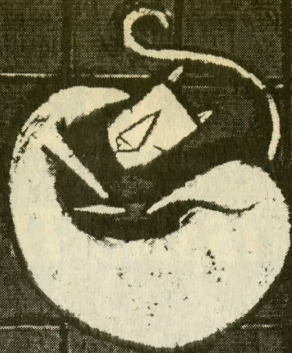


The New Scheme

Issue Three



SHAI HULUDI/ANASARCA/ADAM VOITH/THE THUMBS



Kill Creek Colors Of Home

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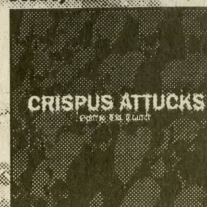
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huh?

the new scheme is a quarterly magazine that covers mostly music, though there is also coverage of underground culture in general, and anything else that i find interesting at the time. the new scheme is free, and supports itself financially with advertising and subscriptions. it is distributed through a variety of mailorder companies, and a small army of kids across the country. see below to join that army. i encourage feedback, in the form of e-mail or letters, though i don't usually print letters in the zine itself.

Circulation is 5000 copies. Printed by Intermountain Color in Boulder.

advertising:

the rates are very reasonable. please get in touch if for rate and deadline info if you're interested.

review policy:

send along your record, zine, video, or book and it will be considered for review in the next possible issue.

check out the website for more info on either.

the team

stuart

editor. all business and layout work.
everything without someone else's name on it.

justin

official sidekick (read:bitch). a bit of everything

kap

the one man peanut gallery. interviewer

paul miles

the token new guy. interviews/columns

brian

web design

tom

record reviews

scott, zach, jason, nate dogg

columnists

i'm always looking for good contributors.
get in touch if you're interested.

join the army

the new scheme is distributed each issue by a small army of people all over. circulation is increasing pretty rapidly, and will probably continue to do so. thus we are in need of more kids to pass out copies of the new scheme to their friends, put stacks at stores or shows, or anywhere else interested people will find them. all i ask in return is enough money to cover some of the postage. i will send along a stack of zines, along with whatever posters, other zines, stickers, samplers, etc. i have laying around at the time. send well hidden cash to cover postage, along with your mailing address, and e-mail address if you have one to the address above.

rates:

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a brief soundtrack for the creation of this issue:

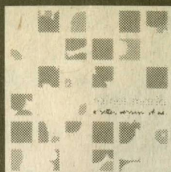
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Alkaline Trio "From Here To Infirmary"	Nora "Losers' Intuition"
Anasarca "Discography"	Crispus Attucks "Red Black Blood Attack"
Darkest Hour "So Sedated, So Secure"	Juno "A Future Lived In Past Tense"
Kill Creek "Colors Of Home"	The Thumbs "Last Match"
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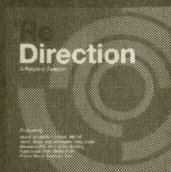


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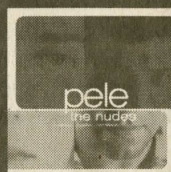


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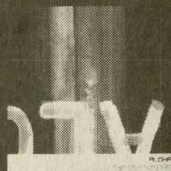


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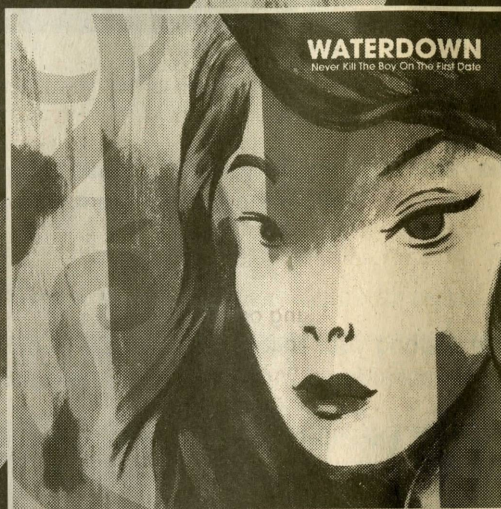


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Editor's Notes.

This issue, like many before it is late in coming out. Perhaps it's just the nature of doing a zine, though it drives me nuts to put every issue out a month later than I had originally anticipated. Every issue I say it, and I'm going to say it again. I'm going to start really pushing to get every issue out within a three month time frame. The difference is that I am making a conscious effort this time around to put everything in place to accomplish it. I've been doing one zine or another for more than four years now. That whole time it has never been my first priority. Over the last month or so I've made the decision to do everything I can to make this zine my first priority. I've made a few decisions in the last few months that will all ultimately benefit the zine.

I went on tour with Shogun for most of June. The tour was up and down throughout, though it went pretty much as expected. Tour, and life in general made me decide now is not the time for me to make playing music my first priority in life. At least not now, or with Shogun. So after tour then a few local shows, it was a very mutual decision that I leave the band. After returning from tour I went through a couple weeks of really extreme burnout. It was the worst I had ever experienced. I had been taking on more than I had time in every day to do for far too long, and it finally caught up with me. Thus I decided something had to go, if not more than one thing to make my life a bit more manageable. The decision I had made was to either quit the zine altogether, or clear enough space in my life to do it right. I decided I didn't want to quit doing the zine under any circumstances. So I have decided to put off going to school indefinitely (for a number of reasons), and quit playing music for the time being. I think I have more than enough time now to do the zine on the level I want to do it at.

I am also finally moving back to Boulder in just over a week. Justin and I will be living in a two bedroom apartment that is part living space, and part office space. It will be as close to an co-editor situation as I've ever really had. Hopefully two heads really are better than one. I think this too will definitely benefit the zine. Aside from having to show up to work at the copy store four days a week, I have no commitments but this zine. It's taken four years, but I finally have the time to do what I've wanted to do all along.

So all of that said, what does the future hold for The New Scheme? That's a good question. Very little of it is decided. Hopefully we can continue to put out a better product every issue. The rest should take care of itself. I'm still working on the distro side of things, but that is coming along too. I've raised circulation this issue to 5000 copies which is considerably more than I've ever done before. But I'm confident that I can find homes for all of them. I'm also going to start increasing the page count. Next issue will be 64 pages, then I'm going to keep pushing it as far as I can. With all that has been going on the last few months, I was still able to put together an issue that I'm moderately happy with. So I'm confident that I

can do way more with at least twice as much time to work. I am considering trying to go back to a bi-monthly format, which I haven't done in years. We'll see what happens.

As for this issue, it is sort of the bastard child of four months of very off and on work. A lot of it sort of fell together over time rather than being planned out. I have found a couple new staff members too. Paul's Shai Hulud interview came to me unsolicited, though I'm a fan of the band, and the interview is well worth reading, so I'm printing it. Hopefully Paul will continue to do interviews each issue. I'm also looking for a couple more regular columnists, as well as another record reviewer or two, and I can always use good photography and articles. I felt like most of the time I spent on this issue was spent on record reviews. And I guess that shows, since the record reviews take up more space than any other part of the zine. I want to keep that section the same size in future issues, but with more pages devoted to other things, thus balancing out the reviews and the ads a bit. I also interviewed Less Than Jake for this issue, but none of the photos came out at all, and I ran out of space to print it in the issue. But I did feel like it was an interesting, and candid interview. So it became the first website only interview I've done. Check out the website to read that.

Speaking of the website, that too will hopefully be growing a lot in the coming months. Brian is working on a redesign as we speak, and it should be up shortly after this issue is out. I'm also going to keep working on beefing up the content, while Brian does the design end of things. While I never want to do a webzine, I would like to make the website a viable companion to the zine. It always has news that's updated much more often than issues come out. I'm also working on getting a good system for ordering subscriptions, and everything else on the site itself. That may take a few more months, but it's coming. I will also probably keep putting up website exclusive interviews, and keep putting up photos, most of which aren't printed in the zine itself. I'm also going to keep updated info on the site concerning help wanted, and anything else that changes in between issues for the zine.

So, in short I guess I hope that while this is the third issue, this is in a number of ways the beginning. Stay tuned.

See you this fall.

- Stuart -

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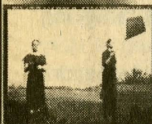
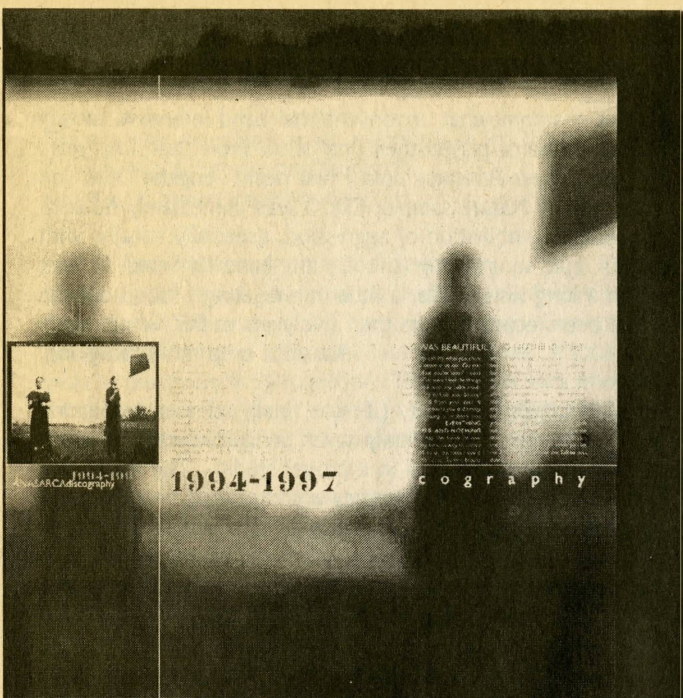


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This is a somewhat unconventional band interview, mostly because Anasarca played their final show more than four years ago. I didn't hear Anasarca until I first heard "Eugene Debs" on the Second Nature sampler CD. I was immediately hooked. Their perfect combination of aggression, especially vocally, with beautiful, epic songwriting isn't like any band I'd heard, at least not in a long time. After a little investigating I found out the song had been recorded more than five years earlier, which made Anasarca even more intriguing.

Months later, their Anthology CD was finally released by Second Nature. Though there are only seven songs present, it is every song Anasarca ever recorded in a proper studio. The record is a great testament to what Anasarca accomplished musically in a relatively short existence. It is also a testament to the lasting impact they've had. The fact people are still paying attention to them is amazing. That sort of lasting impact is something that most bands will aspire to, though only dream of.

I interviewed singer Nick Pimentel, who is still very active in the scene. He runs Planaria Records which has released the vinyl version of the Anasarca discography, as well as about a dozen other records to date. The following interview was conducted via e-mail by Stuart. I do not know who took the photos.

Enjoy.

Introduce yourself.

Hi, I'm Nick. I sang for Anasarca. Nice to meet you.

How did Anasarca first meet, and form?

We all went to high school together in Baltimore and have been playing music in different bands until the Anasarca lineup just clicked. I guess that was in 1994.

Give me a rough history of the releases and tours you guys did. We first recorded a demo with four songs. Then we did a 7" on Yuletide after that. Then we did a split 7" with a Philly band called Anonymous on my record label, Planaria. Tour-wise, we did a week tour on the east coast then we toured the US and Canada in the summer of 1995.

How did you guys fit into the scene musically when you were playing shows in D.C.?

At the time, we really didn't fit into the DC scene. We were really young and it was hard to get shows at the bigger venues and clubs. We were more known outside of DC I think. For DC, we played a lot of diverse shows because we were too heavy to play with the Dischord scene and not heavy enough to play with the hardcore scene. So in turn, we played a lot of diverse shows with bands such as Snapcase and Antioch Arrow. We were also affiliated with the Beehive, a political anarchist collective in DC at the time and we played in the basement a lot.

When and why did the band end?

After the tour in 1995, Carl moved to Philly, Jon had to go back to New Haven, Jim went to Virginia and Chris and I stayed in Washington DC. It was all because of school, art, and jobs. At

first, we got together about once a month to practice. Then it suddenly became once a year as we were all going through school and jobs and life in general. It basically just faded away.

Did you plan on releasing an anthology at the time you broke up? Did you want it to be posthumous?

No. It kind of just happened.

Was it hard to get everything put together?

It was a pain in the ass because it was a lot of work tracking down the DAT's and getting our shit together. Especially since we were all living in different cities at the time. It took about a year to get everything together. The artwork was another thing. It took me a year to design the damn thing because its really hard to designing for yourself.

How did it end up on Second Nature?

Actually I don't really remember how. At one point before we broke up, we were approached by numerous labels to do the next release and Dan at Second Nature just seemed right because his label was so diverse. We were originally going to do a 7" or something with our 2 new songs but then we broke up. Then all our records were out of print and we were getting tons of letters to repress them because they were going for like 30 bucks on eBay. And I was copying the demo to like 20 people a month. After awhile, I was getting tired and was thinking that we should just put all of the stuff out on one disc as opposed to repressing it. I think I asked Dan if he wanted to put out a discography and he was into it.

Do you think it's better or worse that the anthology is coming out three years after you played your last show?

Actually, it has been more like 4 or 5 years after our last show. I don't know. I was afraid that since it took so long to come out, people would forget about us but it is doing really well right now. It does sound a little dated now, but I am glad that it is out.

Any chance of a reunion?

There has been talk and we have gotten some offers to play festivals and such but we will see. Its still really hard to get all of us together in the same room.

What are you doing now musically and otherwise with Anasarca over?

I have been keeping myself busy with my job as a graphic designer for a firm in DC. I also have been freelance designing for a bunch of labels doing cover and such. Musically, I am now playing drums in a band called Dateline Diamonds. Its a lot of fun. We are starting to play shows now. We just played with the White Stripes and the Von Bondies. That was a lot of fun. I also have been working on my record label, Planaria Recordings, which has been unexpectedly picking up lately.

What are the other guys doing?

Jim is in Boston taking classes at the Berklee School of Music. Chris is at New York University doing music. Jon plays in tons of bands in New York and Carl is a painter and framer in New York and Mike, our first drummer is in DC doing experimental electronic music.

Looking back on it now, would you have done anything differently with the band as a whole?

Just maybe touring Japan. We were offered twice but never made it. Other than that, I would of not done anything differ-

ently. We got to play across the states and Canada. We met tons of people, saw tons of shit, and had a shit load of fun.

Explain why you started the label, and what you've done to this point.

When we put out our demo in 1994 or so, we just wanted to put a fake record label name on it to seem more professional I guess. The demo sold about 300 copies in 3 or 4 months, so I decided to keep it going. It was a lot of fun putting the tapes together, printing the covers, mailing them out and writing little notes. It was so satisfying, that I wanted to do another release, this time on vinyl. So I put out the Anasarca/Anonymous split 7". That did really well and financed the next release. That was the Elements of Need/Jasemine split 7", then a Network 34 CD, then a Plunger LP, then a compilation 7" with Sleepytime Trio and others, then a Your Adversary 10", a Dead Meadow LP, then the Mihaly CD, the Anasarca LP, and finally an Ida LP.

When I started putting out records, I always heard about other labels losing money. I was actually living off of Planaria for a few months. Then, something happened, and I slowly started losing money. Actually, I lost money rather quickly, so I slowed the label down a bit. But its picking up now and I am slowly getting out of debt.

What's the future hold for the label?

Planaria has a lot going in the future. We have an Anasarca enhanced CDEP with live footage and some improvisational jams we done in the past. A 10" picture disc/CDEP with the Apes, a Yume Bitsu/Andrew Rieger of Elf Power split LP/CD,





a 7" by the band GuTrot, and the first in a series of books with artists in the punk rock community, titled DIY EYE. The first issue will have Neil Burke of Men's Recovery Project, Matt Brinkman of Forcefield and Ft. Thunder, and Paul Weil and Erick Jackson of the Apes.

What is the best selling release to date?

So far, the best selling releases are the Anasarca stuff. But the Dead Meadow LP and Ida LP are catching up

What labels do you admire most, and why?

I am going to have to say what most labels would say, and that would be Dischord. They are great people and have helped my label so much and they don't even know it. Very professional and very punk rock at the same time. Another label that I admire is a relatively new label, Tiger Style Records. I have been working with them since they started and have watched them grown really quickly. You can tell that they love the label, they love the bands and they love what they do. They work so hard and have their hearts behind it. Its inspiring.

Favorite bands these days?

Tough question. Let me just tell you what's next to my stereo tonight. The Von Bondies full length which comes out soon on Sympathy For The Record Industry, Sleep and High on Fire, The Cherry Valence, the new Tight Bros. From Way Back When which will come out soon on Kill Rock Stars, the Pop Group, the new Dead Meadow which comes out in October on Tolotta, the NEU reissues, and Cannibal Ox.

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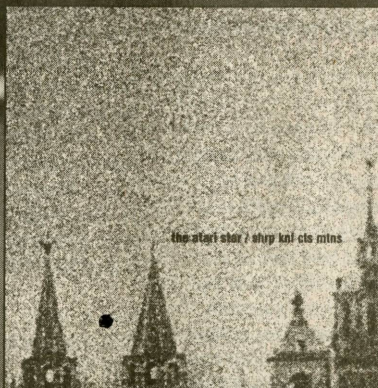


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Scott Weigel

Hello again fellow New Schemers. For this issue, you get to read excerpts from my tour journal that I did during the Fairlanes US Tour. (March 15, 2001-May 6, 2001) Most of this is lifted exactly from the journal. A good part of it, however, I had to elaborate a bit on so you would understand what's going on. The Fairlanes will be touring Europe next and in the next issue, I guess you'll see a journal of that. You can see more at www.thefairlanes.com. OK.

March 15, 2001

Well, we left last night. We got to I-80 in Wyoming and it was closed down so we had to sleep in Cheyenne. The roads were completely fucking crazy with wind and snow. At one point the RV almost blew over, or at least it seemed like it. It was really scary. Also, when we tried to turn on the heater, it reeked of something awful so we decided to sleep without it on. Bad move. It was so fucking cold all night. Really fucking cold. I was wearing fleece pants, two sweat-shirts with the hood pulled up and socks. It also did not help that the blanket that I bought for the tour was sort of like a cross between a burlap bag and a screen door and could only cover about half of my body at once. I kept thinking of dumb and dumber when Jim Carey takes off his extra gloves because his hands were sweating. Around me everybody brought sleeping bags and could probably sleep in their underwear and a leg out to balance out the hot/cold factor. I slept in the area above the driver's section with Jason. I would say we got about 4 hours of sleep. It has not really sunk in that I am on tour yet. I am still soft from the stable life I knew a couple of weeks ago. I figure my body will be used to tour in 4 days or so. So we woke up early this morning, and I-80 opened up. I took a nap today and feel much better. Tonight we play in Salt Lake City. I have no idea who with. The last time we played there we played at a gay support type club. At first I thought it seemed odd to have a gay support place in such a conservative place, but the more I thought about it, the more it makes sense to have resource groups in places that NEED them. Utah is a weird place... The "Motherfuckin' D.R.E." (Our beautiful 27 foot RV) is holding up well thus far. (Our license plate is 833DRE).

March 16, 2001

-Utah-

Tour is weird. Outside of it, I always feel that I have to keep doing things and getting shit done for whatever. But on tour, time is one thing that you DO have...

March 18, 2001

-Spokane, WA-

We are sitting in the RV right now blasting music. The place for tonight is cool and we are playing with Moral Crux. Last night's show was great. It was St. Patrick's Day. We got free green beer all night and Colin, the promoter, kept giving us Jegermeister shots. The kids went crazy and we had a lot of fun. The band that opened had sort of a Blink type of thing going. They were a young band, but what was bad was the jokes they told in between songs. Musicians are musicians, not comedians for god sake! Stick to music. Not "comedy" (note the quotation marks). It is, in my opinion, one of the worst things that has happened since Blink got big. Everybody has to have something funny to say about shitting or dicks or something. Here is an example: "This is a song about my car, and I stuck my wiener in it. And it was gross..." That was a joke I heard. I think it was a joke. I think what made it a joke was the clever use of the word "wiener". Please feel my pain people. Earlier, right outside the RV where we are sitting right now across the street, a prostitute got in a car with some dude and was dropped off later. Crazy. We always play in the most desirable parts of town!

Friday March 23, 2001

-Redding, CA-

The show tonight was pretty cool. We rocked hard. Everybody played well. Afterwards we went to a party. Josh (Our amazing roadie) decid-

ed to make things a bit more interesting and break down the walls a bit, so he got completely naked and tried to strike up a game of cards with some dudes. There was music on and he was walking around playing air guitar really close to people. It was great. The crowd was a bit younger than us, by the way. A few girls were taking photos with him. Some guy, seemed a bit pissed that there was a nude man walking around, so he picked up Josh's boxer shorts and threw them at him and said "Dude, put these on". Josh, said "Oh, I'm sorry man, I didn't know, ok?... I didn't know. I'll put these on." He then put the pair of boxers on his head and proceeded to hang out. It was an act of brilliance at work. Sheer brilliance.

March 31

-Long Beach, CA-

After the show we went to the exact bowling lanes where The Big Lebowski was filmed. It was amazing. We sat exactly where they sit in the movie. I ordered 3 "Caucasians" at the bar (which in the Big Lebowski is what they call White Russians). It felt great. Most bars you go to, if you order a Caucasian, they look at you like you are crazy, unless they happen to be a Big Lebowski fan. The old woman said "coming right up honey". She had a raspy voice like she had been smoking a pack or so a day for a good 60 years. Then I said "Wow, nobody know what a Caucasian is. That's great." And then, very dryly and sort of annoyed, she said "yeah, we only get about 80,000 orders every day for them". I felt sort of stupid at this point, so I said, "I'm from Colorado", trying to point out that I came a long way to see the Lebowski lanes and to forgive me for my tourist ways. She then said, "That explains it". I have since wondered what it is was that was explained when she found out I was from Colorado. Do I look strange? Do I talk funny? I grew up in Southern California, so I can't be that different. Regardless, she made me play the fool. The punk role, if you will. She was a real champ. She takes no shit from anybody. I bet her name is Gladys or something like that...

April 1, 2001

-Somewhere in AZ-

AAAAHHHHH. The open highway. Andy is driving, Josh is Co-Pilot, Jason and I are in the main area and Robbie is asleep in the back. The windows are all open. The cool, Arizona night is passing through the RV. Dinosaur Jr. is Blasting on the stereo. I feel great. This is what it is all about...

April 2, 2001

-El Paso, Texas-

Andrew and Josh drove all night. Superstars. Then they parked the RV under a freeway overpass so we would not experience the sun beating down on us. I swear it is 130 degrees here. All of the highway pillars (holding up the highway) have some great art on them. There is a Caesar Chavez memorial and an Emiliano Zapata one as well. There are a lot of other Chicano/Aztlán themed paintings as well. None of them have been tagged with graffiti. Truly a beautiful place. All under a noisy-ass highway. Doesn't matter to me. I look up at the highway and can see a sign that says "Juarez, Mexico. Right lane only". Tonight I think we'll head into Mexico!!! "The Amigo" just drove by. He is the ice cream man in his beat up ice cream truck. It has been a long time since I have seen an ice cream man. The Amigo. The Friend. Dope.

April 4, 2001

-Somewhere in Texas-

4:08 AM

Josh is driving. Jets to Brazil on the stereo. Great album (Four Corners Night). So last night we went into Mexico to a bar called "Fred's". Complete gringo bar. It was pretty funny. There was an American flag on the wall and a picture of George Washington and Abe Lincoln. In Mexico!!!! Pretty funny shit. Jason and I bought \$1.00 burritos from some dude who came in selling them. They were so good. Everybody was warning me of the side effects. Well, I feel great. No side effects at all, suckers! There were 50 cent tequila shots and \$1.00 beers. Josh said to me "Man, this is a Euphoric moment for me. I'm just trying to take it all in."

April 14, 2001

Tampa, FL

OK, so 2 days ago it was my 24th Birthday. 24. The Big Two Four. What a waste of a birthday. The guys took me out to eat in Clearwater, FL on the beach. Bad food, but it was fun. We went out afterwards to a \$5.00 all you can drink dance club. I think the cocktails were mixed with rubbing alcohol. They were horrible, but what do you expect when you can order 3 at a time and do not have to pay! I passed out in the RV soon after. While I was out, the other guys went to the beach and swam and partied more and went out to breakfast to a diner and got breakfast. I missed out on all the action. I woke up with my clothes on smelling absolutely awful. I hate that.

April 27, 2001

-Chicago, IL-

Had yesterday off. Didn't do much. Jason and I walked around downtown Toledo, which was funny. Some of the old buildings are cool. The newest one looks like it MIGHT have been hip looking circa 1965. We went to a diner. We also went to this great mall... "The oldest mall in Toledo". Inside there was a store with all sorts of bitchin Toledo merchandise. If I was not poor, I would have purchased the white "I love Toledo" sweatshirt. The show last night was pretty cool. The flyer said "The Fairlanes, featuring Andy Baldwin"!!!! (Andy is from Toledo). Since when does the flyer "feature" the drummer? When I was the Fairlanes' drummer, I was never featured, much less ever listened to. Nobody listens to the drums. Nobody listens to the bass either, so it's not much better now. For some shows that I don't want to play, I want to get a cardboard cut out of me and stick it up on stage. Nobody would know the difference. Andy is a funny dude. The other day we were talking about how, on tour, dreams are so boring. All night, I basically seem to dream of sitting in an RV all day. Then I wake up and I sit in an RV all day. Wow, my dreams are coming true. I'm so fortunate. So, Andy had an awesome horrible nightmare. In his dream, we made macaroni and cheese and he came out from the back room and we had eaten it all. Horrible nightmare. Poor guy. Today we drove to Chicago. Went into a bathroom at some truck stop and it was so fucking disgusting. Men have the uncanny knack for really screwing up bathrooms. Each stall was clogged and there was piss all over the place and the flushers were those kind with the automatic sensor that you cannot manually flush. I don't think they were working right. Gross shit.

May 1, 2001

-Minneapolis, MI-

Grey Skies. We have 2 days left until I am home! Our second night in Chicago was rad (we played 2 nights). We played with the Teen Idols and after they played all the current members of Screeching Weasel minus Ben, but including Vapid, did a set of old Screeching Weasel, Riverdales, Mopes, Queens and Squirtgun songs. They played "Automatic Rejector", "Baby Doll", "Mary Anne", "Make Way", "Totally", "I Met Her At the Rat", "I Wanna Be Naked", "Guestlist", and "Cindy's On Methadone". It felt awesome to hear some songs that inspired me years ago that are still classics to this day (for me at least). While the band was sloppy, it was still one of my top ten "punk rock moments". After the show Jason and I wandered around downtown Chicago and went to bars. Hung out with some of the Teen Idols a little bit. Nice people. We had no idea where we were, but we just went. It was fun. Nice break from doing band stuff. I had a lot of fun, but I am REALLY ready to get home.

May 3, 2001

-Somewhere in South Dakota-

2nd to last night of tour! Dashboard Confessional is on the stereo. Perfect midnight driving music. I'm so excited to tour Europe. It will be really fun. Well, right now, I am just excited to get home. It has been too long. That's what I need. When something that you love becomes more serious, it can lose a lot of the "fun". Oh well, it comes with the territory and I would still rather be doing this than anything else, I guess. This journey of life is a crazy one indeed...

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Jason Neubert

Ascending and Descending: My Life as a Loop

Hello.

I've opted not to begin this ramble with an Oscar Wilde quote for a few reasons. One of which is that most readers would find that to be a pretentious and cliché way of precluding an otherwise stale essay on politics and/or punk melodrama with a bit of overused wit. Nothing against Oscar, it's just not my bag. Instead, I want to toss out a thought-provoking paradox that seems to echo numbing parallels within my own life, and I'm almost positive, other lives as well. It goes like this:

The following sentence is false.

The preceding sentence is true.

Taken out of context from Douglas R. Hofstadter's book *Godel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*, it represents something of a verbal anomaly, a riddle which is unable to be solved, or more precisely, a kind of hypnotic circle of thought which infinitely cycles through itself. Oh, I know it seems foolish and simple. But, bear with me.

Plucked from a book that delivers an utter assault on "Cujo" and "Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing" speed-readers, it delivers a blow no less ruinous to one's sense of literacy as an ax swung from a "lumbering Viking in centuries past Prussia. If you are looking for an easily digestible read (which I myself am a Koontz fanatic and sucker for science fiction) I'd only recommend this if you own a copy of *Principia Mathematica* for bathroom reading.

However, the meaning behind those coupled phrases represents something of more importance. Dubbed as *Strange Loops*, this phenomenon isn't found in wordplay alone. Situations in human thought processes, the structure of certain pieces of music and art, as well as the breakdown of quantum physics and modern mathematics deployed by frazzled physics nuts attempting to reach back before the Big Bang supposedly share these common *Strange Loops*. What the hell am I talking about? Am I a lunatic? Do I have a lot of spare time to ponder these random and silly questions? No. And, yes.

Let's back up a few days.

It seemed like a typical Thursday. I awoke like any other morning to my blaring clock radio which is purposely pegged so loud it could deafen a fool, and stumbled downstairs to click on the pot of coffee and toss myself into the shower. Normal enough. Even driving to work seemed stock. Half the drive I usually pump a favorite disc, the other half I listen to talk radio and morning shows. For some mysterious reason I find it refreshing to listen to a.m. humans blathering amongst themselves about the political-social-diabolical concerns of daily living while I gradually gather the momentum to face the impending ritualistic events of prison life. I mean, corporate life. My fault. Upon getting to work, booting up, and having meaningless small talk with any of a number of other pitiful members of the chain gang, I found myself falling into my [still] normal routine. My working title is Web Editor, and my job entails taking stacks of copied web sites which come in nice little kindergarten-style colored transparent plastic sheaths and editing them for grammatical errors and structural defects. On this particular day, this lasted only ten minutes or so until I pulled into my mail client and searched for someone to send an e-mail to (anyone). I instead opted to search for innocent passersby to claim music tracks to my hard drive for later burning pleasure. While my selected tracks were downloading, I refreshed my coffee with the company dirt water which is served burnt, and gallivanted the cubes looking to crack a joke on the company dime. Settling on my impersonation of the corporate ass from the movie *Office Space*, I propped an arm over a cube wall and grumbled to my friend Eric, "uh, yeaaaaaah, great, great, listen, you

know the cover sheets are supposed to be stapled now, right? Riiiggghht." After proposing a ping pong match for 3:00, I strode back to my office with high hopes that I had an icon stating that I have mail waiting on my desktop. Instead, I found my boss Mike standing near the window, his eyes locked on the parking lot below. He turned as I entered.

Mike: "Hey man, listen, I need to talk to you really quick."
I take a sip of my coffee and try and read him, to no avail.
Me: "Sure, sure. In here, or..."
Mike: "No, let's go down the hall."

He points to the large empty conference room at the end of the hall; the one I haven't set foot in for months. I follow him in and he closes the door behind him. I immediately panic, thinking back to when I would peruse the Internet looking for smut; did I erase all of the temp files? Did I make some lewd comment recently within earshot?

Mike: "Don't worry, you aren't in trouble or anything."
Me: "Ha. I was beginning to worry."; you know the sappy boss/employee submission voice. Pathetic.
Mike: "Go ahead and sit down. This may come as a surprise to you, but, the company has been having some difficulties."

I immediately think back to my ex ping pong partner Osman, who, among four or five others, was swept out the door like salve on a bad rash.
"Downsizing," they put it.

Me: "Oh?"
Mike: "Our primary client has been financially hemorrhaging and they decided to do the sites in-house. This, of course, would mean the web team would be dissolved."
Me: "Wow."
Mike: "So Jim counter-offered, and they've come to an arrangement based on cutting the cost of each site."
Me: "How much of a cut?"
Mike: "A substantial amount. Almost half."
Me: -silent-
Mike: "So, what we're looking at is having to let go one designer, and one editor."

Freeze-frame. At this point, I figured that I was severed. Dislodged from the company. Disemboweled and gutted by a torrent of streaming ones and zeros.

Mike: "Of course, we'd let Phil go first; out of seniority."

You must know a little background. Phil is the other editor who shares my office, blasting Dylan and the Beatles at near full volume, forcing me on many occasions to make blatant innuendoes and allusions to earphones and the convenience and privacy of being able to just 'tune out the environment.' It sounds just as psychedelic as the damn yellow sub, I realize this, but he's the type of guy that takes a brick through a living room window or a "Honkie Lips" tag sprayed on the side of his station wagon to realize he's offending someone. A great guy though, really. He started six months after I did, making him unfortunately the newest and most vulnerable member of the staff.

Mike: "However, if you choose, we are prepared to offer you a month of severance pay, plus your unused week's vacation hours if you opt to go. Of course, Phil has no knowledge of any of this, including the company's dilemmas, and if your choice were to stay, which is perfectly fine, he would be the one to go. Take a day or two to think on it. Get back to me on Monday. Do you have any questions or are you unclear about anything?"

Me: "No, no, I'll think about it, and let you know."
Mike: "Great. I'm sorry this has to happen. I truly am. But, please, don't be a martyr. Don't leave out of sympathy for Phil. Do what is best for you."
Me: "Oh, no. I wouldn't. Give me a few days."
Mike: "Of course."

So, after being debriefed by the company financial officer about how it wouldn't be a 'good idea' to blab my sensitive information to other

employees before their Monday meeting, I act as if everything is silk and head home.

It takes an hour of silent reverence of their heed before I spill and call two work friends out for a beer and a game of pool. Upon hearing the news, and after I swear them to secrecy (for the weekend), they are spooked about the turn of events, and are nervous and heavily distressed about the inevitable slow sinking of the battleship, or more directly, the creeping death not unlike Poe's masque which has caused so many other employees to succumb to its stifling grip. A few beers later I feel as if I made the decision. There is a time when the only option is to cash in your chips.

So after filling Mike in, gathering my personal effects in a duffel bag, and divvying out my number like crumpled smokes to a few token convicts, I've come full-circle. I am looking for another job once again, preferably one which will allow me to dedicate more time to what I truly enjoy, and that is, writing and playing music. I'm a dime a dozen, I realize this, but it takes a broad, fell sweeping circle of experience to fully realize what is personally important, and what is for the birds. Although I may again eventually fall into that chosen chasm of corporate life, at this point in my life, while 'I am young and I am able, all I want to do is play.' I subscribe to that point of view. Although everyone is at some point in their lives forced to institutionalize themselves for financial reasons, there is hope that at least in the waning hours after 5 and before 9 a few may realize another option which could allow them the time to truly fuel their inspirations, instead of paying their landlords.

It's those damn Strange Loops, I'm telling you.

"I don't speculate upon the future. It comes soon enough."
-Albert Einstein

Jason Neubert is a freelance writer and rock musician living in Atlanta, Ga. He is a member of the band the Walt Lariat, hailing from Athens, Ga., and in his spare time enjoys golf, angling, Paulaner Hefe Weizen, and great rock music.

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Nate Dagg

Who DIDN'T See That One Coming?

Dale Earnhardt was NOT, I repeat NOT an American hero. A real American hero is a firefighter or a volunteer at a soup kitchen. If Dale Earnhardt is indeed a champion, he is truly Champion Of the Dumb Asses.

I'm not saying it isn't sad that he's dead, I'm sure his son will think long & hard for about five minutes tops about the fragility of the human existence before he goes right back to driving cars as fast as possible until he runs until a wall and blows up, his insides splattering all over the bleachers just like Daddy.

"Dale was the Michael Jordan of our sport," explained Humpy Wheeler, president of Lowe's Motor Speedway near Charlotte. "To think he is not around anymore is incomprehensible. This is a terrible, terrible loss and, for me, it ranks right up there with the death of JFK." This sort of statement is not surprising, coming from a man who prefers to be called Humpy.

NASCAR isn't even a sport, for God sakes. Basketball and baseball are sports. Driving a car isn't a sport, more of a skill. I'm sure it takes

coordination to make those turns and remember to pull over and get gas and all that. But can you name me one NASCAR driver who possesses a "athletic" body? I think not. These guys look like they were going to go man a schooner, light up some Winston's, and kick back with a 84-pack of Budweiser. If these guys are athletes, I hate to see what out of shape looks like.

Born and bred in Kannapolis, NC, Dale dropped out of high school, married at 17, and took over his dad's stock car after he died of a heart attack working on carburetors in the garage. Over the years, Dale collected some of the lamest nicknames ever: "Iron Heart," "The Intimidator," "The Man," & "The Master." Is it like official NASCAR policy that all of it's drivers be given retarded nicknames?

Dale Earnhardt made Ty Cobb look like Shirley Temple. After Jeremy Mayfield beat him at Pocono Raceway last June, Dale greeted the other drivers by flipping them off. After seven near-death experiences from car crashes over the course of his career, Dale decided the most intelligent move would be to continue racing highly-flammable automobiles for a living. The always-progressive-thinking Dale protested fiercely against restricting speeds, something that could possibly have saved his life. "If you're not a race driver, stay the hell home. Don't come here and grumble about going too fast. Get the hell out of the race car if you've got feathers on your legs or butt. Put a kerosene rag around your ankles so the ants won't climb up and eat that candy ass." I guess getting your head smashed open is the ultimate macho act.

The only worse than NASCAR is it's fans. Put down a few hay bales, crank up the AC/DC, and thousands of dirty water coolers will appear out of nowhere tooted by mullet-sporting hillbillies, their hair spray queen love interests/cousins, and the illiterate offspring. If they had a motto, it would be "Take it ALL off, sugar!" If they were a developing country, their main exports would be date rape, fruit pies, and NRA membership cards. Hang out at one of their tailgating parties for more than five minutes and you'll begin to wonder if Darwin's theory about the survival of the fittest even applies anymore.

Sadly, the canonizing of worthless celebrities does not end there. News stands sold millions of commemorative Princess Diana issues, a spoiled brat who thought having a cushy life wasn't easy and chose to get in a car with a drunk driver. What reason does she have for trying to kill herself, the tea is cold? The biscuits are stale? America came to a stand still watching body parts of JFK Jr. float to shore. How many times did he fail his bar exam again? Sonny Bono, a sub-standard musician as it is, crashes into a tree because he doesn't know how to ski and people are writing Cher letters? Do you know any of these people? How have they enriched your life, really? Do you think they actually care about you? Most of us don't know the first names of our neighbors, but the whole world shuts down if Meg Ryan or some other idiot actor from California gets yet another divorce. For the love of God, start working on improving your own surrounding community instead of mourning over yet another has-been celebrating dying as a result of risks he/she chose to take.

Nate Dogg, 21, resides in Minneapolis, and edits Ad Hominim, a quarterly zine that focuses mainly on humor, politics, music, and Abraham Lincoln. If you would like a copy, kindly send \$3 to: 1401 Portland Ave. S. #C303, Minneapolis, MN 55404.

Zach Savich

Dust

Asbestos sheets, dropped into dumpsters by men in spacesuits, raised dust into my freshman year. They built the school around us as we sat. The polished facade. The mud fenced from view. The construction workers grilling hamburgers in the parking lot. Every day, a fence would redirect an old route, like the roadblocks in Paul Auster's "In the Country of Last Things." I burst, daily, onto the field to see, in silence, the gulls before they turned to fast food bags.

This is the last column about high school. "No matter what anyone says, the only thing that counts is staying on your feet," writes Auster. Despite all the anger, the resistance, the misery and the absurdity, even I am tempted to release the subject like a powdered dandelion, like a ceiling tile slammed into a dumpster. Sentimental, even, ready to forget the arguments, defenses and histories that were necessary for sanity (how they made us attend pep assemblies after Columbine, threatening to send us back to class if we showed inadequate spirit; how they made Gary take the same math class twice, then a third time when the system switched; how K. killed himself).

Let it go. Brow be smooth. What need is there now for that cynical armor and readiness to debate? The fashions fade, the faces change, and we flee, from here, shaking our heads and ready to begin. They didn't determine my conformity, and they won't determine my rebellion.

I have hardly been in the building in two years, having taken school-paid college courses with old loggers, twentysomething hipsters, and middle-aged mothers as my peers. To be honest, I don't even feel the need to comment, in depth, on high school; I've been done with it since I started, since, with a pile of over-serious, over-simplistic un-, home-, and non-schooling books by my bed, I swore I would find an alternative or else leave to get me some real learnin'.

There is this milestone, it seems, at which we are supposed to congratulate ourselves and do a dance. But, baby, what have we really done? This may be a border, but it is a weak, local one, and I'm all for blazing straight through till sunrise. My only luggage: a full tank of gas.

For the second time, they asked me to make a speech at graduation. Again, I refused, telling them I would be in Paris/New York/London by then—like the branches of a publishing house—well aware that absence can be a type of presence. Deep in the land of computer files and old notebooks, I found an address I had sketched in ninth grade after viewing a "spread your wings reach for the stars never give up keep in touch" speech from the "Pomp and Circumstance" pit with the band.

My notes instructed me to write a version that would get me the gig, then to spring the real one on them, tauntingly, subversively, at the last minute. Would they cut off the mic? Would anyone clap? Would I have any energy left by then?

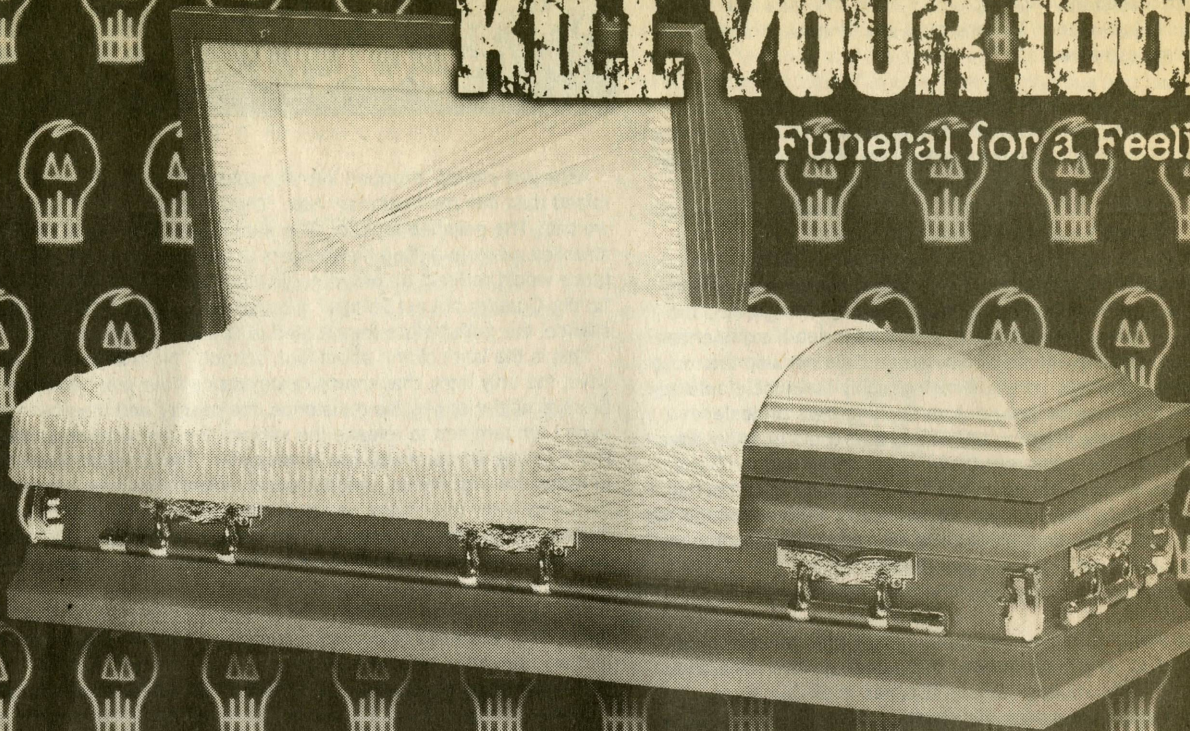
I don't recognize anyone when I return to the school to talk with counselors and a couple of old teachers. Even the ones I know, I don't recognize. They look either too sad or overly cheerful. Not the people I remember. Not the people from Friday nights. The halls reek with girls in small shirts, who need to eat, and with guys walking with bulged armpit muscles, in poses of strength that convey only insecurity.

The smell hits me—pizza, body lotion, chewing tobacco, glue—as the counselors greet me with praise and just-from-the-workshop communication techniques (focusing on the techniques, not on the communication). I laugh, I let it go. You know this story. It is so common that it is hardly sad. I let it go.

Here is what I hold: Laura, old friend, pacing in circles on a knee-high wall. Seven kids, after school, giddily bouncing around Rich's "wagon of love." And Cheryl, in spring, tenth grade, for five minutes before sixth period. I think of it, my old binders in the trash, and well with sentimentality. "You must salvage the salvageable and learn to ignore the rest," Auster says, summing up my experience. "The trick is to do it as fast as you can."

KILL YOUR IDOLS

Funeral for a Feeling



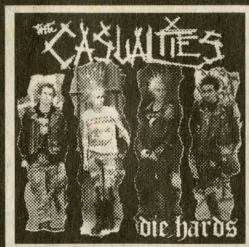
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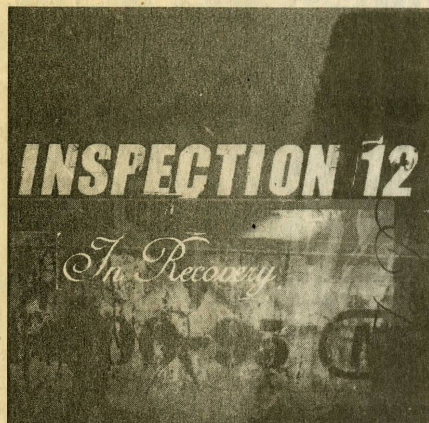
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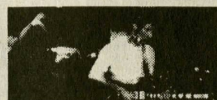
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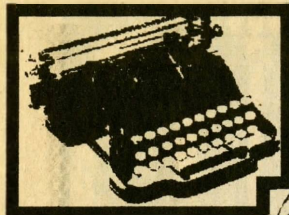
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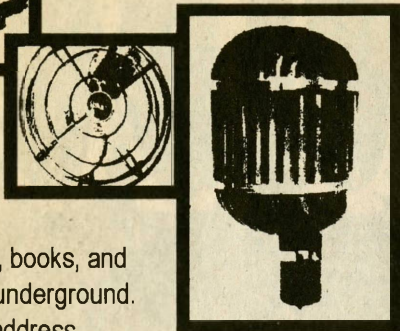
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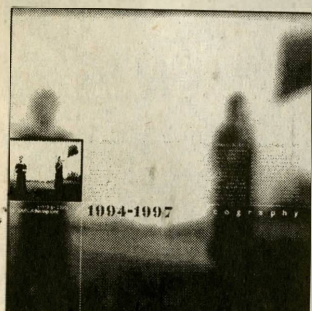
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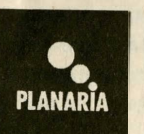


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SHAI HULUD

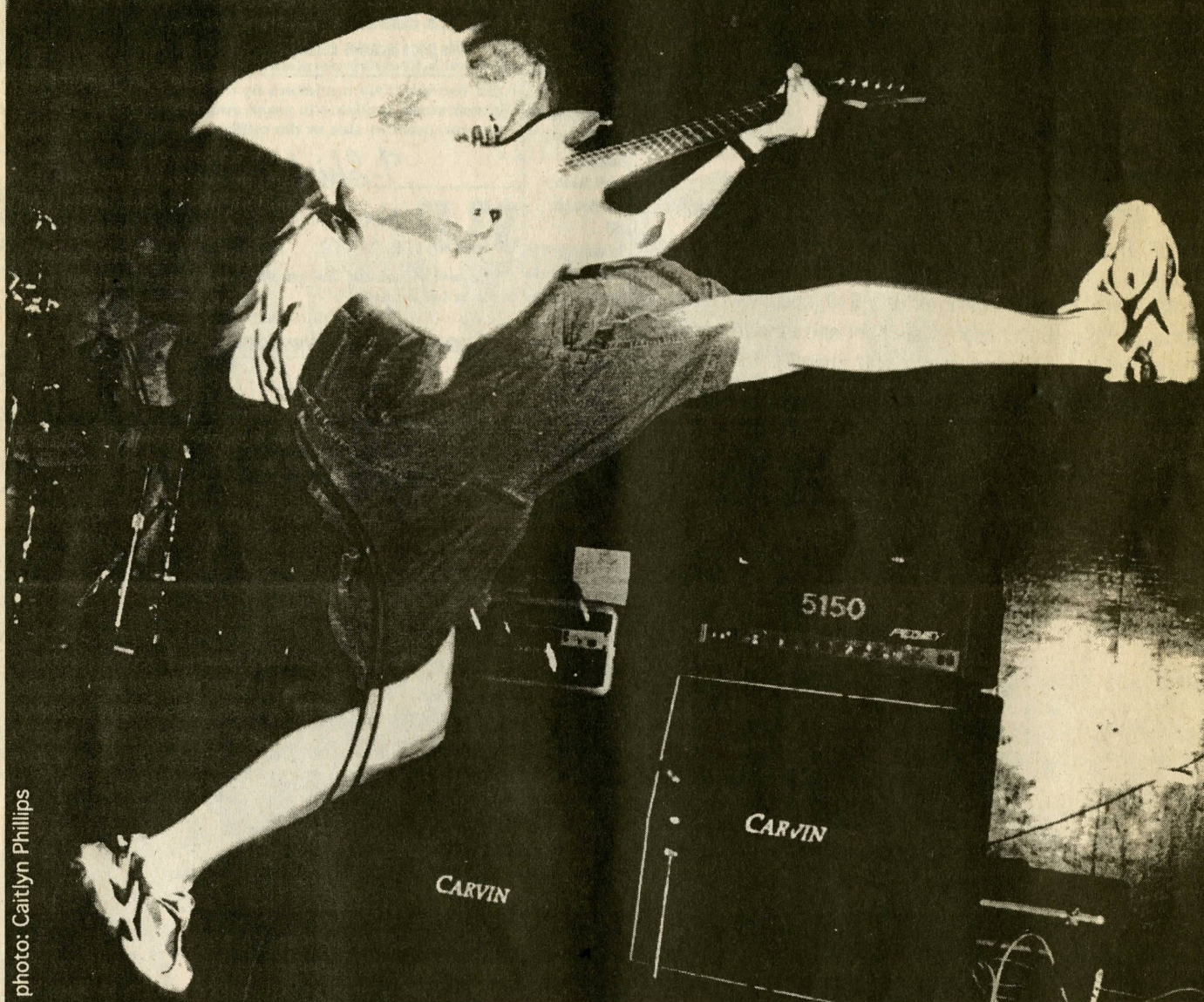


photo: Caitlyn Phillips

Jared Allen plays bass for Shai Hulud. This is basically all the information on the band you will get on this interview. Read on young Padoin.

Interview conducted via e-mail by Paul

Who's Jared Allen?

Jared Allen is a bald-headed bass player from Oklahoma.

What do you do for a living?

I play in Shai Hulud, silly! HA! I wish that's how I made a living, but unfortunately it's not. Yet. I work at a retail store in

the local mall between tours and recording sessions in order to pay the bills.

How long have you been playing music?

In a rock and roll capacity, I've been playing since 1993. Before that, I played classical music on the bassoon since about 1987 or '88.

For all the girlies out there, are you currently involved?

No sir. I have been through a couple of great relationships, that unfortunately ended in pretty bad breakups, which have left me rather bitter and jaded. I have decided to stay away

from any intimate relationships with females (or anything else, for that matter) for a long, long time. I think that when you're with somebody it can be the greatest thing in the world, but when it falls apart, it can be the absolute worst thing in the world too. There are so many qualities that a person has to have for me to really be seriously interested in them, and it seems that very few girls have many of those qualities, and right now I'm not too interested in searching for any that do. At this point in my life, it's just not worth it for me to put in the energy necessary for a serious relationship, only to have to go through all that again. I know that's a terrible way to be, and I hate the fact that I feel that way. I hope that someday my attitude will change, but for now, that's just the way it is. So, I'm sorry girls, I'm single, but unavailable.

What band and/or album made you go get a bass and learn how to play?

People are going to laugh, but this is a true story: In 1993 I had a really good friend named Wally Tarkington, who was a great guitarist and bass player (he played many other instruments too). One night at home I fell asleep listening to Nirvana's "Nevermind", which I hadn't listened to in quite a while at that point. Sometime during the night, probably in one of those half asleep/half awake periods, I had some sort of a dream in which I was playing the song Polly on the bass. Throughout the dream I was looking down at the fret board of the bass, and I just kept playing the song over and over. The next day at school, Wally had his electric bass out, I think it was at lunch or after school when the jazz band had just finished practicing, and I asked him if I could see his bass for a minute. He strapped it on me and I noodled around on it for a little bit. Within a couple minutes I was playing the bass line to Polly, much to everyone's surprise, as well as my own. Wally said something to the effect of, "Well, I think you should start playing the bass," so I did. Within a week we had formed a band to play at a friend's birthday party. We did a few Nirvana covers, some Jimi Hendrix covers, and even a couple originals that we had slapped together. We decided to keep playing together, and I practiced the bass every chance I got, just trying to figure out how to play every song I could get in to my CD player. The bass just felt so right to me, and I picked it up very quickly I worked on a lot of more unconventional techniques and pretty soon we were covering Primus songs.

What band makes you just want to quit because you feel totally inept after listening to them?

I get asked this type of question a lot, and I usually say Prince, but to be honest, no one really makes me feel this way. I have the highest respect for so many different musicians, and when I hear or see highly skilled musicians play, it inspires me more than anything else. I don't think about it like, "Man that guy is so good, I'd never be able to do that." Instead I'm more likely to think, "Hmmm, that's pretty cool. I bet if I worked at it I could pull something like that off."

Are you proficient at any instruments besides bass?

Well, I played the bassoon for several years before picking up the bass, but I don't think I'd call myself proficient, especially since I haven't touched one in years now. I wasn't a horrible bassoon player or anything, but the bass came so much more naturally to me. I also played the sousaphone for a few months, which I hated, I know my way around a keyboard, and I like to fiddle around on a drum kit whenever I get the chance. I'm definitely not proficient at any of these other instruments, but with a lot of practice I might be a decent drummer. I'm not really naturally inclined to play the drums,

but they are a hell of a lot of fun to bang around on.

Is Shai Hulud the only band you've been in?

No. After Lovewrench, which was the band I started with Wally, I played in a band called Ketones, which lasted a little over a year. Then after that, I played with Matt Fletcher in a few projects until he joined Shai Hulud in 1999. There's not really any released material from any of those bands floating around out there.

You decide to start a side project, and have carte blanche, what musicians would you surround yourself with, and what style of music would you attempt playing?

Actually, right now, there's no other music I'd rather be playing more than what I'm doing with this band. There's a few ideas floating around in the back of my head that will probably surface in another project someday but right now I can't imagine doing anything else.

Watching MTV anymore, I feel like most videos are just over-produced high budget ego-strokes. Do you watch music videos, and what do you think of the current state of music on television? I don't watch much MTV, but I'm not very impressed with what I see when I do watch. A lot of what's being played these days is just very watered-down and lame. But that's the way the pop music scene has always been, mainly because the general public is watered-down and lame, and their money is what drives the market, so that's what gets the airplay. What most people don't realize is that what they hear on the radio and see on MTV, that they think is heavy or aggressive, is really pretty tame compared to what's going on in the more underground of the hardcore and metal scenes.

What albums are getting a lot of play at your home right now?

I've been listening to The Hope Conspiracy's "Cold Blue" CD a lot. That album just plain rocks. I've also been listening to Dido's "No Angel" CD quite a bit. It's very beautiful, and very powerful. I've been going to sleep to The Ghost In The Shell soundtrack for the last few nights. It's very peaceful and helps me to relax.

What bands from Poughkeepsie, NY should we be looking out for?

When Dreams Die is doing a lot of recording and playing a lot of shows, so you'll probably be hearing a lot from them soon, if you haven't already. You should definitely check them out.

I just read that Akira is going to be remastered and re-released in theaters. If the choice came down to a Shai Hulud show, or the Akira opening, where do you go?

First of all, I would see to it that we weren't playing a show that day. But, if it was unavoidable, I'd have to stick with the Hulud show. It would be a little upsetting, but the rock always comes first.

Princess Mononoke: a great anime with all American production, or just an attempt by Hollywood to cash in on anime's popularity?

Princess Mononoke is a great honest-to-goodness anime film that just happens to have a lot of big-name English-speaking actors doing the voice overdubs. Usually I prefer to watch anime with English subtitles and the original Japanese voices, because the English voice actors are always so cheesy and goofy sounding, and even with all the big actors doing the English voices for this film, a few of them still manage to be

cheesy and goofy. I think that this is the only shortcoming this movie has. It's a great story, and the animation is excellent, and I've been told that if you watch it on DVD with the Japanese voices and English subtitles, that the more direct translation of the subtitles provides for an even better story.

Are you new school or old school anime? Would you rather watch Voltron or Gundam Wing?

I was a big fan of Voltron when I was a kid, and I still am to a certain extent, but I can't really get into watching the show these days. It's like a lot of other things that you watch when you're younger, but are a little harder to watch now. I'm not a huge fan of the Gundam Wing series, but I think they did an awesome job on the mecha design. The new Gundams are some of the best ever. I even have a few of the models and some t-shirts from that series. What I'd really like to watch are some of the older Gundam series. I believe that the cartoon network, or sci-fi, or whoever it is that is showing Gundam Wing now, is going to be airing the original Mobile Suit Gundam series soon, which will be pretty cool to see again, and that's even older than the old Voltron.

Are you an anime collector, or a renter?

I rent a lot of stuff, just to get a taste of what's out there, but then I'll try to buy the really good ones so I'll have them around whenever I want to watch them.

What's your anime collection look like?

I actually don't have much of a collection at the moment. I'm in the process of getting all my favorites on DVD, but here's a short list of what I already have or will be getting soon: Akira, Battle Angel, Ninja Scroll, Princess Mononoke, Perfect Blue, Neon Genesis Evangelion series, Robotech series, Macross Plus series.

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon drew a lot of comparisons to The Matrix. So who would win in a fight? The tough ninja chicks or Keanu Reeves?

Either one of the girls from Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon would mop the floor with Mr. Reeves. I really love that movie. It's like they sat down and said, "OK, remember when we used to watch all those kung-fu movies when we were kids? Well now that we've got better technology than they had to work with, how about we make a REALLY GOOD kung-fu movie?" I think it's awesome that they didn't rely too much on computers either. You can still see the cables from the harnesses in a lot of scenes, which makes it a little less slick, and I kind of like that about it.

How did the duties of designing hulud.com fall on you?

Well, about a year before I was even in the band, I offered to do a site for Shai Hulud because they didn't have one at all, but it never really got off the ground. Then when I got in, I was really the only one with the computer skills, and I really wanted to do it, so I was the obvious man for the job. Since I was around more at that point, it was a lot easier for me to hound everyone about getting things together, so finally the band had it's own site.

Do you design other sites?

I have done a few others in the past, but now the Hulud site is my main focus. I don't really have time to maintain any other sites right now, but somewhere down the road, if music doesn't pan out for me, I'm sure I'll end up with a web design job of some kind.

Are you classically trained, or self taught?

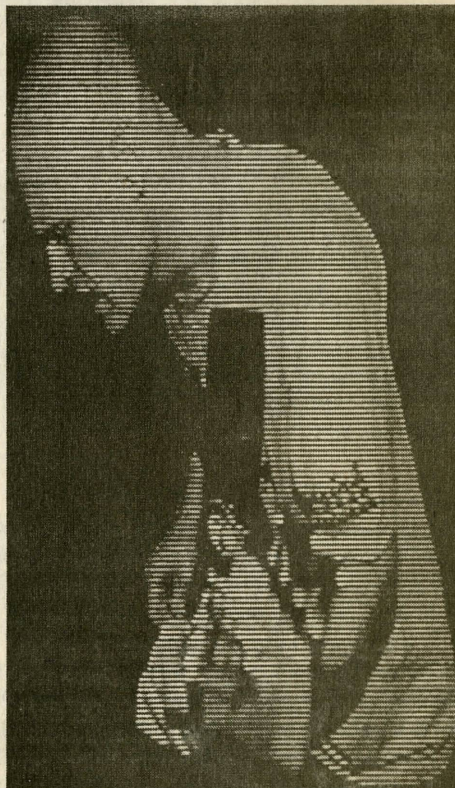
I took a few programming classes in high school and in college, but as far as graphics and web design I'm all self taught. I had a job working after hours at a video studio for a few years, and in my spare time at work I would get on their computers and learn everything I possible could about them. I ended up maintaining all their machines, their local network, and designing their first website.

It's my opinion that good web designers are influenced by other good web designers [A good artist borrows, a great artist steals. (Pablo Picasso)]. What websites do you have bookmarked?

I don't even know where to begin on this one. There are so many great looking sites out there. I really like the stuff the guy from Elfin Creative does (he did the Perfect Circle site). That's all I can think of off the top of my head, but I'm always on the lookout for new and interesting designs to check out. Most of the sites I have bookmarked are Mac news sites and other nerd stuff. The little photo thing at the top of our website started out as Fletcher's idea to have a bunch of pics at the top, then I did the film roll thing and decided to animate it. Somehow our site ended up with a lot of similarities to the GlassJaw site, but I swear I had never seen their site until after ours was finished. Great minds think alike I guess, right?

What do you use to design your site?

I start out with bits of gravel and twigs to experiment with layouts out in the driveway. Actually, I create all the graphics in Photoshop and Illustrator. I do all the animation in Flash, and layout the pages and tweak the html in Adobe's GoLive. I keep hearing all these great things about Macromedia's Dreamweaver, but every time I try to use it, I just can't get into it. I've been using GoLive since back when it was called Cyberstudio, before Adobe bought the program from the company which was called GoLive. I know it's got it's share of quirks, but I'm just very comfortable in that program because I've been using it for so long.



What's the next step?

There are a few areas of the site that are still incomplete because I'm waiting for the other band members to type up a lot of things for them. As soon as we get our next batch of merchandise in, I'll be putting up a new web store so everyone can order all the fancy new designs. I may be adding some live video footage soon, and I'm always tweaking little graphics things here and there. There won't be a major site redesign for a long while because we're all really happy with the site in it's current form, but I'm always open to suggestions. If anyone has any ideas feel free to email me at jared@hulud.com.

I think I successfully conducted this interview making only passive reference to your band Shai Hulud, but I do understand there is a drummer search in progress. Where can the rhythmically coordinated apply?

Just go to our website, www.hulud.com, and there will be a link on the home page, until we have decided on a drummer, that will take you to a page with all the information you need.

I also hear there is a new album on the way, what's the title and release date?

The title of the album is "That Within Blood Ill-Tempered". The exact release date is not set just yet, but it will probably be out in mid-summer of 2001, on Revelation Records. Just keep an eye on the Hulud website as we will be posting lots of updates on the progress of the album. We're actually in the studio as I type this, laying down the last of the drum tracks for the new record.

What are your plans for summer?

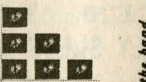
Our number one priority right now is getting the album finished. After that, we will focus on securing a new drummer. Until then, we are not booking any more shows, since it's kind of hard to play a show without a drummer (although, somehow we have managed to pull it off before). Also, our singer has to return to Holland as soon as the record is finished, and he won't be able to come back to the states until sometime in the fall. After that, we plan on touring all over North America, Europe, Australia, and Japan.

For More Info:
www.hulud.com
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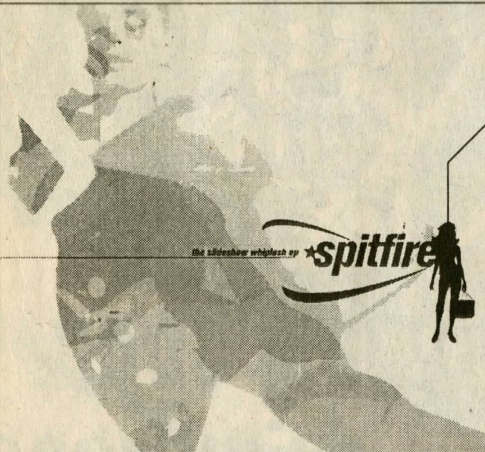
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the thumbs

I stood solitary in the crowd, packed in shoulder to shoulder, wondering if anyone else noticed the scantily clad women dancing in-between drink orders. Their bikinis complimented the motif and feel of the venue, Kahunaville. The evening seemed to be a joint creation of Jimmy Buffett, the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition, and Chuck E. Cheese. Above and beyond the surrealism of the area, there was still a show to be watched.

The Thumbs were on stage, rocking, but I couldn't help myself from looking around at all the colorful people. Bleached and dyed hair that harkened back to my youth danced around in a growing circle pit. Small frames that could barely support their new concert t-shirts smashed into each other in time with the music. Behind them stood a sea of poses that stretched from yuppies that quipped about work to anarchists commenting on the door prices.

When I turned back around to face the band, Mike and Bobby shot small smiles across the stage. During tuning breaks or small moments to address the crowd, Mike just stared with eyes that easily conveyed the strangeness he felt. Aside from one announcement about visiting the Anti-Racist Action tent and a thank you to Adeline Records, they held back from much conversation. They sipped beers, tore through a quick set, and left the crowd to their bated anticipation. I'd like to say they won them over, and I believe they did to some extent, but it's hard to steal a crowd from Green Day.

This scene took place in Wilmington, DE this past June as The Thumbs opened for these punk rock veterans. A month prior to this show, The Thumbs released their new full-length "Last Match" on Adeline Records, a label partially owned by Billie Joe Armstrong. This is the second release on Adeline for the Maryland-based band and is the first full-length since their critically acclaimed "Make America Strong." These songs continue the path The Thumbs embarked upon with their EP "All Lessor Devils" and maintain the same tone. Aggressive, intelligent, honest, and heartfelt; the songs embody a dark place that still leaves room for hope. Essentially, "Last Match" is everything you want in a punk rock record.

This interview originally appeared in Thrasher Magazine, however, it was edited for size. This is the interview in its entirety. It was conducted via email and without an opportunity for follow-up questions due to deadlines.

Interview and intro by Kap

<http://home.earthlink.net/~thethumbs/>
www.adelinerecords.net

What are your names, positions in the band, and day jobs?

Mike: Mike, bass and vocals, and I work for a trade association in DC.

Bobby: Bobby, guitar and vocals, and I shrink wrap boats for transport and storage in the winter and wait tables or work construction on an off the rest of the year.

How did The Thumbs start?

Mike: Mark and Bobby were in a band called Rubber Sole (you can find their 7"s on Sneezeguard). Their singer quit, and they were one of my favorite local bands. They kept practicing in their basement, writing new songs, trying out singers unsuccessfully. I was playing bass in the Pee Tanks at the time, but I thought it would be fun to try to sing for them. It turns out Bobby had all these new songs that he wanted to sing, so he asked me to bring my guitar, and we started out as a 4 piece, with Mark, Bobby, and I all chipping in on vocals. When drummer Pete quit after a few more practices, Randy Rampage joined the band and we changed the name to The Thumbs.

Would you ever go back to a two-guitar lineup?

Mike: I don't think so. I'm comfortable with it the way it is. If Mark wanted to come back, that might be the only way we'd go back to a 4 piece.

Bobby: I think we are the sum of our parts and we lost a part and now we sound a little different and I don't know if I would want to change again.

Like every band, you guys have gone through many different lineups, especially drummers, will it ever get to a point where you will declare a final lineup and leave it at that?

Bobby: I think this line up is amazing. Its very nice to have that tight friendship with all the members and still be actively touring and getting things done and writing good songs. But the older you get the harder it is to do all those things. We have become very good at juggling work and tour and our personal lives but everything is meticulously planned out far in advance and isn't very flexible. We all have to be on the same page and willing to drop everything for a few months a year to go off and do this around the country or world so who knows.

How much does adding a new member stress out the band?

Bobby: It's hard to relearn all the old stuff and that delays the writing of new stuff which is usually a lot more fun than just practicing and getting up to speed with the old standards. That's why its been two years since we've recorded. Since then we've toured four times with three different drummers and played with two others for some local drummers. That's a lot of getting up to speed that could have been spent writing rockers.

Mike: It can be frustrating at times, for the reasons that Bobby mentions. It also depends on who the person is. Touring condi-

tions tend to make bad seem worse sometimes, and it's not always easy to find someone that you can get along with enough to sit in a van with you for a month or two at a time. But we've been really lucky in that we've met some amazing people along the way.

I heard the guys at Adeline wanted to sign you and they had never seen you play live. How did that relationship come together?

Bobby: We sent them a tape right before the x-mas of the last stuff we recorded and got a phone call the next week. The stuff had been recorded for almost a year and hadn't really gotten the response from people we were hoping for. I sent it to a few labels that we didn't really know anything about that were running ads consistently. I had sent a letter basically saying that this was about to get put out on our label as a last resort but we were very proud of the songs and felt they deserved to be put out by a label with some real distro and actually have a chance to be heard by people. Definitely a shot in the dark but we got a call right back simply saying "Lets do it. We want to put out those songs." Its a cool story but a real testament to Adeline's very down to earth attitude. They just want to put out good punk music whether it comes from friends bands in Oakland or a band they had never heard of from Baltimore. I think that should always be a label's first priority and with them it is.

Your band was built up through a DIY ethic. With a rise of independent labels that act like majors, do you see that ethic slowly dying with other bands today?

Mike: It seems that way, but it's hard to say if it's dying, or just going through a dark time. I can't pin it solely on "independent labels that act like majors," either. That is certainly part of it, but I think the bigger issue is the general feeling or attitude in the "scene," to use an over-used word. To me, the whole point is supposed to be that the bands and the crowds are the same people. Anybody could get up and do it - do it yourself. But I see a lot of bands that feed the "star" mentality. It's disturbing to see bands play the part of the unapproachable rock star, and it's even more disturbing to see people come to the shows in awe of a band. If you're really into a cool punk rock band, you should be able to walk up to them and have a conversation with them. If the band treats you like a "fan club member," then you might as well be a Britney Spears fan.

Do you still see this as a time period where bands can put out their own records and become successful, or is the label aspect so dominant... You guys had been doing it for a while with Sneezeguard. Dillinger Four, they put out seven inches on smaller labels and had been a band for years, and then when they signed to Hopeless it became a whole new ball game.

Mike: I definitely think it CAN be done. It's tough. It's really hard to run your own label if you're on tour all the time. If the label does well enough that you have a staff, or if you're running it with someone who's not in the band, that would make it easier. When we've been on tour, Bobby's mom takes care of the mailorder stuff, but it's tough. We decided after a couple Thumbs records on Sneezeguard, that it would be better for us if we could concentrate on writing songs and on touring, and find cool people with similar attitudes to put out the record and promote it. We stopped putting out records on Sneezeguard when all the touring got started, because we didn't really have enough time to give the label what it deserves in terms of energy and promotion. We're putting all our energies into The Thumbs right now. It's worked out really well, between Soda Jerk, Snuffy Smile, A.D.D., and Adeline, we've met a lot of

amazing people, and we have felt very comfortable putting the records in their hands.

Bobby: I think it's all about the songs. Dillinger Four did well with those early records and I think they shocked people. But it wasn't because they sounded so revolutionary. What was so different about them is that they were/are the best at it. Their songs are better. Their words are smarter. They rock harder and actually entertain you. And then they step off the stage and buy you a beer. That's why they are different from most of the bands having success out there today. The longer you do this you see how things work. It's not brain surgery. If people want your records then distributors want your records. If people want your records, labels want to put out your records and fanzines want to interview you. The trick is to figure out how to get people and more importantly the right people or people who have the capacity to appreciate what to are trying to do with your music to hear it and then want to get there hands on it. If you can break into that cycle then you are on your way. We just have never been very good at it. Don't know what to do but to begin somewhere and that began with us putting out our own records and booking our own tours. But its six years later and things aren't too different except now you can find certain records easier in stores and we get more hits on our website. Its been a long road and I think we've loved almost every minute of it but I don't think we really expected it to go any other way. D.I.Y. is the only way we know and we haven't spotted a shortcut or a way to guarantee everyone out there buys our records. I want them to buy them because they think they are good and come to shows because they know we'll throw down and that we do this for ourselves and because we love writing and playing music together.

In your lyrics, there is a balance between politics and poetry, do you find it a hard balance to maintain or is it natural at this point?

Mike: It's something we talk about all the time. I think the balance that you're talking about is an important part of what we are as a band. We write about whatever interests us, and politics often come into play. But we like to figure out what the crux of the song is, and then turn it around, and apply it to a completely different and more personal topics.

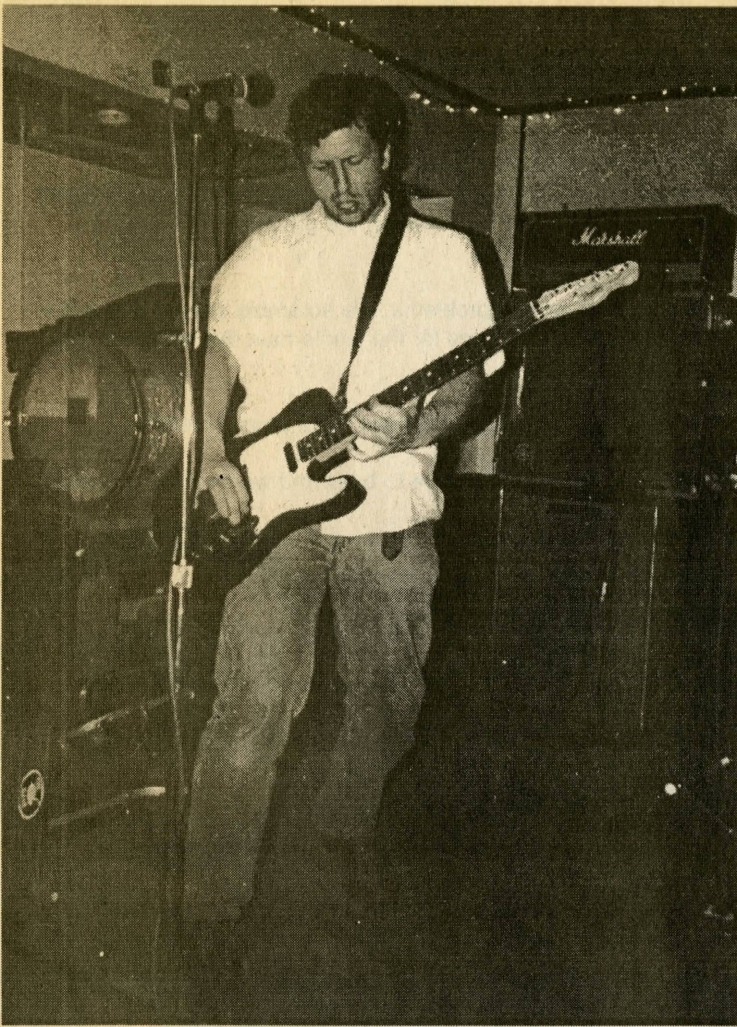
Bobby: Anytime you include your lyric sheet you're putting yourself out there for everyone to see and interpret. We spend a lot of time on our lyrics. It seems incomplete if you don't. I think as time has gone by we have gotten better at editing each others stuff and just knowing what questions to ask each other: "What are you trying to say in that line?" I really like that more bands are taking their words more seriously. That's the worst when you hear a great song but you are cringing because the line they are belting out is no good.

Do you consider yourselves a political band?

Bobby: No. I think we just write about what interests us. It just so happens that a lot of the topics we choose express a general dissatisfaction with things we see around us or in the past. We are just throwing our opinions out there. I wouldn't say we are offering any answers with our words. Just the messenger but it's definitely more fun to write about things we care about. Very often having to write words about a certain topic teaches us and usually is very cathartic.

How many years have you been touring? What have been the greatest experiences, and the worst, you've had through that aspect of life?

Bobby: Six years technically but pretty steady since the winter of 97. Seven tours so far. It's taken us all over North America and Japan so far. We have friends in almost every city in the



U.S. But that is also the hard part because you miss those people and if you weren't touring you'd never see them. I have no complaints except we haven't gotten to Europe yet.

The new record on Adeline was recorded in a week... is this short period of time normal for you?

Bobby: Yeah that's pretty standard. We kind of over extended ourselves this time I think. Last time was 10 songs, two of which were covers and one was a redo of an old song. This time its 17 songs which went through the strainer and became 12 for the record. It's nice to be able to choose the best ones but it's a lot of work to get those put together and polished up, especially since more than half Roman had never heard a month before.

What is the mood on this record in comparison to other releases?

Bobby: I think its pretty dark. That's a good thing I think though. I listen to dark and skewed a lot more than happy and funny. Even the poppier ones are sad.

Mike: This is definitely a gloomy release. It's gloomy and mean, though, as opposed to gloomy and mopey.

It seems like the East Coast is more centered around hardcore more than ever, in addition to whatever Dischord is putting out, are you supported by local shows?

Mike: There's never hordes of people at our shows. We see our friends at all our shows. It's always a great time, though, and we try to rock it just the same.

Bobby: I feel like we are always converting someone. There is always someone who comes up after the show who seems so surprised that we were good. We just tell them to tell their friends we don't fuck around.

What are the positive and negative aspects to being a band where you live? How does geography effect a band's ability to grow?

Bobby: Well we are lucky because there are tons a great bands in our area but a relatively small scene. Not so many bodies and that is both good and bad. Imagine seeing your favorite band and there's only 15 people there. On one hand you're pissed because more people don't "get it" but you have a good time and they play like they would to a thousand people and you realize something amazing has taken place and you were front row center. Geography can definitely help I think. It depends on what style you play and where the mecca is located. The band that lives on the East coast and wants to play on the West has to really bust their ass to get out there a few times a year. If that band was from Arizona for example they could play California 4-5 times a year and the consensus would be that they are touring fiends when they've been out less time and still gotten more exposure or now get on better shows there. But I think it ultimately comes back to being good. That's the theory anyway. People will catch on if you just work hard enough. You just have to be satisfied with your music and love it whether or not you grow or play to empty rooms. There's no payoff or instant respect around the corner and I don't think I'd want it that way if it wasn't earned.

From releasing just one EP on Adeline, have you seen many changes in the way people perceive the band either through crowd response or turnout?

Bobby: Our Gilman show last tour was very cool because we got to play with American Steel again. Plus they got us into some places we wouldn't have been able to play otherwise. We are getting lots of e-mails from kids around the world that are getting the record which must be because of the Mordam Distribution thing.

What are your plans for the next year?

Bobby: Keep writing. We are way ahead on ideas for songs-we had to narrow it down to 17 and then down to twelve. Plus another five or six that weren't coming along as fast as the 17. We just need to keep getting them recorded. Most likely and East coast tour in the summer and the West and Japan again in September. Also Europe would be amazing. We are still trying to figure out how to do that one.

Any final thoughts?

Mike: Start a band, write a zine, set up shows in your area. It's a lot of work, if you do it right, but it feels good, too. Don't complain about how all the new bands suck - start a new band and rock it.

Bobby: Buy the new Jack Pallance Band record and anything by Hello Shitty People.

Can you give a scaled back time line of the band?

Mike:

Spring 1995: I start practicing with Rubber Sole,

Summer 1995: First Thumbs show in Baltimore.

Summer 1995: 10 day Canadian Tour

Early 1996: We release our 12" demo on Sneezeguard. We only pressed 500 and hand screen the covers.

Mid 1996: Phil joins the band on drums. Randy was splitting time between The Thumbs & The Great Unraveling (Kill Rock Stars), so he really didn't have the time to devote to us that we needed to really get the band off the ground.

Fall 1996: We release the Sprague Dawley Rats 7" on Sneezeguard.

December 1996: We record 7 songs

Jan-March 1997: Phil quits the band 3 weeks before our first U.S. Tour, due to money problems. We scramble around and find a friend of a friend, Jason Gambrell from Columbia SC to fill in on drums for the whole tour. We also met Mike Soda Jerk on this tour.

Spring 1997: The Sweet Merciful Crap 7" comes out on Soda Jerk.

Fall 1997: 2nd U.S. tour - Crazy Tom plays the drums. (Lee Ashlin filled in for local shows between the 2 tours of 1997)

Spring 1998: Make America Strong-CD released on Soda Jerk.

Summer 1998: Mark leaves the band to go to NYC to pursue animation career. Mike switches to bass and we become a 3 piece. Phil rejoins band for the 3rd U.S. tour. At nine weeks it the longest so far.

Winter 1998-99: Randy comes back to fill in on local shows, and we record 9 songs that later turn out to be on 3 different records.

Spring 1999: Friendly Pat signs on to play drums on our fourth U.S. tour.

Spring 1999: We record 2 songs for a comp. (that never came out): one with Jason Gambrell playing drums, and one with Jason singing and Patrick from Crispus Attucks playing drums.

Summer 1999: Snuffy Smile (Tokyo, Japan) releases the Trust Your Dog single, as a split with The Urchin. Limited to 1,000 pressed.

Summer/Fall 1999: Bug joins the band - U.S. tour #5, and the Japanese tour. 27,000 miles in 18 days. Played every night until we had to cut the tour a few days short due to altercation in Chattanooga. Bug is out of the band.

Spring 2000: Adeline Records put out All Lesser Devils (7 song CD, 5 song 7")

Spring 2000: A.D.D. Fanzine releases the "Down With the Roads" single, as a split with the Jack Palance Band. (from the All Lesser Devils recording session)

Spring 2000: Roman joins the band as drummer - We go on U.S. Tour #6.

Summer 2000: Roman becomes the first Thumbs drummer to do 2 tours - U.S. Tour #7.

Jan/Feb 2001: We record for the next CD, which will be on Adeline, and will be called "Last Match."



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TNI

Adam Voith



I first heard of Adam Voith almost two years ago. I received "Bridges With Spirit" to review, it was the first book review I'd ever done. I was immediately attracted to the book, and to Adam's style of writing. The book was published by TNI Books, which I later learned was Voith's own publishing company. I heard more and more about TNI as time went on. Then, not long ago I received Adam's most recent venture, the first issue of a literary magazine called "Little Engines". If the first issue is any indication, Little Engines could easily become a force to be reckoned with. It features varied work by Adam, as well as numerous other notable independent writers. I interviewed Adam via e-mail to ask him about the past, present and future for TNI.

Introduce yourself.

Good evening. I'm Adam, and currently my cat is demanding all of my attention.

What first sparked/influenced your interest in writing?

I didn't write much growing up, but when I was first introduced to zines in high school, I was pretty sure I wanted to be writing in some regard. I wasn't necessarily thinking about literature, but I was making stabs with horrible poems and leafy prose. I had a photocopied zine I made myself and wrote things for a couple other zines. This was all mostly local stuff in Indiana and around the Midwest.

It wasn't until college that I really started reading with any type of regularity. I got into a handful of novels that really got me thinking about what's involved in writing, what's really at stake if you want to write things that matter. I decided to go with an English major on something of a whim and took a few classes that really got me stoked on talking with other folks about books and stories. In particular there was a class on Metafiction based around the structure and techniques used in Don Quixote. We read a lot of great stuff in that class including Paul Auster's "New York Trilogy." Later, I had a class on road novels where we got into Kerouac, Nabokov's "Invitation of a Beulah" and Steinbeck's "Travels With Charlie." Those were the two lit classes that have stuck with me, the Metafiction focusing heavily on form and all that, the other class knee deep in theme and tone and emotion and character and all the gut stuff. I was stoked on both parts, and then a few writing classes had me trying to put some well thought out things on paper. I ditched the poetry attempts and started focusing on fiction and creative non-fiction.

Lately, I've been reading lots of new stuff. Books and stories published by tiny presses in the past few years and it's a whole new kind of excitement over writing. To me, it seems totally insane to talk about lit. movements and such, but there are a good number of great things happening in little numbers with writing and small press publishing.

When did you first become interested in music?

I was into bad music for a long time. Then, a friend of mine had a tape sitting by his weight bench and it had some punk bands from California on it. He let me borrow it and then I started finding out about the whole independent bands and labels making all this excellent music AND they'd play in your town for 5 bucks in a place with no beer.

What influence does the music you listen to now, and the music scene you're involved in have on your writing?

It has a more profound impact on the business side of things, not necessarily the writing... Although, I'm sure the fact that I love rock music will always show up in one way or another in the things I write.

What were you like in high school?

I remember a day when I had this huge zit on the tip of my nose. I was walking through the commons area where all the clumps of kids gather in the morning before the first bell. I walked past a clump of popular girls and I heard one of them say clear as day: "OH MY GOD! Adam Voith has the biggest zit on his nose!"

When did you first have your writing published regularly? Was it in fanzines? If so, which?

I'm not sure how regular these things were. But a zine or two back in Indiana, and some websites while in California and now in Seattle. Nothing too regular yet, really...

When and how did the idea to start TNI come about?

The idea to start publishing writing came about toward the end of my last year in school and throughout the following year while I was living in California. I was writing the stories that ended up becoming a book, and I decided I'd publish the book myself.

Are you currently really looking for new writers, or are you trying to concentrate on what you have going right now?

I'm always looking for new folks. I've been gettin' into comics lately and so I've been on the prowl for people doing interesting things in that area. But I'm always looking for good writing in whatever form. Doing the new magazine keeps me ears perked for new interesting writing. But there is a part of me that wants to keep working with some of the artists that have been involved with TNI releases in the past. I like the idea of creating a very loose "roster" of writers and artists and going back to them again and again.

How do you see what you do as the same, or different from all the people running smaller record labels? Do you pattern anything you do with TNI after any labels in particular?

I see it as almost exactly the same. I should qualify that and say that I hope it's the same as SOME record labels. But certainly there are a few independent record labels out there that have given me a great pattern to follow. And more and more I'm convinced that there's a cross-over audience with music and writing. Earlier, when I was mentioning the "roster" of artists... That's just what record labels do and it works in so many positive ways. I think a lot of labels start out with compilation releases and that's sometimes how I think about Little Engines.

What have you done so far? What do you have planned as of now?

So far it's "Bridges With Spirit," which is a book I wrote. Then there was Damien Jurado's "Postcards and Audio Letters" CD which had no music on it and was made up entirely of things he found on cassette tapes stolen from answering machines or bought for pennies in thrift stores. Next was "A Guitar for Janie" which is a kids story and 7" by Pedro the Lion. And just recently... the first issue of the lit./ art magazine called "Little Engines." So



that's it so far. As far as plans for the future: More issues of the magazine (quarterly, we hope) and soon enough another novel... and if all goes well, more books and stuff forever!

Explain what Little Engines is.

"Little Engines" is a magazine. We're hoping to do a new issue every quarter. Inside there's fiction, comics, interviews, etc. The focus is the writing inside and it provides a nice open forum for all sorts of stories and things.

What would you have done differently when you first put out "Bridges With Spirit" if you were releasing it now?

I have a standard answer for this that I can now get into a three bullet list, I think...

- * Proofreaders!
- * Proofreaders, again!
- * Distributors!

If given the opportunity, will you make your living doing TNI?

If given the opportunity? Are you hinting around that you want to give me a million dollars? The answer is yes. If given the opportunity and if it doesn't involve doing something disgusting.

How do you think "Bridges With Spirit" has been received so far? How is it different than you had anticipated?

Since the book's been out for almost two years now, I can look back and say it was received well. It was on a small scale, but I was pretty stoked about the reaction. A lot of it was really encouraging. I'm excited to do another book, that's for certain.

How much do reviews of your work effect (or even interest) you?

I like reading reviews. They can be rough or they can make your day. But I can't help but find it interesting to see how reviewers are receiving the stuff.

What things make you want to quit what you're doing all together? Not much, so far. I get frustrated at times. Usually with the distri-

bution side of things. It's difficult for the little guy, but it doesn't make me want to quit. Sometimes being blocked up with nothing to write can be more aggravating than any type of business thing.

What music/writing has been inspiring you lately?

I've been consumed with moving and gettin' ready for a wedding. I find myself listening to a lot of talk radio and watching too much TV news. I'm tired and it's so easy to just plop down and zone out. Tonight I got out an old record I used to listen to all the time and it felt so good to hear it. I must give the stereo a little more exercise. As for reading, I just finished the new issue of Al Burian's Burn Collector and was in awe at how well that thing reads. I'm always wondering if stuff like that is interesting because of the way it's written or because of the things being written about. In his case, I'd say it's a little of both. A damn fine zine indeed...

Do you find people to write for Little Engines, or do they usually find you? Do you see that changing as more issues are released?

I do some finding and some people find me. The first issue was a mix, and I really liked that about it. I'm sure it'll continue that way. I get more submissions now than I did a year ago, so I expect to come into more good stuff blindly like that, but I'm sure I'll always go after writing from people that seem to be doing good things.

Explain the role that you think the internet plays in both your own work, and smaller business/culture as a whole.

Well it's clear that everyone's not gonna get rich from the internet. That's clear now, right?

I never planned on getting rich... Well, maybe for a second while I was in California... But in general the internet has had a profound impact on the way small businesses work. I don't think I could be doing TNI Books without it. So as a tool, it's huge and I don't think too many businesses would disagree. On an artistic level I'm still uncertain. I love building and keeping the website up, and I think some of the viewers appreciate what goes up there. We'll see what comes around.

explain what a blog is, how you got started doing one, and why you continue to do one.

Blogs are just daily (sometimes) ramblings on a webpage. I think they're "supposed" to be like web diaries. There are a zillion of them out there and each one has a different idea of what should be included. I first got into them when I was out on tour with my friend's band and we were updating a blog from the road each night so people could follow the tour. It ended up being mostly me writing. Since I wasn't in the band, I expected readers to be bummed. Like, they'd want the band on there talkin' about rock and roll, not some guy along for the ride going on and on about the country-side and fast food. But people seemed to be into it, so I decided to incorporate that into the TNI Books website. I think it gets people coming around on a regular basis, but I try not to take the blogs too seriously. They're lighthearted and fun, for the most part. Something to do while you're bored at work. There's a lot of talk about blogs being a "new form" which is probably true in some regard. I do think there are some interesting things going on with them... I think you can equate them with a lot of personal zines that are done in print.

What do you do when you're not working on TNI, or writing?

Well, I've just been laid off from the part-time job I've been working on for the past year. So I'm taking on some other jobs... Stuff that's gonna allow me MORE time for TNI Books, which is great and been the goal all along. I work with a friend booking tours for bands, and I help out another label doing press mailings and follow-ups and all that good stuff. I keep pretty damn busy, even though sometimes that might mean marathon email conversations under the guise of working. I'm getting married in June, so I spend a lot of time with my girl and I'm making the effort to spend more time in that manner. I think if some sociologist were to give me a test, I'd come out as a shining work addict...

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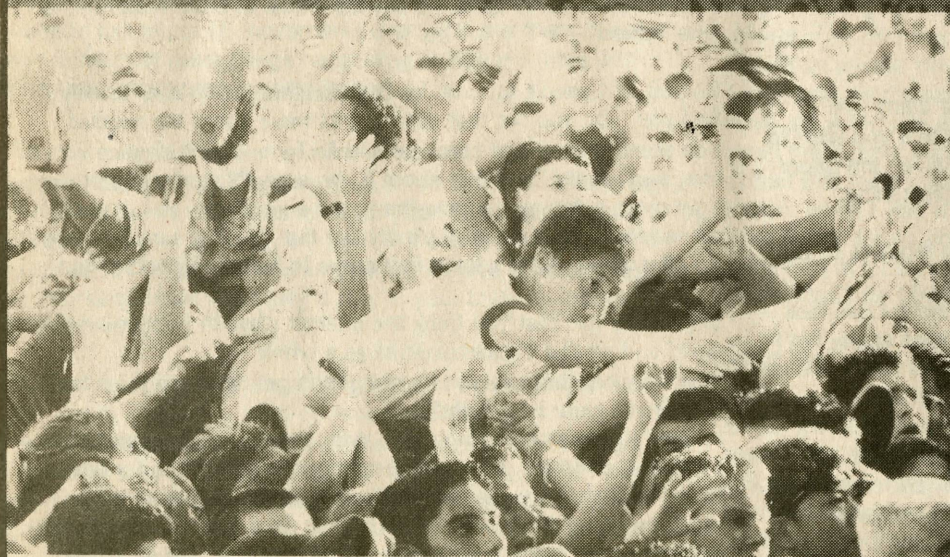
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Publication Reviews

Ad Hominim #11

This is a good marriage of personal, and somewhat random writing with basic music fanzine fare. There are a ton of interviews, all of which are short and sweet, usually e-mailed conversations with a good cross section of bands. Everyone from Face To Face (shudder), to Integrity, to Rocket From The Crypt. There are also some record reviews, and columns most of which were well worth the read. Then there are a few pages of Too Much Coffee Man comics which were a nice surprise. Overall this is an entertaining read, but I can't but help noticing that everything is really spread out in here. Given a little effort, and a some type smaller than 12 point, this could have been condensed into 50 pages or so.

full size, copied, 72 pgs., \$5 ppd. (comes w/CD)
1401 Portland Ave. S. #C303 | Minneapolis, MN 55404

Eyeball Magazine #2

Though I never saw it, I guess the first issue of this zine was called "Indy Media". They made the wise decision to change the name, since there are a ton of other zines and websites this zine was being confused with. This is a well written, and well designed new magazine. Most of the pages are filled with reviews of comics, underground films, and zines, though no record reviews. There are also a few interviews, most of which are pretty short though well thought out. The whole thing is well laid out and very easy to read. Overall it is worthwhile, though I'm not sure that the page count quite justifies the cover price yet. Either way this is a very promising second issue, and I'm sure there are much bigger things to come from Eyeball.

full size, offset/color cover, 40 pgs., \$3 ppd.
PO Box 21141 | Oklahoma City, OK 73156 | eyeballmagazine.com

Fresh Cow Pie #6

This zine is, in a lot of ways your standard zine fare. Most of the pages here are filled with well thought out record reviews, as well as one non-music interview. The thing that makes this interesting is that the editor, Farmer P. is a full time farmer in South Dakota. He listens to the review material while working, and thus calls them "Tractor Seat Reviews". The writing is well thought out, and the reviews are knowledgeable. It's awesome to know that someone who lives in such a rural area and can never make it to shows, let alone a decent record store, is able to keep doing a solid zine. A good zine, though it is mostly reviews. But Farmer P. is definitely an above average review writer, and since that's what most of this issue is made up with, it makes for a good zine.

7"x10.5", newsprint, 16 pgs., \$1 ppd.
5112 77th Ave. SE | Montpelier, ND 58472

Heartattack #30

For years, Heartattack has been one of the mainstays in the hardcore/punk scene. It's one of the longest running, larger fanzines out there. This issue is much like previous issues. There are lengthy interviews with Le Shok, and Bury Me Standing, as well as the usual boat-load of columns, and record and zine reviews. There are also a ton of ads, which isn't too big a deal since this zine is either free, or \$.50 in person. There is a whole lot of tiny text here, so there is definitely enough reading material in every issue to keep you busy for a while. Most of the columns are worth reading, especially Al Burian's. The reviews are also hit or miss, depending on who reviews each respective record. The review section is also home to some really outstanding band photography which helps keep the longest section of each issue interesting. Heartattack is still one of the best of the "old standards" who are still left in zine land.

full size, newsprint, 88 pgs., \$1.50 ppd.
PO Box 848 | Goleta, CA 93116

Jaded In Chicago #11

This zine has grown a lot already, especially in terms of the layout and design. This issue even has a glossy cover, and offset printing. Content wise this is improving too, though it is definitely basic fanzine fare. There are short interviews with Less Than Jake, The Weakerthans, New Found Glory, and more. There are also half page features on some other bands, most of which are Chicago bands. The reviews are well written, though most are very short. This is a solid fanzine that's improving at a good pace. My only suggestion is to compact the text you've got a bit, and perhaps make space for more of what you've got, or longer interviews. Worth checking out, especially if you're from the Chicago area.

full size, offset/glossy cover, 40 pgs., \$2 ppd.
4031 Forest Ave. | Western Springs, IL 60558 | jadedinchicago.com

Journalson #3

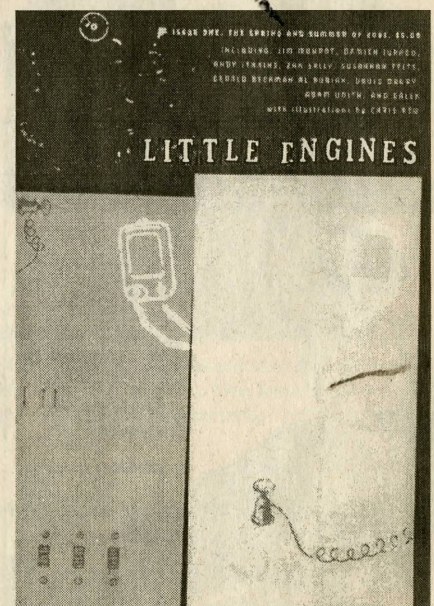
I have never considered myself a great judge of personal zines for some reason. Maybe it's because I've never attempted to write one. Either way, Journalson is an above average personal zine, especially considering it's only his third issue. The writing is solid, and makes even run of the mill topics interesting. The layout is fairly typical guy with typewriter and lots of scotch tape fare, and it fits the tone of the writing well. If you are a fan of the personal zine, you could do a lot worse than this. Hopefully Steve will continue to publish, and this will continue to grow. Good stuff.

quarter size, copied, 48 pages, \$1 ppd./three stamps
PO Box 3444 | Portland, OR 97208

Little Engines #1

In content, and form, this is essentially a novella. But because of it's content it's part literary zine, part novella. The content is made up entirely of one piece each from some of the best underground writers going. There are pieces from Al Burian, Adam Voith (also the publisher, check out his interview in this very issue...), Jim Munroe, an interview with Dalek, and much more. I found all of the writing to be worthwhile, and it's great to have stuff from so many different writers. The style, and length of every contribution varies greatly, though that also adds to the versatility of the magazine. There is everything here from lengthy interviews, to an outstanding comic, to lengthy fiction pieces. The variety, and overall quality here is surprising, even though I had high expectations when I first received this. This certainly goes far beyond most any zine in it's depth of writing, which is why it's more of a literary magazine than anything. There are ads in the front and back of the magazine, but it's solid contributions otherwise. Certainly worth every penny of the asking price if you're interested in some of the best up and coming writers this particular scene has to offer. And this is only the first issue...

6"x9", offset guts/color
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2442 NW Market #357 |
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tnibooks.com



Motion Sickness #11

Phil has been publishing Motion Sickness for years, and it has been improving slowly the whole time. He seems to publish less often, though the issues he releases are really thick, and well written. This issue is no exception. There are 80 pages, all of which are packed with text. There are interviews with Dillinger Four, 7 Seconds, Empty Records, and more. There are also articles on the Las Vegas Shakedown, and an entertaining guide to restaurant etiquette. The interviews, and reviews are both interesting, and well informed which makes or breaks any interview or record review. The long and short of it is that there's a lot of writing here, and it's almost all good writing. One of the better fanzines going these days.

full size, newsprint, 80 pgs., \$2 ppd.
PO Box 24277 | St. Louis, MO 63130

Muddle #17

It's been more than a little while since Muddle last published an issue. Most assumed the zine was dead, myself included. But then again, Muddle has surprised me in the same fashion before. Perhaps Ron and Dave are content to publish an issue every year or so, which is way better than just calling it quits. This issue features The Flaming Lips, Hot Snakes, Man or Astroman, No Knife, Tiltwheel, and more. The content is solid fanzine fare, with the interviews being the highlight for the most part. The layout is well above average, as is the content, and there is a lot of it. If you're into the bands featured, you'll be into this zine.

full size, newsprint/color cover, 140 pgs, \$3
PO Box 120289, San Diego, CA 92112

N.O.T. The Dream Team #5

This is the kind of zine that you are either going to love or you are going to hate. You will either "get it", or you'll hate this zine to no end. If you do, in fact, "get it", you'll love every minute of this. Chris' writing is very tongue in cheek, random humor that is very entertaining. This issue features his take on important topics like blind beating, the age old "god vs. science" debate, and the fetal version of Jesus he possesses, in a small jar none the less. The humor is well thought out, and doesn't get stale after a couple articles, which isn't easy to pull off. In addition to random articles, there are also a couple record reviews, and band button reviews. There are also some short contributions from other writers that are in the same tone as Chris' writing. Well worth looking into if you don't take anything too seriously.

half size, copied, 32 pgs., \$1 ppd.
PO Box 19561 | Boulder, CO 80308

Old School Beat #3

This is definitely an entertaining idea for a zine, though the amount of content is still lacking a little bit. The editor reviews and writes about video games from the 80's, funk records from the 70's, and blaxploitation movies. All of the topics are at least somewhat interesting to me,

so this is an entertaining read, and a refreshing change of pace. This issue has profiles of Centipede, and Donkey Kong, along with some funk record reviews, and an old school video game quiz. Hopefully this zine will continue on the path it's on, and grown into it's own. Right now it's got a lot of novelty, though there just isn't a whole lot of content. But a is it's still a good change of pace and an entertaining, though short read. Hopefully this will continue to grow.



half size, copied, 20 pgs., \$1 ppd.
PO Box 227 | Morrisville, PA 19067

Profane Existence #39

Profane Existence has been one of the mainstays in the Minneapolis punk scene for years. They have always covered the crust end of the spectrum, which doesn't really interest me too much, but this is a good read none the less. The reviews are well written, as are the interviews, which kept my interest even though the bands interviewed don't particularly interest me. There are interviews with Tragedy, Shitlist, and Hate To State. The reviews are mostly of like-minded bands. Fans of this scene will find this a bit more interesting than I did, though I still found it worth reading.

11"x17" newspaper format, 20 pgs., \$1 or three stamps
PO Box 8722 | Minneapolis, MN 55408

Slug & Lettuce #68

It's a little hard to fathom exactly how long Christine Boarts has been doing Slug and Lettuce for. Every issue is evidence of just how good she's gotten at zine making. Every issue is packed with tiny text, and very impressive band photography. There are columns, and tons of zine, and record reviews in every issue, along with classifieds and ton of great photography. The reviews take up a good part of every issue, and most of the reviewers are well informed, and are good writers. Another one of the mainstays in zine world that just refuse to quit, or even slow down. If you only subscribe to a few zines, this wouldn't be a bad one to add to the list.

11"x17" newspaper format, 20 pgs., \$.57 or stamps for each issue.
PO Box 26632 | Richmond, VA 23261

Sore #12

Sore was a very standard, thin half size zine for a couple years before making the big jump to newsprint last issue. It seems like Taylor is definitely getting the hang of things with this issue. There has always been an absence of interviews in Sore, and that continues with this issue. Whether that is a good or bad thing is up to you. The pages are filled with columns, which are all hit or miss, and reviews of zines, books, and records. The reviews are worth reading for the most part, and the design on those pages has improved a lot over past issues. Taylor's own writing here is worth reading, though not all of his columnists' writing is. If you can get your hands on a copy of this, it's probably worth your time if you're into more personal music fanzines. Solid stuff with a lot of potential.

full size, newsprint, 40 pgs., \$1 ppd.
PO Box 68711 | Va. Beach, VA 23471

Toxic Flyer #31

Billy has been doing Toxic Flyer for quite a while now. It's very consistently released, and you always know what to expect from him. Every issue is cover to cover music coverage with reviews of records, shows, and zines, as well as a lot of band interviews, most of which are pretty short. This issue features interviews with Oxymoron, The Distillers, The Yo-Yo's, AFI, Electric Frankenstein, and a ton more. The remaining pages are taken up by reviews and a lot of band photos. The layout is pretty obviously not done by computer for the most part, which adds to the feel of the zine, but hurts it's quality. Perhaps that's just how Billy wants it. Overall this is a good zine that covers mostly the bar rock sector of punk rock.

full size, newsprint, 64 pgs., \$3 ppd.
PO Box 39158 | Baltimore, MD 21212

Underdog #31

Underdog has been publishing very consistently now for years. Every issue is pretty close to the same which is both good and bad. This issue is actually a split issue with a new zine called Greenleaf Rebellion. Underdog's content this time around is very close to what it always is. There are no reviews, or interviews, just columns and articles, which are usually pretty lengthy. The writing is sometimes hit or miss, since there are so many different people who write for Underdog, but it definitely above average for the most part as fanzine writing goes. There is also a refreshingly broad amount of subjects covered in the writing which helps to keep it interesting. Greenleaf Rebellion is on the other side of Underdog, and is an unexpected bonus. This is the first issue, and it certainly looks to be a promising new zine. Most of

it's covered with solid writing on random topics, along with a piece of fiction. There are also band obituaries, for Chicago-land bands that have recently called it quits which is a cool idea. Though it's short, it's a solid first issue of a zine that will hopefully continue to grow. It's also an extra bonus that it came along with this issue of Underdog. full size, newsprint, 48 pgs., \$2 ppd.

1513 N. Western Ave | Chicago, IL 60622
Greenleaf Rebellion | 2716 West Prindiville St. | Chicago, IL 60647

Uprising #10

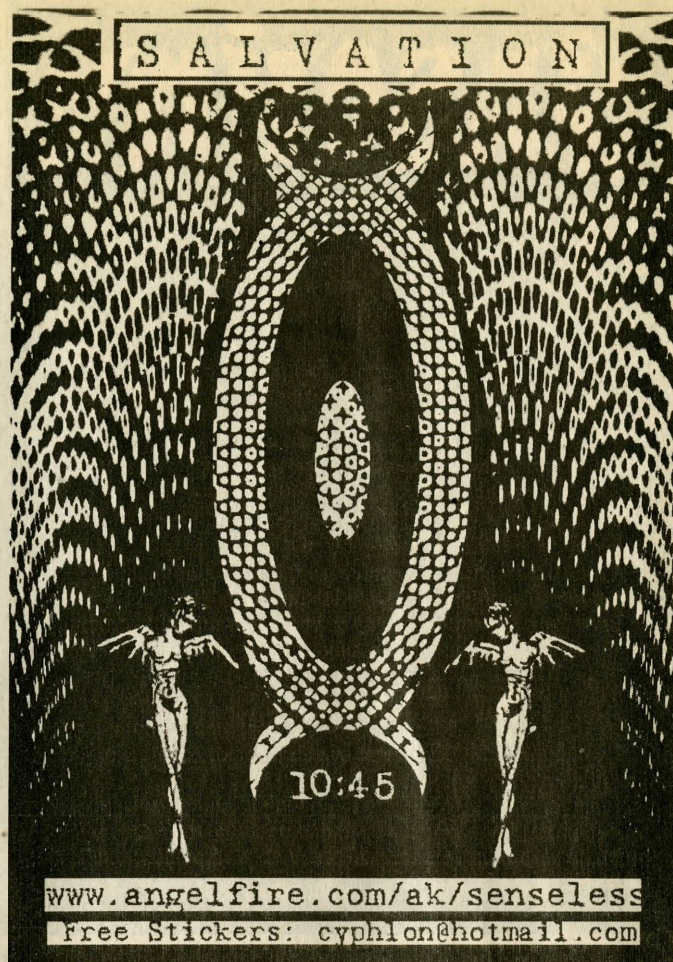
Though it's still a fairly new zine, Uprising is already publishing very regularly and is improving with every issue. This time around there are interviews with The Fairlanes, The Eycliners, and they guys that book a venue in Toledo called the Bottle Rocket. There are also show, record, and zine reviews, and a short news section. Overall this is a solid zine with good writing, and layout. The only trouble is that it still feels really thin, but hopefully content will continue to improve, as all the other pieces are in place. I'm interested to see where Uprising goes from here.

full size, newsprint, 32 pgs., \$1 ppd.
PO Box 2251 | Monroe, MI 48161

Wonka Vision #14

This zine has been growing slowly over the last couple years, though this is the first issue I've actually sat down and read in quite a while. The writing is solid for the most part, and covers a wide variety of topics, and musical styles. The band interviews this time around are with AFI, Pedro The Lion, Bright Eyes, Jurassic 5, Thursday, and more. Most are solid interviews, though most are also a bit too short to really cover much ground. There are some layout problems that plague this issue. The biggest one is that almost all the text in the whole issue is 12 point, which makes it easier to read, but makes a little bit of text cover a lot of space. This is especially evident in the record review section, which could easily have had the same amount of text, and taken up about half the space. Overall this is a good fanzine with all the pieces in place, but the look of it could use some work. But it looks like Justin found a designer to do the cover, and the AFI interview pages, so that is certainly a step in the right direction.

full size, offset/color cover, 68 pgs., \$2 ppd.
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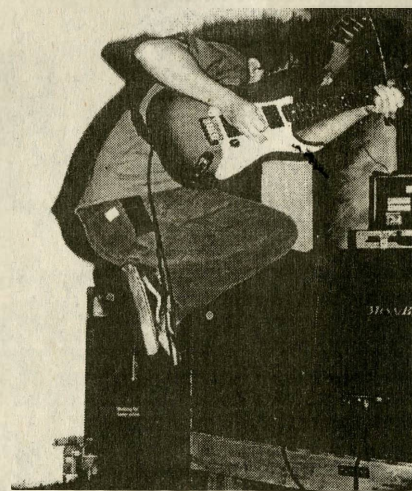
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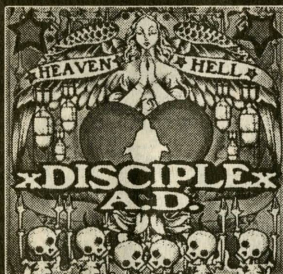
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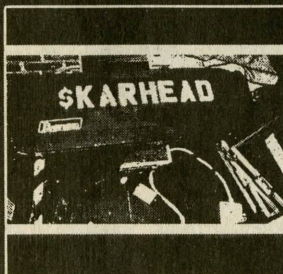
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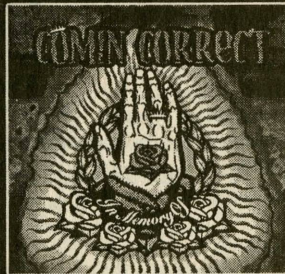
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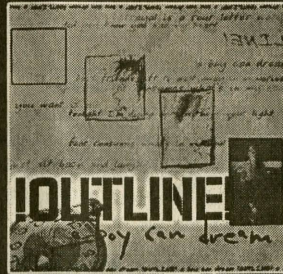
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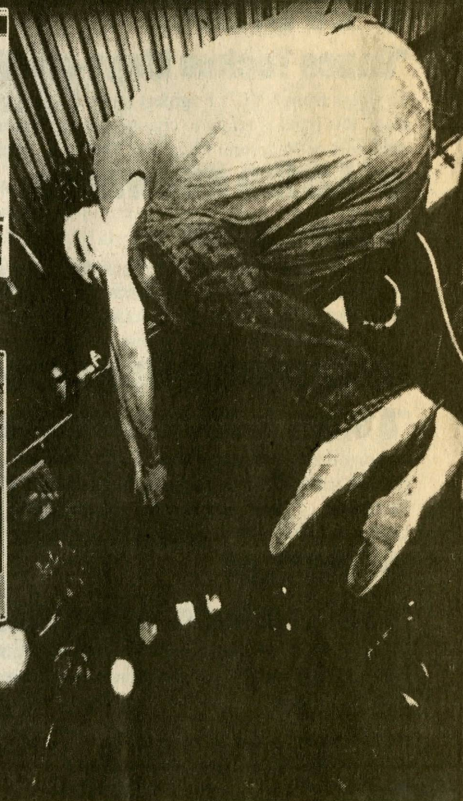
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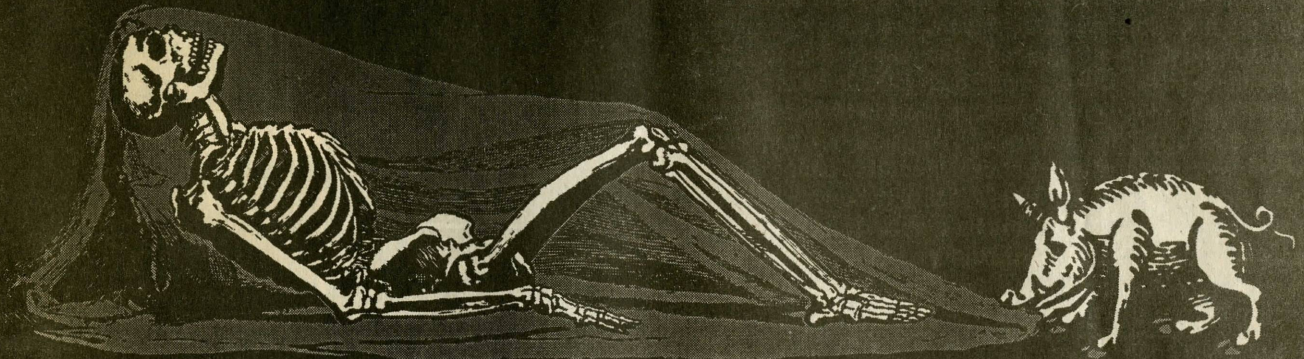


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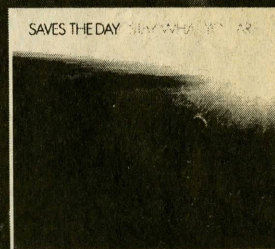
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Record Reviews

A.C. Cotton "Half Way Down"

The first time I put this in, it appealed to me almost immediately. But as I listened to more of the album, it got a little monotonous. By the end of the second listen I was almost completely uninterested. A.C. Cotton play super poppy, and basic rock and roll with a slight country twang. The problem is that the songwriting is really repetitive and elementary. The formula and musicianship are passable, but after track three or four, it feels like it's just the first song on repeat. Perhaps given some time A.C. Cotton can develop something distinctive. But for now, they don't have a lot to show for their efforts except a pretty boring CD.

Alkaline Trio



Advocate "s/t" 7"

Though I don't want to pigeon-hole this too much, it's sort of hard not to. Advocate play pretty straight ahead thrash which never really lets up. As with most any band in this genre, the guitars are definitely the focal point musically. The vocals are screamed, and though the guy's voice isn't terribly distinct it's still above average. The guitarist is really talented, and does a good job of avoiding playing the same set of riffs over and over again. The drumming gets a little monotonous, but not to the point that it's a hindrance to the sound. Overall it's a really solid three songs, and hopefully these guys will stick around since it seems like they've got a good thing going. *Dead But Dreaming*

Affront "People Who Live in Glass Houses"

It's pretty obvious that Affront's sound is at least partially a direct product of their surroundings. Though this is the D.C. band's first full length, they have certainly already molded a very mature sound of their own. They combine elements of newer, 90's hardcore like Better Than A Thousand with the melodic elements of old Dag Nasty records. The vocals especially bring to mind Dag Nasty, and they're definitely the most distinct element of the band. The music is mostly pretty mid-tempo, though it's still very driving which is thanks to forceful execution from the drummer and guitarist. The band is very obviously talented, especially the guitarist, and it wouldn't surprise me if this wasn't the first band they've all been in. My favorite tracks are "Double Take", and "Pray For Sunlight", though their cover of Depeche Mode's "Enjoy The Silence" is definitely worth noting too. Overall this is a very impressive debut album that is hopefully just the beginning for Affront. This really made me take notice the first time I heard it, and I'm liking it better and better with every listen. A very good combination of old and new hardcore with the melodic rock elements of some of today's best bands. One of the biggest surprises in this batch of records reviewed in this issue. Take note of Affront. *Phyte*

Agent 51 "Just Keep Running"

Who here has heard Rancid? I'm sure that it's just about everybody. Who here likes Rancid? Probably at least a few of you, they're a popular band. Where am I going with this? You probably have a pretty good idea by now. I have a suspicion that the members of Agent 51 are fans of Rancid. It seems that they like them so much they did the next best thing to starting a Rancid cover band. These San Diego natives have been around for a while, and this isn't their first record. But in that time, they have managed to not find a sound at all their own. In fact the third track "C.I.A.F.B.I.", along with a handful of others sound like they could have come straight off "And Out Come The Wolves". There are a few songs that sound a bit less like Rancid, though they are the slower, filler tracks for the most part. Maybe these guys should have called this record "And Out Come The Coyotes". It would have been more fitting. Boo-urns. *Adeline Records*

Alkaline Trio "From Here To Infirmary"

In a relatively short period of time, Alkaline Trio have built a large following, and have now moved up to Vagrant. Their story isn't a terribly new one, but they have done it the old fashioned way. They have been writing great songs all along, but they built a following touring constantly. Being a fan of their earlier stuff, I was definitely anxiously awaiting this record. All in all it's another Alkaline Trio record. If you liked them before, you will like them more now. If you didn't like them before, I doubt this will change your mind. The differences between this, and their earlier records are there, they just aren't huge ones. The production is a bit more hi-fi, especially in the guitars. At times it feels like it may be a bit too much, though it still harbors the power of their earlier records. The vocals are once again something to write home about, and Dan's vocals have come a long way since "Maybe I'll Catch Fire". The biggest improvement over their old material is the consistency of the record. Though I love both of their previous full lengths, they have a couple songs each I find myself skipping. But this record seems to have traded a few of the Earth moving highs away, though there isn't a track here I would call a dud. The highlights are definitely "Armageddon" (possibly tied with "Cooking Wine" for their best song to date), "Mr. Chainsaw" (a great song with even better lyrics), and "Take With Lots Of Alcohol". One of the best pure punk rock bands going. Perhaps now Vagrant can take the money they make off these guys, and have The Anniversary shot straight into space to never be heard from again. *Vagrant*

AM Stereo "Suffocation Town"

I got this to review many months ago and I have listened to it a lot since then. I really enjoy this record but I have had a really hard time putting into words exactly why I really enjoy it. I think the hardest part is that I really can't find many bands to compare AM Stereo to. They have elements of so many bands that no one sound really describes them or does them any justice, but I'll try. Take some old punk roots a la Screeching Weasel, add just a drop of say Wilco and top it off with some Superchunk. That will have to do for now, but I highly suggest buying this to find out for yourself. This is just good old high energy, guitar driven rock, complimented by raspy, heart felt vocals shared by the three members who play the strings. I can honestly say that there is not one bad song on this album. My favorites are "Impossible", "Southern Rock Radio" and "Money Store". *Intelligent Records (Tom)*

American Steel "Jagged Thoughts"

After releasing their first record almost two years ago, American Steel saw their fair share of hype. Now, after losing their drummer, and replacing him with their original drummer, they are finally releasing their follow up full length. This time around it is a more mid-tempo, and mature version of the band. Some of the songs here are even down right mellow. The East Bay punk rock feel is still there, but it's combined with straight ahead rock, or even an 80's rock feel (think The

Police). Never fear though, as there are also a couple short, and fast bursts here too. "There's A New Life", and "Time Gone By" are both considerably faster and shorter (both clock in under 2 minutes) than the rest of the record. American Steel have managed to shift their style a bit, but still maintain the edge they had before. The result is a much more interesting record than "Rogue's March". Recommended, especially if you liked these guys before. *Lookout!*

Anasarca "Discography, 1994-1997"

Anasarca's story isn't a terribly new one. They operated for three years in relative obscurity outside their native Washington D.C. Then, three years later their discography (which is only seven songs) is finally released. Though they didn't put out release after release while they were functioning, Anasarca's impact will certainly be felt now more than ever. Their stripped down, though extremely epic sound was very far ahead of it's time. In their time as a band, only these seven songs were recorded, and they released a 7" of their own, a split 7", and a demo. But with that, their impact is still felt today, at least enough to warrant this release, more than three years after their final show. The final result is well worth your while, especially if you're into bands like The Red Scare. I guess it's a bit ironic that one of the best releases to come out yet this year was recorded more than three years ago. And though it's only seven songs long, it covers more ground than most bands can cover in 15 songs. A very highly recommended document of a very important, and talented band. *Second Nature*

The Atari Star "Shrp Knf Cts Mtns"

Though Atari Star is a young band, they're by no means amateurs. Singer and songwriter Marc Ruvolo has been running Johann's Face records for a decade. Though as far as I know, this is his first musical endeavor. The songwriting definitely subscribes to the theory that less is more. Most of the tunes fall into the sparse, plodding pop song category. What they lack in tempo and volume they can back up with well crafted songs that don't have to be right up in your face to get your toe tapping. There is a lot of variety in the instrumentation, though most songs utilize drums, some bass, and either acoustic, or very quiet, and reverb heavy electric guitars. Marc's vocals are soft, though not terribly shaky and wimpy which helps keep things moving. There are also dashes of violin, piano, and some well placed backing vocals to help mix things up further. There are also guest appearances here from Mike Perkins of Sig Transit Gloria and Matt Skiba of Alkaline Trio. This is certainly not the sort of record I would put on every day, but it has already grown on me a lot. After a relatively short period of time, Atari Star seem ready to make a name for themselves in a crowded genre. Solid stuff if you're into quiet, yet melodic indie rock. *Johann's Face*

Atom & His Package "Redefining Music"

I think that at this point, most people probably know more or less what Atom & His Package are all about. His knack for catchy songwriting, along with his very unconventional approach to executing those songs has won him a lot of attention both positive and negative. Everyone seems to have an opinion one way or the other on Atom, and it's easy to see why. Most of the songs here, like on previous records are made with vocals, guitar, and "The Package", a drum machine/sequencer. Because of the package, a lot of the songs are in essence pop punk songs, though they sound more like 80's rock mixed with Nintendo background music. This is the third proper full length Atom has done, in addition to a lot of compilation and 7" appearances which were recently combined on the "Making Love" LP. This record is quite similar to previous releases, all of the songs are at worst mediocre, and at best brilliant. There seem to be more really good songs, and a few more not-so-good ones, as opposed to his previous records which were a bit more even keeled. Though there are some dull moments, "If You Own The Washington Redskins, You're A Cock", and "Anarchy Means I Litter" are easily two of his best songs to date, and the highlights of the record. All in all this is another good Atom record, and with Hopeless behind it will likely be heard by a lot of kids who've never heard this before. Good stuff, though maybe not his record to date. *Hopeless*

Benton Falls "Fighting Starlight"

At first glance, Benton Falls fall pretty easily into the emo-core musical cubby hole. Upon further listening, that initial assessment doesn't go away by any means, though there does seem to be a bit more going

on here. For better or worse, this has a lot of elements of more mainstream college rock. The vocals and guitars sort of lull you into a trance, and only about half the time does the song ever come out of it. But perhaps that's the beauty of Benton Falls. Their rhythm changes are numerous, and they help add a level of complexity to the record. The vocals are pretty distinct, which is always a plus. Not to mention that they guy can definitely sing. The song writing is a bit above average, especially considering that this is their first full length. The problem is that once you're past the intro to each song, it can start to blend in with every other song. It adds continuity to the record, though it doesn't help keep the listener's interest through all ten songs. All in all this is an above average debut that expands out of what has become a pretty below average sub-genre these days. *Deep Elm*

Biddy Biddy Biddy "Logic Makes Us Look Good"

Whether they love it or hate it, this is the kind of record that gets an opinion one way or the other out of everyone. This is herky jerky post punk, with it's share of strange electronic influences. It falls somewhere in between the angular guitar rock of Shellac, and Man Or Astroman minus the surf rock. The electronic noises, and bleeps and bleeps function more as separators for the songs than anything. So it keeps things interesting, without being the focus of the record itself. The vocal duties are equally shared by two members, which helps mix things up too. Some of the songs seem a little too slow, though what they lack in speed they still maintain in intensity. The drumming is fairly non-conventional, though not terribly obtrusive which is a hard balance to find. The guitar work is generally basic riffs, and sort of a backdrop for the rhythm section, and vocals. This is good stuff that I would perhaps be more into if I saw this band live. A promising debut record either way. *Atarms Mechanics*

Big In Japan "Destroy The New Rock"

This new project features Zac Damon of Zoinks!, and Screeching Weasel fame, along with two members of the now-defunct Gain. Zoinks! played straight ahead pop punk, while The Gain were more of a mod/punk band. That considered, Big In Japan doesn't throw much of a curve ball musically. They do deliver on their promise of an Elvis Costello-esque new wave edge, though at the end of the day they're still a pop punk band. The hints of 80's British music are there, but they're very subtle. The songwriting is well thought out, though it doesn't take long for the songs to all start sounding the same. By the fourth song I felt like I'd heard most everything they had to offer, and at the end of the record I realized I had. Zac does have a good, and distinct voice though that's one of the only things that separates these guys at all. Solid pop punk with a British new wave edge that will get lost in the pack. Ho-hum. *Honest Don's*

Billy "The Band" CDEP

I've been struggling to find something clever to say about this band, but I'm drawing a blank. It's not that Billy's music isn't interesting, it is. It's certainly not ground breaking, but it's very well done. They play straight ahead emo, but with a powerful rock and roll edge. While their sound is similar to a lot of other bands, mostly from a couple years back, they do what they do very well. Some of the recording was done by Ed Rose, and it sounds really good. The music, and vocals fall somewhere in between older Samiam, and any one of a number of Midwestern emo bands. All five songs on this EP are pretty unrelenting, and lead into one another well. Given some time, these guys could easily go far. Especially considering how much improvement there's been just since their record previous to this one. These guys are tight, and they can definitely play their instruments. Recommended to those not too cool to check out a new emo band these days. *Life Recording Company*

Bouncing Souls "How I Spent My Summer Vacation"

The Bouncing Souls are, and always have been the kind of band that could have easily lasted the summer. But here they are ten years later, still doing things on their own term and making a lot of the same jokes. But that said, they're also still playing punk rock as it was meant to be. The energy, spirit, and talent are all there, along with a smile. The sound, and lyrical content here hasn't changed much since their last record, or even the one before it. But that is the beauty of the Souls. "Manthem", "Late Bloomer", and "No Comply" all rank amongst the best songs they've done to date. Though there are a few tracks I

find myself skipping past, though I guess that's been the case with most of their records. A band that started out by breaking the rules seems that they're now setting a lot of them. Another good record from one of the best straight up punk bands going. *Epitaph*

Boxer Rebellion "Courtesy With Claws" CDEP

It has been three years since Boxer Rebellion last released a record. Their last was a full length on Hydra Head. I'm not sure why there was so much time between releases, but this does seem worth the wait. The four songs here cover a lot more time than most four song EP's would, though they do it without lulling you to sleep. Their mid tempo rock certainly has it's roots in a few D.C. bands, especially Hoover. While the tempo of every song is fairly slow as rock and roll goes, the dynamics and constant changes in every song keep this moving right along. The bass and guitar work very well off of each other, with the bass usually plodding along with blues influenced walks. The guitar has a very reverb heavy sound, and switches from lush chords to scale after scale. Both keep things moving along, and maintain the groove of each song though they don't get monotonous or boring. The vocals are half sung, half spoken most of the time, and his voice brings to mind a less angry Guy Picciotto quite a bit. The packaging is all hand done, and this is hand numbered and limited to 1000 copies. Four meaty, and very interesting songs, along with an interesting package combine to make this well worth the \$6 asking price. Especially if you are into the brown slacks art rock of a few years back. *Corporate Records*



Brother's Keeper "Fantasy Killer"

After five years of tours, split releases, EP's and compilations, this is the first proper full length from Brother's Keeper since 1996. Brother's Keeper's take on hardcore is focused on melody, groove and riff after riff rather than just aggression. That, coupled with Mike Ski's vocal style brings to mind Snapcase more than once. I certainly wouldn't go so far as to call these guys a rip off, though the similarities are apparent. The strongest element of the record is definitely the song to song variation. Almost every song has a very different feel, and tempo from every other song. It helps keep things interesting, as well as give each song it's own identity. This release also has one of the strongest enhanced CD sections I've ever seen. They include a full length music video for "I Shot JFK", and two full length live videos as well. All three are well done, and well worth watching. I'm sure fans of the band will love them, but they operate well as an introduction to Brother's Keeper as well. Though this didn't grab me at all at

first, it has grown on my a lot. The intricacy and variety of every song makes for a very dense, and interesting record. I can also safely say I'll be hearing something new every time I listen to this. After five years, this record will only further solidify Brother's Keeper as one of the most interesting bands in hardcore. *Trustkill*

Burning Airlines "Identikit"

At this point, Burning Airlines have released two full length records, and have been a full time band for a couple of years. So perhaps they will begin to shed the "that guy was in Jawbox" prefix that always seems to be attached to these guys, or any other band under similar circumstances. Regardless of how far this band has already come though, I'm betting they will continue to be followed around by the ghost of Jawbox indefinitely. But that doesn't seem to matter to J. Robbins and company one way or another. Musically, they have already carved their own niche. J. Robbins still seems to be the main songwriter in the band, though now permanent bassist Mike Harbin, and drummer Peter Moffett seem to play a larger role than they did on the last record. J's distinct, and forceful voice still drive the songs' melodic edge, while his guitar works perfectly with, and sometimes against, the outstanding rhythm section. Overall, this record seems a bit more of a complete thought than "Mission:Control!". The songs work together as a unit more, while on the last record there seemed to be a bit more contrast from track to track. Much like the on first record, this starts off very strongly, with "Outside The Aviary". The track's incredible hook starts the song off, and by second 15 I was already drawn in. But the song never really lets up, and by the end of the first track I had gone from drawn into the record, to completely hooked. From there things do even out a bit, though that is only due to the continuity between the songs that is the obvious result of a lot of very calculated songwriting. There are fifteen tracks all together, two of which have been released before. "Deluxe War Baby" originally appeared on a split 7" with At The Drive-In, it's an awesome song and the new recording is even better than the original, so I'm glad they re-released it here. "Dear Hilary", the last track on the CD is originally a Metroschifter song, and was previously released on a compilation. All in all this is easily the best Burning Airlines material to date. Not too many bands can combine aggression with melody, and precision the way these guys can. I guess there's something to be said for leaving it to the pro's. *DeSoto Records*

C Average "Second Reckoning"

As the title points out, this is the second full length these Olympia natives have released. Since their that debut, a lot has happened for C Average. They played in a trio with Eddie Vedder, doing Who covers among other things and actually ended up opening for The Who at the House of Blues in Chicago. Though all of that business scored them a lot of attention, just writing great rock songs as C Average is still what they do best. It's hard to believe how much these guys can pull off, especially considering that they're a two piece band. But both guys are very good musicians, which is even more apparent when they hit the stage and can play everything note for note. It would be very justifiable to do a lot of studio magic when you're only a two piece, but it seems like C Average will have nothing of it. If they used overdubs on the songs, they must be really well concealed. While their technical abilities musically are outstanding, it doesn't mean that there's any lack of talent when it comes to songwriting. The songs are very good rock songs that combine the straight ahead groove of Black Sabbath with the more contemporary math rock sound of The Fucking Champs. A lot of this is instrumental, and even when the vocals come in it's more as an accompaniment to the guitar and drum work that's going on. Great stuff that's both great background music, and very intense listen depending on your mood. Very highly recommended. *Kill Rock Stars*

Cadillac Blindsight "The Allegory of Death and Fame" CDEP

This is Cadillac's second release, the first being "Read the Book, Seen the Movie", which remains a favorite of mine. It's been nearly a year since that record came out, and in that time they've moved to Fueled By Ramen. This new EP was a disappointment the first time I listened to it. But since I'm a fan of their earlier stuff, I kept with it. After numerous more listens, I have to say that while the second half of the record has grown on me, it's still a considerable disappointment. What it lacks is the straight ahead rock, and selfless good time that they played up before. There are some louder, raucous moments here, but

they're a little more mapped out, and it comes off really tame. The lone favorite here is "Consumed By Television Sets", which is melodic without being too wimpy. But overall this record is porridge for the most part. Perhaps if I'd never heard them before, I would feel differently. But this leaves me cold. *Fueled By Ramen*

The Cherry Valence "s/t"

After three plus years of shows, at least four U.S. tours, and a couple lineup changes, The Cherry Valence are finally releasing their first full length record. Perhaps they waited too long, but the maturity of both the songs, and the record as a whole seems well worth the wait. Due to personnel issues, the lineup of the band is now rounded out by two members that sometimes alternate on vocals, and drums, though some tracks have two drum kits going at once. Two drummers isn't easy to pull off, though these guys seem to be doing it with ease. Their sound falls on the slightly more pop influenced side of the whole garage rock sound, with a heavy leaning towards snotty 60's rock and roll. The combination isn't a brand new thing, though it's executed very well here. The dual guitar work is the backbone of the sound, with both guitars sometimes playing perfectly in time with each other. Then without notice, they will go in completely opposite directions, which adds a lot of complexity to the whole thing. Think the MC5's attitude coupled with a James Brown good time edge, and maybe even older Stones stuff. A solid, and surprisingly original sound that's drawn from a number of influences that have been combined many times before. I'm sure this isn't the last we've heard from The Cherry Valence. *Estrus!*

Christiansen "Emphasizing Function Over Design"

This is really cool shit! Hard rocking, guitar driven, melodic rock (with much emphasis on rock)! Sure it's emotional music, but I wouldn't call this emo. I really like the way the two guitars play off each other, the songs seem pretty well thought out and very well written. The vocals are well sung and sometimes remind me of Cedric from At The Drive-In. There is actually a lot about this that reminds me of ATDI, including the energy, I would love to see these guys live. Highly recommended! *Eulogy (Tom)*

Crispus Attucks "Red Black Blood Attack"

It's easy to compare Crispus Attucks to a lot of bands, most of which broke up almost ten years ago. Perhaps that makes them a throwback band. But it definitely seems like this is just what comes naturally to these guys. I don't think they ever said "Hey guys, let's start an old school band...". There is a very up-front 80's skate-core influence here, though there are also elements of more modern hardcore. The music, especially the drumming is very fast, and rarely if ever comes up for air. But the music, especially the drumming is much tighter on this record than ever before. Perhaps it's the songwriting, or it could be thanks to a new bass player. Either way, these guys have tightened up an already proficient attack. The vocals have a very distinct yelled, yet not screamed, or screechy sound. The bottom line here is that this band is really, really pissed. There are 15 songs that flow well, along with a few short sound bytes that help tie things together even further. One of the best pure hardcore records I've gotten in a while, whether or not you want to call this a throwback. *Soda Jerk*

Cursive "Burst and Bloom" CDEP

After a considerable hiatus, last year saw the rebirth of the new Cursive lineup with "Domestica", which was a considerable departure from their previous material. This new EP is a pretty logical extension of "Domestica", though they've added yet another weapon to their already eclectic sound, with the addition of a cellist. Their sound falls somewhere in between the choppy rock of Fugazi and the admittedly wimpy, though still hard hitting emo-core of old Mineral. The combination of sounds that Cursive employs are unlikely, but they work well. The five songs here have a very good flow to them, and it's pretty evident that they were written as a unit for this release. This is eclectic, and somewhat experimental, but without losing its sense of melody and pop sensibilities. The best track is Tall Tales, Telltales" which lands right in the middle of the EP. It's a very epic, and moving track that brings to mind Mineral a lot more than the others. But this works very well as a unit, and it's hard to pick just one song out of the five. Plus, at 22 minutes long it clocks in quit a bit longer than most EP's, so you're getting your money's worth too. This is one of the better wimpy

post-punk bands going, and this is the best example yet of exactly why. *Saddle Creek*

Darkest Hour "So Sedated So Secure"

Many bands walk the line between hardcore and metal, Darkest Hour don't seem interested in bothering with that. Despite being a part of the hardcore scene now more than ever with Victory on their side, don't be fooled. Darkest Hour are a metal band from top to bottom. Their sound is very reminiscent of a few Swedish black metal bands, especially At The Gates. The straight ahead rhythms laid down by the drums and bass are complimented very nicely by a dual guitar attack. Both guitars split their time perfectly between following the simple bass chords, and jumping into melodic riffs and the occasional solo. It's all tied together perfectly by John Henry's screamed vocals, which are easily some of the best in the genre today. From beginning to end every song is very unrelenting. While this is great, especially at first, the downside is that by the end of the album some of the songs can start to run together. But at just over thirty minutes, with eight tracks it's a very concise and intense ride. After things were looking very bright last year for these guys after "The Mark Of Judas" their label, MIA, promptly folded. But now they're back even stronger than before. With so many mediocre bands sharing the same loose genre, look for Darkest Hour to rise above their colleagues sooner rather than later. One of the best heavy releases to come out this year. *Victory*

Ben Davis "The Hushed Patterns of Relief"

Ben Davis is a veteran of both Sleepytime Trio, and Milemarker. But after becoming a father he didn't have time to continue touring with Milemarker, and left the band when they relocated to Chicago. He is now doing his own project, writing all the songs and recruiting a few friends to play on the recordings with him. The sound here is quite a departure from Milemarker, and even further from Sleepytime Trio. Piano and Ben's haunting vocals provide the backbone for almost all of the songs. There are also solid guitar and drum work on every track as well, though it's a bit behind the piano and vocals in the mix. Some tracks also use cello, and a lap steel guitar to further add to the eclectic feeling. There is a definite similarity to Elliott Smith, or any of a number of guy and acoustic guitar acts. But the heavy amount of instruments aside from the guitar help to set this apart. The songwriting is pretty basic in structure, though each song has it's own identity. My favorite tracks are actually the first and last, "Finally I Stand", and "Wrestling Won't Help". A guy from this band and that band solo project that's actually really worthwhile. Who knew? *Lovitt Records*

Joe Davis "Hope Chest"

This is the relatively new solo project from the singer/songwriter for The Pinehurst Kids. The result is fairly standard, melodic but slow going guy with acoustic guitar fare. Most songs feature drumming that is just sort of there, but does help move the whole thing along. There are also moments of keyboards, and some backing vocals. Overall, this doesn't do too much to separate itself from all the other "guy from rock band does quiet solo record" records. Ho hum. Check it out if you're a fan of The Pinehurst Kids. *In Music We Trust*

Downpour "Footsteps Above Our Heads" CDEP

After having kicked around Atlanta, and a few surrounding areas for the past five years, Downpour are apparently taking things to the next level. While there are only seven official tracks on this, there is also a Black Flag cover, as well as eerie soundscapes in between most of the songs. Downpour play balls out metal/hardcore with two vocalists that sound similar enough to blend well together, but also different enough to keep things interesting. The songs are fast, with a lot of time changes and pretty straightforward drumming. The guitar work is very tight, and interesting and usually is what keeps each song really moving along. This is a good introduction to a very good band, and it's hopefully an accurate indicator of what is to come from Downpour. Tight hardcore with no compromises made. These guys are easily better than most of the similar bands out right now. Very good stuff. *Alveran Records* (available through Eulogy)

The Dropsience "Experimenting With Contrast"

Though The Dropsience have only been functioning for just over a year, these guys are by no means amateurs. There are veterans of Sterling Silver, Camera Obscura, The Trans Megetti, and other estab-

lished indie rock bands making up this five piece. The combination of their experience is a very experimental band that still feels surprisingly accessible, which isn't an easy thing to accomplish. There is implementation of the usual drums, bass, guitar, and vocals, but there is also a lot of keyboard, sampler, and tape loop stuff going on too. There are nine tracks here that cover just under 74 minutes. Most of the songs are pretty sparse and experimental indie rock, though there are still more edgy, and rockin' moments. The tougher moments bring to mind Jawbox or Garden Variety, while the sampler and electronic moments break up the record nicely. Most of the songs are at least 5 minutes long, and are each very dynamic in their own right. The end result is a full length that is quite a ride. Though at first this didn't work well as anything too far beyond just background music, it has started to grow on me. Sparse, experimental indie rock with a few tougher, more straight ahead moments. This is certainly not for everyone, though I think there will be a strong following for these guys once this record hits the streets. Interesting stuff. *Happy Couples Never Last*

Egon "Behind The Curtain"

Emo-pop-rock trio outta El Paso, TX. When I first got this I listened to it a few times casually while driving around. While I liked what I heard nothing really seemed to grab me about it. After a closer listen, I see it deserves more than just a casual ear. The guitar sound is gangly and quirky, reminds me a bit of Rainer Maria. The vocals are sung quietly, almost whispered most of the time, falsetto at other times, when he just sings it sounds pretty good. Pretty simple bass and drums. Overall it's pretty good emo-rock if you're into that sort of thing. Better production could help this album quite a bit. When the distortion kicks in it sounds muddy and takes a lot away from what the songs should provide, this is probably why I wasn't too impressed with it during the rides in my brothers truck. I'm interested to see what they do in the future. *Has Anyone Ever Told You?* (Tom)

Eighteen Visions "The Best Of"

At first I thought it odd that a band with only a few records out so far would have a "Best Of" CD coming out already. But it turns out that this is more or less a re-release of some older material, and rather than re-releasing everything, they took the best songs off each record. So what you get, in theory, is the best sampling of their old material all on one record. There is also one brand new song here to keep the collectors happy. I'm not too familiar with the original records, so I don't have my own two cents as to whether or not these are really the better songs off each record. But this is a great sampling of where these guys are coming from musically. This is mostly heavy, pretty basic and mid-tempo, screamy hardcore with more than it's share of metal leanings. While this isn't unlike anything you've ever heard before, it is certainly above average metal-core. Rather than trying to do something brand new, they just do their thing, and do it well. This is not only a good record for fans of Eighteen Visions who don't have the older stuff, but it could also function as a good introduction to the band. A good collection of older stuff by one of the most talked about hardcore bands going these days. *Trustkill*

Fall Silent "Six Years in the Desert"

After spending the last six years in and around Reno, Fall Silent have already made a name for themselves without ever having any significant label behind them. Their touring, and list of releases are also not significant, though all this time it seems Fall Silent have just been honing their skills. Now it seems like these guys are ready to really take their show on the road. This release combines two 7"s, the "No Strength To Suffer" full length, and some compilation tracks. All the songs were recorded some time ago, and do seem a bit dated. But it is a good introduction to the band, and will hopefully warm people up to the band before they put out a new record here soon. Fall Silent combine pretty basic chugga-chugga hardcore with elements of more complex metal in the form of almost constant time changes. The lyrics are what set these guys apart from a lot of other bands. They're screamed, though they're not unintelligible, and there are also spoken sections, and some parts that almost border on fast hip hop. Overall this is a good record to add to your collection, especially if you're a fan of Fall Silent or want an introduction into the past of the band. But these tracks are pretty dated, so if you're hesitant you may

want to wait for a new record, as I'm sure that will offer just as much or more than this one does. *Revelation*

59 Times The Pain "Calling The Public"

Here is another band in the increasingly long line of punk/hardcore exports from Sweden. I had never heard these guys before, and this is their fourth full length so my expectations were fairly high. While in some ways they met, or even exceeded my expectations, I still don't think I'll ever find myself listening to this again. They are a tight band, and they can play their instruments. The production is top notch, as is the layout of the record. So in those respects they already have a leg up on most bands. What's the missing piece? The songwriting. This sounds exactly like The Clash. Exactly. I don't know if this is a new thing, or if it's been their thing all along. Either way it's a pretty blatant rip off. If you really like the Clash, and wish they'd put out a few more albums I guess you might be interested in this. Otherwise bust out "London Calling" and just indulge yourself in the real thing. *Epitaph/Burning Heart*

Film School "Brilliant Career"

As far as quiet lo-fi Shoegazer music with emo tendencies, Film School know what they're doing and fill their niche quite nicely. Filled with soft swelling melodies and quiet vocals, there is nothing jarring about this lullaby of a record. Valium songs. Naturally there will be comparisons to the more tranquil moments of My Bloody Valentine. Members of Fuck, Pavement, and Glitter Mini 9 also contribute to filling out the canvas on this one. Nice. Tranquil. Subtle. Not boring. Subtle. No, not boring. Subtle. *Me Too! Records* (Brian)

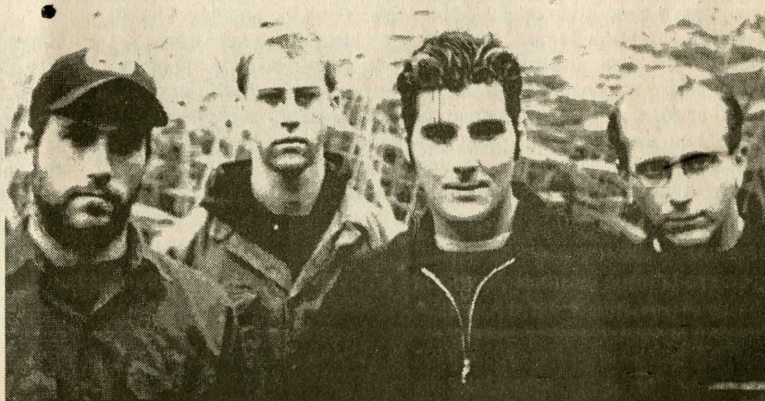
The Frisk "Rank Restraint" CDEP

The Frisk's lineup looks sort of like a Bay Area all star team. Jesse and Mike of the now defunct Criminals are on vocals, and bass, with Zac Hunter of The Nerve Agents on guitar, and Hunter from AFI on drums. Musically they are a bit more upbeat than The Criminals, though they're similar. That could be in large part because Jesse's distinct vocals automatically make me think of the Criminals. If these guys were more of a full time deal, and less of a side project they would definitely make a name for themselves. As it stands, this is a very good side project record. There are eight tracks, one of which is a cover of "Know Your Rights". My favorite is "Leech", which perhaps sounds a bit more like The Criminals than the rest of the tracks. All in all this is a good record, and it's highly recommended for fans of any of the bands who's members are involved. *Adeline*

The Generators "Tyranny"

No frills punk rock seems to be a bit less prevalent than it used to be, though bands like these guys, and labels like TKO are keeping it alive. The Generators are certainly not doing anything brand new, though they are certainly an above average street punk band. The music is mid-tempo punk rock with melodic street punk sound, and Doug Dagger's vocals really make the band. He's a good singer, and has a good (and distinct) vocal style. Think the U.S. Bombs with a bit more of a leaning toward melody, especially vocally and you have The Generators. Street punk fans should take note. *TKO Records*

Hot Water Music



Good Clean Fun "Straight Outta Hardcore"

Thanks to relentless touring, and an outwardly sarcastic, and original take on things Good Clean Fun have quickly become one of the biggest hardcore bands around. This new record is a lot like their last couple, though this time they have Alex Garcia-Rivera of Shelter and Piebald fame on drums. Good Clean Fun are a throwback band in a lot of ways, with their sound rooted in late 80's hardcore. They cross the straight ahead straight edge hardcore of Youth Of Today, with a more melodic sound that brings to mind old 7 Seconds. The songs are well written, but they do start to run together towards the end of the record. For better or worse, the lyrics are usually the focal point of every song. The lyrics are all funny, and make fun of just about everybody. Every song has the same sarcastic, though fresh outlook on things that really sets this band apart. If you liked Good Clean Fun before, you'll like them more now. If you found them boring before, I doubt this record will change your mind. The best and worst thing about this band is that they don't change at all from record to record. *Phyte Records*

Good Riddance "Symptoms Of A Leveling Spirit"

Over the last five or so years, Good Riddance have been one of the most popular punk bands around. This new record is much like the last few, though this time with Lifetime/Kid Dynamite drummer Dave Wagenschutz in tow. Melodic, fast hardcore with occasional, and candy coated hardcore moments. The guy can sing, and they can play their instruments, but the songwriting is very, very predictable. Perhaps the fact that Good Riddance were a part of creating the formula for this sub-genre is an excuse for the fact that they never step out of it. Either way, this is an enjoyable listen for the first few songs. After that it does start to seem like it's just on one song repeat. Good Riddance fans already own this, and most likely love it. This is not bad by any means, though it's not really good either. It's just there. Melodic, cut time punk rock. Nothing less, though certainly nothing more. Ho-hum. *Fat Wreck*

Hero Of A Hundred Fights "The Remote The Cold" CDEP

Having never heard of this band, or any of the bands the members used to be in, I had no idea what to expect from this. For whatever reason this isn't quite what I was expecting, though that's rarely a bad thing. This quartet out of Milwaukee have a pretty original, and very interesting combination of sounds crammed into four songs. They play chaotic hardcore that you would have expected out of the Midwest a few years back, but with more proficient and precise musicianship and structure. Dual vocalists are utilized very well, and both alternate from frantic singing to more frantic screaming. The layering of vocals, coupled with the unique drum sound leaves little room for a lot of guitar and bass work. Though that's not to say the guitar/bass combo doesn't have it's moments. This is one of those records I like more every time I hear it. And after several listens, I'm still hearing new stuff every time. A more focused Anasarca meets a less pretentious Frodus. Not to mention that this is engineered by Steve Albini, which is, as you might expect a plus. And the sound of Electrical Audio suits these guys better than most bands. Thumbs up. *Divot*

Hot Water Music "A Flight and A Crash"

After as many records as Hot Water Music have released, it would be easy to spend a whole record review just comparing the new to the old. But I think it's safe to say that since this is their first release on Epitaph, there will also be a lot of people hearing them for the first time now. I have been a fan of Hot Water Music since the first time I heard "Fuel For The Hate Game". I've gotten my hands on nearly every release since then, and their older stuff has a huge place in my heart. But getting to the point, I think this is in fact Hot Water Music's best record to date. The songs seem to have the element of reckless energy that has always been present, but it's the theme of the entire record instead of in short bursts. The layering of guitars and vocals is more complex than ever before, though both manage to be more melodic than anything they've done before. And though it seems to go without saying, the rhythm section that has been one of the best around for years has seemingly reached their pinnacle. "In The Gray", "Old Rules", and "Swinger" are probably my favorite tracks. All 14 songs are very strong, and the record as a whole is sequenced very well, and comes to a real climax towards the last few tracks. The recording was done by Brian McTernan, and while he's a very renowned engineer

these days, I think his style matches Hot Water better than most bands. So there you have it. After seven years, it seems that Hot Water Music are just getting started. *Epitaph*

Hundred Hands "Little Eyes" CDEP

This trio is a side project band featuring two members of Applesseed Cast, and recording guru Ed Rose on drums and keyboards. The result isn't too far off what you would expect from a side project of Applesseed Cast. The songs are dynamic rock that certainly has it's roots in straight ahead emo. But despite not being aggressive, they still maintain a very dense, wall of sound sort of intensity. The songs do run together a bit, though it is a solid six song effort. The addition of drum machines and keyboards helps a lot of distinguish the songs, and add a much needed extra element to the formula. Of the six songs, my favorite was "Spider Eyes", though none of them stand out as a lot better or worse than one another. Overall, this is quite obviously not too unlike The Applesseed Cast, though it is a bit more bold and experimental. Perhaps that is due to two members working with someone outside of the band. Fans of "The Cast" will eat this stuff up, in some ways I like it better. Good emo, though I wouldn't expect it to change your life. *Deep Elm*

The Icarus Line "Mono"

After kicking around L.A. for the last couple of years, The Icarus Line are now releasing their first full length. What they've achieved is definitely something that not too many bands can, especially on their first full length. But after a couple 7"s, and a CDEP they have had some practice. Their sound draws influence from a lot of places, and it's pieced together well. There is a definite 80's, Motley Crue sound here, though it's mixed well with Estrus style vocals and attitude, and a rough punk rock (Black Flag perhaps) sound to tie it all together. One of the real redeeming things about this record is how much there is to it. It's 55 minutes long, and every song is really dense. There are somewhere between 3 and 5 guitar tracks going most of the time, which makes for very interesting songs. The real highlights are "Feed A Cat To Your Cobra", and "Enemies in High Places", and there is also a video for "Feed A Cat..." included on the CD. Their highly melodramatic live show is also very much hyped every step of the way. After seeing them, most people will probably love them or hate them, and I suppose that is the point. I'm sure this isn't the last you've heard from The Icarus Line. *Crank*

Inspection 12 "In Recovery"

Hailing from Jacksonville, Florida this is the first full length Inspection 12 has done, though they've been around for almost three years. They play super melodic punk rock much like many of their label mates. They have an eclectic edge that comes in the form of a short intro with strings or a bit of piano here and there, or sometimes just a mellow intro to a few of the songs. While it doesn't set them apart from the pack too much (if at all), it does break up the songs on this record pretty well. Overall this is above average super melodic pop punk that will drive kids crazy on the Warped Tour circuit as soon as they get their chance. Though they have their own things going musically, it's not apparent at first. Think Lagwagon meets Cheshire Cat era Blink, with a little less speed, especially in the drumming and a more solid sense of song structure. Overall it's not a bad release, but it'll certainly be lost in the mix of poppy, wallet chain bands. *Honest Don's*

The Ivory Coast "Clouds"

I have to admit that while I enjoyed The Ivory Coast's first full length "The Rush Of Oncoming Traffic" when I got it last year, I haven't listened to it a whole lot since I first got it. I liked it, but it never really grabbed me. Now, a year later they are releasing their second full length. I'm certain that I'll be listening to this record for quite a while, and perhaps even dusting off my copy of their first record. Not too many indie rock records have grabbed me lately the way this one has. These Bostonites play pretty mellow indie rock, but combine eclectic elements with a great command of melody for what is a catchy, and very interesting record. I think the opening track "Lack Placid 1986" is one of the best songs off any of the records I've gotten to review for this issue. The rest of the record stacks up well, but it's hard to resist just putting it on track one, and repeating. "Swope", and "To My Brilliant Wigmaker" are similar to "Lake Placid", with their up-tempo

pop rock feel. While they were the first songs to grab me, I have since really come to appreciate the whole record, especially the epic final track "There Will Be Clouds", which utilizes piano very well. It starts out like many of the songs on the album, then slowly trails off for almost fifteen minutes. While it is a very long and epic song, the structure and melody keep one's attention, which isn't easy considering the length, and the fact that it's the last song on the album. This is one of the best indie rock records I've gotten in quite some time. Take note. *Polyvinyl*

Jimmy Eat World "Bleed American"

The twists and turns of Jimmy Eat World's career, especially when it comes to record labels is pretty well known. Not long after forming and releasing one record, they were signed to Capitol. After two very good records, neither of which sold really well by Capitol's standards, they were dropped from the label. So the guys decided to go ahead and record this album before signing another record deal. After "Bleed American" was completed in the studio, they were picked up by yet another major label. This time it's Dreamworks. Regardless of the business side of things, this is certainly the best overall album Jimmy Eat World has released to date. The album starts off very strongly with "Bleed American", which is also the single. The other real highlights are "Get It Faster", "Sweetness", and "A Praise Chorus". All three songs are very shameless, and straight ahead pop rock songs. This album is plagued a bit by the same problem that "Clarity" had, which is that some of the slower, more experimental tracks really kill the momentum of the album at times. The variety that they add is a definite plus, though a couple, especially "Hear You Me", are a bit too long winded, even bordering on boring. That said though, this still blows away most of the bands out there doing anything similar to this at all. It's too bad that a couple of duds have to even be on this record, because it would be near perfect without them. But in the end this is still an outstanding rock album, and it seems that perhaps these guys finally seem destined for much larger things. But then again this has all happened before for Jimmy Eat World, they're always seemingly on the verge of explosion. Maybe now it's finally their time.

Dreamworks

Evan Johansen "Quiet and Still"

This is yet another Radiohead rip-off album. I really don't particularly enjoy having to give overwhelmingly negative reviews, but I suppose records like this give me a chance to hone my skills. It may come in a cut above bastardizations of bastardizations like Coldplay and Palo Alto, but it's still a rip-off of a rip-off and it still makes me hate my life. Johansen has a nice voice and decent songwriting ability, so why can't he forge a more original (or even just slightly less cliched) sound for himself? Sounds like Radiohead with a leaning toward an Americana (though Johansen lives in Scotland) sound. Whiny college rock to the core. To be perfectly honest, this sort of thing just depresses me. (Brian)

Juno "A Future Lived In Past Tense"

I will admit that I am sometimes guilty of using words like "expansive", or "atmospheric" in record reviews in place of the word "boring", or "long-winded". And I'm sure that I'm not alone in that. Juno's music has always had a very epic (and expansive) feel to it, and that's even more true on this new full length. But unlike most of their contemporaries, keeping the listener's attention is, seemingly, not even a concern for Juno. This record is meant to be a significant journey, with thirteen tracks that cover just under 70 minutes. Juno's sound doesn't develop fully in the first minute or two of each song. Each song is an adventure of it's own, with three or four guitar sounds going at once, along with Arlie's smooth, though still confrontational vocals. The bass duties on this record are split between Sunny Day Real Estate's Nate Mendel, and Death Cab For Cutie's Nick Harmer. Both guys do a very good job of filling in, and the bass playing is perhaps better on this record than the last. Which is quite a feat considering both the level the last record was on, and the fact neither of the guys this time around are permanent members. The record seems to have a loose pattern of a longer, slower song followed by a more confrontational track, and so on. It helps keep things interesting, though some songs have the very same pattern within the song itself which only adds to the melee. Perhaps if Radiohead had grown up in D.C. and still



played guitars, you'd have an idea of what Juno are doing. A talented and interesting collection of influences all coming together over the course of just over an hour. Juno are one of the most interesting bands this whole scene has to offer these days, and they're on the top of their game. *DeSoto Records*

Kill Creek "Colors Of Home"

After a four year span, and being dropped from Mammoth Records, Kill Creek are back stronger than ever, and with a new full length. All of the things they've learned in the past ten years of making music together are tools that are utilized well here. Kill Creek's sound has a definite Midwestern indie rock feel, though it's not a stretch at all to also call it epic. Though the songs aren't necessarily long (this 10 song full length covers just over 30 minutes), they cover a lot of ground individually, and as a whole record. This is some of the most truly dynamic music I've heard in quite some time. The best example of that is also my favorite song here, "Without It". The song starts innocently enough, as a melodic guitar song, but within twenty seconds, it's a huge, triumphant chorus. It then eases itself back down, just to be built back up again with little notice. Many of the songs follow same pattern, and the sequencing of the whole record lends itself to this whole feeling perfectly. The production is courtesy of Ed Rose, one of the better engineers today. The production is clear, but also has a very live, and unpolished feel to it that suits Kill Creek perfectly. After seeing, and experiencing things that have killed most bands, Kill Creek seems as if it's only made them stronger. "Colors Of Home" is proof of that, and all of that aside it's a unique and very notable record. Very highly recommended. *Second Nature*

Kill Your Idols "Funeral For A Feeling"

There are a lot of bands that come to mind when you think of New York hardcore. Kill Your Idols aren't quite one of the first I'd think of yet, but they are certainly making a name for themselves these days. With six years, as many releases, and at least 20 tours under their belts, they certainly know what they're doing. Their sound mixes mostly straight ahead New York hardcore ala Sick Of It All, or even Madball. Though they have a more old school feel that brings to mind Agnostic Front or even Poison Idea. Perhaps I can blame that on the cover of Poison Idea's "Made To Be Broken" on this record. The production on this is pretty slick, though it is perhaps too slick for their sound at times, especially in the guitars. They sound a bit too compressed a lot of the time, though overall the recording sounds good. The vocals are unique, and are more half yelled, and half sung, instead of just screamed. The vocals really help distinguish Kill Your Idols a bit from the heap of bands doing similar, no frills hardcore. Overall this is good hardcore that will be called old school by many, mostly because there are very few (if any) traces of metal here. But I don't see this being something I'd be in the mood for every day. Solid stuff. *Side One*

Ladderback "Introductions To Departure"

I have tried and tried, but I can't come up with anything to first describe Ladderback as aside from "art-rock". They are a three piece whose

instrumentation is usually fairly chaotic, especially the drums. The vocals are sung half the time, and just screamed the other half of the time. The tempo, and rhythms bounce around in most of the songs, but usually end up somewhere in the vicinity of a very choppy, 4/4 beat. Their back and forth chaos is broken up nicely by the occasional melodic break, or sometimes the addition of some strings here and there. Overall they are a talented band who didn't grab my attention at first. But upon further listens I found quite a lot here to be excited about. Perhaps they're the kind of band one should see live. Their sound fall somewhere in between the arty, though tough indie rock a lot of past Louisville bands had, and the modern screamo of today. Good stuff, though with a little refining it could be great. Maybe I need to see it live to truly appreciate it. *Bifocal Media*

Little Champions "Transactions + Replicas"

Though it's a very overused term, it's hard to describe these Seattle natives without saying "lo-fi". This is the second full length from Little Champions, and they seemed to have honed their skills pretty well. While they do a good job of mixing elements of a few different sounds, this is, at the end of the day lo-fi indie rock. Their sound is accented well with dreary pop moments, and well implemented alternating boy/girl vocals that are usually half sung and half spoken. While this could easily get really monotonous real quick, the song to song variation that runs through the whole album really keeps things moving right along. The biggest highlights are "Low Flying Plane", and "Half Inhaled". The production is very crisp, without being too glossy for the band's sound. A solid effort that kept my interest all the way through, something that fewer and fewer bands in this genre seem to be able to do. Well executed, and eclectic indie rock. *Barsuk*

Malefaction "Crush The Dream"

Hailing from Winnipeg, this is Malefaction's third full length, and they have apparently amassed quite a following in the great white north. Their sound is full speed ahead grind-core, though they definitely have hints of slightly more melodic metal here and there to break up the assault. This record features 23 songs, which clock in at just over 25 minutes. Quite naturally, a lot of the songs start to run together, due to their length, and overall unrelenting nature. Though I've never been a huge fan of grind core, I find myself liking this more and more with every listen. Fans of grind will certainly eat this stuff up. But for the innocent bystander like myself, I still found a lot here worth while. The songs are dense, and the musicianship is solid. Good stuff, though not exactly "my thing". *G-7 Welcoming Committee*

Man Or Astroman "Beyond The Black Hole"

This is a re-release of the "What Remains Inside A Black Hole" LP that was originally released only in Australia. All of it was recorded between 1993 and 1996, though it has been remixed and remastered for this release. This is definitely the older, more straightforward Man Or Astroman. There is a lot more straight ahead surf rock, and way less of the bells and whistles you'll find on the newer stuff. Is that good or bad? It depends on who you ask. All twelve songs here are similar, and solid stuff. Not too many bands do up tempo surf rock the way Man Or Astroman have been doing it for ten years or so. This is a definite must have for fans of the band, though if you weren't into them before, I doubt this will make a believer out of you. But it's a justifiable re-release, since it was very hard to get in the states before. Not to mention that it's a very solid album, and easily as good or better than a lot of the older stuff they've done. *Estrus*

The Mercury Program "All the Suits Began to Fall Off" CDEP Four years after forming in Gainesville, The Mercury Program seem like they're just warming up. This EP, while only containing five tracks covers just over 30 minutes. All in all, it's a logical extension of last year's "From Vapor To Gasoline" full length. It seems like these guys are starting to come to the front of the pack, with the glut instrumental indie rock these days. Their sound has a lot of jazz influence, especially in the drumming, but it's lush "wall of sound" isn't quite that simple. The addition of alternative percussion as more than just an occasional accent here or there goes far in giving this record a sound of it's own. There is a lot of vibraphone used in time with the drumming, which adds another dimension to the percussion, and some times even assumes the melody. The rest of the melody trades off between the guitar, and some electric piano. Though there isn't a set pattern to any

of the songs, with the melody moving from instrument to instrument freely, which adds a much needed new dimension to each song. Of all the instrumental bands going, these guys are easily one of the best, and most interesting. The definite highlight on this EP is "Marianas", though the other four tracks aren't far behind. A very good band, who operate as much more than background music for me, which is rare with this style. *Tiger Style*

Milemarker "Anaesthetic"

Though they've only been a band for just over three years, Milemarker have come much further in that time than most bands come in five or even ten years. Their sound has already evolved with each of their three records. Their live show is rapidly becoming something of legend, and with one of the best labels around behind them, the sky is certainly the limit. The best way to define Milemarker is to say that the fall somewhere in between tough post-punk rock, and melodic new wave. Some songs fall a little to one side or the other, but that is the all too simple gist of it. The definite highlights are the first track, "Shrink To Fit", a short (by Milemarker standards), and intense number that starts out the album well by bouncing from one edge of their sound to the other. "A Quick Trip To The Clinic" is a slightly lighter song, with a definite Devo influence both musically and lyrically. All in all, the seven songs here cover just over 41 minutes, and way more ground musically than almost any band can cover in twice the tracks. Every member except for Sean Husick, the drummer share the vocal duties fairly evenly. All three have very different, and distinct voices which helps add to the complexity, and unique feel of the record. Guitarist Dave Laney, keyboardist Roby Newton, and bassist Al Burian all have their respective places in the independent music scene outside of the band as well. The band recently relocated from Chapel Hill to the presumably greener pastures of Chicago. With extensive touring planned, and easily their best work to date about to be released, Milemarker certainly seem poised to do big, big things. *Jade Tree*

Minus "Jesus Christ Bobby"

In the grand tradition of many other noteworthy hardcore and metal bands from some section of the great white north come Minus. This is the second proper full length from these natives of Iceland. Their music is an energetic and progressive hardcore/metal crossover, the focal point is the guitars, which balance well with growled vocals and herky jerky rhythm section work. The breaks are sometimes dominated by screamy guitar work, while other times they will be filled with bleeps and bleeps that will likely have people thinking of the Refused. While the sound is eclectic, with varied elements coming into play throughout most of the songs, it isn't dominating enough that the flow of the record is lost. Overall this is a very interesting and original record that is very hard to compare, or pin down. Savage music that doesn't lose it's artistic edge, which is a balance not many bands can find. Chalk another one up for our Northern Atlantic neighbors. *Victory*

Neighborly "Grass Is Greener"

This is more or less a solo project for Tom Ackerman, who was the front man for Skiploader and now plays drums for Sunday's Best. This is melodic, mid-tempo indie rock with a definite pop edge, not unlike Sunday's Best. But there is also a very noticeable 90's alternative rock edge too. The best tracks are definitely "I Concede The Point", and "Vandalized". Both are more punchy, and fast paced pop rock songs. There are a few more mellow moments which help to break up the album and keep things interested. Think Sunday's Best or Knapsack meets Superchunk or even the Foo Fighters. This is self-produced, and mixed by Mark Trombino and it sounds great. Hopefully these guys will stay at it, and keep growing as a side project. There is definite potential here. *SunSeaSky*

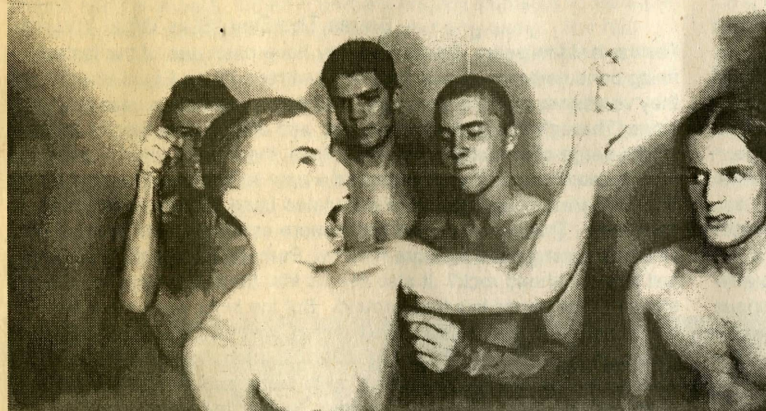
The Nerve Agents "The Butterfly Collection"

Most bands, and labels set out to create a buzz about some aspect of their band. It seems like for The Nerve Agents, that took care of itself. This is their third release, and each one has been stronger than the last. And all the while they've been out on the road, and their live show has already become something of legend. After two releases on Revelation, The Nerve Agents have moved to Hellcat Records, where they seem more poised than ever to collect their due. Their sound falls somewhere in between the hardcore of a few years back, and the balls out punk rock of old Misfits or Black Flag records. These guys were in

Redemption 87, Fury 66, and a couple other bands, and they are the logical extension of both bands in a lot of ways. The fifteen songs here cover just over 30 minutes. The songs are short and sweet, though not overly simple or repetitive. The combination of the two make for a very distinct record that goes by all too quickly. Intense music that will capture the attention of fans of many different genres much like AFI or The Explosion. The best record yet by one of the most interesting bands around these days. Keep looking over your shoulder for The Nerve Agents. *Hellcat Records*

Minus

photo by Börkur Sigurðsson



No Innocent Victim "Tipping The Scales"

As far as I can tell, this is only the second full length from these San Diego natives, though they've apparently been around for nearly a decade. Musically they've got sort of a nothing more, nothing less take on hardcore. They're a pretty talented band, though they never seem to get past third gear. It's pretty basic, mid-tempo music with pretty lame grunted vocals ala Hatebreed. Don't get me wrong, I didn't dislike this record terribly. But a couple problems really kept me from wanting to put it on again. First and foremost the songs are pretty difficult to tell apart. If not for the silence in between them, it sounds like one long song. There are almost no distinguishing moments to any of the tracks. And there just isn't any energy behind the playing or the vocals for the most part. It sounds like these guys are just going through the motions. Ho-hum bonehead hardcore. *Victory*

No Motiv "Diagram For Healing"

After a two year lapse between releases, I didn't really know what to expect from No Motiv. What I got was more or less a good continuation of their first record. While there is certainly nothing ground breaking going on here, they do their thing shamelessly, and they do it well. Poppy punk songs about girls is a medium that's been done every which way. No Motiv's songs are very melodic, though pretty fast for the most part. The songwriting, especially in the vocals has an interesting epic quality to it. The highlights here are definitely "Throw In The Towel" and "So Long", though there are only a couple duds. The one real criticism is with the lyrics which leave a lot to be desired. But I suppose there have been better bands with much worse lyrics. I find myself just tuning them out completely most of the time, as they rarely add anything to each song. Don't expect No Motiv to change the way you look at music, or anything else, though they certainly do have their moments. Emo with chain wallets. *Vagrant*

Nora "Loser's Intuition"

This is Nora's first full length, though they have been at it for quite some time. It has been just over a year since some major lineup changes, and that time was spent solidifying the lineup, and working on this record. Nora's brand of hardcore is pretty straight ahead, and repetitive, though there are still more than enough changes to keep things interesting. There is a very over the top feel to the whole

record, the guitars are relentless, as are the vocals, with occasional spoken breaks. Everything is over the top, but keeps from feeling cheesy which isn't easy to pull off. The contrast in the style's within the songs on this record is even impressive. One of the best examples of that is also one of the best songs on the record, "Nobody Takes Pictures of the Drummer". The highs and lows in the tempo and feel of the song are a good example of how the record works as a whole. "Leadpipe Moment" is the other real highlight here, though I hear something new every time I listen to this, and I find myself into all ten tracks at one time or another. Overall this is a very good hardcore record. Hopefully this isn't the last we've heard from Nora. *Trustkill*

Owls "s/t"

A lot of bands never can shake the "ex-members" of tag that inevitably follows them around. It seems that Owls will have that even worse under the circumstances. These are the four original members of Cap'n Jazz, in their original lineup. As Joan Of Arc broke up not too long ago, these four guys decided to start from scratch with Owls, though in the lineup they hadn't assumed since 1994. Very much unlike Joan Of Arc, especially recently, these guys stick to just drums, guitar, bass, and vocals for everything sound here. No computers, no samplers, no loops, no bleeps, no bleeps, no bling-bling. Just rock music, the O.G. if you will. The songs are monotone for the most part, with the guitars and bass working wonderfully together. The drums do a good job of tying things together, and are followed closely by the vocals for the most part. The musicianship is impeccable, which is imperative with this style of scientific songwriting. The production is courtesy of Steve Albini, so it almost goes without saying that it sounds great. Albini's style of recording is also very fitting for this record. It's both very real and straight ahead, but also very precise. The highlights are "I Want the Quiet Moments of a Party Girl", one of the shorter tracks on the record which is melodic though also pretty epic in nature. The last song, "Holy Fucking Ghost" is another definite highlight, especially vocally. Overall this is a very good record that easily lives up to the high expectations I had placed on it. *Jade Tree*

Pinehurst Kids "Bleed It Dry"

What the Pinehurst Kids are doing is by no means a brand new thing. It's not even close. Fast paced college rock/emo that's more pop than it is rock, though it walks the line well. Have you heard this before? Sure. But, the fact is that these Portland natives are doing their thing better than most of their genre-mates. Joe Davis is a very good songwriter, as well as a solid vocalist. The songs are mostly driving, though not angry rock songs with a very technical, though poppy edge (think Superchunk). The record's intangibles are also executed well, which helps out a lot. The production, mixing, and sequencing all suit the sound very well, and it's obvious that a lot of time was spent on this release even after the songs were written. Eleven well constructed, very driven pop songs that are well worth another listen. Look out for these guys if and when they're given their due. *Barbaric Records*

Pinhead Circus "The Black Power Of Romance"

For more than a decade now, Pinhead Circus have been local heroes in this neck of the woods. The whole time they've been honing their skill in writing, and executing straight up punk rock songs with a melodic edge reminiscent of a few west coast bands of a few years back. This time around they have yet another new lineup, but that's nothing new. The time spent on a lot of the songs here really shows. Gone is the simple cut time, verse/chorus/verse structure in every song, which has been fading fast over the last couple albums. There is a lot more variation between songs on this album than any of their previous efforts. The highlights are "Raise 'Em Up And Toss 'Em Back", easily one of their best songs to date "Sometimes We Shine", a hair band influenced power ballad done Pinhead style, and "Got The Scars To Prove It" a more straight ahead rock song. The lyrics are even more exposed "heart on your sleeve" style than ever before. If you're looking for poop jokes and simple "dude... so and so is such an asshole" songs, you'll have to look elsewhere. Ten years later, these guys are musically stronger than ever. They are also about the only bright spot left on their once proud label's roster. Very highly recommended. One of the best punk records released yet this year. *BYO*

Playing Enemy "Cesarean"

Playing Enemy have risen from the ashes of Seattle's Kiss It Goodbye. Their sound is obviously not too terribly far off the path of Kiss It Goodbye, though there is more than just a subtle difference. This is very mid-tempo metal with hardcore tendencies. The chugga-chugga guitar work is the driving force behind each song, though the rhythm section and vocals set the band apart. The whole band can stop on a dime, and move a song in a whole new direction at any given point. This element really brings to mind fellow Seattle dwellers, Botch. The production is very clean, but still very fitting, and complimentary to the band's sound. While this is plodding, and very heavy there is a strange sort of grace to the whole record. There are constant changes, and breaks, though they all flow really well into each other, which is something not too many bands can pull off. Even the individual songs flow well into each other, which speaks a lot for the sequencing of the whole thing. Think Kiss It Goodbye (duh), but with new found groove ala Neurosis, and grace not found too many metal/hardcore bands these days. Recommended. *Escape Artist*

Rise Against "The Unraveling"

I was going to avoid the comparison, but instead I'm going to get it out of the way. This band does feature the core (guitar and bass) of 88 Fingers Louie. Most bands want to avoid the tag of being ex-anyone, but perhaps Rise Against should embrace it. Since the main songwriting core remains intact in this band, they do sound like their previous incarnation quite a bit. But there also seems to be a pretty respectable amount of growth, and change. Rise Against are without a doubt a hardcore band, and the result this time is much more intense than anything 88 Fingers Louie ever produced. They've got the fast and furious hardcore side of say Kid Dynamite with the heart on your sleeve edge (especially in the vocals) of old Bad Religion. What you get is one of the best meldings of punk and hardcore I've gotten in a while. At first I found the record pretty standard, if not boring in spots. But the more I listened to it, the more I liked it. And lately I find myself putting it in at least once every day. Chicago remains a force to be reckoned with, and Rise Against are easily one of the best new bands to come out of the windy city in recent memory. Very highly recommended. *Fat Wreck Chords*

Rollo Tomasi "He Who Holds You" CDEP

This Chicago trio features ex-members of both Traluma and Gauge. The result is good, and powerful post-punk along the lines of a few Dischord bands of a few years back, or even Hoover. Their musicianship is definitely there, especially in the rhythm section. The songs are fairly slow tempo-wise, though there is a lot going on both with the time signatures, and the sheer number of notes the guitar and bass are playing. The vocals are half sung, and half spoken, though the lean one way or the other a lot of the time. All of the songs are intricate in their structure, as the songwriting is really dynamic. My favorite track is "Route Two", which is probably the fastest of the six tunes. They start the song out with a solid guitar riff, then the focus transfers to the bass, which starts playing a similar riff. The whole song continues in that fashion, sliding emphasis between the different instruments. The songwriting and playing are very talented, and creative which shouldn't be too big of a surprise considering this band's resume. Good stuff. *Divot*

Roto "The Low Power Hour"

From an experiment that sounds like a musical-wank-disaster waiting to happen comes a record that's remarkably focused and tightly orchestrated. Roto's permanent members are David Arbury and Carleton Ingram. The two hatched the concept to perform as a live band with a different drummer for each show. Rotating members of the band and contributors to the record have included John Davis and Harris Klahr (Q and Not U), Justin Moyer (El Guapo), and Charles Jamison (Land Speed Record). The result of their combined efforts reminds me of the some of the jazzier (and proggy) aspects of the Louisville scene from more recent years... June of 44, Shipping News, etc... But there are also folk facets which bring to mind the recent Puerto Muerto record, and a bit of electronic influence as well (Land Speed Record). This album is worth a listen, even a likely candidate for a spot in your collection. I'm glad to have it in mine. Artsy post-punk. *Resin Records (Brian)*

Santa Sangre "Feast For The New Gods"

Santa Sangre rose from the ashes of Another Victim, though their music is a bit of a departure from their roots. The Syracuse metal/hardcore influence is definitely there, but there is also a more straight forward, mid-tempo metal feeling that falls somewhere between Carcass and Black Sabbath. The guitars are pretty slow, but they don't let the tempos get in the way of their intensity. The vocals are low, and screamed though they're definitely better than average. None of the individual elements here are necessarily something to write home about on their own. But the songwriting is very good, and very consistent and all the musicians play well off of each other. The end result is a very straight ahead, but also very good metal record. The highlights are numerous, though my favorite tracks come at the end of the record. The title track, and "The Sleep" are two of the best. Fans of new school metal/hardcore could do a lot worse than this. *Eulogy*

Saves The Day "Stay What You Are"

For the last few years, Saves The Day have been one of the fastest rising bands around. Since their first two records on Equal Vision, they've already come a long way. It's been more than a year now since "Through Being Cool" came out, and all that time they've been on the verge of something big. That said, there are a lot of high hopes for this record more than a year, and a new label later. The new Saves The Day are a seemingly more calculated band, in their songwriting especially. This record seems much more complete, and the overall vibe of the songs is a bit more mellow. Perhaps less punk, and more just straight ahead rock? It also seems that there is a bit more substance to the music this time around. But the lyrics spoil more than one song here. The music is well written, well executed, and well recorded. The vocals are well executed, though the lyrics are very sub-par for the most part. In addition to being about vague, though boring subject matter most of the time, the words themselves seem like they were thrown together the night before they were recorded. Aside from the lyrics being a real damper, the record is very good aside from that, and easily the best and most complete Saves The Day record to date. Recommended, just don't read the lyric sheet. *Vagrant*

Sig Transit Gloria "s/t"

Not long after releasing their first EP, these Chicago boys already have enough material for their first full length. Though the songs here travel most of the same roads the songs on their EP did, there seem to be more standout songs, and moments here. Sig Transit Gloria play very up tempo pop rock songs complete with a lo-fi guitar sound, well sung vocals, and keyboards to round it out. While many are undoubtedly already shouting Get Up Kids rip-off, I think that though there are similarities these guys definitely have their own thing going. "Song in F", the first track is the perfect song to start the record. It's possibly the fastest song here, and easily one of the best. The vocal melodies, and tight drumming are most apparent on this song though they don't fade much for the rest of the album. The remaining nine songs cover a lot of the same ground, though the song to song variety is still pretty strong. These guys definitely seem poised for bigger things, especially considering that this is only their second release. Yet another band that the kids with glasses and backpacks will love, the difference is that these guys are better than 90% of their colleagues. *Johann's Face*

The Sky Corvair "Unsafe At Any Speed"

Finally the re-release of this near legendary album. Featuring Bob Nanna (Braid/Hey Mercedes) on drums and vocals and Tim Kinsella(s?) (Cap'n Jazz/Joan Of Arc) on guitar and vocals. If you haven't heard it, it sounds pretty much like you would expect it too, a mix of early Braid and Cap'n Jazz. A must have for a fan of either! *Divot (Tom)*

Spark Lights The Friction "L'Homme Robotik"

It's hard to describe this record as anything but post-hardcore. There are certainly elements of a number of styles represented here, though in the end this is post-hardcore. These guys hail from Syracuse, though a D.C./Dischord influence is quite evident. This reminds me of Kerosene 454 with their combination of herky jerky art rock, and melodic and hard hitting riffs. That said though, it's still tough to really nail this record down, and the comparison to Kerosene 454 is there, though even it is a loose one. The production on this record was done

at Inner Ear which makes the Dischord sound even more apparent, though the sound fits these Syracuse boys perfectly. Each song is an interesting contrast between off time rhythms, and intense drumming, and the melodic guitar parts. The vocals are sometimes abrasive, and sometimes very well sung, which only adds to the contrast this band seems to rely on. All in all the thirteen songs here work well together, and as a full record. It's obvious there was a lot of time taken when crafting this. Really good stuff, that I have a feeling may be even better live. *Trustkill*

Strike Anywhere "Change Is A Sound"

The story of Strike Anywhere isn't a terribly new one so far. They were born out of the ashes of a few bands, all of which made their mark, The Exploder, Inquisition, and Count Me Out. But in a just over a year, Strike Anywhere have already begun to make quite a mark for themselves, and they don't appear to be stopping any time soon. This is the first full length from these guys, and it's sure to create quite a buzz when it hits the streets. Strike Anywhere employ elements of hardcore with a very melodic edge and sing along after sing along. The real trademark is certainly Thomas' vocals, which are very distinct and really make a few of the songs. But as a band, the songwriting is much more mature than anyone could expect from any band's second release, and first full length. The lyrics are pretty straight ahead political anthems with a real heart-on-your sleeve feel. Musically, they combine the new school melodic feel of Kid Dynamite or even Seven Seconds with their own D.C. roots ala Dag Nasty. The result is a catchy, though still powerful record that I find myself putting in every day. These guys are poised to go far if this record is any indication. Take note. *Jade Tree*



Sunday Flood "Advisory"

I don't think I like this. I especially don't like the effect on the vocals, as it sounds like the vocals are recorded singing into a toilet. In fact, it sounds like stool. The music shows some glimmers of decency. Some "wall of sound" type guitar stuff that reminds me of early Hum but a bit more up beat, and with more melody but less maturity. I think if this was produced a little bit better I may like it a bit more. I would be interested to hear them in the future, it sounds like they could be pretty good with a bit of growing up and better production. *SunSeaSky (Tom)*

Ted Leo/Pharmacists "The Tyranny Of Distance"

After years as the front man of the seminal indie rock band Chisel, Ted Leo went solo. This is his second full length out on his own. This record, much like his last is the logical extension of Chisel in a lot of ways. Ted's songwriting and amazing voice were two of the major trademarks for Chisel, and they're still here on his solo work. So, naturally this sounds a lot like Chisel, though it is a bit more mellow and guitar driven. This time around he had help from a lot of sources. The production is courtesy of Fugazi's Brendan Canty, while there are also appearances from his brother James Canty of MakeUp and Nation of Ulysses fame, as well as Seb Thomson of Trans Am, and members of Golden, Telegraph Melts, and more. While I wouldn't hesitate to describe this as a guitar pop record, there are very strong dub roots,

especially in the rhythm section, as well as new wave moments. The highlights here are numerous, though the record is really even, and the standouts aren't too far ahead of every other track. Think Chisel with a dash of Elliot Smith, especially in the guitar work. How many times did I say Chisel in this short review? Six. Thanks for asking. *Lookout!*

Thrice "Identity Crisis"

This record actually came out some time ago, and Sub City is just picking it up an re-releasing it after it sold out it's original pressing. Thrice play melodic, Orange County style hardcore with more than it's share of poppy breaks. Some of the vocals are screamed, though most are sung. Unlike most vocalists that try to do both, this guy can actually pull it off. Some of the intro's, and breaks actually have a cool 80's butt rock edge. It's not the first thing I heard, but it's definitely there. The biggest highlights are "To What End", and "Ultra Blue". They are two of the best examples of Thrice's ability to combine technical guitar parts that border on hardcore, with melodic breaks and well sung vocals. Almost every song seems to come to a climax towards the end, which is part of why I hear so much hardcore influence in their songwriting, even though some of the songs are pretty straight ahead pop. There are a lot of bands trying to do something similar to this these days. But it seems like Thrice may be poised to come to the front of the pack. This is a very solid record, especially considering how long ago it came out, and the fact it's their first record. There is a new full length set to come out this fall, which promises to be an interesting record. *Sub City*

Thumb "3"

These guys hail from Germany, and have been going since 1993.

Their sound fuses hard rock with DJ samples and hip hop.

That's right, these guys are the independent version of Papa fucking Roach, Linkin Park, or any of the other horrendous "Nu Metal" bands going right now. Though I haven't heard any of their previous material, I guess they've been doing this stuff since before it was the newest craze. Either way, this is just as painful to listen to as Limp Bizkit. No thanks. *Victory*

The Thumbs "Last Match"

The Thumbs have been one of the best punk bands going for more than a couple years now. I've been a fan ever since I first heard their "Sprague Dawley Rats" 7". Then I spent a full summer listening to "Make America Strong" at least once every day. It's been a while since their last full length, and so naturally I was excited to hear this. Much like their last CDEP, this is a slightly more mid-tempo Thumbs. The attitude and intensity remain, but the songs are a bit slower on average than their older stuff. Though you won't find guitar solos, and a bunch of tracks on every song, there is still a certain complexity to every song. The vocal parts are layered, and both singers chime in constantly, sometimes alternating and sometimes harmonizing.

The result is a melodic, though angry and aggressive record with some more mature influences than most straight ahead punk bands. Maybe if Dag Nasty worshipped The Smiths or even The Pixies, you'd have about half of The Thumbs sound. Aggressive, though controlled and well thought out. The lyrics pack just as much punch as they always have, and deserve your attention right along with the music. This is exactly what punk rock should be. Check out "Businessman Patriot", and "Yellow Metal" first, though you'll be hard pressed to find a lacking moment on the whole record. *Adeline*

Tight Bro's From Way Back When "Lend You A Hand"

There are a number of influences that the Tight Bro's employ to accomplish what they've set out to do musically. There is a strong blues influence, as well as hints of a few underground bands of today. But let's cut the crap. The Tight Bro's From Way Back When are, in a lot of ways, a new school butt rock band. The AC/DC influence, especially vocally is hard to deny. And the similarities don't end there. The guitar playing, and especially the drumming remind me of more than a few longhaired bands of yesteryear. So now that we've established that, we can move on. It's easy to be a novelty act. Whether or not the Tight Bro's are simply novelty would depend on who you ask. I think there is at least a little bit more to it than that. It's hard to deny the fact that there is at least a little bit of a cheese factor to this record. But it's also hard to deny that there's not another band, at least not in

this scene as a whole, that sounds anything like the Tight Bro's. There are even fewer bands that sound ANYTHING like this in the Tight Bro's native Olympia. This record is a very frantic ride from beginning to end. The energy in each song is very high, and never lets up. That quality can also make this record seem a bit repetitive, though that faded after a few listens. Overall this is a hard hitting, though also a very fun record. Zipper down, balls out rock and roll with a definite nod towards the 80's. *Kill Rock Stars*

The Trans Megetti "Fading Left To Completely On"

I have been listening to this for much longer before writing a review than I usually do with any record. This is mostly due to the fact that I've been having a really hard time deciding what to say about it. In the weeks since I first got this, I have been listening to it constantly. That in itself is one of the most important virtues of any record. The combination of straight ahead energy, avant garde art-rock, and well, balls that The Trans Megetti have managed to harness leaves me in awe. Most of the tracks bust right out of the gate with quick tempo, and tough (though intricate) drumming. But just as you start to get comfortable, you're thrown a curve ball. Sometimes its dub-esque bass work ("Gina"), sometimes it's a vocal/drum breakdown ("Haircut"), sometimes it's dense guitar chaos. The key is that the songs pull together a number of influences, but do it very well. The songwriting, while it is very eclectic, also flows incredibly well. Very, very few bands can combine the two, and every member also has the chops to pull everything off. There is almost always a lot going on, especially between the two guitars. So there is the added element of hearing something new almost every time I listen to this, which really keeps me interested every single listen. I tried to come up with a list of the best songs, and it ended up being more than half the album, so I won't bother. Mix the artsy, though melodic sensibility of Chisel, with mic stand to the head rock and roll ala The Stooges, and you might be half way there. Any way you slice it, this is easily one of the best indie releases to come out in quite some time. Buy this record. *Gern Blandsten*

Tune In Tokyo "Make Me Eternal"

Though this was actually completed in 1999, right before the band split up, it's just being released now. Though all four members are doing separate things right now, there is apparently a chance for more Tune In Tokyo shows at some point. Hailing from Austin, they play stripped down, balls out hardcore with a straight ahead rock and roll edge to it. The vocal duties are spread pretty evenly between all three vocalists, and all three guys have similar voices and styles. There are eighteen tracks here, which definitely adds to the value of the overall project. It did take more than a couple listens to start to really distinguish some of the tracks from each other. But what is occasionally lacking in song to song variation is made up for in the density of the album as a whole. I'm sure I'll be hearing something new every time I listen to this for quite some time. Manic and artistic hardcore with an honest rock and roll edge. An interesting find, especially considering that these songs are at least two years old. *Buddy System*

Two Man Advantage "Don't Label Us"

These guys are perhaps the punk rock version of The Zambonis. They definitely seem to be a hockey-core band through and through with their name, song titles, and even their artwork. But schtick is about all they have on their side. They play straight up punk rock with really bad vocals, and sloppy musicianship. This is hard to listen to. Some people just don't have any business making CD's. *Go Kart*

Useless I.D. "Bad Story, Happy Ending"

Have you heard Lagwagon? Me too. This band sound just like them. Only worse. The fact these guys hail from Israel is the ONLY thing about this band that is at all interesting or original. This record was produced by the singer from the Ataris. So at least these guys learned how to be a watered down Lagwagon rip off from an experienced hack. You don't want to take something like that lightly. This is literally not worth the materials it's made with. *Kung Fu Records*

Volante "45 Degrees North"

Upon first listening to this record, I skipped straight ahead to get a feel for a bit of each song. I was pretty into it, until I hit "Fight Song". I liked the song well enough, but it's similarities to at least one Fugazi song were undeniable. I sort of wrote this off, and put it back on the "review me" shelf. Upon further listens, it's still hard to discount the strong Fugazi influence but outside of "Fight Song", Volante have a lot going on aside from that. Their music is pretty straight ahead, D.C. style post punk, though a lot of the songs are very sparse though still melodic. The guitars have a very angular sound, without being too abstract or jagged. Part of the easy comparisons may be due to the production. The recording was done by J. Robbins at Inner Ear in D.C. Some of the slower tracks have a definite wall of sound, melancholy guitar rock sound ala Hum or old Mineral material. The vocals are very distinct, and well sung which adds a lot to most of the songs. As a whole, this record has a lot of variation both from song to song, and within a lot of the tracks. I feel like maybe I missed out by putting this record aside for so long. This is an impressive effort, especially considering it's their debut full length. *Guilt Ridden Pop*

Welt "Brand New Dream"

Years after Welt started, they are still going though they have but one remaining member that played on any of their first recordings. Their sound has changed quite a bit since their earlier recordings, though it hasn't changed at all since their last record. In fact, this could easily be a continuation of "Broke Down", their last record. The production, and songwriting is a carbon copy of that last record. Is that good or bad? You be the judge. Welt are still playing melodic punk rock, that sounds a whole lot like Social Distortion. Again, whether this is good or bad is up to you. The end result here is a solid punk rock record, though it's hard for me to justify recommending it too strongly. The vocals are above average, as is the musicianship. But in the end it doesn't seem like these guys have anything that can't be found a million other places. If you liked Welt before, check this new record out. Otherwise I'd say your life is still complete without it. *BYO*

The White Octave "Menergy"

It seems like I just received The White Octave's first record to review, though I guess it was almost six months ago. I'm not sure how the story goes, but somehow there is already another White Octave full length out. This time around, they've looked to Initial Records to release this. I was a fan of the debut, "Style No. 6312", and thus I was eager to check this out. Much like their first record, this is an interesting, even keeled post-punk attack not unlike the more straight ahead Dischord bands. Singer and guitarist Stephen Pedersen was a founding member of Cursive and played with them for six years, up until 1998. Then he moved to North Carolina where The White Octave began. The recording is once again by Bob Weston, and his style suits the band well. The drums and bass are both unusually high in the mix, though that too suits their sound. Almost the whole record has all four instruments doing different variations from every other instrument. That in and of itself isn't a new idea, though not too many bands do it to the extent that these guys do. While something like that can lead to a real mess, it's pulled off well here. I would expect a lot more to come from The White Octave, especially if they can continue on the pace they seem to be on right now. *Initial Records*

Yellowcard "One For The Kids"

This CD has already become a bit of a guilty pleasure. This is super melodic punk with sort of a Fat sound going, but also the youthful, shameless pop sense of Saves The Day. I think the members of this band are actually all still in high school. Either way they are all solid musicians, and also good songwriters. Though what they're doing isn't anything you've never heard before, they do add their own twist. For one they have electric violin in most of the songs, which they actually pull off well. It adds a lot to a few of the songs, and also gives them a bit more of their own sound. The one place these guys lose points is the lyrics, which are sometimes mediocre, and worse other times. But overall this is a very good record, especially considering this is their first. The songs are very well constructed, and the musicianship is certainly above average. Given the time, these guys will go far if they stick with it. A very pleasant surprise. *Lobster Records*

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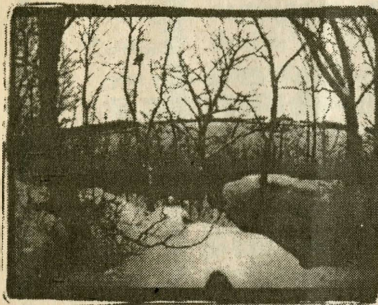
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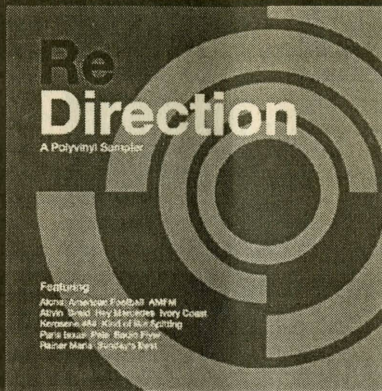
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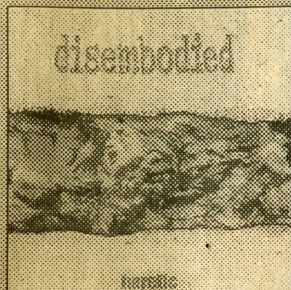
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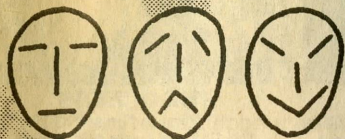
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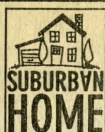
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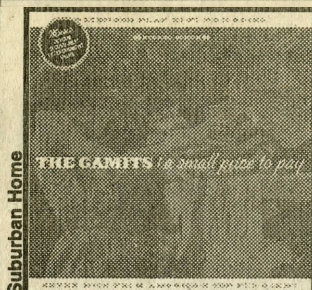
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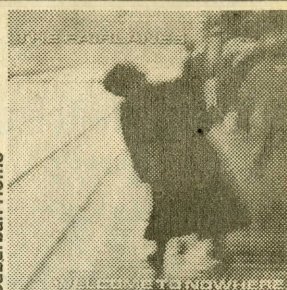
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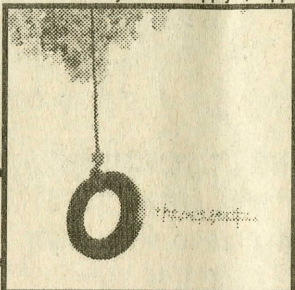
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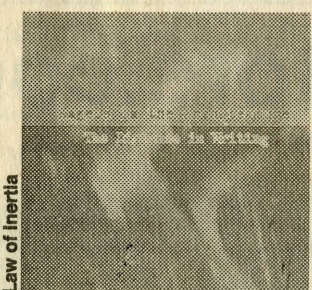
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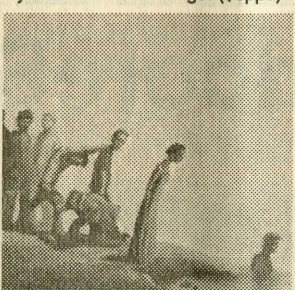
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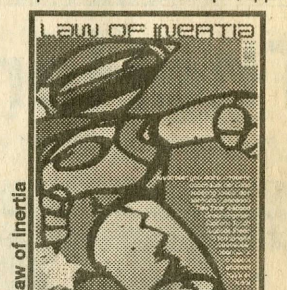
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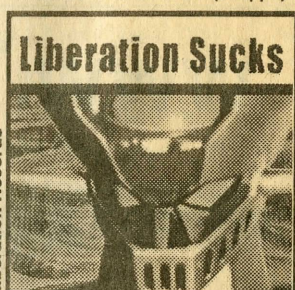
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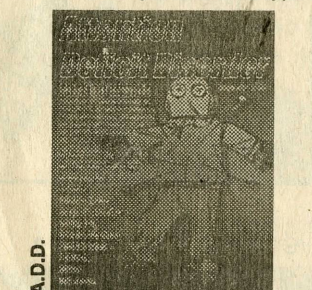
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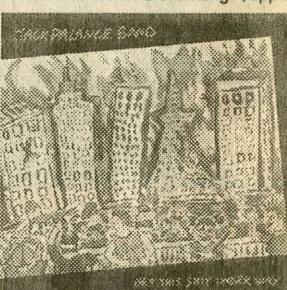
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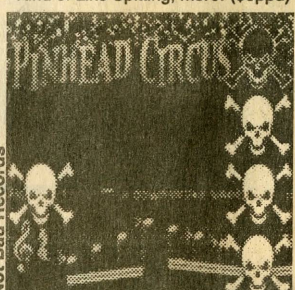
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