, just slip the nearest Good Charlotte cd into his stereo and he'll forget anything real happened. (www.mindsetrecords.com) –PB

TUNGSTEN 74 *Aleatory Element* (Technical Echo)
Imagine if Yes didn't suck so much and took heed to the hesher metal of Blue Cheer, The Groundhogs and perhaps Deep Purple. Imagine some serious trudging mud boots taking a ten mile walk through thick snow on a pitch black night. Imagine a bass solo where the bass is hidden somewhere in some clouded noise of synth, a drum beat and some acoustic guitar. Imagine there's no heaven. Imagine if Eno's Ambient albums *weren't* boring and lame. Imagine *two* cds of this. Imagine driving two hours past your destination while on hallucinogens. (172 5th Ave. Brooklyn NY 11217) –KC

TWISTED ROOTS s/t (Dionysus)
There is no more suspect entity in rock than the idea of the supergroup; two or three established stars supported by skill position players or drinking buddies, or a whole group of musicians bound together to undo the mistakes made by previous collaborations. More often than not these clusters create music of little merit. Their lack of natural chemistry and glut of opposing egos hitting each member at odd angles to result in not so much.

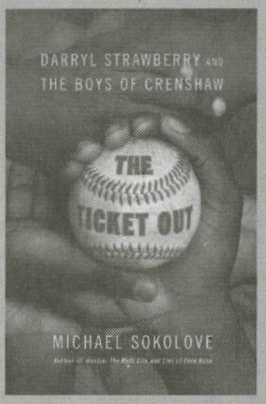
In the case of L.A.'s Twisted Roots, leader and ex-Screamers and Nina Hagen keyboardist Paul Roessler teamed with his sister (and future Black Flag bassist) Kira, ex-Germs guitarist Pat Smear, momentary 'Flag drummer Emil Brown and charismatic young Maggie Ehrig. For the next eight months or so they burned hot and loud through the Southern California clubs, gaining the respect of many with skewed pop tunes, funkified and shrieked with enough energy to wonderfully convey the complexities of the music's structure and strength. Maggie, the tiny MC of the show, exploded from the proscenium like a circus barker. The role of ringmaster was played by Paul Roessler. It was clear the group was his, and he commanded the stage with confidence.

It's been said that the best pop music is that which can make the subtly complex sound as simple as possible. Think of your fave pop gem, say "Billie Jean," or something like "Purple Rain." On the surface you have a steady bass line and thump-whack drum pattern. Put on the headphones and the orchid opens its petals, revealing the colorful beauty therein.

This is what Twisted Roots was, and could have continued to be, had they not let the band implode after six or eight months. Cute little ditties like "Mommy's Always Busy and—one of the finest pop songs ever created—"The Yellow One" sound like light throwaways of sugary tuneage, but when disassembled, each aspect takes on a private life that forms the rich little society of, and quotes are necessary: "The Perfect Pop Gem."

Though a good 2/3rds of this collection are recorded a few floors below fi, this definitive compendium is more than worth looking up to include in your little black book. This is the girlfriend that you let get away. The one you regret not treating better. Here is your second chance. (www.dionysusrecords.com) –KC

V/A – *Death by Salt: A Slug Compilation* (Eighteen Percent Gray Records)
Slug is a Salt Lake City freebie 'zine that recently celebrated its 15-year anniversary…meaning that it' only a year from its first drivers' license and six years from its first legal beer. Death by Salt corrals 59 area groups spanning a range of punk/rock/pop/metal/hair/dread rock, sealed in an expansive two-CD set that, quite simply, offers a little something for everyone. Viewed as a final product destined for public consumption, Death by Salt is about as elaborate as they come. The two disks are packaged with a full-color booklet devoting a page to each group, all bound in a printed cardstock box that feels pleasantly rough to the touch. The CDs feature tracks from a roster that includes local heroes the 12th Street Staggers, JW Blackout, Books About UFOs, Brownham, Chinese Stars, Corleones, Coyote Hoods, the Cronies, Dead in the Womb, the Debonairs, Form of Rocket, Fantazmic Four, Hudson River School, Mental Midgets, the New Evils, Nimh, One Way Nowheres, Redd Tape, Stilletto, the Switch Tolchok Trio, and Vexations. Lots of others, too. As with any project of this scope, the quality skitters up and down with each track—but for the better part it's a solid representation of what's baking on those long stretches of ossified salt. (www.slugmag.com) –JH



The Ticket Out: Darryl Strawberry and the Boys of Crenshaw

By Michael Sokolove, (Simon and Schuster)

In baseball, natural ability combined with the principles of hard work do not always equal a field scout giving an exceptional player a second glance. Nor does a start on a major league team guarantee one has the maturity to fulfill the club's imposed p.r. destiny of greatness without the missteps of drugs.

Darryl Strawberry's many returns to rehab and other stories of super star redemption are not the main focus of Sokolove's book, but of the individual stories of his lesser known teammates from the 1979 Crenshaw High Cougars (a Los Angeles inner-city school) who, titans all with true virtue and focus, wished to make it in MLB and of their unfulfilled dreams and the essential quality one must have to leave behind embittered feelings acquired from youth to gain contentment in adulthood.

Eight team members were eventually drafted, but one, Carl Jones whose love for the game endures to this day, could not rise above baseball's shun and his story is told with heart breaking sadness. The laws of the baseball draft do not apply to logic. And although baseball greatness is measured with undeniable statistics, the arcane rules of pettiness pervade. (One instance explains Coach Brooks Hurst's short career in MLB by the time honored illogical given that players cannot drink at the same place as their managers and coaches. He was cut from the team for this infraction.) Decisions that seem to be right might actually be the ones that turn out to be wrong. One team member initially turns down the offer to join the Oakland A's minor league and continue with college thinking that MLB would call again, but it never did. Sometimes one is told to bunt when a swing would have been the better decision (as in the inner-city Cougar's championship game against an upper middle class Caucasian team).

What one thinks will bring joy might, as in Darryl's case in MLB, present pressures not foreseen in youth and for shoulders not ready to carry the weight of the title given to a phenom, can lead to the escape into drugs and the bliss of irresponsibility. Drafted after high school, no matter how much the dream is desired, very few are ready for the loneliness, upper management assholism and false player camaraderie on a major league team or exist in minor league purgatory. Hopes and dreams can give triumph but they can also return only sorrow. –SO

Take Me Out To Blah Blah Blah...

Illinois road-trippin', truckin' and spielin'

by Hap Mansfield

This is all about balance whether it's baseball, the Minutemen, Olympic gymnasts or hotdogs. I don't particularly have balance when it comes to food. If you've ever wondered who actually eats those questionable looking hotdogs in the rotisseries at truckstops; well, I do, for one. I've seen a few truck drivers eat them, as well. The hotdogs (tubesteaks, my dad always called them- I think it's generally a father thing to say) aren't really very good. But they're not bad, either. For one thing, the buns are usually kept in a steamer which keeps them nice and soft. Yeah, soft hot white bread. Why is something that is so nutritionally useless so delicious? For another thing there are often lots of condiments available to load up on to cut the taste of the over-cooked hotdog. Oh, and they're cheap. On my most recent road trip through the Midwest last week I got two hotdogs for a buck and a free ice cream sandwich. The Kwik-Stop in Iowa that I always hit gives you the ice cream (if you ask for it) and incessantly informs you of this on a dozen billboards that precede its exit on I-80. Free Ice Cream!!! I'd seen the sign for years and never had the forethought to ask about it until about 6 months ago. I was there for the cheap hotdogs, really. Cheap hotdogs are a taste I acquired from being on the road while I was singing in a couple of really lousy bands. If D. Boon and Mike Watt figured themselves as corndogs then our band's metaphor would have been cheap hot dogs.

So I was talking to a trucker as we stood at the Kwik-Stop loading our dogs with condiments. We were advising each other on what to use, relish, mustard, onions and the like, and we both agreed a hotdog should be fully loaded. This gave me the idea he might be from Chicago. I asked. He was. See, the Chicago hotdog is the kitchen sink hotdog—we put everything we can on top of that all-beef wiener. I think it's the Illinois version of a salad. Our concept of a well-balanced diet might well be how much chili, sauerkraut, relish, onion, tomato wedges and hot peppers you can balance on top of a hotdog. A redhot with a junkyard full of stuff on it that actually makes it to your mouth without most of it falling in your lap is called a Nadia Comaneci by the way. Just FYI.

Of course, this trucker was a Cubs fan. One of the beauties of being a Cubs fan is that there are a lot of us. Everywhere. You could stand up in an airplane going any direction at all in this country and yell out for another Cubs fan and you'd find one. When I lived in California I was sure that in this baseball rich state there would be lots of fans of the game but that I'd never come close to another Cubs fan and I'd have to tolerate a bunch of folks that bled Dodger blue. I knew there would be a shitload of people who wanted to talk about the A's or the Giants. I was sure there were a slew of Padres fanatics. Even the Angels have fans. But I thought the Cubs were going to be a lonely baseball path. Boy, was I wrong. I spent many a Cubs game drinking Anchor Steams and eating bangers and mash and beans while basking in the warmth of Cub fans at the Prince of Wales pub in San Mateo where all the games were broadcast via satellite dish. It was a lot like I think heaven would be if you could also throw in smoking opium with Chow Yun Fat.

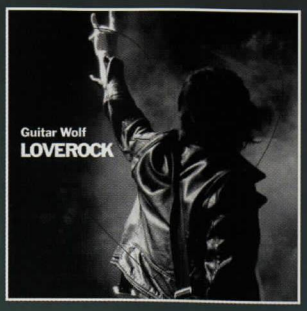
Back to the trucker and the hotdogs. As well as being Cubs fans we were expressing our worry over the Friendly Confines. Surely you've seen the news stories about the bricks crumbling and falling on or near patrons at Wrigley Field from the upper deck. While there is really no bad seat in the house, the views of the ball field and the city of Chicago are spectacular from the upper deck. Great place to see the game although I've always been a cheap-seats-right-field bleachers gal, myself. The truck driver described a great Marlin's game he had seen; 16 innings, Wood vs. Pavano, triple by Mark Bellhorn and Preston Wilson carried off the field after hitting the wall. I mentioned how I had wept the day in 1988 we heard the lights were going in. No, I wasn't against it; it just felt like the end of something special (we'd have had them in 1945 but Phil Wrigley donated them to the war effort, you know). The trucker patted me on the back and bought me a cup of coffee. We chuckled about the fan, who, on that first complete night game held up a sign that said, "Will the last person to leave the stadium please turn out the lights?" We parted voicing hopes that they wouldn't have to tear the old girl down. Oh, and how happy we were to have Nomar Garciaparra. Come on. That's cool. If he ever gets off the injured list, we'll show 'em!

So now I'm back in the car listening to Double Nickels on the Dime for the sixth time in a row, eatin' my hotdogs and thinkin' about Wrigley Field where the hotdogs are actually pretty good. Record attendance levels are being recorded at the Friendly Confines because young people just getting into the game love the feel of the place and regulars have always known it's a little slice of baseball paradise. Everybody in baseball knows it's a little emerald baseball jewel box of a place (especially thanks to Bill Veeck planting all that ivy). Maybe too little. I've read that it's small and cramped and I wondered how big have we all gotten that you could play baseball in it in 1914 but now it feels tight? But, maybe we have all gotten bigger. There's only two Cubs in the starting line-up this year that are under six feet tall and they are a respectable 5'8" and 5'9". Were baseball players always that tall? I don't think so. Somebody once told me that Wrigley Field was a smelly and dirty place to watch baseball. (I'm pretty sure I killed him.) Ernie Banks said he felt like he won every time he stepped onto the field there.

Now I know this sounds like I'm standing next to Hack Miller, throwing this in but I had an idea. An idea inspired by cheap hotdogs and D. Boon singing the verse, "The people will survive." on the song "Corona". See, I think ABC and the Tribune Corporation are missing their big chance here for a new reality series. They could call it *Death Diamond 2005* (in honor of the movie, *Death Race 2000*, where, I believe Keith Carradine plays a cheap hotdog.) It would be like *Fear Factor* plus baseball...what's not to like? So baseball fans, in this game show, would have to watch a Cubs game at Wrigley and then make it past the bombadiering bricks of the upper deck where they would run the risk of injury or death (come on, tell me you don't want one of those "survivor"-type players to get hit in the head with some fuckin' cement?) If you had to have one of those put-something-vile-into-your-mouth-and-eat-it segments they could just hand over a wad of ABC gum from underneath the north field bleachers and ask 'em to chew. The final part of the contest would be remaining cheerful and truly optimistic after the Cubs lost. Or won. This show would create the revenue to fix the ballpark. Everybody wins.

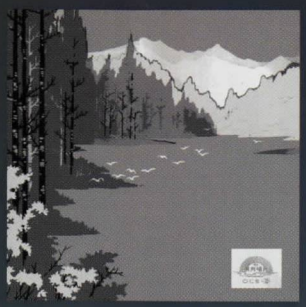
See, it's all about balance. The Nadia Comaneci. The sublime symmetry of poetry and amusing crap perfectly balanced on Double Nickels. The preservation of the Friendly Confines, home of the first organ music in baseball, the diamond of the fabled hit where Babe Ruth pointed to the stands, the place so full of baseball history you'd need a whole ChinMusic devoted to it (and I know Chanel, this ain't gonna happen) balanced by the fact that just down the street is Cabaret Metro where you can catch a good gig and grab a hotdog on the way there. Heaven. Throw in a red satin dress plus smoking opium with Chow Yun Fat and you've got Nirvana. Who, by the way, owe an awful lot to the Minutemen. And that, pal, is balance.

Now available on Narnack Records...



GUITAR WOLF
Loverock
Packed with attitude, packed with distortion, packed with anger, GUITAR WOLF are the kings of guitar rock and they are taking no prisoners. "This is hands down the best record of 2004" HOUSTON PRESS

NCK7020
CD/LP



OCS
2
"OCS's 2 is what it will sound like when the aliens take our tar, asphalt and concrete away... Those reliant upon the gold rush, the Industrial Revolution, the Internet-boom, and the information superhighway will be left to ponder what the road actually was. It's all gone now, folks, and OCS, a project of Coachwhips founder/leader John Dwyer, offers a wide-open womb to relax in now that the party's over." PREFIX MAGAZINE

NCK7016
CD

THE FALL
The Real New Fall LP
"Seemingly fueled by Red Bull, red meat and bile, THE FALL rock with scalding fury as if it were 1981 again." ALTERNATIVE PRESS
"Shit's positively majestic. We are all Fall-struck once again." ARTHUR MAGAZINE

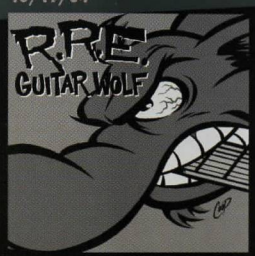
NCK7018
CD/LP

THE YELLOW SWANS
Bring the Neon War Home
"Yellow Swans are staggeringly deliberate; their patience and acute attention to detail allow them to pack a beguilingly huge wallop, and Bring the Neon War Home prevails on density, not girth." PITCHFORK MEDIA

NCK7018
CD/LP

Coming Soon...

10/19/04



GUITAR WOLF
Rock 'n' Roll Etiquette
Stronger than ever, loud as fuck. Guitar Wolf spew their ferocious, unforgiving, mind-melting howl, growl, speaker tearing punk rock.
NCK7022 CD/LP

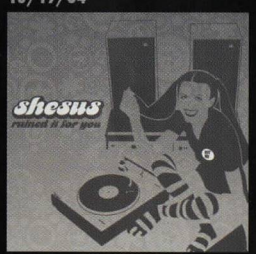
10/19/04

THE BUNNYBRAINS
Box the Bunny
For the first time EVER...
FINALLY All your favorite records on CD PLUS special DVD with live Bunny action, weird behind-the-scenes and more!
4 CD box set plus bonus DVD
NCK7021

1/25/05

THE COACHWHIPS
Peanut Butter & Jelly
All new from the trio that brought you Bangers vrs. Fuckers "THE COACHWHIPS make the White Stripes sound like they were produced by Phil Spector."
NCK7024 CD/LP

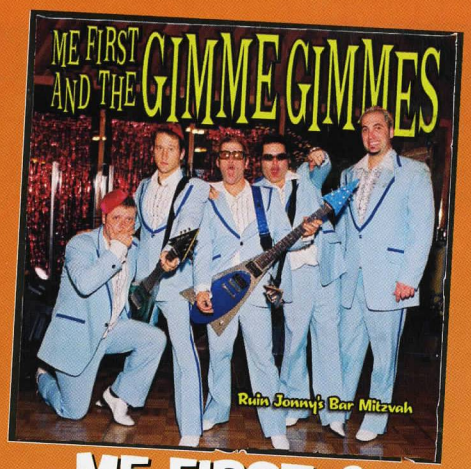
10/19/04



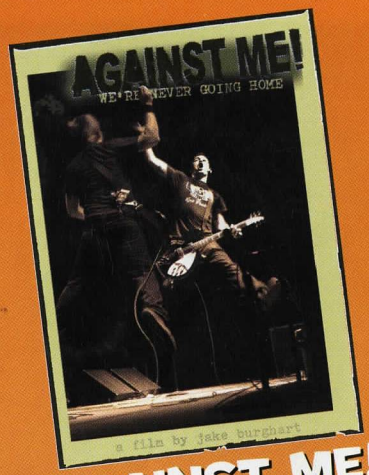
SHESUS
Ruined It For You
One listen to the discordant yet melodic full frontal assault of the Shesus experience will convince anyone, anywhere, that the heartland is where it's at.
NCK7023 EP

NARNACK RECORDS

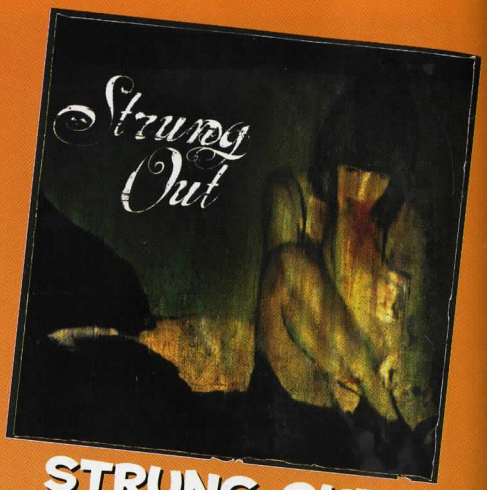
www.narnackrecords.com



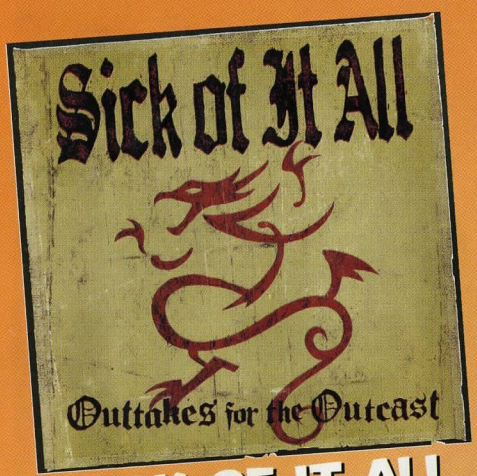
ME FIRST & THE GIMME GIMMES
"RUIN JONNY'S BAR MITZVAH"
OUT OCTOBER 19TH ON CD/LP



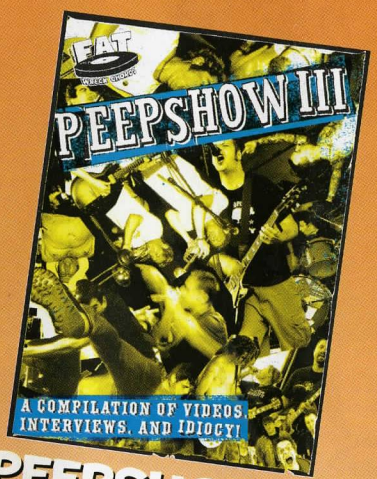
AGAINST ME!
"WE'RE NEVER GOING HOME"
OUT NOVEMBER 2ND ON DVD



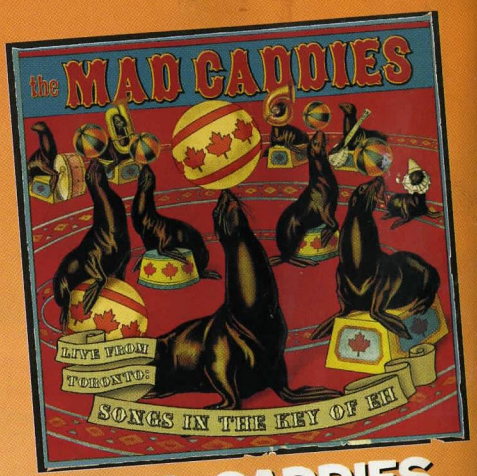
STRUNG OUT
"EXILE IN OBLIVION"
OUT NOVEMBER 2ND ON CD/LP



SICK OF IT ALL
"OUTTAKES FOR THE OUTCAST"
OUT OCTOBER 19TH ON CD ONLY



PEEPSHOW 3
VARIOUS ARTISTS
OUT NOW ON DVD



MAD CADDIES
"LIVE FROM TORONTO: SONGS IN THE KEY OF EH"
OUT NOW ON CD ONLY