

AUSTIN DAZE

CONVERSATIONS WITH **JOHN KUNZ** OF WATERLOO RECORDS • **G. LOVE** • **STRING CHEESE INCIDENT**
PAPA MALI • **LOS LOBOS** • **CYRIL NEVILLE** • **MATT COSTA** • **MISSY SUICIDE** OF SUICIDE GIRLS
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2006 AUSTIN CHRONICLE
READERS POLL

Welcome to Issue #61.

This was a monster to finish. Everything seemed to be conspiring against us releasing the new issue on time. Well, with a lot of extra work, we finally pushed this wild animal through the gates. We hope you expected nothing less.

This month of October marks our 7th year of publishing this paper. Some things have changed, but so much has stayed the same. Thanks for picking us up again. You will dig this issue. Like I said, it is a wild beast, so take some time with it and enjoy the experience. We had a wonderful time at ACL this year. Every year there are so many people. I see like 8 people I know there. It always boggles my mind. Flip through the pages and check out who we talked with. Then came Fantastic Fest at the Alamo Drafthouse. This fest is only an infant in existence but it blew my mind, day after day. This festival will be one to reckon with. Mel Gibson showed up and screened his new Oscar contender "Apocalypto." "Pan's Labarynth" took me into another world. It was a fantastic achievement for Guillermo del Toro. I'd say it was an overly succesful year #2. Can't wait till next year. I bet it will be harder to get in as the years pass. But then, this is Austin. Things here always have a way of

working out.

We talked with Missy Suicide of the Suicide Girls. The Suicide Girls are coming to town in eary November. It will be a show worth seeing. You can trust me on that. Our two big conversations are with two local legends of Austin. They have made their mark on this town and continue to dig deeper and create further. John Kunz and Papa Mali talked with us at great detail. Even if you know these guys, I am sure you will find something new and of interest. Next up came Cyril Neville. We talked with him about his new home and other things. A few weeks ago I had one of those perfect Austin music nights that would not quit. That reminded me again why I am here. I started with Toni Price at The Continental and then moved to Ephraim Owens' Experience upstairs then at Antones came Marcia Ball and Cyril Neville's Tribe 13. Next door I dropped by DJ Manny and then over to Boombox ATX at Lucky Lounge. We are lucky to have quality stuff going on all the time. Get out there and dig it.

Speaking of quality stuff, 1st Thursdaze at Ruta Maya turns 4 years old on November 2nd with The Resentments! For 4 years we have been throwing this monthly party on 1st Thursdaze. Come celebrare with us.

What else?

Our new website is unstoppable. It is finally a worthy compliment to the paper. In fact, it's also an extension. This month we will begin releasing web only interviews. We will start with The Austin Film Festival. Our staff is starting to update the blogs. The whole website is interactive, meaning that you can comment on anything. Comments make us happy. Our office space has been remodeled and looks fantastic. Let's hope we can thrive and grow with the changes.

This morning we were very excited to discover that we won the "Best of Austin Poll" again in The Chronicle. Thanks for voting for us. We are honored to be chosen again.

We will be back in December to keep you warm for the holidays. Have a nice Halloween and Turkey Day.
- Namaste, Russ

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PAPA MALI



AUSTIN DAZE: Where does the name Papa Mali come from?

PAPA MALI: My nickname, Papa Mali came from the Burning Spear band. We were on tour with the Killer Bees opening for Burning Spear back in about '8 and they came over to my house one day because we had the day off in Austin and I wanted to stop by my house and pick something up. I was in the van with them and we pulled up to the yard. At that time, my children were all younger -- have six kids -- and immediately they said, "Malcolm whose children are them?" I said, "Those are my kids." I was still in my 20's at the time and they thought it was really funny that I had so many kids at such a young age. From that point on I was Papa Mali. My manager overheard it and thought it

would be funny to put it in an article someone had wrote about us and the next thing I know I'm seeing it in print -- it just takes

on a life of its own.

Now that I'm getting older I feel more comfortable with it. But I always introduce myself as Malcolm because it seems less pretentious.

AD: Do your kids call you Papa Mali?

PM: They actually don't call me Papa Mali. They call me dad.

AD: When did you start playing music and why?

PM: Like a lot of other kids I was seduced by early rock and roll. I really was a fan of spy music when I was a kid. I remember being about 4 or 5 years old and hearing Secret Agent Man and hearing the theme from James Bond and really liking that guitar sound. My mom got me my first guitar at Woolworth's but it was just a toy. It was plastic and had plastic strings on it. So I asked my dad to get me a real guitar. He made frequent trips to Mexico and on my 5th birthday, he brought me back a handmade Mexican guitar that had my initials carved into the headstock. I remember seeing the price tag on it and it was 80 -- which was 80 pesos. At the time it was only \$0 or something but I remember thinking, wow; this is a really expensive birthday present. So that was my first guitar. And then the Beatles. I remember seeing them

when I was either 6 or 7. I saw them and that really did it. The next day I asked my mom if I could start taking lessons and the first song I learned was the chords to "I Want to Hold Your Hand." From then on it was just playing. That was 1964. So 2 years I've been playing.

I became really interested in blues music first through Jimi Hendrix and the Yardbirds and The Rolling Stones. But then when I was 14 met this guy named Johnny Slim Campbell and he was like a real blues man. He played an old beat up National guitar and played open tunings and slide -- all the heavy Delta guitar stuff. My older brother had hired him to play at a party and I went to the party and I saw John Campbell play and I was just mesmerized; I was just blown away. So the next day I went in my bedroom and I was just sitting here with my guitar putting on this Allman Brothers record, trying desperately to get that same sound that Duane Allman got. But I didn't have a slide so I didn't know how he was getting that sound. I'd seen John Campbell do it but I still didn't understand what he was doing with a piece of a bottle on his finger.

Just as fate would have it, John Campbell came by my parent's house to collect money for the party from my brother and he stuck his head in my bedroom and he said, "So you like the Allman Brothers, huh?" And I said, "Yeah, I can't figure out how they get that sound."

He goes, "Well you're going to have to get yourself a bottleneck." And I was like,

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The Austin Daze

“Entertainment paper that supports the Austin Scene”

The Austin Daze is free speech. We are a publication of and for the community. We put an issue together every other month in Austin, TX. We distribute in over 200 locations around our town. We celebrate the uniqueness of our town and we bridge the gap between well known national, international and local musicians, artists, and events. Our interviews are great conversations that the reader is invited to partake in. The Austin Daze exhibits some of the lesser known treasures and mixes them with more well known names which helps expand our community's interest. The Austin Daze is made up of a well-rounded mix of: local, national, international, art, music, interviews, pictures, editorials, politics, comics and humor. We have a nice website:

www.austindaze.com. You can look at our issues of old on the site. We are always looking for coverage suggestions AND FEEDBACK.

If you want to get involved with us, send us an email at **involved@austindaze.com** or call us at **512-587-8358**. If you wish to find out about submissions, email **subs@austindaze.com**. Or call us. Complaints as well as monkey questions should be sent to **MrJangles@austindaze.com**. Love and good feedback can be sent to the **Editor@austindaze.com**. Contact Wendy at **wendy@austindaze.com** about advertisements.

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Dony Wynn - Review
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And Everyone Else
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We do not necessarily agree with all the articles here. Maybe we do. But not as a collective entity?
Does that make sense?

JOHN KUNZ



AUSTIN DAZE: How long have you been doing the record store? Was it always such a pulsating place?

JOHN KUNZ: I just celebrated my 33 1/3 anniversary selling music in Austin a few months ago. Waterloo is 24 1/2 years old now and I came on about three months after it started. The day my original partner opened it up was April Fool's Day 1982 and that was the same day I was turning in my resignation for the chain music store I was working for. I was looking to open up my own store, so Lewis Carp and I were talking about how we could help one another out as two new kids with record stores in town. The more we talked the more we realized that we actually shared more or less the same vision of what our record stores were going to be but we neither one of us had enough time, money, inventory, energy to do everything that we envisioned. We started talking about partnering up and that is indeed what happened a few months later.

The original location was on South Lamar where Austin Soccer used to be. It was much smaller.

At that time it was a 1,000 square feet between the music store and the video store and now we're almost 9,000 square feet so it was almost 1/9 the size originally. Even though it was always a kind of happening place from the beginning, there was a number of times--the first summer particularly--where I'd be the only one working in the store and there wouldn't be any customers and it was time for my lunch break and I would go to the burger joint next store and eat my burger with my eye on our front door and if somebody pulled up I'd grab my stuff and go. But otherwise, if nothing else, I could get out just for a little while and not be in the store getting french fries all over the counter or something.

From year one, we just had such a rapport with all of our customers--just really super serving them and such a rapport with the bands that it kind of became the de facto place to go for music in town. That was the first year the Austin Chronicle did their music poll and included things that were ancillary to the bands themselves and we won that first year — right around the time of our first anniversary — for best record store. And we were up against all sorts of record stores. That was really rewarding

to have that happen. This was a world where MTV, I think, existed already but it hadn't come to Austin yet and of course there was no internet or anything so a lot of the way people were discovering music was just from what got played on the radio, got reviewed in the magazines, newspapers and that sort of thing. That was limited as far as it was concerned. And one of the ways that we were really finding out about cool things — particularly under the radar original stuff — was from the bands in Austin that were large enough to go out and do tours. So you know, the Fabulous Thunderbirds go out and do an east coast run and come back and they're touting A Room Full of Blues to us, or someone that opened up for them or they opened up for--however it played out. You know it was, “Oh yeah, we did a string of dates with these guys and they were incredible and they got these CDs available.” It wouldn't be available through the local wholesale places that we went to here so we started dealing with just lots more regional wholesalers all over the country. And we just started picking up on stuff that a lot of other places weren't hip to or weren't getting. Building that kind of rapport with the bands themselves where they were kind of doing the A&R, if you will, for the bands that they liked and getting them into our store and having them start selling out of Austin when maybe some of these bands hadn't even come and played

Austin yet made Waterloo a pulsating place. It was cool for us to be able to say, “Oh yeah, Jimmie Vaughan

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was telling us how great these guys are” and someone would go, “Oh, well I’ve got to check these guys out”. That was one of the things that helped build us. That was always the vision: to be really connected with the music and the people that make it and then find a way to extend that out to the fans that came in wanting to get that music.

We started out day one with anyone being able to listen to anything in the store and that was a holdover from what records stores were like when I was a kid. It was just going away, because they had started putting records in shrink rap. Prior to that, it had been 78’s and 45’s and they were just loose. But once the LP had won — originally those came without any shrink wrap on them too — people were concerned about whether a record had been played before.

AD: Can you still do that at Waterloo? Listen to any CD?

JK: You can still do that. It’s always been that way.

AD: Is that what the listening rooms are for?

That’s what they are about. We’ve got over a 100 different things that someone can go and listen to his or her self just by going up to a listening station. But we open up and play anything someone is interested in as well. For that matter, we’ve got a couple of really cool things where you can just walk up with the CD and scan the bar code and it will bring the song list up and you can just press the song you want to hear. The advances in technology have been amazing.

Back when we opened the store, there weren’t CDs. So we would open a stack of records for somebody and they would choose the ones they liked and give us the ones back that they didn’t.

We’d go and re-wrap those and sell them — it really was just about the music. If we were going to be selling stuff that wasn’t

getting played on the radio, how else were we going to sell it? You wouldn’t expect to go by a shirt or a pair of shoes without that first step.

Kind of the three things that were most different about us when we opened up were: we opened and played anything that you want, we had a full exchange policy because back in that day most record stores would only take something back if it was defective for that same reason they were concerned that someone was going to buy the record, tape it and bring it back. We weren’t concerned about that. Not that it didn’t happen with us, but we kind of weeded out the bad apples. The last thing, and I still don’t understand why more stores don’t do it, is that we didn’t categorize our store — we just put everything in there alphabetically. So blues were next to rock; next to rap. The example I usually go back to is Emmylou Harris because I’ve seen her in rock, in country, in folk, and female vocals. Every store classifies everything differently but she is always under “H” in our store. There are people that don’t like it but they are few and far between because most real music lovers might buy a reggae record or a rock record or a folk record all at the same time. We do have a few sections — I guess every store has to have a few sections. Classical is separate. Movie soundtracks are separate and world music is separate.

We have a color-coded system now and that’s actually something we came up because of Clifford Antone. He would come in and say, “John, I just want to look at the blues when I come in here. I don’t want to look at the other people. Can’t you just find a way?” Once we do that, the whole thing falls apart. So we came up with a system where we will give all the blues ones a blue indicator and the jazz ones we’ll give a red indicator.

AD: One thing that I really do like is that you do separate the new local music.

JK: That kind of goes back to that early connec-

tion with the music and the people that make it. I think it’s the responsibility of the radio in any town, clubs in any town, and record stores in any town, to really embrace what’s there and help to make sure the music is out there. I think Austin--more so than most towns--has always understood that and have done a great job with it. It’s unfortunate, the clubs that we’ve lost over the years but there has always been that core group of a crowd that really are the nest where a band could develop and grow and discover who they are and come out fully grown. Austin’s always had its fair share of radio programs that play to the local scene.

One of the things that I think really worked well with us, really gave it a lot of validity to a local artist was rather than making it a ghetto area, we kind of more celebrated it as a Texas music section. So past, present, future, it’s a situation where we’d put a new band in the same section as Willie Nelson. You can kind of see the beginning and the end point in terms of these are the stars and they once were the band that couldn’t get distribution and they came to the record store and put their music in our consignment section. Going back nearly 25 years, Denny Freeman put his records on consignment in our store. Denny, even back then was an incredible guitar player and he’s Bob Dylan’s guitar player now. The Dixie Chicks’ first record in our store was on consignment. It’s very different than that now.

I want to give props on that because that was a concept that we borrowed from Forrest Coppock who was at the Sound Exchange. Forrest, now at Antone’s Record Store, was the one who came up with the whole Texas music concept of putting the new developing artists right there next to the fully formed superstar artists and everything in between. And we liked the idea. And I always like to credit him because it really was the first time that a local music section wasn’t ghettoized. At that time, if the Dixie Chicks did fifty tours



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around Texas they would be in the local music section and then

once they started selling they would have come out of the local music section and gone into the country section. What would be left in the local section would be the artists that were selling marginally.

AD: How does your consignment policy work? Do you ever approach bands?

JK: We don't pay for them until we've sold it. They believe in themselves, they are going to sell, and it's just a matter of getting together with them and determining what the right amount is.

On the subject of other music stores, 11 years ago, me and a bunch of other stores around the country got together and formed what we call the Coalition of Independent Music Stores—another SIMS, if you will—it's CIMS. We've got about 30 different companies, some of the best music stores around the nation and we work together on all sorts of projects. We originally came together because a lot of the big record labels and distributors were downsizing their operations and they liked calling up the merchandiser or buyer from Borders—talking to one person about one particular band getting something done and then knowing it would happen for that hundreds of stores. There was a lot that had to be done on the back end for any chain stores in terms of communication among those stores. We thought that if we could take the strengths of our stores with an added communication amongst ourselves just to get behind a particular artist the record label could make one phone call to one place and know that they would be setting up a promotion to get an artist front and center in a lot of these stores. In fact the first artist that we did anything with was Ben Harper. We all agreed to promote him at the same time. That has worked out very, very well. The coolest thing about it I think is this led to lots more communication between the stores to where we could share success stories and share failure stories. It's led to lots of discoveries musically but also in the business sense. We were able to go and get lower credit card processing rates because we banded together. So it has worked on many fronts. We've gotten to a size that is manageable now where communication will still be familial as opposed to corporate and we just put a cap on it. There have been several other coalitions that have formed since then and we have fully shared with them how we got formed so even now we've got things going on between coalitions—it's like the next level.

AD: What do you think about the downloading music?

JK: Well, I think it's different for everyone but as far as I'm concerned any avenue that somebody can discover music the better. I-Tunes is a way that someone can discover stuff and pay for it as opposed to unauthorized file transfers happening out there. But even then, there have been

lots of bands that have broken through because of all the file sharing that has been happening between fans. There has been lots of bands that have gotten deals because of the success they've had doing it on their own through the internet. There are lots of folks that don't want to have that big massive wall of a record collection or CD collection—they want to have it all sitting on their lap top or their i-Pod. As the world changes, it's always been that the customer is always right. So however the customer wants to have it that's how it should be as far as I'm concerned.

Our digital store was supposed to be open on April 15th and here it is September 6, 2006 and it's still not ready. Every time that I get excited that it is real close it's a new hurdle. This is what we are working with the coalition trying to get our digital store open to where we would all be able to sell music online. We all have void transactional websites where 24/7 someone can order a CD and have it mailed to them. In terms of just being able to order a digital file and do it that way, it gets a little complicated because the record companies—the major ones anyway—want there to be digital rights managed files and the customer, again, is the one that is right, just wants an mp3 file that they aren't going to be restricted on what they can do with it once they own it. If they can get an mp3 authorized file, they are willing to pay and I don't know why the record labels should care. I always tell everybody at the record labels that I'm selling unprotected mp3 files right now. And they say, "You are?" And I say, "Isn't that what every CD in the store is?" Once someone takes this home and puts it on their computer there is nothing that you can really do. Depending on what they decide to do with it at that point, it's out of your hands. Unfortunately, not enough people—in my opinion—seem to realize that. But we are trying to get them to see that. The other thing is the things that are going on between the Steve Jobs and Bill Gates of the world. Yeah they might like music but I think it's more about the software they sell. In many cases it's not a great deal different than a Best Buy or Wal-Mart store that is using music or film as bait to get people into the store to buy all the other stuff.

AD: So tell us the story behind Waterloo.

JK: Well, the name was already picked by the time I came in. Waterloo was the first name of Austin so it kind of seemed like it was going back to the beginning as far as Austin was concerned. There was a fellow who early on was a big part of the spirit of the store named Philip. And Philip has to be one of the biggest ABBA fans in the world and he immediately jumped on that fact and said, "Oh yeah, there's an ABBA song called

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Waterloo so that's perfect". And that's been always one of those things that have made me personally cringe.

At the time Waterloo Records came to be I think there were maybe 3 or 4 businesses in town that were called Waterloo something or other—one of them being Waterloo Ice House. We were over on South Lamar at the time and they were over on North Congress. We weren't next door to each other like we are now—that just kind of happened years down the road. There are lots of businesses that are Waterloo and I guess they all chose the name for the same reason. It was Philip who went to London a few years after the store opened and came back with his pictures that he took of himself at Waterloo Station. And we were looking for a new t-shirt design and so we decided to go ahead and use the London underground logo with the Waterloo station. Everyone just totally fell in love with that t-shirt and everybody wanted one. So eventually we just said, "Why don't we just change the logo of the store?" We looked into it and fortunately the London Underground never figured they were going to extend the line under the Atlantic Ocean so they never trademarked it for the United States. So we said, ok, we'll do it then. That's how we got to be Waterloo.

I was going to name it Eclipse Records or Breaking Records if I was going to have a store.

AD: What are the biggest challenges for a new artist starting out in the music business?

JK: In the past 15 years the cost of entry into recording and manufacturing, have come down considerably. At one time someone had to go out and rent studio time at a very expensive studio. Now it will be on someone's lap top and they can turn any room in their house



into a really incredible studio. So the good and the bad of that is that it means that there is a lot more stuff out there but there is still only 24 hours in a day so there has to be some sort of a filtering process. And one of the things the record store becomes at that point is the filter for what their customers want to buy and what they are going to be looking for. Any store worth a salt in my opinion is going to have not only what their customers are looking for but what they don't yet know they are going to be looking for and helping to lead them towards that. With the exposure of things like my myspace.com and so forth there are so many avenues for someone to take that and blow it up.

I think it's really gotten easier for a group of talented people to get the word out about them. The communication amongst stores is better now than it was — people can go on message boards and subscriptions and what's really working well.

AD: Why do you think you've been able to outdo Tower Records here in Austin?

JK: Tower is an incredible institution and Russ Solomon, the guy that started Tower is now like 80 years old. Unfortunately, Tower is going through their second bankruptcy in this many years. Tower is a great store. There were times as a music buyer myself that I would just be going, "Oh my God look at all this stuff they've got — this is incredible." The staff was so nice and knowledgeable about things. But we were just better connected with what Austin wanted, better connected with the local musicians. Long before they came into the Austin market we were fairly well established and had our feet on the ground. We had a lot of things in place as far as the clubs, the radio stations, and the community. We had so many bands both touring and local do in-store performances at our place that we had a lot of people really rooting for us and concerned. **We were concerned**

too — they were a juggernaut to contend with. We didn't know what was going to happen. But like competition is supposed to do, it made us better. Even though we wanted to be a big boy we didn't want to play like one. And we realized on some of these things we needed to find a way to do



it the Waterloo way but still play in bigger leagues.

At the same time we didn't want to abandon the community of independent stores in town because that's an important thing as well. We still try to have real big communication with the other independent stores and share information.

It's a community and if you lose sight of that, that's when it is just not worth doing as far as I'm concerned.

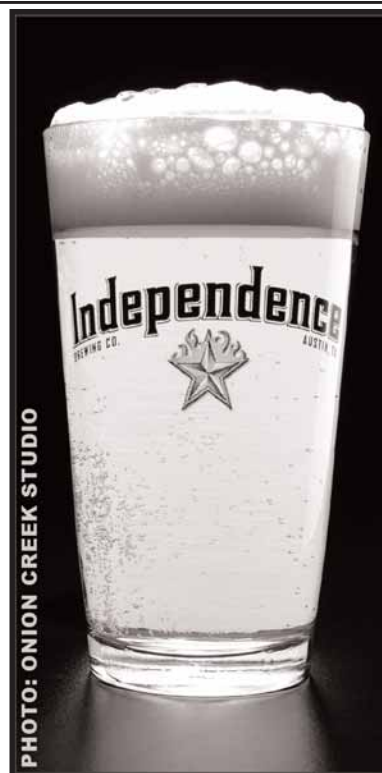
AD: What makes Austin special to you?

JK: Austin's been special to me because I was born in Dallas and grew up in Houston and have lots of relatives here in Austin. My mom and dad met in Austin at UT and my dad was a big UT fan and would get his season tickets and we would come up for ball games. This is when I was 3, 4, and 5 years old. Coming up for a football game, visiting my aunts, uncles and cousins and jumping in Barton Springs. After I had learned to ride a bike my cousin would take me down the hill from UT to Shoal Creek and scared the I-don't-know-what out of me.

When I made the move here myself to go to UT it was so much more of a community. I appreciated the arts and the music and film--although film was so lame back then. I remember in the early 70's the Academy Awards or something would come on and there would be however many, 6 or 7 films nominated for best picture and only one of them had played Austin. There wasn't any multiplex in Austin.

Did I answer your question? I guess I did more with the past than the present. The Armadillo World Headquarters was around then which was an incredible place. To this day it is still one of my all time favorite clubs in history.

I guess also there were so many like-minded people that were doing what we were doing. I remember vividly being at a Bruce Springsteen concert in San Antonio where probably 2/3 of the audience was from Austin. And Springsteen had been through one other time and played the Armadillo and then didn't play Austin but played San Antonio. So there were all these rabid fans in Austin that weren't going to let something like that come that close without seeing him again. But there were a number of times that a band would play there because they had the right size stage ability and the right size market. There were enough folks here with the passion and the love and the knowledge of what was going on that they start-



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ed working to change all those things. So now this is the music scene, this is the art scene, this is the film scene. This is the computer and game scene. All those people working towards that common aim, and getting it, and appreciating it — that's really important. That sense of community for the things that are really special and unique in life. That's what I love most about this place.

AD: What do you think of ACL Fest?

JK: I'm so excited for ACL Fest. **Austin audience is the best. The crowd never gets it or connects like they do in Austin.**

AD: Anything else?

JK: I would like to say something about the group of people that I've got working with. Over in the video store and in the music store we've just got people that have been there literally longer than me. One guy was working at the store before I came on board — before I partnered up with Lewis. There is so much out there that we really do need experts in these areas. There is a cross-pollination that happens between them in their musical tastes and where they have talents as far as their job is concerned whether that's inventory, or customer service or marketing or merchandise and whatever. They are such a talented group of people the store wouldn't be what it is without all of them and all of their contributions whether it is 20 years ago or 20 minutes ago. I just had to give them their props.

“That’s the thing you were playing the other night.” He said, “What you should really do is listen to the people that these guys listen to

because they are good but they had to listen to somebody to get that style.” I asked, “How do I find out who that is?” And he said, “Come over to my house tomorrow and I’ll loan you some records.” So that’s how it started and eventually he started showing me things on guitar. How to tune down the guitar for different tunings for Delta Blues, how to use the bottleneck and eventually I had a full fledged apprenticeship going on where he was my mentor and I was his student. It all started making sense to me because of the bottleneck thing and the blues tunings.

That’s when I really started to learn the blues.

AD: At what point did you know you would be able to be a musician and keep it going?

PM: My older brother has always said that he believed in me because I knew who I was going to be since I was old enough to speak. It was never a question in my mind that I was going to be a musician. I always knew that. I always told people that I was a musician—even when I was so little they would just laugh when I would say that. They would say, “What are you going to be when you grow up? And I would say, “I’m already a musician.” I remember the summer after my third grade year I went to New Orleans to visit my grandparents. It was 1965, ‘66 and my grandmother said, “I want to give you some money to buy some back to school clothes.” And that was the first time I had ever had money to go buy clothes with. I showed my cousin, who had just gotten her driver’s license, a picture of the Rolling Stones and said, “Is there any place that sells clothes like this?” And she goes, “The French Quarter. There’s a boutique that sells mod stuff.” My grandmother had given me enough money to buy 5 or 6 nice outfits at JC Penny or something but I went down and spent it all on one outfit. I still remember it. It was a paisley shirt with these kind of really fancy cuffs and kind of a poor boy shirt that went underneath it and red wide bell corduroys—hip huggers—and white leather shoes. And a pair of blue rimmed glasses and a little corduroy cap kind of thing. I was styling. So that kind of set the tone.

AD: Where were your first gigs?

PM: My very first gigs were playing at dances and the YMCA with other teenagers. I played at parties and at talent shows. That was a big one. Those actually felt like shows. There was the stage and there were lights and people had to sit down and there was a dark auditorium. Those were the first ones that really felt like shows. By

the time I was in high school I had already formed several bands.

AD: Why did you choose Austin to settle in and how long have you been here?

PM: I’ve been here for almost 21 years. In 1985 I had been touring with the Killer Bees and at that time our manager lived here in Austin. The band had gotten scattered — somehow we were living in different cities. Michael was living in Dallas, Stan was living in Wichita Falls, I had moved back to Shreveport. Our manager said it would be really nice if we could all live in the same city so we could do rehearsals and photo shoots. And he thought Austin was just a great place to live. In ‘85, Austin was just an incredible place for a musician to live. At the time Liberty Lunch was happening and we were starting to become really popular there. Our manager was also partners with the guy that ran Liberty Lunch, Mark Pratz, so in addition to being our manager he also booked a lot of the entertainment there. Any time a good reggae band would come through we would get the opening slot. Through that connection we developed a big following pretty quickly — after 1 ½ years we were the biggest band in town. So it just made perfect sense for us to form a solid band base here in Austin. And then you know, life has a way of taking over from that point and we all started having kids and our kids were in school and had lots of new friends and it was home.

AD: We’ve seen you play many different forms. Which affords you the most creative expression? Do you have a preferred style or genre of playing?

PM: Absolutely. Where I am these days musically, is where I have always been in my heart of hearts and will be from now until I can’t pick up a guitar anymore. My

own original vision of what I do is rooted in Louisiana culture but heavily influenced by world music and psychedelic music and experience. And I don’t mean just the drugs. I certainly believe using psychedelic drugs when I was younger influenced the way I saw the world, but more than that the doors that it unlocked and the spirituality that comes along with that influenced my version of Louisiana blues - based and funk - based music as well as my experiences playing Jamaican music and African music. I have a definitive style of my own that people can tell that it’s me that it is playing. It took a long time to come to that.

Every musician, every person has a journey and the

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things that they pick up on the journey help mold them into who they are. My musical jour-

ney has taken me through many different genres and musical experiences. After the Killer Bees, it was good for me to take on a few prominent sideman gigs like playing with Toni Price and with Ray Wylie Hubbard. Those were kind of like finishing school for me. Not only did it make me more versatile in my ability to collaborate with other people but it also made me more aware of my own stylistic uniqueness. It made me realize that I’m not supposed to be a sideman. Toni Price actually sensed that I was not really a sideman. My own solo record had just come out when I started playing with her and as much as I wanted to play with her, as much as I was honored to be in that guitar chair that had been occupied by all these great guitar



players that I looked up to, I didn't belong there. Toni sensed that. I felt like I was doing fine as far as holding up my end of things, but she realized every time we would try to start singing together on the microphone it would be like my personality was too strong to be a side person. And she knew that and encouraged me to go and do my own thing. From that point on I decided I'm not going to be a sideman anymore, it's Papa Mali: do or die. At that point I sought out a new manager, a new agent, and I started taking my own career a lot more seriously. I began touring 200 nights a year and since then things have been just doing great. That was almost 5 years ago.

AD: You play in New Orleans a lot. How has the music scene changed since Katrina?

PM: It's changed a lot because the entire city has changed so much. Let's start with the positive side of things first: there's a lot of hope in New Orleans right now. There's a lot of strength coming to the surface that people didn't even know that they had. There's a lot of joy in simple things that people had forgotten; that many people had taken for granted. Musically, there are new clubs opening to fill the void of some of the old clubs that were destroyed. There is a spirit amongst musicians there that every day they are going to play like it might be the last time they play. There is a sense of pride and identity that can only come through people having been through something this tragic and catastrophic. On the flip side of that coin, there has been a human straddling; a dysphoria of people; a displacement of people that is probably the greatest since slavery times. There was just a mass exodus of people to other parts of the country.

In New Orleans, the inner city teenager who lives below the poverty level, who was already facing the temptation of gangs and drugs and things like that can lift himself out of that by being in a brass band. Or if he happens to be in a neighborhood that has Mardi Gras Indian Tribes he can sew a feathered costume and parade as a Mardi Gras Indian. He can be somebody. There is no other American city where we can say that. New Orleans social and pleasure clubs exist for that reason. In a time when racism and poverty were not providing a great many opportunities for a large portion of a population, they came together themselves and formed these social and pleasure clubs. The Mardi Gras Indians are a direct result of that sort of mentality. The powers that be tried to keep those less fortunate citizens down and they found inner strength by banding together; by forming these groups that celebrate their own culture and the African American way. That is what made New Orleans such a unique musical city. That's where jazz was born. That's where all various forms of rhythm and blues, soul music, funk music — they all came from those groups. After a while that element is what defined the city of New Orleans

and the musical outlet that has come from there.

So now you have all these people that have been displaced. The Government is not giving them any incentive to come back. The neighborhoods were destroyed. I'm worried about the teenagers from New Orleans that are the best trumpet and tuba players on their blocks ending up in Detroit and having the elder inner city kids kick their ass and say, "There are no God-damn horns around here."

I'm worried about those kids. I'm worried about the effect it's going to have on future generations of musicians. Trombone Shorty is one of the best trumpet players in the world right now. He is a direct product of what I'm talking about. A long history of tradition and people nurturing that talent in kids. That's what makes New Orleans such an important place. They were treated so badly in the wake of Katrina. They were humiliated, they were left out to die, they were ignored and it was all on television. They were portrayed as uncivilized animals. These were proud people who were caught at their very worst. Why would people want to go back to a city that treated them like that?

AD: What do you think the city of New Orleans should do for displaced musicians?

PM: Not just for musicians, but for all the people that lost everything. There should be some sort of restitution plan. A lot of those homes had been paid for for years and passed down through generations. They are old houses and maybe they needed repair but they were paid for. I think the people that held deeds on property should be given another chance in some kind of way. I don't know how it could be done but believe me, if we can spend billions on a useless war in Iraq, and make Halliburton one of the



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richest companies in the world, then we can afford to do that for the people who lost everything in the city. But the first thing that needs to be done is to build a levee system that will protect them when the next one comes.

AD: Tell us about your debut album Thunder Chicken.

PM: In 2000 when Thunder Chicken was released, I was going through a really weird time in my life. My best friend Michael Johnson of the Killer Bees was terminally ill and dying right before my eyes. My other best friend Mambo was dying. Mambo, Champ Hood and my dad all died within a couple of months of each other. It was a really hard time for me. My record had just come out and was getting great reviews all over the country. The first review I got was from Playboy magazine and they raved about it. My record label was saying, "Come on, you need to be out there touring." And I was like, "Sorry, I can't do that right now. I'm grieving." Another year went by and I was still too traumatized to deal with it. I personally kind of dove into drinking and drugging and had a near death experience myself from just too much fun. But it wasn't fun it was just me self-medicating to hide my pain. Eventually I healed myself and that's when I realized it was time to take my music seriously and started touring and realized there was an audience out there for my record even though it had been out for over two years. It's been almost 3 years since Thunder Chicken got re-released. Now that record has kind of run its course completely — it's had a long shelf life — and this new record, Do Your Thing, is coming out and I'm really excited about it. It will be released on Halloween of this year.

AD: What kind of sound can we expect from Do Your Thing?

PM: Like Thunder Chicken, it's a combination of influences: the biggest one being my initial exposure to music growing up in Louisiana. I lived



there all through my formative years and heard all the great music that comes from Louisiana. And then, that got filtered through all the experiences I've had since then. It's my love of Jamaican music and psychedelic music and unusual recording techniques. My quest to always want to play with other musicians--the new record really reflects that.

It's almost a continuation of Thunder Chicken. It's produced by Dan Prothero, the same guy that produced Thunder Chicken on the same label, Fog City Records, outside of San Francisco. It features several very legendary New Orleans musicians: Henry Butler on piano, Kirk Joseph, an original member of Dirty Dozen Brass Band, on saxophone, Chief Monk Boudereaux of the Golden Eagles Mardi Gras Tribe. It was recorded in New Orleans before Katrina. We did overdubs in San Francisco months ago and the last couple of months have been mixing and editing and all of that. There is a promotional video shot for it by the same people that do all of Norah Jones's stuff. I'm very proud of it.

The other thing I'm really proud of is that I just got through producing Ruthie Foster's new record and it sounds amazing. It's going to be released the first of next year. I think a lot of people are going to be very surprised by it. It's kind of a return to her roots. She grew up singing in a black Baptist church in a rural town in East Texas. I wanted her to get back in touch with that. She is a fantastic piano player and people don't even know that because she always just plays the acoustic guitar. I have her playing a lot of piano on this record, and she's singing a lot of classical songs and soul and gospel songs in place of the folk thing she's been doing most of the time.

AD: How did you get into producing? What is that like?

PM: I started producing when I was with the Killer Bees because I was the only member of the band that wanted to spend all the extra hours in the studio hanging out with the engineer learning how to do things. From the very first Killer Bees record back in the early 80's, I would watch the guy in the studio after everybody else would go home. Even before that, when I was young, I would listen to records carefully and wonder how they did that — how they got that sound. It was a natural curiosity for me.

When I produce an album, I like to work closely with the artist in selecting the musicians that play on the recording. I'm there every second of the recording process. I make suggestions about mic placements, about arrangements, about what instrument to use, about how songs are sequenced on the record. If I take on a record production it is going to reflect a lot of my own personal approach and philosophy of music.

AD: You've been in town awhile and you've

seen many changes. What have been positive things and what have been negative things that you have seen here?

PM: I missed out on the Armadillo so I can't use that as a reference other than I've heard all about it and it must have been a magical scene. I did get here right in the hey day of Liberty Lunch and Liberty Lunch closing down was the end of a certain era of Austin music. I was there at the creation of SXSW because my manager at that time, Louis Meyers, was one of the founding partners, and I think that was a very positive thing as far as Austin music goes. I also remember when KGSR formed and that was a very



positive thing for Austin music. I think they have done a really good job of reflecting the taste and mood of the city. There are very few cities that have a major station that is as geared towards a local scene as KGSR is. And of course KUT has always been fantastic. Guys like Larry Monroe - has a wealth of knowledge of music and always been very supportive of music in general. ACL Fest and Austin City Limits television show. Austin City limits television show put Austin on the map for the rest of the world as far as music goes. And ACL Fest has just been tremendous.

AD: And the negative?

PM: Well, whether you like it or not it's bigger. And bigger doesn't always mean better.

From my perspective, I love the people of Austin for being as good to me as they have

been. Just this year the Killer Bees were induced into the Austin Music Hall of Fame by the Austin Chronicle readers. And that meant so much to me. It was a very proud moment.

The flip side of that is the Killer Bees were such a big deal locally, that it overshadows what I do now to people here. My career in the last three years

was really bigger than the Killer Bees ever were and it's hard for a lot of people to see that. I've played Bonnaroo, I've played Jazz Fest--all these huge events that the Killer Bees never got to do. When I come back to Austin they still say, "What are you up to these days?"

AD: Tell us about the Imperial Golden Crown Harmonizers?

PM: That is our public service work. It's something that we do that makes us feel good and makes other people feel good and helps the community. We specifically formed the band because everywhere I would go I would talk to veteran musicians who were not really what you would call super religious music but they loved gospel music. The way I choose to worship is by treating my fellow man the way I would like to be treated, and try to spread as much love as I can, try not to destroy my environment and just giving thanks as often as possible. When I hear the Staple Singers praising the Lord I feel the same way, I feel like jumping up and shouting Hallelujah! The more I talked to other people I realize there are a lot of people like me that feel the same way. There are a lot of musicians that feel the same way. So when we put the Imperial Golden Crown Harmonizers together it was me, Scrappy Jud, Paul Mills, Larry Fulcher and Malford Milligan. Pretty soon Larry got busy playing and couldn't do the gigs. It ended up being a rotating cast of characters but the one thing we all have in common is that we think that one of the most spiritual things that we can do is to get a group of people together and sing our hearts out for them, leave them feeling happy and then take all the money that we make and give it to people that are living out on the street and need help. That to me feels like good Karma, it feels like church, it feels like love. It may not be religion but it's the closest I'm going to get.

AD: What is the lesson you've learned being involved in the music industry?

PM: The greatest lesson I have learned is that music is a gift but without an audience it is like a gift that remains unopened. You have to give face and never take your audience for granted and always be grateful that there is somebody out there that wants to hear what you want to say. Without that happening, it's like the tree that falls in the forest that nobody hears fall.***



MARIA MESA'S RECORD REVIEWS



Howdy from Atown Records, it's your faithful musical servant here- Maria Mesa. I've been given the honor of writing music reviews, which puts me in the position of bestowing a wealth of great music upon anyone who still cares about real music. I want you to know that I don't take this responsibility lightly. There's a war being fought over music today, and the Corporate Bahstards are winning. So it's up to the little people like us to dig out obscure hidden gems.

This will be my last installment for a while. I've been invited on a spiritual quest to Ireland and Tibet. In Ireland I'm staying with a friend that gives haunted tours of Dublin and a few surrounding castles and old Catholic churches. In Tibet, I'm going to meet the Dalai Lama for a retreat in the mountains. While I'm there, I'm gonna try to re-create the mushroom experience Bill Hicks had at Kevin Booth's ranch. Given all the things that are going on in the world, I decided it's time to find some truth and enlightenment. I may or may not return. Please be kind to whoever takes over in my place. Thanks!

That being said, thanks for sending me your CD's and now it's time to read on!

The Applicators "My Weapon" 2006 Hairball 8 Records

Score= 7.5



When I first heard about these girls a few years ago, I was really excited. I loved the name and the concept, and being a chick who rocks myself, I wanted to give them my full support. So I ran out and bought 2001's "What's Your Excuse" and was a bit disappointed. The concept was there, the attitude, the energy and the look, but the budget production and tinny tone was a poor representation and I knew it wasn't worthy of them. It suffered from

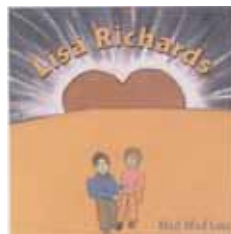
what a lot of the early punk recordings did, at a time when there was just no reason for it. But I held faith, because I knew these girls would be back, and they are.

I'm excited to say that "My Weapon" is the album I knew they were capable of making all along. This disc just rocks. The girls are a little older and wiser, the sound is fuller, richer, deeper, punchier, and sounds better cranked up in your car, which is a pretty important thing to me. The release of this album is in good time with the recent softening of The Donna's sound. The Applicators are brattier and edgier, taking The Runaway's style in more of an early punk direction than towards Ace Frehley and AC/DC.

The Applicators sound hungry and ready to knock The Donnas off the pedestal they've enjoyed for too long. Who'd be better to do that than a bunch of girls from Austin? This album is further proof that Austin chicks flat-out rock. What a wonderful place to be where artists like The Applicators, Adrian and the Sickness, Carolyn Wonderland and Patrice Pike are considered regular parts of the scene. Gotta love it! =====

Lisa Richards "Mad Mad Love" 2006 Independently Released

Score = 8.5



Lisa Richards has been quite a traveler, starting her career in Australia and then taking it to New York City. But fortunately for us, this Aussie now calls Austin home. As soon as I pressed "play," I knew this artist could join ranks with the best talent in our town.

"Mad Mad Love" is a sweet, wonderful thing. The first thing that hits you is her unique and expressive voice. Initially you will want to compare her to Macy Gray, Kate Bush, Björk, or perhaps Eartha Kitt. Then you begin to realize that Lisa Richards really has her own thing going, and any comparisons become futile. With an uncanny ability to be silly and feather-light, and disciplined and refined at the same time, she is definitely a singer's singer. She can also switch gears on a few bluesy songs and lean in a very natural Bonnie Raitt direction.

In "Mad Mad Love" she showcases that spectacular and versatile voice with twelve well-written and thought provoking songs. The production is far beyond its budget for an independent artist, and the talent along for the ride is superb. Lyrics range from story telling to the abstract, with plenty of imagery and emotional pull. This CD exhibits the experience and confidence few singer songwriters have.

=====

Butch Hancock "War and Peace" 2006 Two Roads Records

Score = 8



When Ed Hamell (Hamell On Trial) was here for the Folk Alliance, he did an in-store at Waterloo. With his typical wit he said "So this country and the whole world is going to hell in a hand basket worse than ever before, and I'm staying at the Folk Alliance and all those people over there are singing songs about flowers and butterflies. Where the hell are all the folk songs?" His point hit home and was greeted with laughter and applause. Well Ed, here's what you're looking for. Perhaps the events of the world today are so overwhelming that all the good songwriters are stumped- except Butch.

Many anti-war and anti-Bush CD's are sent my way and I usually agree with them politically and chuckle at the humor. But I haven't reviewed any because none have been great albums. None have been worthy of more than a few listens. Songwriting, musicianship and lyrical poetry always take the backseat to ranting about the mess we're in. Thankfully Butch knows better than to make that mistake. This IS a great album in every imaginable way, and a cathartic experience for the artist and listener alike. Butch has managed to take those thoughts and frustrations that so many of us share and turn it into great art and a beautiful lesson.

The music recorded here has a timeless quality that will far outlast Bush, this particular war and unfortunately the ones that are to come. The gentle lilting melodies often convey the peace and harmony he wishes to promote. With thought provoking wordplay and clever use of metaphor he never comes across as preachy or condescending, which will make it enjoyable even to some who support the war. The feeling you get is that of a wise old sage relaying the simple truths about the evils of war and the goodness of peace, without being too specific. He sings often about Bush but never really mentions him by name- it's just not necessary. Many future leaders will repeat his mistakes, so these songs are about them too. Butch is as good as Dylan when he was Dylan, and Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger as well.

=====

Leeann Atherton "Every Day Dream" 2006 Independently Released

Score = 8



Nothing less than the "Queen of South Austin," Leeann has been pumping life into the ONLY part of this city that's worthy of our reputation for quite some time. Her backyard "Barn Dances"



are some of the best house parties anyone could throw anywhere. If someone tried that in north Austin, their neighborhood association would shut them down. Try it in Round Rock, and Williamson County's finest would slap them around, bloody their nose and leave them in the slammer. But in South Austin, no one complains because they're all there, having a great time. Life is good down here, ain't it?

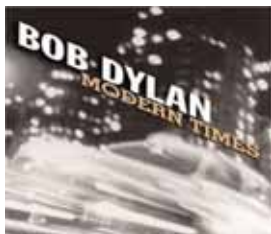
This CD is just dripping with soul. Leeann has this wonderful kind of old time bluesy rock thing happening that echoes of Motown, Janice Joplin, Bonnie Raitt, Marcia Ball and plenty of artists from the 60's and 70's that aren't around anymore. Her warm, full and slightly raspy voice is strong and consistent, and very versatile. As good as it is, the musicianship here is probably even better.

There's no hiding the blazing melodic lead guitar solos by Johnny Mac and Larry Wilson, the slide guitar work by Papa Mali, the rhythm guitars by Sunnyman and Jackson, Riley Osbourn's Hammond B3, bass by Courtney Audain and drums by Frosty. Several other talented guests round the recording out nicely. The musicianship makes for a big big sound that way exceeds the budget for this independent release. That's what friends are for, and Leeann has plenty of talented friends.

Songwriting is also strong, with Leeann writing or co-writing most of the tracks. "What's Your Situation" is a jazz departure, which reminds me of the jazz-pop from the mid 90's. Extra points goes for track 5, a tribute to Austin's beloved Mamo John Traynor. (Anything that makes Mambo look down from above and smile gets a nod from me.)

=====

Bob Dylan
"Modern Times"
2006 Sony Records



There's one thing that keeps all artists going, no matter what their craft is. It's the idea that they could still come up with something better than anything they've done so far. It's the thought that their defining moment may not have happened yet, and if they keep reaching down deep enough, maybe they'll find it. But if you're a guy like Bob Dylan, that's got to be one hell of a monkey to carry around on your back. As big as his 800-pound gorilla must be, it doesn't stop him. Maybe that's because he quit buying into that logic and pushed the monkey off years ago.

That logic is flawed for many reasons, one of which is that artists evolve and change in many intangible ways. They don't just start out and continue on in a linear direction, they must constantly re-invent themselves and jump on different tracks altogether. Certainly Bob has become

a very different artist over the years, so to wonder if he's better now than he was in the 1960's disrespects both the man back then and the man today.

If you ask me, I like his voice far better now. It's weathered, haunting, mysterious and engaging. It's completely different, so once again, apples and oranges. But this is the sound I WANT to hear from Dylan today. If he were still doing that trademark warble that every comedian has impersonated, it would be almost unlistenable.

What you will here in "Modern Times" is graceful simplicity in its finest form. Dylan understands that if it's not necessary to the song, then it doesn't belong. That's the lesson to be learned here. It's smooth and soothing, well seasoned and effortless, which is somehow edgy in its own way. It is a wake up call to anyone who might think Dylan is no longer relevant, or that this is old hippie folk music.

=====

RokkaTone
"In This Life"
2006 Independently Released



Score = 7.5

RokkaTone is a 5-piece acoustic band from Austin, specializing in old school ska and rocksteady. The goal of this group is to sound like "a Jamaican street band" from the time when Alton Ellis, Toots & the Maytals, Desmond Dekker and the Skatalites ruled the island. They blend that sound with American folk, blues and ragtime, and a bit of doo-wop for good measure.

By the late 1970's, ska music was slowly being absorbed by the punk rock scene, which resulted in songs with faster and faster tempos. More of the bands were coming from England or America instead of Jamaica. Sadly, this became the ska sound that most Americans know today. While hyperfast tempos may have been fun for a while, in the end it ripped the heart and soul right out of the genre. Ska had lost its roots, Jah was saddened, and darkness fell upon the face of the earth.

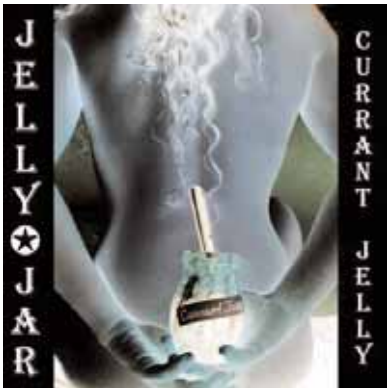
So it is really refreshing to me that this group is helping to revive the style, and bring it back to its simple, mellow "rocksteady" ways. More interesting is the acoustic format, with upright bass and stripped down drums and percussion. Even more interesting is the use of the melodica, and the sparse presence of steel drum. The choice of instrumentation really helps to create a unique and timeless thing. (There just aren't many towns in America where such a ska band

would form other than Austin.)

The production is sparse and thin, but I think that's the feel veteran ska producer Victor Rice was shooting for. (You almost expect to hear a few skips and pops as if you're listening to old vinyl.) Songwriting is up to the task creating smooth, intoxicating melodies and the same kind of simple romantic lyrics old ska was known for. The musicianship wisely lets the songwriting take the lead and does not stand in the way by doing unnecessary things. I don't think these guys are trying too hard to please the purists, but if any kind of ska is your thing, these guys are for you.

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CYRIL NEVILLE



AUSTIN DAZE: How does the Austin music scene compare to the New Orleans music scene?

CYRIL NEVILLE: Let me put it like this: there's a lot more activity here after the storm than there was before the storm. I'll just put it like that. The city is a lot bigger than I thought it was, really.

Mechanisms here that allow musicians to help themselves have been in place for awhile now so it's kind of easier for you to basically make a living doing what you love to do here in Austin. Another part about being in Austin is that you can get connected to a lot of different things. It's more widespread. New Orleans is really a

small place so the difference in the number of clubs is huge — just on sixth street there are more clubs just in that area than in one concentrated area in New Orleans.

AD: Why did you choose Austin to be your new home?

CN My wife and my daughter had come here before. The last 5 or 6 storms that came I was on the road. She made the decision to get out of the city and everything so I just went. We had come here before and it was really nice — it's nicer than New Orleans in many ways: the music scene here and the different cultures of people that are here and that's kind of what made our minds up to come here.

AD: How do you feel about Austin? How does the music scene here compare to New Orleans?

CN We had been here only two days before we heard from Marcia Ball. So that's one of the reasons that we decided to stay. The total community of Austin reached out to us. I'd say that we are here now so we're pretty much Austinites. In saying that, you can take us out of New Orleans, but you can't take New Orleans out of us. The music and everything that we are is New Orleans. But at the same time there are a lot of things here that remind me of New Orleans. One thing is that the average musician here loves New Orleans music and loves New Orleans culture that's why it wasn't hard to find musicians that could blend in and make it feel the way it's supposed to feel.

AD: How has the displacement from New Orleans affected the Neville Brothers getting together?

CN We are scattered all over the place. Not just the brothers but everyone that plays with us.

It's pretty much a trip getting everybody together. The last time we went out everybody just met up in Atlanta from different points then flew to wherever we were going together. Art is still in New Orleans, Willie Green is still in New Orleans, Nick, myself, and Ivan are in Austin. Ian is in New York and New Orleans sometimes. So it's like people are scattered all over everywhere. Whoever has to sit down and put all those logistics together it probably makes their job a lot harder.

AD: Tell us about the new band, Tribe 13.

CN Actually Tribe 13 grows out of what I was doing with my uncle Big Chief Jolly and the Wild Tchaptoulas. We had another band called Uptown Allstars. Maybe about a year before we left New Orleans we started doing this and one of the main characters in it was Papa Mali who I've been knowing for over 20 years--since he was with the Kler Bees. And we were doing this thing but we had never gotten the chance to do it in Austin. So when we got here we started doing it a little bit more and I wound up getting 3 really great musicians from here to join forces with us: Courtney Audain on bass, Mr. Brown on guitar, Jimmie Dreams on guitar, and my two nephews, Ricky and Norman Caesar - The Caesar Brothers, my wife Gaynielle and myself. That's essentially what the Tribe 13 band is now. And then Kevin Goodman of the Mardi Gras Indians comes out and sits in with us sometimes too. We are basically carrying the real spirit and cultural essence of New Orleans music.

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AD: Did you have a chance to catch up with the Spike Lee movie?

CN We saw it. Wow, I'm just glad that somebody did it and the way that he did it because it's in the voices of the people and it's actually the people expressing what happened to them. It's hard to watch. Then again at the same time it's essential that you do watch it because then you know what really did happen. Just think about how painful it is to watch it and how much more painful it is to actually have experienced it.

AD: What advice would you have for someone who is new to the music business?

CN Know your business. Like they say, it's 99% business and 1% show. *

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Garden District

The other day we visited a café that is located at the front of the Great Outdoors. The visit, I should preface, was not voluntary. Having ventured to this same location on several occasions before—each time under a different name and owner—I had all but written the place off. It seemed destined to be the structure that housed bland, uninspired cuisine. I am surprised and delighted to announce that The Garden District has ended this location's unfortunate tradition.

Upon entering the café, I was set at ease by its comforting and welcoming vibe. Right away I knew this would be a good place to hang out and sip some brew. Coffee, that is. Ruta Maya Coffee. Coffee isn't the only thing this place has going for it: the menu is an impressive array of entrees and snacks all made from the freshest of ingredients. There are amazing homemade, cooked to order empanadas that come with either a chicken or beef filling. The sweet spice is just right. I ordered a blueberry smoothie and veggie sandwich while Wendy

ordered the Garden District's "famous" Cuban sandwich. The veggie sandwich was piled high with garden delights on a toasted bun with cheese and a delicious hummus spread. My blueberry smoothie was dangerously good. So good, I have been back a few times just for it. Craving anything is always dangerous. Let me warn you it is habit forming.



Wendy's Cuban sandwich looked so good that I had to steal a bite or two. Scrumptious

The proprietor, Ryan Marks, was on hand to give us a tour. The Garden District lives up to its name! The back deck is like stepping into a magical palace garden complete with fountains that help set the mood. It overlooks the Great Outdoors' botanical splendor and you truly feel transported.

I should mention, Ryan and I have known each other for many years — 7 to be exact. Although our friendship spans the history of the Austin Daze conception and birth — Ryan owned and operated the smoke shop at the old Ruta Maya where I was a regular non-smoker, hungry for good dialogue — I am not shy of being critical. Friendship or not. He is well versed in running a smooth and welcoming atmosphere. He made a wise move and sold out of that place before the Yuppies took over. Ryan was ready to make another mark on the Austin culture. I would say he has done so. It is the real deal—a perfect combination of great food, serene atmosphere, and welcoming proprietorship. Take some time and stop in for lunch or a snack and I guarantee you will be back! The address is 2810 S. Congress. Phone # is 512-462-2473 M-F 7am - 10pm, Sat 8am-10pm, Sun 9am- 10pm



Polvo's

By Chappy Sinclair

South 1st Street in the ATX: Taco Row, The Isle of Mex, whatever you wanna call it, you could slip on an enchilada and fall into basket of tacos one step off the sidewalk.

This is where the taco obsession started for me, my taco homeland. I used to work in an office at Monroe and South 1st. come lunch time every day, we would choose the next restaurant in line. El Mercado, Jovita's, Little Mexico, La Reyna, La Mexicana Bakery, Aranada's #5, and of course, Polvo's... Polvo's is about as "South Austin" as you can get. It's not overly-trendy by any means. It is real. The decor is funky and colorful. The patio is always crowded and the wait staff is laid back and helpful. It's where the real

Austinites go to eat. It's a great place to have some drinks, you'll probably run into an old friend and see a semi-famous Austinite or two there as well. The food is not Tex-Mex, rather, it is mostly authentic central Mexican dishes: they are known for their fish tacos.

The salsa bar is there right when you walk inside, a round ice trough with 4 or 5 fresh salsas there for the tasting. Grab a bowl and see how many varieties you can carry back to your table without having an accident. My favorite is the dark red roast ancho salsa. It's the perfect amount of tangy-spicy-ness. On this particular day, I was in the mood to sample some new stuff. I decided to order 3 different tacos. One beef fajita, a chicken mole, and a pastor taco with rice and beans to complete the meal. My running partner, Cabeza, ordered the fish enchiladas with the cartuja pepian sauce, which is a rich almond creme sauce that I have sampled in the past. Its an amazing sauce that you have to try to understand. Food came. My tacos looked beautiful, large, and steaming hot. The homemade corn tortillas were

everything they should be, dense and strong enough to survive a large amount of fillings without cracking or getting too soggy. They are damn near perfect in that they don't distract you from the taco fillings. I went for the chicken mole taco. It was tasty, with shredded chicken and a generous amount of mole sauce drizzled on top. I keep trying mole in this town and I am always led back to Curra's. If you dig mole - its my hands down favorite. Polvo's mole was respectable, but not worthy of much praise from Chappy. The highlight of my taco triage was most certainly the beef fajita. It was amazing. The beef was marinated and cooked to perfection. Tender and exploding with flavor. The grilled pablano peppers mixed in were a pleasant counterpart to the beef. I was having a taste bud oragasm eating this taco. I was not expecting this at all. Most the time the beef fajita meat is a standard afterthought, but here, and in the late afternoon no less, the beef fajita was the shining light of taco beauty that made Chappy want to die and ascend into the the heavens while eating on the last bite. I'm not kid-

ding. Cabeza's fish enchiladas were a very respectable runner up to the beef fajita taco. FYI - a past highlight of the menu has been the exotic tacos - where you can get the aforementioned almond creme sauce on an open face tortilla with your choice of meat. It's cheap and huge - 1 taco is enough for a meal. All in all, a great Polvo's experience. Another reason why I love this town. There are endless opportunities for fearless taco explorers to roam the streets in search of mexi-perfection. On this day, I succeeded. Polvo's Mexican Restaurant 2004 S 1st St (Cross Street: W Johanna Street) Austin, TX 78704 (512) 441-5446 **The Score: (scale of 1-10)** **Food: 9 (quality across the board)** **Salsa: 8 (great salsas - good variety)** **Tortillas: 8 (perfect corn, standard flour)** **Price: 8 (cheap meal)** **Service: 7 (some-times slow, but always friendly)** ***



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AUSTIN ALIVE with the Austin Daze



Austin is Austin, both night and day there is something cool always happening. This is a small taste of some of the events we were at. This page will gain momentum as the days pass. Please go out and support the culture that makes our city unique.



Oliver Mtukudzi at Threadgill's

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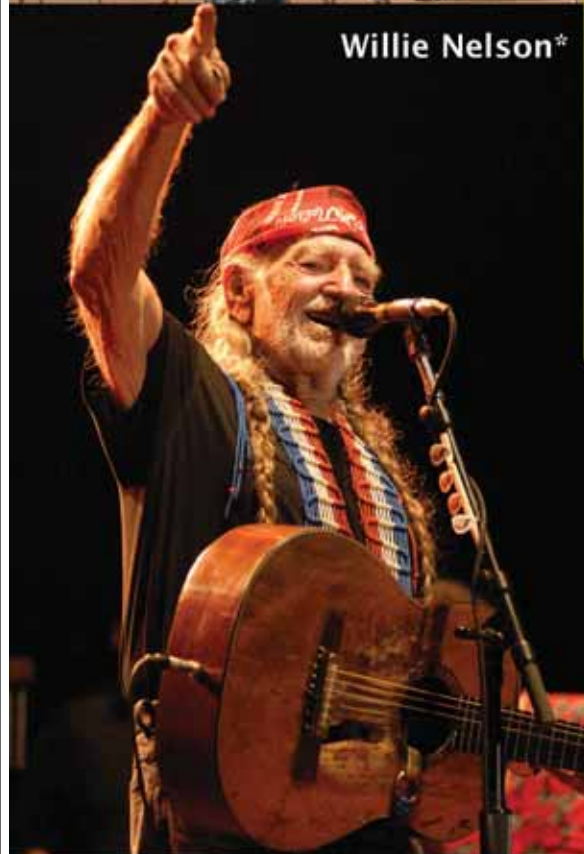
Cyril Neville at Huston-Tillotson





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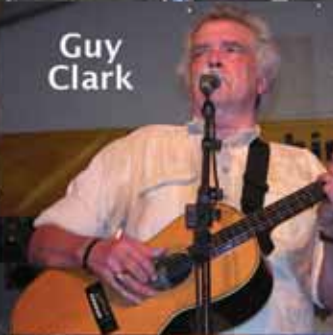
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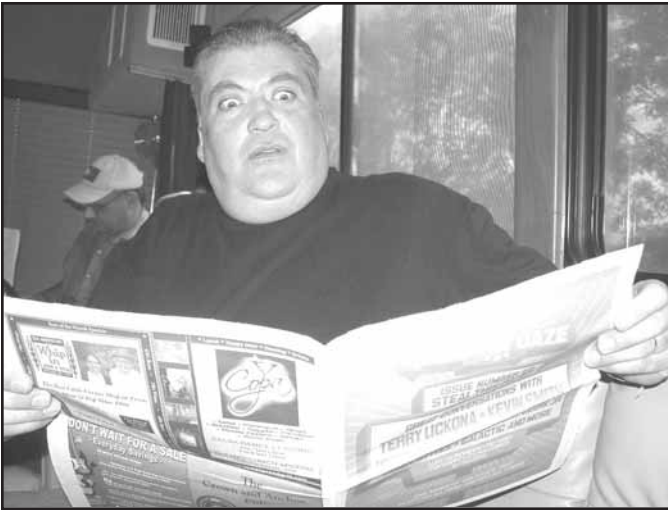
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LOS LOBOS



AUSTIN DAZE: Tell us about your new album "Town and the City". What was the recording process like?

LOS: We were recording at Cesar's house and it was a pretty casual atmosphere. It took a little while to get the ball rolling. We usually go in with a couple of ideas, hopefully to get the thing going, and then get a feel for where it is headed. We don't have all the material written and it's not rehearsed or anything. We

just go on inspiration. We started off with a couple of songs and then in the middle started writing and everything and we went out with an album.

AD: Does the album have anything to do with Kerouac's book of the same name?

LOS: We just used the title. Normally when we start writing we have a concept or we kind of follow the inspirations of the music and where it leads us. As it starts to form and creates this body of work you can kind of see how the songs are related. Usually, if you write the songs in the same period of time they somehow mate. I guess

the way that that album turned out it kind of had that feel of someone going on a journey. Starting off at this dream and getting lost along the way and trying to make it back home. It seemed to work with that title.

AD: What makes this album feel special to you? Do certain albums feel better than other ones in the artist's eyes?

LOS: I think so. I think it's the atmosphere and the working environment. If it's comfortable and things are going well, even if it is hard work, it doesn't go quickly sometimes. If you get the feeling that things are coming together and you see new things happen that you're not repeating yourself and there are different kinds of songs and you see things unfold before your eyes, it's inspiring. And that feeling creates a good album—all the memories you had. With the Neighborhood—which I think is a good album and has good songs—we had a lot of trouble with the record company and it sat on the shelf for six months. When it came out I didn't want to listen to it. People

seemed to like it but it just killed the whole thing for me as an artist.

When we did Kiko, it was the first time we worked with Mitchell Froom and Tchad Blake and it was a new atmosphere. Stuff would just start to click. We started experimenting and trying different things—just looking around. We were like big kids. I think you can feel it on the recording. On this album you can feel that something is happening. If you can catch a performance on record it's a lot stronger than trying to piece something together.

AD: Tell us about how Los Lobos writes a song.

LOS: It usually starts with a simple idea. I usually do stuff on my own. I work with buie, we write together but apart. I'll come up with the ideas and put them on tape and I'll play it for him and see which ones he likes. If he's inspired then we'll talk about it—he'll kind of shape it and take it to the band. Then when the band plays it they sometimes change it up.

AD: Over the years you all have recorded with many people. Who has been the coolest to work with and who has been the hardest?

LOS: Everyone has been great. Who comes to mind is Bobby Womack—he was an amazing gentleman; gracious. We went into the studio and he wanted to work. He was there for the music. It wasn't work, it was a joy—it was beautiful. We did it a few times and he hung out the whole day and was talking to our kids and stuff. It was a really great feeling. He was really generous.

And we got to work with Willie Dixon—another one. He was the A&R man producer for all the Chest records. He wrote all these great songs. He liked us. He pulled us in and directed us and gave us pointers—a great man. A really, really cool human being.

Everybody was just really cool.

AD: What does playing at the ACL Festival mean to you?

LOS: Well, obviously it's a great show. They have been really good to us over the years. This thing is so big. We played the first one that was amazing. It was hot and everyone was passing out and everybody still had a great time. I just wish they had it in March or something. We always have a good time here. It's one of the best places to play. It's a music town. Musicians can actually make a living playing here. It's one of the few cities that still have live music everywhere. Austin, Chicago, and Boulder, Colorado are the nicest places to play. Good for us. San Francisco is really good too. But Austin stands out.

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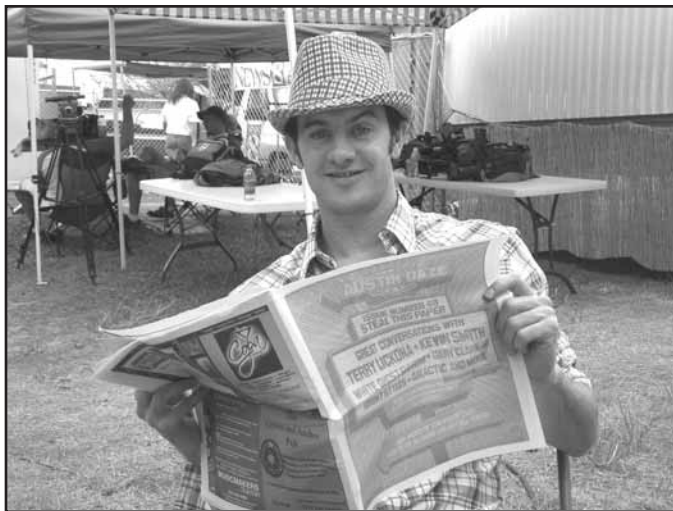
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G LOVE



AUSTIN DAZE: Tell us about Lemonade and what it means to you?

GLAND SPECIAL SAUCE is our new record. This was a cool record for us because we tried to start out doing a regular G love and Special Sauce record and we just started reaching out to musicians that we knew. It started with Leo Nocentelli from the Meters and then Ben Harper. That kind of got the ball rolling and we ended up with a lot of people playing on the record. So, Leo, Ben Harper, Jack Johnson, Donovan Frankenreiter, Tristan Prettyman, Blackalicious, the dudes from the Roots, Steve Molitz from Particle, Kyle from Slightly Stoopid, Jason Yates from Ben Harper's band--a lot of people played on the record. What kind of set it apart from previous G love records was the amount of collaborations that were on the record. It still comes off as a G love record so that's pretty cool. We were able to invite and collaborate with a lot of incredible musicians but still keep our identity on the record.

AD: Your touring schedule is crazy — how many shows have you done this year?

GLSince the record release, we started in August. This is the second leg of the Lemonade tour. This year is pretty busy for us in general. We toured a lot even before the record came out. This year we'll do maybe 200 shows, 175, something like that.

AD: Do you ever relax?

GL I do what I love so I never try to admit that I



have a job. It would seem like a lot of work if I felt like I was working. The travel is

a lot. I have a five-year-old son so I try and juggle a heavy touring schedule with trying to be a good father and get home to be with him. I've got plenty of drama with my ex and that s**t definitely weighs me down sometimes but at the same time, it's just life. The older you get the more heavy things you have to experience in your life and you just have to take it in stride and not let it get you down.

AD: Tell us about the relationship you have with your fans.

GLWe like to interact with our fans. There's been a couple of times in my career where I've been frustrated with different things creatively, business wise, that involved making music, and I was just like, Man, I don't know if I can take this anymore." Any time I had moments of self doubt a show would be really euphoric and remind me of why I'm playing music. A fan would reach out in a sincere way and just say "Your music is important to me because of this and this."

Really the fans--without trying to pander to the audience too much--the fans and the crowd are very important to me. It's funny, you get addicted to crowd reaction. You get addicted to what the crowd gives you and it's a dangerous thing because the music has to come from inside of you. Being on stage is where the vibes have to start. But once you learn more and more how to work a crowd you realize how you can manipulate the vibe of the whole audience without even playing a note. Whether you just say something funny --you know how to get people hyped up. It's amazing. A microphone is a tremendous power. I always feel like when you are on stage you have 15 minutes or 2 hours or whatever it is, and this group of people, you're all in the same situation together and I'm the person that can really dictate where that whole experience is going to go. Even if everything is against you: the sound, the heat, you're sick, maybe your band isn't playing that good, maybe the crowd's off, maybe the room sucks, you can overcome any of that. At the same time if you have a great situation where everyone is playing great,

the fans are great; you're like, Oh my god I could also f**k this up." You've just got to play it.

AD: Tell us about Philadelphonics.

GLThat's just our company and the name of one of our records and our crew. Representing Philadel--our home town--and bringing the phonics, man.

AD: How do you feel about Austin?

GLIt's great. It's been a really supportive town. We've had really great shows back in the days at the Liberty Lunch and Stubbs and Elcos and Antone's. I played a show last night. Of course City Limits--we're like a staple here; knock on wood. We're about 5 years. We have a great relationship with Charles and the promoters and everything. I think more importantly, our music bridges a lot of gaps. This is kind of an eclectic festival and we're kind of a quirky, eclectic band. We kind of bridge a lot of musical styles and I think it works well at a festival like this. You have such opposite sides of the spectrum: like Ann Barton and Gnarls Barkley. We're a real melting pot. Sometimes it kind of upsets me that we bring too many flavors into our mix --the sauce has a lot of ingredients these days --but we keep it live and we like to put on a good show and it's all good.

AD: What's next for you guys?

GLWe're going to get ready to wake up and get on stage and put on a great show. We have the new CD out so that's cooking. We've got some good momentum but hopefully we can pop one. I have produced a new John Hammond record. He's my major idol and influence and I produced him this past year. Otherwise just kind of focusing on promoting the new record and the band is sounding great and we are just cruising. ***

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MATT COSTA



AUSTIN DAZE: Tell us how you got into playing music and some of your influences.

MATT COSTA: Well when I was a kid my god-mother had a piano at her house and she would watch me when my parents were gone. I always would just be drawn to the piano and I would just start playing. So my parents decided that since I was always drawn to music they should start putting me in music classes or get me involved with music. My parents put me in school band, I played the trumpet and I took some piano lessons. I got my first guitar when I was 12. I've pretty much just been involved with music my whole life.

A lot of my main influences have been music from the 60's and folk music from the early 190's. Like Mississippi John Hurt, Lead Belly and all the things that inspired a lot of what Bob Dylan and all the 60's beat folk thing that happened. That just inspired the roots of what I would like to do just because it was so much easier to understand a song in the simplest form and understand what made it, you know what I mean? As opposed to so many sounds happening at once. I hear other music and it's just a world of sound and I would get so lost in it that I couldn't understand what was happening how to create that musically. I would get lost in the world of it. Folk music was like a miniature world of that where I could learn how to do that. From there I could expand and then gradually grow into what become the bigger art productions. So that's how I started learning about music.

AD: It seems like you took the express to fame after just starting out. Can you elaborate?

MT: Well you make a deal with the devil at the crossroads. You go down the crossroads and play a couple of songs and he takes your guitar, you don't look at

him, he gives it back to you and you can play any song you want. You've got to be a little creative because you have to come up with the songs but you can play anything you want so it makes writing a little bit easier.

AD: I've read that you have been compared to Bob Dylan. What do you feel about that?

MC: You know, it's an honor but I think I just do what I do. Everyone out here, all the musicians, they just do what they do. You can't take any of that stuff too seriously and just make the most of it. It's a great compliment but I know that even Bob Dylan wants to shed his past. It's a crazy thing. He is who he is and he shouldn't have to live up to anything and I don't think anyone should have to live up to anyone. People are who they are, what comes out comes out and they are going to do what they are going to do. Everyone that is playing today is going to be way more respected 100 years from now because they aren't doing it anymore they are not alive. When you can't get it, it's that much better. That's what makes it so special.

AD: Tell us about that songwriting process.

MT: It's a weird thing. When you write a song it all comes off of one basic idea that happens. Whether it's like a 5 second, 10 second or 20 second bit of inspiration that comes, it's using itself as a form of meditation. You're doing it or you're involved in it. Writing music, 6 hours go by and you don't even realize it. With anything you love, time goes by and you don't realize it you're in that zone, you know? I think what happens when you write music is that it's weird because you don't have the song and the next second you do. And it's like, "What happened in that 20 seconds; where did it come from?" It really just comes out of thin air. It's just a matter of capturing that moment when you have it and from there you just elaborate on that. I'll sit around for months at a time and wait around for that moment and then when you have it and you really like that melody or song then I'll sit down for 2 days or for however long and just assess it until it becomes a full, thought out piece.

AD: What does playing ACL Fest mean to you?

MC: It is an honor to be invited here. I've played a lot of festivals this year, touring around the country and hitting all the festivals in between

there. Austin is such a big music town. Everywhere you drive down the streets, every place has got their venue. The whole town is dedicated to live music and that whole thing. I've been here a bunch: I've been to SXSW, I've played lots of shows here before. But to come and be part of a grander thing where it's an event where all this music comes together, the whole city comes together and people come from everywhere, to be involved in that is just a privilege. I just try to soak it up. It's great because a lot of people that I know who are my friends I see when I'm here.

AD: Tell us about your recent album.

MC: Songs We Sing is the name of my record and it came out in March. Basically it's just a definitive collection of everything I have been working on for the past 3 years. It pretty much sums up, until a year ago, who I was. So now I've been touring and growing a lot faster since then. Things have been coming in every direction. It's a documentation of what my life was — the books I was reading, the people I was involved with, my friends. There was a whole period when I was going to a friend's house and there were a bunch of people that would stay there — it was like a flop house. We'd go there and I would bring my guitar and I'd sing cover songs. Every new song I wrote I would play over there. Those were the songs that we would sing, you know? So I figured what better title to call the album then, Songs We Sing. It just made sense. So that's how that came about.

AD: What's next for you?

MC: D'geez. I'm going to go to Europe in 5 days. I'm going to Europe to tour for 3 weeks. It's my third time in Europe this year. This year has been crazy. I have no home anymore; my home is the road. It's great though. It's great to be out and seeing so much and trying to write as much music as I can and learn as much as I can while I'm out here and soak it all up — see all the different people and soak it all up.

AD: Is there anything else?

MC: Live it up. ****



HAAM - A Bridge Over Troubled Water

- Dony Wynn

Musicians, by today's standard, are the equivalent of the nekkid red headed stepchild. While the world demands we give them our life's blood for free even as the cost of living dramatically rises, our standard of living hasn't had an increase since the early 70's. While our industry fails even after systematically raping us from the very beginning, no one is there to extend a helping hand, a helping hand that could very well gives us yet another day to compose a piece of music that would make a difference in your life. We musicians need food just like everyone else, a roof over our heads as everyone expects, and health care, too, what everyone on this planet deserves. Yet I watch in disgust how everyone from every working sector takes care of their own while we who are blessed/cursed to make this music that everyone wants and actually needs when you get right down to it, have been left so far out of the shuffle as to not be believed, and even our own kind use and abuse us when in positions where they could make a difference, but don't. Meanwhile, no one is there for us. No one. In my mind what is systematically being done to us is downright criminal, but we don't have a unified voice so therefore we are largely ignored and openly ridiculed.

For those of you who know me are very aware I've made it my life's mission to actively do something about the situation rather than bitching and griping while our existence grows even worse, if that much can be believed, and having lived within the system, I can say that yes, overall the musician's predicament is getting worse, much, much worse.

So consider me very proud to announce to you today, dear reader, that in this incredible community we live in there are indeed some people from other sectors who are showing some high degrees of understanding and compassion, and are actively putting their money and efforts where their mouths are; veritable angels in human clothing in my humble opinion, as to be honest, they don't have to lift a finger or expend an ounce of energy to help us, as they could just go on about their lives doing whatever they please, but no, some courageous people here in Austin have also made it their mission to get involved and help with the musician's current plight. God bless 'em, sez I!

I am speaking about the HAAM organization, which stands for Health Alliance for Austin Musicians.

HAAM is an organ-

ization that grants access to health care, existing only for musicians who qualify under their system. After the screening

process, if you indeed qualify, you have access to services which include a physicians care for a mere co-pay, outside professional services are worked out on a percentage basis according to your income through the Seton Family of Hospitals, access to SIMS mental health services involves a co-pay, while the dental program through the St. David's Community Health Foundation is free. And with the rising costs of care in this day and age such a gift can save people's lives, their homes, their families, and for this they are to be highly commended.

HAAM was spearheaded by several folks, all of whom deserve mention. Through the efforts of the SIMS Foundation represented by Ray Benson, Robin Shivers a local music manager and advocate, Diana Resnik, Vice President of Seton Community Care, and Carol Clark, representing St. David's Community Health Foundation, the unprecedented happened. Through these people's efforts both Seton and St. David's, two competitive systems, began to work together to benefit musicians with their medical and dental needs.

HAAM was officially launched at SXSW in March 05 and in April of that same year began to see clients for the first time.

Carolyn Schwarz was brought onboard as Director of Services for HAAM after working several years at Insure-A-Kid, helping Texas children get access to healthcare.

Personally screening each applicant, Carolyn is committed to bring musicians the help they need from both a personal and professional standpoint (music lover that she is!). Talking with Carolyn it became evident that she is dogged in her determination to expand the current program. For instance, a recent HAAM fundraiser, The HAAM Benefit Day, was staged where local businesses agreed to donate 5% of each sale they made that day while customers were being entertained by many of the local artists, a day that looks to have been very successful on several fronts. In 2006, HAAM received grants from the Austin Community Foundation and the Cain Foundation. HAAM is also currently working with the Topfer Family Foundation as well as the

Moody Foundation who've both agreed to match 25K in grants generated by this latest fundraiser.

At present Seton has offered 500 openings to HAAM, but through efforts and others like these Carolyn has high hopes to up that number to the 1000 range by year's end.

That's 1000 musicians who will have access to health care where none existed before HAAM came into being.

HAAM, a program that helps many in this town who provide the entertainment that is known the world over isn't just lip service, these people have created something from nothing that gives quality of life to those who bring smiles to so many faces and make more than a few butts wiggle in the aisles, too.

'Bout time, ain't it?***

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Trailer Vittles, Part 2

- Magnus Opus

One of my first introductions to trailer vittles occurred in Milan, Italy, to be exact. I was living there as the fellow for whom I thumped, Robert Palmer, had built a recording studio in city center and with as much work as we were doing then it only made sense for me to locate there, too, not to mention by this time I'd grown quite fond of the Italian people and their way of life. Hard to knock a nation and a people that thrive on artistry and beauty in everything they do, you know?

After putting in a routine 14-hour day of making music we'd light out into town to unwind a bit, cut loose, shake a tail feather, in other words. There was a particular bar that had a great in house DJ, lots of pretty girls, too, so it became our nightly hang. The name of the club was "Killer Plastic-O"; lots of friendly faces, great pours, and if you felt like dancing you needn't ask a partner as it was considered normal to just get up and strut your stuff if you so felt the calling. I remember a particular song -and this comes from a guy who doesn't dance at all- called "Waterfall" by the group Wendy and Lisa that made my butt move pretty much every time it hit the speakers. A very splendiferous, festive time, all in all...

Our little entourage would always stay 'til closing then afterward we congregated at a trailer in midtown near a roundabout, a yellow neon lit trailer that sold sausage sandwiches exclusively for the late night crowd, or salsiccia panini as the locals called them. This trailer also served real decent inexpensive bottles of vino as well, as the party didn't just end there. No such ball busting Americano rules there, thank goodness...

I distinctly remember the communal feeling of gathering there, all my new Italian friends, the smell of grilling meats wafting through the air, and how delicious it was to stave off the morning hangover by ingesting these incredible sandwiches, sharing a bottle or two along the way. A great way to end the evening! Tons of good cheer and great eats, if memory holds me correct. And trust me, some of those memories are quite fuzzy, but still memorable.

Fast forward to my moving to Austin many years later... Imagine my surprise when leaving 6th St. late one night and stumbling across "Best Wurst". Admittedly I suffered a fit of Vuja De, the strange feeling I'd never been there before, but the experience was familiar all the same. Results were the same, too, minus the after hours vino, of course.

Over time, since diving in to the local music scene as I have, I've been fortunate enough to eventually get to know the owner, Jon Notarthomas, both onstage and off.

It was only a few weeks ago when I finally nailed Jon down to get the story behind his baby, "Best Wurst". At the time he'd just rolled into Chicago from New York City where he was tour managing Ian MacLagen and The Bump Band.

Before he and Ian went out to get some

late night eats, Jon had to say this about that...

Best Wurst



Jon has been a guitarist most of his adult life, having begun when a teenager. He was raised in Syracuse, New York but ultimately felt the calling of the Austin music scene and relocated here.

As it turned out, a childhood friend of his, Steve Novelli, had also relocated here and had brought with him a homegrown creation, a trailer that sold sausage sandwiches late night, then called "Flamin' Hots", which set up shop nightly in a doorway of a pawnshop next to "The Black Cat".

His friend's creation caught Jon's attention on several levels. One, Jon has always been a big "foodie", but he also was a huge fan of the little mom and pop joints, little quirky holes in the wall that served great late night food at inexpensive prices. During this portion of our interview Jon mentioned the affinity he felt with the famous Saturday Night Live skit where the Greek family has the "Cheezboiger Cheezboiger Pepsi!" stand (modeled after a very famous late night Chicago eatery, the "Billy Goat Tavern" - a place I have also graced very late in the evening after The Bulls '96 World Championship game final where I shared a cheezboiger with my then employer, Kix Brooks, he of Brooks and Dunn fame - by the way, Dennis Rodman was f\$%#king awesome in that championship win!!)

Having to support himself while he invested himself in the local music scene, Jon looked to get a job at several restaurants but found the more corporate atmosphere a bit stifling, so he eventually began working part time at what was now called, "Best Wurst".

Over time the business lost focus which cost the little trailer dearly. Sales were down, public support was down, in short, the door for opportunity opened...

Feeling the call for a chance to grasp manifest destiny and noticing the lack of late night affordable eats in the Austin area, Jon stepped in to buy the sausage stand from his friend so he could bring it back to preeminence. This was early in '96.

Jon laughed recalling how here he was, a guitarist, now a hot dog salesman and the thought of him bugged him greatly on more than one occasion. But there was also a side of him that burned with the desire to provide the community with a slice of home, so Jon upped the ante and began to actively investigate procuring the best sausages he could find.

During this time Jon also decided to go

back to school and found his job as a hot dog salesman could pay for it. "It was at this time", Jon said, "that I began to take this job a little more seriously, time to treat it more like a business."

Jon was able to convince the city to allow him to set up shop where he's been for many years, at the corner of 6th St. and San Jacinto. The hours of that location are 7PM to 3:30 AM, Wednesday thru Saturday. He's also got another "Best Wurst" stand that sets up at the corner of 6th St. and Red River, same hours, Friday and Saturday only. Jon also mentioned he's planning to open a new stand soon which he will situate in the Warehouse District. During lunchtime on Thursdays the "Best Wurst" trailer can be found at the corner of 9th and Congress

"Best Wurst" has been steadily gaining in popularity over the years, so much so concert promoters now actively seek him out whenever a big festival hits town, most noticeably the ACL Festival. Jon also informed me that the Rolling Stones team personally contacted him to be at their upcoming show in Zilker Park, too. I guess being a hot dog salesman has its perks, eh?!

Jon laughs again when he tells me his goal is to be known for being the most efficient restaurant in town. "I want this little stand to have an iconic status, so that when people think of Austin, they think of all the things this town is famous for, and I want "Best Wurst" to be on that list."

Now selling almost 80,000 sandwiches per trailer each year, Jon is well on his way to achieving this kind of status. He has a staff of 8 guys that pretty much have been with him for quite some time, "A real dedicated bunch", he says.

Jon relayed, "You know, I've long since left behind the troubling feeling of being a hot dog salesman, and I now see "Best Wurst" as freedom, the freedom to be independent and live my life as I want, alternately providing the community and the visitors with a memorable, affordable sandwich and experience."

Jon? You're doing a good thing my brother! All I can say is keep on keepin' on!!

The sandwiches all sell for \$3.75 each. You can choose from a Bratwurst, Smoked Italian, Smoked Jalapeno, Jalapeno and Cheese, or All Beef. You can dress your sandwich with mustard, grilled onions, sauerkraut, and the ever special curry ketchup. My fave raves are the Smoked Italian and the Jalapeno and Cheese. Both are slammin', but from what I can tell, everything Jon and his staff serves is slammin'!

You want a souvenir? \$18 will get you a tee and a sandwich, too!

The beautiful thing is, Jon only accepts cash, but we're talking all world denominations! He says over the years they've taken yen, pounds, whatever the folks got, he's willing to take it so they can partake of his wares.

Jon is a good guy. "Best Wurst" is a cool place. Austin is lucky to have them both.



STRING CHEESE INCIDENT



AUSTIN DAZE: What does playing at ACL mean to you?

STRING CHEESE INCIDENT: This is actually only our second year here. 2003 was our first year. It's changed in the three years that we have been away. It's so great to see so many bands getting together, see all the fans getting together and enjoying the music. It's extremely hot. ACL, what it means: extreme humidity and lots of heat. We have a really great group of friends and family that we have gotten to know over the years from coming to Austin, so Austin, in a lot of ways, has become a yearly home for us. It just feels good to be around everybody and see how everybody has been doing over the course of the years that we have been doing this. It's a little bit like a family reunion. Musically, it's an opportunity to, in a professional setting, see some other people and check out the vibe from the crowd side so it's really refreshing for us.

AD: What do you think of Austin?

SCI: We love it here. This was one of the early places that we came to when we first started touring. It was California and then we came down to Austin because we knew there were a lot of people that enjoyed our music and a lot of good fans down here.

AD: How does playing here compare to playing in other cities?

SCI: It's hard to compare but Austin is definitely a unique place. Maybe it's in the water. There is a special kind of life that exists here in Austin. People are relatively well musically versed because they've got so

much coming through here.

People are just into the group musical experience so it's a great place to share what we do. For some reason there are a lot of like-minded people here for us.

AD: We'd like to ask you about the direction of your sound: you all seem to have come from the land of bluegrass, but where else have you been? Are you staying there, are you going home or are you going elsewhere?

SCI: There are always roots. You set seeds from certain places and certain musical directions and it's always going to be an element of everything that you have done in the sound that you create. But as an artist, you always want to try and get into new territory. That territory for us is kind of undefined - it's whatever strikes us at the moment. But over 13 years of being a band and playing over 1,500 shows one of the things that we have developed is a willingness to just go for whatever comes along. Being able to delve deeper into some new forms of music is always what we are looking for. With the addition of a son our drummer, we've definitely been trying to learn new grooves and all kinds of different stuff.

We can't pinpoint exactly where we are going to be headed but we are definitely open to whatever comes along.

AD: What is the future of Kang's new toys and of the looping capabilities we've been seeing out of Kyle?

SCI: We've been listening to a lot of great electronic, new break beat dj's that we really love. It's kind of the new forefront of really good dance music which we are always interested in. A lot of the sounds aren't necessarily produced by instrument so as far as looping goes, we're not really a looping band because that brings in all different kinds of complexities into weaving the live and the electronic musical experience.

But we are open to trying to weave some of the sounds from some of those elements that really happen when there is a really good track going on. We're open to just allowing those textures to breathe. It's an experiment. We'll see what happens with it. It's a new fad these days in musical exploration where people are trying to weave the live and the electronic so we are definitely willing to give it a shot.

AD: What method would you give a musician starting out in the business?

SCI: It's challenging. We worked really hard and we got really lucky as well - being in the right place at the right time. If music is your passion then you have to follow your passion and play as much as you can with a new group and hopefully go out and get better as a musician by playing with as many musicians as possible and make as many connections as possible.

AD: What's next for you guys?

SCI: We will be going into rehearsal and then we start our fall tour which is a blast. Ultimately what's next is that we are going to keep pushing the musical boundaries and try to find new territory.

*



Electric Cars of Austin

- Melinda Rothouse

Imagine a world where we're not in such a hurry, a world where we take time to smell the flowers as we drive around at 25m.p.h. in silent open-air vehicles that operate on electricity and spew no harmful emissions into the air. Would we be willing to give up speed and productivity for a quieter, cleaner world? Would it be a better world if we did? Is it possible to have both?

You may have heard about the automobile industry's apparent sabotage of a whole new generation of viable electric vehicles, and you probably haven't seen too many electric cars flying past you on the highway. Hybrid vehicles are now being touted as the best, most environmentally-conscious option, but the electric car may live to see another day. The main type of all-electric passenger vehicle currently on the market is an outgrowth of, you guessed it, the golf cart. Perhaps you've seen one of these stylized dune-buggies tooling down South Congress on a Sunday afternoon, and chances are, it came from Electric Cars of Austin, a dealership specializing in electric "Low Speed Vehicles" (L.S.V.s).

The L.S.V. is an official classification created by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) that governs the production and operation of slow-moving, electric-powered passenger cars (something between a golf cart and a regular car) for general use on the open road. As mandated by the NHTSA, these cars are equipped with headlights and brake lights, seatbelts, windshields and wipers, rear-view mirrors and turn signals. Electric L.S.V.s feature zero tailpipe emissions and require very little in the way of maintenance. Marketed for short trips, these vehicles use batteries that can be recharged using a standard 110-volt household outlet. The federal government now offers consumers some incentives to purchase L.S.V.s in the form of tax credits, and local incentives may be on the horizon as well.

Electric Cars of Austin carries several different makes and models of L.S.V., each approved by the NHTSA for street use on roads with posted speeds of up to 35m.p.h. Models

range from the "Dynasty," which looks something like a miniaturized VW bug and can travel up to 30 miles per charge, to the "Big Man," which looks like a souped-up golf cart with headlights and can travel 75 miles per charge. This means that you basically have to charge it up every night, however, the cost of operation of an L.S.V. is calculated at only 50 cents per charge. At an average of 40 miles per day, that's about \$15 per month, or \$180 per year, as compared to almost \$2000 in yearly gasoline costs for the average car.

One criticism of electric cars is that although they produce no emissions directly, the elec-



tricity they depend on is created using fossil fuels and emissions-producing power plants. But Austin Energy offers a solution, describing how plugging in your electric car at night could actually promote the use of wind power. Because wind farms in West Texas harness the most wind at night, and most people would be charging their electric cars at night, they would end up powering their vehicles by wind rather than fossil fuels.

Of course, electric cars are not a new phenomenon. The first electric cars were developed in the mid-1800's, and by the turn of the 20th century they traveled side-by-side with

gasoline-powered cars, but were cleaner and quieter. However, the discovery of Texas crude oil suddenly made gasoline extremely affordable. This fact, coupled with the growing need for longer-range vehicles and Henry Ford's mass production of gas-powered vehicles at lower prices, all led to the decline of the electric car, at least for the better part of a century.

In response to the energy crisis of the 1970's and growing concerns about the environmental impact of emissions from gasoline-powered vehicles, the federal government introduced incentives for creating alternative-fuel vehicles. Several major automobile companies began developing electric cars, and some even made it to the mass market, but then they suddenly seemed to disappear. The recent film "Who Killed the Electric Car?" chronicles the demise of the GM EV1, a viable electric vehicle introduced in 1996 in response to California's Zero Emissions Mandate (ZEV). The car was made available for lease only, and although customers loved their EVs and many more joined waiting lists to receive the vehicles, all existing specimens were reclaimed and most were destroyed by the company.

So where does this leave us? For the moment, we have the L.S.V. According to Electric Cars of Austin's website, the company aims to promote the use of electric-powered vehicles locally, with the hope that the visibility, availability, and demand for the vehicles will lead to improved clear air standards and provide an environmentally-friendly alternative to gasoline-powered vehicles. With maximum speeds of 25m.p.h., these funky little cars won't get you there fast, but you can spend the extra time thinking about how much money you're saving and how much pollution you're keeping out of the air. Take one out for a spin today and begin to imagine a better world.



MISSY SUICIDE OF SUICIDE GIRLS



AD: For people who don't know. what is Suicide Girls and why did you start it?

Suicide Girls is a pinup site with hot naked girls and a community, with message boards, groups, dating. The site also features a great newswire and a terrific interview section.

I started it as a way to showcase gorgeous women i knew and saw every day, that didn't fit in with the mainstream ideas of what is beautiful. It was an art project/experiment; something I could be passionate about while doing corporate freelance projects. I had always loved pin-up girl photography and wanted to photograph the girls that I knew with the same sort of control and respect the classic pin-ups were given.

AD: What sets you apart from playboy ?

sg: Playboy girls feel slightly unattainable, whereas the girls on suicidegirls are the ladies you already know, but naked.

AD: What is the name Suicide Gils all about?

SG:The term was taken from the Chuck Palahnuick book, Survivor. There are no dark sinister undertones. If I had known the site would be so popular then I might have thought the name out a bit more.

Suicide girls is a term my friends and I had been using to describe the girls we saw in Portland's Pioneer Square with skateboards in one hand, wearing a Minor Threat hoodie, listening to Ice Cube on their iPods while reading a book of Nick Cave's poetry. They are girls who didn't fit into any con-

ventional sub-culture and didnt define themselves based on musical taste like punk, metal, goth, etc. I think the only classifications right now people identify with are mainstream and outside of mainstream. That is why the site is called SuicideGirls.

AD: How do you choose who will be a Suicide Girl? And how does a girl get involved?

SG: I receive about 1000 applications a week from girls wanting to become Suicide Girls just through the website. A lot of the women attracted to becoming SuicideGirls identify heavily with the SuicideGirls currently on the site and are already members of the community. Potential models are attracted to what the community is interested in: music, politics, fashion, etc. and they see other women who look like they do and they want to be part of it. The women who become SuicideGirls all share a similar strong self-confidence and independence in who they are and how they interact with the world.

I go over the applications and choose girls that will be an asset to the community and who want to model for their own personal reasons, not just because a boyfriend thinks it would be hot.

AD: What do you say to people that label the site as porn?

SG: I get this question a lot and writers often label us as adult without really taking time to explore the community. We have never considered SuicideGirls to feature anything but beautiful and interesting women in sensual pin-up style photographs. We acknowledge that sexuality is defined by the individual and each person has a comfort level with they deem acceptable and we respect their opinions. SuicideGirls believes that creativity, personality and intelligence are not incompatible with sexy, compelling entertainment.

The SG community interacts like everyday people do when they feel they are in a comfortable and accepting environment. They discuss sex and dating frankly, they have strong opinions about everything from music to politics, and aren't afraid to loudly discourse about them. The community has created over 70 sub-groups for people to discuss and get tips on fashion, musical genres, video games, computers, traveling, etc.

AD: Why is the Federal Government hassling you guys?

Don't you think they have enough foreign and domestic issues on their plate to be concerned about some images on you site? What has your experience with the Feds been like, please explain?

sg: I guess the war on terror is over, since the FBI has time to hassle people who take pictures of topless girls. We were all told that 9/11 changed everything, but really it didn't change anything. The federal government focuses on busting tommy chong for selling bongos on the internet and people in the adult industry instead of focusing on real threats.

AD: The interviews on your site are amazing, why did you decide to start this feature



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SG: We are using our new-found notoriety and popularity as an excuse to sit and talk to some of the most interesting artists, thinkers and businesspeople of our time in every field from literature to television to film to comics to videogames to politics. It's been an amazing opportunity to get to have candid, in depth conversations with counter culture icons without having to boil what they say down to a sound clip or a quote.



SUICIDE GIRL

AD: What is the suicide girls tour all about? And what can we look forward to in Austin in November?

SG: The SuicideGirls tour is the webpage come alive! It's an updated, modern more rock n roll version of burlesque. The girls dance to everything from queens of the stone age to ac/dc and peaches.

We have 7 amazing incredible dancers, including an incredible hoola hooper, ready to show Austin a super sexy good time.

AD: What has been your experience with Suicide Girls?

SG: The entire experience has been phenomenal. Every day I talk to and meet hundreds of beautiful, unique women from all over the world.

AD:Whats next?

SG: Myself and several other SuicideGirls just finished filming an episode of CSI - NY that will air October 18th and our next DVD, shot at a villa in Tuscany, will be released in October! We constantly have new exciting things in the works and look forward to debuting them to our fans! ***

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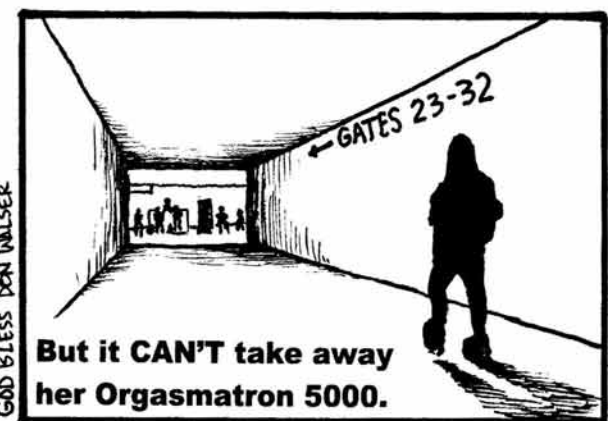
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It's the Highway or the Highway: Transportation in Central Texas

Colin Clark

The growth boosters who benefit financially from rapid population growth expect and often demand that the rest of us foot the bill to address the problems brought on by their success (or excess).

One of the biggest complaints from the growth boosters' Chamber of Commerce and Real Estate Council is traffic congestion. Traffic is spoken of as a big, bad boogey-man threatening to cripple our city. The growth boosters spend money on lobbyists and public relations spin firms that spew slogans of "congestion relief" and act as if the highest and best use of public tax dollars is laying pavement in the hopes that it will allow people to drive cars longer distances faster.

The growth boosters got a special Toll Road Authority, officially known as the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, created by the Texas Legislature in 2003. The chief purpose of the "Mobility Authority" is building toll roads: either new roads or tolling existing roadways. The Toll Road Authority is given the power to go into debt to pay for construction now. This is a radical departure from Texas' former "pay as you go" approach in which road building was paid for with money in hand, not with debt. The Toll Road Authority wants to use debt - coupled with billions in state and federal transportation dollars - to pave Central Texas.

Tolling existing roads is not popular, but the Toll Road Authority is trying to add tolls on existing highways, like 290 and 183. So the Toll Road Authority - using public tax dollars - is propagandizing that toll roads across the region will make traffic magically go away.

They even have a cartoon ad that shows cars swimming in Barton Springs and tubing the Guadalupe River. The very machines that generate pollution for these (and all) watersheds, aquifers, drinking supplies and our air are depicted as animate, smiling characters enjoying a dip in the Springs and a float down the Guadalupe. You can watch the cartoon at www.GetUpToSpeed.org.

The theme of the cartoon is that we will be relieved of all traffic congestion if we build lots of toll roads, which will always be wide open for easy motoring to all of the great places in Central Texas.

The inspiration in the cartoon for going to Barton Springs comes when the main car character is stuck in traffic, feeling down until it sees a bumper sticker of Barton Springs on the hippie van stuck in front of it. The bumper

sticker of Barton Springs starts the day-dreaming of all the great places we could be if it weren't for darned traffic congestion.

(What cartoon audiences aren't informed of is that road expansions in the watersheds that feed Barton Springs and the Edwards Aquifer increase storm-water runoff carrying oil and grease and other pollutants to the aquifer and springs, plus increased silt and sediment runoff from construction sites.)

The more cars there are trying to get from Cedar Park or Hays County to downtown and back or from Lakeway to Round Rock and back, the worse traffic congestion is going to be.

What solution to the "traffic crisis" do the growth boosters propose? Widen the roads and build more of them. How much will that cost, sir? Just 10 billion dollars and a decade of construction. In addition to the appointed officials in charge of the Toll Road Authority, there is a group of (mostly) elected officials who determine how federal transportation funds are spent in Central Texas. Called the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), this group of politicians plans to spend over a billion dollars widening highways in the watersheds that feed Barton Springs and Edwards Aquifer, along with about ten billion for highway expansions throughout the region.

But wait! After five decades of building a car-centric transportation system in the United States, widening highways fails to reduce traffic and congestion. The temporary increase in road capacity induces people to live further away from where they work, increasing the traffic load on the road system. So instead of four lanes of traffic on MoPac, we could someday have eight lanes of traffic.

Just look at Los Angeles or Houston or Atlanta. Is there a shortage of highways in these cities? No, there are endless highways. Yet they are known for having bad traffic. The Austin Business Journal compared Austin to ten "competitor" cities and went through a litany of statistics with which to rank the cities. Seven of the ten cities have longer mean commute times than Austin. Longer commute times in Portland, San Diego, San Francisco/Bay Area, Denver, Phoenix, Nashville, and Boston are apparently not dooming them to economic collapse.

According to the Brookings Institution (a centrist think tank), "No highway or public transit systems in the world can handle all those people who want to move simultaneously without overloading the systems' capacity. So delays inevitably arise as all those people try to use the same roads and the same transit systems during the same periods. That is the fundamental cause of traffic congestion. And that cause is inescapable: There is no real remedy for congestion, once it appears."

Isn't insanity defined as doing the same thing

repeatedly and expecting a different result? What the Toll Road Authority and its powerful boosters and lobbyists would do is not improve our "mobility" but make Austin a lot more like LA and Houston: expanses of pavement, strip malls, and homogenous subdivisions.

We're killing the goose that laid the golden egg. We are raping the landscape, fouling the water and air, isolating where we live based on income, and trapping ourselves in a car commute. Is this the right track?

Instead of continuing to fund a mode of transportation (single occupancy cars) that is not sustainable in any way, we should shift funding to invest in moving people by foot, bicycle, bus, and rail. Just as necessary is a shift in land use patterns - if keep allowing suburban sprawl in areas outside cities, we dig ourselves deeper into the hole of car dependency.

Imagine how much nicer a place to live Austin would be if we could get to work, get our children to school, and go shopping without getting into a car. We'd have cleaner air and water, healthier people, and safer streets.

With the peaking of global oil production coming soon (optimistic predictions place peak in 2020 while some experts believe peak has already been reached), how can anyone justify spending billions on a car-centric transportation system that we'll be stuck with for fifty years?

You can get involved in local transportation issues by attending CAMPO meetings on the second Monday of every month. While the Toll Road Authority is not elected, CAMPO is mostly elected officials, and they control the purse strings to the federal transportation dollars, so CAMPO has enormous sway. The Toll Road Authority surely doesn't want to finance its projects without help from the federal government.

Check out www.HillCountryRoads.com for info on big road projects in the Hill Country. Try getting around by foot, bicycle, and bus. ***

askcareyellen.com is a great resource to find what your looking for.



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