

The Final Cut

Plotting World Domination from Altoona

Otherwise...CD/Tape/Culture analysis and commentary with D'Scribe, D'Drummer, Da Boy, D'Sebastiano's Doorman, Da Common Man, D' Big Man, AI, D'Pebble, Da Beer God and other assorted riff raff...

D'RATING SYSTEM:

9.1-10.0 Excellent - BUY OR DIE!	4.1-5.0 Incompetent - badly flawed
8.1-9.0 Very good - worth checking out	3.1-4.0 Bad - mostly worthless
7.1-8.0 Good but nothing special	2.1-3.0 Terrible - worthless
6.1-7.0 Competent but flawed	1.1-2.0 Horrible - beyond worthless
5.1-6.0 Barely competent	0.1-1.0 Bottom of the cesspool abomination!

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001.

At this point in time, there isn't much I can possibly say about that date that hasn't already been said time and time again...It looked like a Hollywood disaster movie, but it was real. And while the air crash in Somerset County didn't get quite the ink or attention of the New York or D.C. terrorist attacks, it brought terrorism home right to our backyard. Nobody is immune or totally safe anymore.

Thus far, I'm giving a huge thumbs up to President Bush and our government in their actions in the wake of the attacks. I don't like war any more than anybody else, but when somebody violates thousands of lives and does so on American soil, something needs to be done. And I approve of the approach thus far – this is a huge criminal investigation. Over 3,000 people were mass murdered, and those responsible need to be brought to justice. If our police force to apprehend the criminals includes several thousand military troops, so be it. And I'm happy that our government has differentiated the actual culprits from Muslims as a whole; I think Bin Laden's ultimate intent here was to spark World War III between the Islamic and Western worlds. By carefully picking strategic targets and going after the perpetrators rather than a whole nation, we diminish the chances of Bin Laden succeeding in his quest.

I've also heard and read opinions of opposition from some people - from pacifists to Rolling Stone editor/publisher Jann Wenner – who blame our own country in part for what happened Sept. 11. These arguments allege that our economic policies and support for Israel have created the third-world conditions which exist in much of the Middle East, and fueled the jealousy and hatred that many people in that part of the

world have for the United States. While I don't argue that our involvement in the Middle East has made us some enemies in that part of the world, those policies do not justify the genocide of thousands of innocent men, women and children on Sept. 11.

The pacifists' argument got me to thinking about something else. Jealousy. Our attackers and their supporters are jealous of our way of life, our relative fortune and prosperity. I liken it to a classroom where the underachiever becomes jealous of the honor student because that student receives the favor of the teacher. And rather than work hard in the classroom to become like the honor student, that underachiever might instead wait until recess and beat up or taunt the honor student. Then I see television images of Taliban supporters and protesters out in the streets burning effigies of President Bush and chanting anti-American slogans. My point – if these protesters would devote the time they spend protesting towards learning how to make their own nations better – by learning agriculture, technical skills, and developing industry and a viable economy – they might someday enjoy some prosperity of their own and not have reason to hate us so much.

And I do have a gripe about our news media. Why does our news media give the anti-war protesters in both the Middle East and our own country so much attention? And why is the media so quick to sensationalize whenever one of our own missiles or bombs misses a target and kills civilians? Can't the media differentiate between one of our accidental strikes against civilians, and the terrorists' INTENTIONAL killing of thousands of civilians? Yes, I feel bad that we did accidentally kill a few innocent Afghan citizens with wayward missiles and bombs. But this happens in war, no matter how accurate our weaponry is. Somebody is going to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. America didn't start this fight, and we shouldn't be made to feel guilty by our own news media for collateral damage levied as we bring the perpetrators to justice. Which side is our media on, anyway?

And in the wake of Sept. 11, we have learned a lot about living conditions in Afghanistan – what a hellhole, especially if you're a woman! Dogs get treated better than women in Afghanistan. Women have to be totally covered head to toe when out in public – no wonder the men in that nation are baked in the brain! Perhaps rather than using weapons against the Taliban forces, what we needed to do was drop several thousand issues of Playboy on Afghanistan, and send a task force of barbers in there in the dead of night to shave off all the men's beards. They'd all kill each other for looking at nude women and not having beards, and save us the trouble! Just a thought...

In our last issue, I predicted Penn State would go 7-4. Obviously it didn't happen. But finishing 5-6, the Lions at least turned around their 0-4 start to have a chance to be bowl eligible had they held on to their lead against Virginia in that final road game. On the bright side, the Lions seem to have found their QB for the future in Zack Mills, and I predict that the Lions will be a BCS team if not next year, during Mills' junior and senior years. I think next season the Lions will knock two monkeys off their backs – first, they will have a winning record and get back to a bowl game, and second, they will take Michigan down. Be afraid, D'Drummer, be very afraid...

College football still needs a playoff system, evidenced by the glitches that arose in the current Bowl Championship Series (BCS) system this season. Who really deserved to play undefeated Miami for the national championship? Tennessee, Nebraska, Oregon, Maryland, Illinois – or resurgent Colorado with two losses but wins over Nebraska and Texas? And had BYU run the table and not lost to Hawaii in the last game – should they have been considered, even though the WAC isn't regarded as a strong conference? I say let them settle it on the field via a playoff system. Let the top 8 teams in the country duke it out in a single-elimination six-game bowl tournament, with the final two survivors playing in the national

championship game. That is the only true and decisive way to determine who is the best. If BYU doesn't belong, then it gets sorted out on the playing field, not in some geek's computer ratings. The BCS was a step forward from what we had before, but as this season proved, it isn't enough.

How about them Steelers! I was wary of the Black & Gold's offensive output early on, but it seems that Kordell and company are getting better with each game...Maybe this will be the season that puts "one on the thumb" – Super Bowl ring, that is.

For the record, I begin celebrating the Christmas season two weeks before CHRISTMAS, not two weeks before Thanksgiving like all the merchants and TV commercial people. And unlike these same folks, I celebrate the Christmas season for two weeks AFTER Christmas Day, I don't toss Jesus in the attic for another year at the stroke of midnight on Christmas night like everyone else seemingly does. Everybody else can rush and hype the holiday season, I'll celebrate it when we get closer, and keep celebrating it until I decide it's over....

I wish a HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON to all...On with d'reviews...



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Scribes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

OZZY OSBOURNE – DOWN TO EARTH (Epic) The title of heavy metal icon Ozzy Osbourne's eighth studio album, Down To Earth, is an accurate description of the legendary Black Sabbath frontman these days. His first studio album in six years, Down to Earth shows us a reflective, older and wiser Osbourne who has learned some lessons from his wilder and storied past. The majority of the songs on Down to Earth deal with those lessons and introspection, plus some concerns about the world Osbourne is now raising his own children in. The most obvious of these is the current hit single ballad "Dreamer," Osbourne's wish for mankind to take better care of itself and the planet it inhabits. Also powerful is the album's first single, "Gets Me Through," Osbourne's tribute to the fans who have been with him through thick and thin; and his blunt-force portrayal of drug addiction, "Junkie." More introspective in tone are Osbourne's battle with sanity on "Running Out of Time," which evolves into a soundscape of Beatles-styled psychedelia; an ode to his own survival, "Alive;" and the album-closing "Can You Hear Them?," about Osbourne's ongoing struggle to understand himself and the inner forces which make him tick. Osbourne is still game for some good vs. evil wordplay, evidenced on "Facing Hell" and "Black Illusion." While Down To Earth is reflective and thoughtful, it is also easily Osbourne's hardest rocking set since 1991's No More Tears, with guitarist Zakk Wylde's riffage and the rampaging rhythms of bassist Robert Trujillo and drummer Mike Bordin at times recalling the Blizzard of Ozz and Diary of a Madman albums, especially on "That I Never Had." And "No Easy Way Out" and "Black Illusion" recall Osbourne's work with his earlier bandmates in Black Sabbath – not surprising, considering he has been on

the road with Sabbath several times in the past few years. Through Ozzy Osbourne's Down to Earth, we hear the voice of a seasoned warrior who has weathered the rock and roll life and its excesses, and survived to tell about it. His Ozzness has reinvented himself; giving us a hard-rocking, yet sincere and heartfelt album that should only strengthen his status as heavy metal's premiere icon. DEFINITE BUY OR DIE!
RATING 9.4/10.0

TORI AMOS – STRANGE LITTLE GIRLS (Atlantic) Anybody who has listened to Tori Amos' output for any extended period of time by now has realized that Tori views life a little differently than the rest of us. On the surface, don't dismiss Tori's latest album of remakes, Strange Little Girls, as merely an artist paying homage to roots and influences. Instead, Tori interprets a diverse selection of remakes – all written by men – from the perspectives of various female characters and personas (all depicted by Tori in the CD's inner sleeve photography). And more often than not, the results are intriguing...and shocking. Enter Tori's treatment of Eminem's dance floor number "'97 Bonnie & Clyde." Tori converts this song – about a husband turning the disposal of his murdered wife's body in a lake into a game with his young daughter – into a dramatic chiller of a song which would have given Alfred Hitchcock the creeps! Backed with tense orchestration, Tori's icy vocal delivery – recorded in a box to psychologically identify with the murdered wife in the trunk of the car – sounds convincingly demented and evil. Also intriguing is Tori's interpretation of Slayer's "Raining Blood." A stark contrast to Slayer's apocalyptic heavy metal original version, Tori gives this song a minimalist treatment, setting her despair-laden voice against a barren and terse piano/synthesizer backdrop. The results are cerebral, evoking a forboding moodiness almost opposite of Slayer's musical vision – but equally chilling and effective. Also fascinating are Tori's angst-rock interpretation of Neil Young's "Heart of Gold;" her eerie versions of Depeche Mode's "Enjoy the Silence," 10 CC's "I'm Not In Love" and Boomtown Rats' "I Don't Like Mondays;" and her reworking of the Beatles' "Happiness is a Warm Gun," where Tori's voice intersperses with newsclips and gun debate soundbytes. And since this album deals with contrasting perspectives between the sexes, Tori fittingly closes the album with her version of Joe Jackson's "Real Men," a song which itself explores the definition of the male psyche. Strange Little Girls works because Tori Amos takes each of these songs, strips them down to their bare essence, and reconstructs them with a totally new perspective – in the process, further exploring and defining some of the dark crevices of her own complex personality. Strange Little Girls is a captivating experience from start to end. Listening to this album will convince you that Tori Amos is either a "strange little girl" or an artistic genius...or both.

RATING 9.2/10.0

THE YEAR OF THE BADLEES SIDE PROJECTS

Over the course of the past decade, The Badlees have built a career around a trademark style and sound that fuses together modern, classic rock and folk influences. On the strength of their 1995 self-produced album River Songs, the Selinsgrove-based group achieved a national recording deal, and scored two sizable radio hits in "Angeline Is Coming Home" and "Fear of Falling." After falling victim to the corporate downsizing of the recording industry, the group has continued to produce and create their own albums, and even started their own recording studio, Saturation Acres in Danville. Along the way, the group's members started several side projects, which provided extra outlets for flexing their creativity beyond the

scope of The Badlees. This year, The Badlees went on hiatus to indulge and explore those side projects further. The results are three albums, each with its own distinctive style and flavor – and each giving us a closer inner look at the musical personalities that comprise The Badlees.

ECHOTOWN – ECHOTOWN (Torso Records) Echotown features The Badlees' Jeff Feltenberger on lead vocals and acoustic guitar, and the group's drummer, Ron Simasek; along with lead, rhythm, slide guitarist and banjo player Mike Morrison, keyboard player Chris Novak, and former Hybrid Ice member Robert Scott Richardson on bass. Country is a prominent flavor on Echotown's self-titled release, and through the course of the album we learn that Echotown are capable artists on a wide range of country soundscapes. The group whoops it up on honky tonk-styled numbers like "If You Have to Ask" and "Steal," and provides a major highlight with their rip-roaring ode to NASCAR, "A Dinner With Richard Petty." Echotown demonstrates a knack for country ballads on "Little Things" and a tender reworking of The Badlees' "34 Winters." The group reminds us of their Badlees connection with rural reworkings of two other Badlees favorites, "I Liked You Better" and "Ore Hill;" and the Badlees-styled country-rock of the opening track "Been So Long," "Sacred and Sin" and "Joshua (U.S. 93)." All five Echotown band members contribute to the songwriting, and lyrically the group sticks close to familiar Badlees themes of life and love in rural small town America. On Echotown we hear Feltenberger and Simasek explore the Badlees' rural edge and persona further, and listening to Echotown gives us a better understanding of the folk and country edge that partly comprises the Badlees' collective sound.

RATING 9.0/10.0

THE CELLARBIRDS – PERFECT SMILE (S.A.M. Records) Another Badlees side project, The Cellarbirds, features Bret Alexander on a wide assortment of instruments and vocals; Paul Smith on bass, synths and vocals; and drummer Ron Simasek. While Echotown focuses on country, The Cellarbirds give us modern melodic rock, rooted in Lennon-McCartney, with slight nods to the Byrds and Tom Petty. As the Badlees' main songwriter, Alexander continues his magic of creating captivating melodies and compelling lyrics on this project. All ten songs are both catchy and edgy, blending irresistible song hooks with witty, observational lyrics. The song flavors vary from upbeat rocking numbers like the title song "Perfect Smile" and "Time for Pride;" to the Beatlesque country-rock of "Someone Nice;" to playful yet cynical numbers like "Happy Home" and "Lester's Breaking Even;" to the more acidic tones of the two closing numbers, "Any Given Day" and "You Annoy Me." Recorded at Alexander's and Smith's own Saturation Acres studio in Danville, Perfect Smile sounds crisp, imaginative and busy, with subtle instrumental and production details surfacing with repeat listens. The Cellarbirds' use of a wide range of instrumentation – including accordion, dobro, sitar, pedal steel, harmonica and more – provides an ever-present, subtle reminder of their Badlees connection. Ultimately, though, this project takes on its own unique direction and personality, with the focus on melody and songcraft over lush instrumental soundscapes. Perfect Smile is an impressive calling card for The Cellarbirds, a fun album which establishes a strong foundation should these three Badlees wish to explore this side of their musical personality further.

RATING 9.3/10.0

PETE PALLADINO – SWEET SIREN OF THE RECONNECTED (P&P Records) While his Badlees bandmates all perform on singer Pete Palladino's solo album, Sweet Siren of the Reconnected, this album is clearly Palladino's platform to explore his voice and persona. We hear Palladino stretching out on a variety of sounds, from hard-driving rock and pop to acoustic-gearred ballads, along the way baring more of

his musical soul for all to hear. We hear a more expressive Palladino belting his heart out on passionate rockers like the album-opening "Home At Last," "What a Difference a Year Makes" and "Time Honored Tradition." But we also hear a more tender side of the Badlees frontman on the ballads "My Love" and "Lay Beside You;" and a somber and more reflective tone on the album-closing ballad "Ever Come To Mind." Writing/co-writing all eleven songs with longtime collaborator Mike Naydock, Palladino also stretches out as a lyricist on this album, incorporating metaphor and simile into his poetic words to effectively paint his images - illustrated especially well on "Elena on the Wall" and "Fate Could Be a Beautiful Thing." Palladino's all-around artistry also yields emotionally powerful results on his rebellious update of "4th of July," a song he first introduced through the Badlees; and the stern and solemn title song "Sweet Siren of the Reconnected." Also recorded at Saturation Acres in Danville and co-produced by Palladino and Bret Alexander, the album sounds bright and energetic, with Palladino's voice always front and center in the mix. While the rest of the Badlees back him on this album, Sweet Siren of the Reconnected is ultimately Pete Palladino's musical vision, not his bandmates.' This album is Palladino reaching beyond the framework of The Badlees, allowing us a more complete look at his own soul and musical personality. RATING 9.1/10.0

SPOTLIGHT ON JOHN McKNIGHT

Since relocating to Atlanta, Georgia in 1997, Altoona native and former Hurricanes drummer John McKnight is enjoying much success on the Atlanta music scene. John has become one of the most in-demand drummers in Atlanta, and his talents surface on these two new recordings from the Atlanta area. For John McKnight fans, Forrest McDonald's Finger Lickin' Blues presents John performing the blues and funk that was his forte prior to relocating to Atlanta; the Nick Savage Band's Mother's Window shows us John stretching out and indulging his more experimental side. Both albums are enjoyable and well worth seeking out. (Both albums can be obtained through the web sites of both artists: www.forrestmcdonald.com and www.thenicksavageband.com.)

FORREST McDONALD - FINGER LICKIN' BLUES (World Talent Records) Fans of John's tenure with Felix & the Hurricanes will likely enjoy Forrest McDonald's Finger Lickin' Blues, an album of barrelhouse blues and upbeat funk not too far removed from what he previously played with the Hurricanes. As part of Forrest's 3D Blues Band, John splits drum duties on the album with Chuck "Cap" CapDeVille; and while Raymond Victor's gravelly growl is the primary voice heard here, John's soulful lead vocal croon can be heard on a lively version of Chester Burnett's "Who's Been Talking." Forrest, a blues guitarist who worked with the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section and played guitar on Bob Seger's classic "Old Time Rock and Roll," offers up tasty, fluid guitarwork throughout the album. We hear a variety of sounds here; from raucous versions of "I Feel So Good" and "Traveling South;" to funky displays like "Boogie Me 'Til I Drop" and "Momma's In The Kitchen;" piano-driven shuffles like "Not Enough Money" and T-Bone Walker's classic "T-Bone Shuffle;" slower bluesy displays like "Blues In The Basement," "Five Long Years" and "Driving Wheel;" and a delta-bluesy treatment of the Bobbie Gentry hit "Ode to Billy Joe." The delivery is robust and enthusiastic, and Finger Lickin' Blues is a fun album start to finish.

RATING 9.4/10.0

NICK SAVAGE BAND - MOTHER'S WINDOW (Makeshift Productions) On the Nick Savage Band's latest album, Mother's Window, John's drumwork provides the

beat on an adventurous fusion of rock, funk, blues, jazz, worldbeat and more. Group namesake Nick Savage, who sings and plays guitar, gives us a dozen compositions, each uniquely different in its fusion of styles. The overall sound brings to mind the experimental side of groups like Phish, Blues Traveler or Dixie Dregs. Each song is catchy and intriguing; we hear lots of musical experimentation throughout the album, yet never at the sacrifice of song hooks or melody. There's something for just about every musical taste here, from the driving rock-jazz fusion of the opening track "Dready Mama" and the title track "Mother's Window" to the Santana-like "Move;" from the hard-edged funk of "Swing," "You Don't Call Me Anymore" and "It's All Been Done Before" to the tender acoustic ballad "This Love;" or from the jazz-rooted "Jazzbot" to the lighthearted country/folk-leaning "Roam." John McKnight rises to the challenge of constantly changing rhythms and oddball time signatures here, and listeners can tell he is having fun interacting with the other talented players as they explore the album's wide musical terrain. Nick Savage's relaxed vocal style; and his upbeat lyrics celebrating music, love and soul; tie Mother's Window together into an uplifting, rewarding listen. RATING 9.3/10.0

HALESTORM – BREAKING THE SILENCE (self-produced) Halestorm, the rock band family from Bethel, PA (near Lebanon), burst onto the state's music scene with their 1998 debut CD, Don't Mess With The Time Man. That album introduced the blossoming talents of then 15-year-old singer, songwriter and keyboardist Elizabeth Hale; and her 11-year-old brother, drummer Arejay Hale – both backed by their father, bassist Roger Hale. (Their mother, Beth Hale, handles the band's business affairs.) On Time Man, we heard the children's first studio experiences, and the album possessed an innocence and charm as these two youngsters began their musical journey. Three years later, the follow-up, Breaking The Silence, clearly illustrates Elizabeth's and Arejay's growth and maturity as musicians; and finds these two youngsters (ages 17 and 14 at the time the recording was made) stretching out and exploring their talents further. Elizabeth has grown considerably as a singer, songwriter and lyricist; proving an ability to compose both elaborate rockers and deeply moving ballads. She demonstrates a more powerful voice as well, delivering full range and emotion throughout the album's six songs. Arejay shows marked improvement as the band's timekeeper, and displays a better sense for timing and fills. As a lyricist, Elizabeth's words deal with the in's and out's of love and growing up, and lessons learned along the way. On "Unbreakable Promises," Elizabeth relates a lesson learned through childhood naivete. On the ballad "I Forgive You," she sings of a relationship that endures and grows through good and bad. The elaborate rocker "The Children" boldly states that Elizabeth's and Arejay's generation will leave their own mark on the world, and not be content to merely follow in their elders' footsteps. And the powerful rocker "Shout It Out" is about sticking to beliefs and convictions in spite of what others may say. Perhaps the album's strongest performance, though, is the beautiful ballad "Rose In December." Elizabeth pours out her heart on voice and piano as the song's powerful melody and poetic lyrics progress towards its unforgettable, high-flying chorus. Guest Scott Frange's cello accompaniment gives the song added warmth and grace. Halestorm – having worked with several guitarists since the Time Man album - embraces rock more closely on this album, with guest Jim Shull lending a hard guitar edge on several tracks. Produced and engineered by the band and Mike Watert, Breaking The Silence sounds bigger and full, with busy arrangements which layer piano, synthesizer, guitar and vocal harmonies. Based on the forward progress displayed on this album, Elizabeth and Arejay Hale are two young musicians whose futures appear very promising. Breaking The Silence shows us Halestorm growing up before our ears, and offers ample proof why these siblings are regarded among this state's brightest

musical prospects. (For information on obtaining the album, visit the group's web site, www.halestormweb.com. Halestorm will appear on Q94's local music program "The Backyard Rocker," on Sunday evening, Nov. 11 from 8 to 10 PM.)

RATING 9.0/10.0

FAT VINNY & THE WISEGUYS – A DIFFERENT KIND OF BLUES (self-produced) Fat Vinny & the Wiseguys' debut album from last year, The Blues You Can't Refuse, was the Altoona trio's calling card, which served notice that this band was rooted firmly in the blues. On their follow-up, A Different Kind of Blues, Fat Vinny & the Wiseguys use the blues as a foundation from which to stretch out and embrace a wider selection of styles and sounds. Singer/guitarist E. Vincent "Fat Vinny" Kelly, bassist Randy Ketner and drummer Mark Panek bring more styles and influences into the mix, using the process to further explore their own musical abilities. After the opening track "2 to 4" reestablishes the Wiseguys' barrelhouse blues base sound, the group proceeds to do some exploring – first with a Latin-flavored treatment of Tom Waits' "Jockey Full of Bourbon." We hear the group tip their hats to the Rolling Stones and ZZ Top respectively on "Tumblin' Down" (with Cathy Nagle helping on backing vocals) and "Picked The Wrong Day." "About Time for a Love Song" dabbles in Van Morrison-flavored pop, while the playful "Vet Bill Blues" with its witty double-entendre lyrics is the Wiseguys' heir apparent answer to Bull Moose Jackson's "Big Ten Inch Record." The trio flexes its instrumental skills on the funk/blues/jazz exercise "Crabcake Sammich," where we hear detailed musical interaction between drums, bass and guitar. A major highlight of the Wiseguys' sophomore effort is lyrics, as Fat Vinny again shows a strong knack for storytelling, shown especially on the folksy local-flavored ballad "Time Was (The Norfolk Southern Song)," a song written in the wake of Norfolk Southern's announced closing of the Hollidaysburg Car Shops. The song's storyline sets the announced closure of the shops against the backdrop of this area's rich railroad heritage, but suggests that the closure was only the latest step in the railroad's long decline which started with the advent of the trucking era. Vinny also demonstrates an ability for double-tiered messages in his words, evidenced by the somber and delta-bluesy "One More Last Trip Down" (actually about equipment load-out before a gig) and the Latin-tinged title track "A Different Kind of Blues," an observational piece about a changing world and a changing music scene. This album delivers the goods on all fronts. The musicianship is strong, and the Wiseguys show a greater sense of dynamics and texture here. Lyrically the album is often intelligent and thought-provoking. And recorded at Dave Nagle's Daylight Studios in Altoona and produced by Nagle and the band, A Different Kind of Blues sounds crisp and balanced. Fat Vinny & the Wiseguys hit full stride on A Different Kind of Blues, embracing wider musical horizons, but bringing it all back home to the blues. A superb sophomore effort. (Can be purchased at the group's shows, also at Music Emporium, Gallery Guitars and at the Q94 offices in Altoona.)

RATING 9.6/10.0

WINE OF NAILS – ON AND BEYOND (Attack On Culture) The progressive/art rock epic is alive and well in central Pennsylvania – the proof is in On and Beyond, the sophomore CD offering from area progressive trio Wine Of Nails. Guitarist/keyboard player John Charney, acoustic/electronic drummer Dominick Peruso and bassist Gary Schrock flex their creative muscle on a set of eight mostly-instrumental compositions (plus bonus track), which clock in at over 70 minutes. Upon listening to On and Beyond, the obvious roots here are peak period early 70's Yes, Peter Gabriel-era Genesis, Rush and King Crimson. Each composition takes us on a different musical journey, showcasing instrumental precision, improvisation and exploration; and lavish plotlines featuring sudden twists, turns and mood swings.

The 9-minute-plus opener "Vibeland" is almost classical in its arrangement, establishing a central theme early, and then spinning off on a progression of longer side journeys which return to that central theme. The action-packed "Frenzy!" sounds like it would make a perfect opening theme for a suspense movie. In a milder vein, the bluesy "Buddy" takes on an almost tropical flavor, courtesy of Charney's Hawaiian-styled guitar phrasing. The 11-minute-plus "Full Moon Over The Graveyard" gradually builds its revolving theme to a crescendo, before veering off into a galloping, rockabilly-styled homestretch. "Arms of Morpheus" main theme rises from and sinks back into a cavernous Charney guitar progression. And Wine Of Nails gives us a musical sci-fi epic in the nearly 20-minute "Kloone's Voyage," with a complex storyline that carries us through a myriad of uncharted soundscapes. The album's sole vocal number, "Rainy Day Table for One," with Peruso's understated gruff croon, is a throwback to mid-70's John Wetton-fronted King Crimson. Charney, Peruso and Schrock convey a different musical story, mood and atmosphere on each track of On and Beyond, often fusing several styles together within the framework of each composition. We hear continuous experimentation, exploration and interaction, tension and release - especially among Charney and Peruso, as they converse and sometimes even argue on their respective instruments. Schrock's solid bass work serves as the unifying force and mediator between the two. Recorded, mixed and mastered by Bill Filer at Audible Images in Port Matilda, On and Beyond sounds full and balanced; and the band's production brings every element of their sound forward clearly. Fans of instrumental adventure and artistry should experience On and Beyond, as Wine of Nails boldly explores and expands the boundaries of their musical world. (can be obtained through Wine Of Nails' web site, www.attackonculture.com/wineofnails.)

RATING 9.3/10.0

THE WORRY KNOT – UNDER TREES (Oddio Records) Some music comes from a different place; an unexplored, darkish corner of one's soul. Enter the world of Houtzdale-based singer/songwriter Michael Hughes. On Under Trees, the debut CD of Hughes' studio incarnation, The Worry Knot, we are transported into a melancholy world of loss and longing, of sorrow and regret. With a nod to artists like Nick Cave and Neil Young, Hughes laments the passage of loved ones and happier times through the disc's dozen tracks. On "That Place," Hughes is saddened by how the passage of time clouds memories of a happier time and relationship; while "Need To Get Back" yearns to find the point where life got off track. Hughes relays the anguish of a broken relationship on the harder-edged "Rain Keeps Falling;" but on "Lullaby" tries to reassure a loved one that everything will be all right. Perhaps the most powerful track on Under Trees is "Gone," about Hughes coming to grips with the passing of his mother. Hughes speaks to his mother as the song progresses, eventually escalating into a chaotic, anguish-ridden distortion/feedback-laden finale. As dark and melancholy as this album is, Under Trees is also delicate and artistic. Hughes closes the album with musical interpretations of two poems about longing and lament; Oscar Wilde's "Requiescat" and D.H. Lawrence's "The End." Hughes waxes poetic with his own words, selling his laments with a broken voice that sounds authentic and sincere. Through his honest delivery, we realize that Hughes' sadness is the real deal, not contrived. And musically, the arrangements and guitarist/bassist John Wagoner's production give these songs depth, texture and character. Ultimately, while The Worry Knot's Under Trees is a sad album, it is a compelling listen – as we hear an artist bare his soul and come to the realization that some things in life are unreachable. (Can be obtained through The Worry Knot's web site, www.theworryknot.com.)

RATING 8.7/10.0

PASSENGER – GETTING THERE (Curveball Records) From southern Ontario, Passenger is the brainchild project of musician/producer Jim Slansky. On the debut CD Getting There, Jim introduces us to a psychedelic soul stew of jazzy, funky, groove-oriented rock, rhythm and blues. The base sound suggests what might happen if Earth Wind & Fire, Lenny Kravitz, the Grateful Dead and Dixie Dregs all sat in on a jam session together. Jim basically does it all – vocals, all instruments, production; and save for two mixes of the catchy reggae-flavored take on Bill Withers' "Ain't No Sunshine," Jim wrote all the songs here, too. Jim sounds fluent on all of it; his instrumentation and vocals sound crisp and well-balanced, and his song ideas are fresh-sounding and uplifting. And while Jim does some exploring through the course of these grooves, he keeps the songs short, sweet and to the point; never overblown or self-indulgent. Though it all sounds good, my personal favorites include the driving funk of "Howling At The Moon;" the upbeat and optimistic title track "Getting There;" Jim's playful ode to hitting the links, "The Golfing Song;" the funky and lively "Next To You;" and the lowdown funk of "I Need New Shoes." Getting There is a cohesive effort from start to finish, as the eclectic mix of styles and grooves flows smoothly along. Getting There is a feel-good album, a pleasant musical joyride you'll enjoy being a passenger on. (To obtain, visit the website www.curveballrecords.com)

RATING 9.0/10.0

ROADKILL – HARD WORK AIN'T EAZY AND DRY BREAD AIN'T GREAZY (self-produced) Formed in 1991, Clearfield County-based power trio Roadkill has established their niche on regional stages by forging a style and sound they have branded "music for the attitudinally challenged." On their second full-length CD, Hard Work Ain't Eazy and Dry Bread Ain't Greazy, Roadkill – outspoken lead singer/bassist Greg Majewsky, guitarist Sean McCracken and drummer Shawn "Teach" Evans - perform three-chord raunch rock with a nasty attitude, throwing caution and political correctness to the wind. The short and torrid lead-off track, "I Don't Care," is the group's manifesto; as Greg barks that he has no worries or apologies, pulls no punches and doesn't play fair. Roadkill then bashes the feminist rock movement and one of its biggest stars on the sarcastic "I Wanna Be An Ex-Boyfriend of Alanis Morissette." Other noteworthy highlights here include the less-than-optimistic "Today Is The Last Day Of The Rest Of My Life," the playful blues/boogie exercises of "That Thing" and "S.K.S.;" and the monstrous ode to snack cookie obsession, "Hardcoreo," which ends the disc. Roadkill plays it brash and raunchy throughout the disc, with bludgeoning chords and stampeding rhythms, topped at various times by Sean McCracken's skillful fretboard shredding. Ultimately, though, Greg Majewsky is the focal point here. Described on the group's web site as part snarling dog and Sam Kinison, Greg's delivery is acidic, angry and witty; intent on offending the emotionally insecure. Yet his touches of self-deprecating humor throughout the disc let us know that Greg shouldn't be taken too seriously. Roadkill's Hard Work Ain't Eazy and Dry Bread Ain't Greazy is a guilty pleasure, and ultimately a fun album that rocks with reckless abandon - from a band that is proud to be politically incorrect. (The album can be purchased at the group's shows, or through their web site, www.runyoudown.com)

RATING 8.7/10.0



Sean McCracken of Roadkill.



Greg Majewsky of Roadkill.

THE EMBALMED – HOOKED ON DEMONICS (self-produced)

AAUURRRGGGHHH!!! It's been a long time since bonafide hood-and-guts death metal has graced the Cut CD player. Johnstown trio The Embalmed delivers it on Hooked on Demonics – death metal, the type that will have Mark Da Boy headbanging all around the living room and Beth Da Girl climbing the walls in agony! Frontman/bassist Mourning Preacher, guitarist Bluddy Waters and drummer Reverend Fangs give us malevolent, sinister-sounding, monstrously heavy metallic soundscapes with guttural vocals, violence-laden lyrics about the macabre and more. The Embalmed are convincingly heavy and evil-sounding, their metal goods offered here will take you to the nearby graveyard and work you over with a tire iron! Mourning Preacher's guttural utterances and bestial barks will raise the hair on your neck, and you can understand most of what he says. As musicians, this trio is tight, with Bluddy Waters offering interesting riffage while Fangs the drummer levies busy and thunderous beats to pound this stuff down your throat. The songs have direction to them, and there is an attempt at melody within the framework of what The Embalmed are doing here. After several listens, you can distinguish between such noteworthy tracks as "Writhe," "Bleeding of the Slime," (my personal fave) "Welcome Back the Newlydeads," "With Arms Both Broken," "Barbed Wire Morgue," "Incinerate," the title track "Hooked on Demonics" and more. Recorded at the Recording Cathedral and engineered by Paul Bastin, Hooked On Demonics sounds vast and cavernous, thunderous and barren. This is obviously not for everyone, and I wouldn't expect to see these guys joining the Britney Spears/O-Town world tour any time soon. But The Embalmed have already amassed a following with their sinister and monstrous sound, and this CD is proof positive as to why. Crank Hooked On Demonics loud on the CD player the next time the Jehovah's Witnesses show up at your front door, and watch the fun as they run, screaming in fear! Death metal lives! (Can be obtained at the group's shows, or e-mail lucylugosi@webtv.net.)

RATING 7.4/10.0

69 PROOF – SERENITY IS DEAD (self-produced) Upon hearing their debut EP Serenity Is Dead, it becomes rather obvious that Johnstown metalheads 69 Proof are fans of a certain famous Bay Area metal band whose frontman is undergoing treatment for alcoholism as this is being written. 69 Proof's admiration for Metallica is not a secret here – but having said that, the group emulates Metallica well over these five tracks, particularly the New Wave of British Heavy Metal-influenced early Metallica sound. 69 Proof – frontman/lead guitarist Tink, rhythm guitarist Keith Onderko, bassist Dave Rager and drummer Greg Shaffer – hammer it out for all they're worth over these five tracks. From its funky "Shaft"-like lead-in, the acidic CD-opening ode to infidelity, "You Pay Too," is the most melodic song of the bunch, with Tink voicing his dismay over a less-than-true soulmate, with appropriate phone-slammng sound effects to give the unfaithful significant other the heave-ho. "Your Sins" is Tink coming to grips with his father leaving him at an early age – an appropriately slower and darker number which gets heavier and angrier as it progresses. My personal favorite tune here is 69 Proof's instant Saturday night party anthem, "Drinkin,'" a throwback to late 70's/early 80's New Wave of British Heavy Metal circa Blitzkrieg and Diamond Head; its glorious "Drinkin' Drinkin' Drinkin'" choruses will have you raising your frosted stein to the barroom ceiling in sheer delight, 'nuff said! "Titanium" is a multi-speed instrumental which hints at Tink's other musical pastime as guitarist in Pittsburgh-based Iron Maiden tribute band Powerslave. And the title track "Serenity Is Dead" is a two-speed affair that raunches and rages out in the homestretch, with Tink's evil laughs the final sound we hear as the song fades to black. Produced by Tink and recorded in drummer Greg's basement, Serenity Is Dead is appropriately raw and jagged sounding; while slightly muddy, the sound is balanced, and we hear every component of 69 Proof's attack bludgeoning forth loudly and proudly. Ultimately, I like the way 69 Proof merges old-school metal influences with current-day anger and spite. And while Serenity Is Dead would sound better with bigger and better production, it is still a lethal sampler which whets my appetite to hear more of what this Johnstown headbanging force has to offer. Worth checking out.... (To obtain, check out 69 Proof's web site at <http://members.tripod.com/69proof/>.)

RATING 7.8/10.0

KRAMER – THE HOMESTEAD (self-produced) It is interesting how the digital age has made it possible – and affordable – for nearly anybody with a song to burn a CD and get their music out there. Enter Kramer. This Altoona-Hollidaysburg 4-piece are high school students who have been playing instruments and performing together just a short time. They knew somebody with an 8-track board, recorded some tunes, and eureka, The Homestead! Overall, this isn't bad, given the ages and experience level of those creating it. Singer Dave Hand, guitarist Brandon Bauder, bassist Jimi Bacon and drummer Josh Hileman perform hard-edged modern rock here, with touches of punk and funk; Weezer, Nirvana and Offspring flavorings along the way. On the plus side, most of Kramer's raw song ideas show purpose and direction, and I give these youngsters credit for tackling the types of tempo and chord shifts they do. The group gives their strongest efforts on "Plastic Life," "Oxygen," the slower rocker "Scream" and the Greenday-ish "Make You Move." And former Tommi-Gunn singer/guitarist Bryan Weimert does a decent job on production, giving Kramer a crisp and balanced sound. On the minus side, this is a young band, and as such, their chops need some work. Their timing and vocals need tightening – shortcomings that more time practicing and playing together will likely remedy. But again, given their ages, Kramer's effort here is respectable, and The Homestead provides a starting point and foundation for these youngsters to grow upon and develop. Keep practicing, guys, you're on your way...

RATING 5.9/10.0

DA BOY FROM DA BURGH

By Mark Da Boy

I told myself that I would not write anything about September 11th. I lied. The events of that day have forever changed the way the world will revolve. I keep thinking about all the James Bond movies. Some crazy person wants to take over the world. To own it. Now – reality. Here's a "person" who wants to eliminate the world, and he will use his own group to do so. What will this accomplish? I don't have the answers. I do know that it will get worse before it gets better.

Now, the latest chapter in the ongoing medical drama called "Da Girl." Beth had back surgery October 8th to fuse together a ruptured disc. She's pulling through. Stay tuned next time for what, I don't know. Luke? He's doing fine. At the time of this writing, he's going on nine months. He refuses to crawl. Oh well...

Me? At the time of this writing, I'm still employed. Downsizing is affecting every business. Radio is no exception.

Ok. Enough doom and gloom. On to other stuff...

MUSIC REVIEWS MUSIC REVIEWS MUSIC REVIEWS MUSIC REVIEWS

Time for another "Music Review Reduction Sale!" That's right! No bull reviews! Lean and mean. With the way the economy is, you can't afford not to pay attention!

THE WHO – BBC SESSIONS (MCA)

I've seen The Who live three times. The last time was the summer of 2000, and each time, I've been blown away! Few bands can create the magic this legendary group can on stage. What's ironic is that I own few Who releases. This kind of fell in my lap. A hodge podge of performances Roger, Pete, John and Keith did for the BBC in the 60's and '70's that are now preserved on cd. Curious covers include "Good Lovin'" and "Dancing in the Street"...mixed with classics like "My Generation," "Substitute," and "Long Live Rock"...plus radio jingles, obscure originals, and interviews thrown in for good measure. Sounds like they could combust at any point, but they keep it under musical control. If you want the best of The Who live, get the recently remastered version of "Live at Leeds." 8.7/10.0

OYSTERHEAD – THE GRAND PECKING ORDER

Winner of eclectic supergroup of the year! Bassist wacko Les Claypool, former Phish alum Trey, and ex-Police skinbasher Stewart Copeland join together to confuse, confound, and congregate musical musings to a different level. I have no idea what 90 percent of these songs are about! Does it matter? The glue is Stewart's incredible sticking that keeps this funky glop chugging along. Stand out is the country-tinged "Birthday Boys." Diehards only. 7.5/10.0

TONIO K. – YUGOSLAVIA (GADFLY RECORDS)

Tonio K. is my generation's Dylan or Guthrie. Probably THE best political songwriter/performer

out today! Yugo is a collection of recent demos from '99 – recorded with the intent for someone else to perform them. Most of these songs are (dare I say it) love songs! And, he makes no apologies for them! Don't worry. There are a few sarcastic favs including Student Interview (With the Third Richest Man in the World) and 16 Tons of Monkeys. Tonio K. isn't afraid to rock out on a few tracks, but at the three slow songs at the end are a downer. Still my man though. 9.2/10.0

DEVO – PIONEERS WHO GOT SCALPED – THE ANTHOLOGY (RHINO)

In High School, a friend who shall remain nameless, along with me, were the BIGGEST Devo fans! We knew all the words. We had all the dance mannerisms. In other words, we were geeks. That's ok. I still like Devo. Akron Ohio's own Devo helped to advance the punk movement, pioneer the concept video, wore merchandise before it was hip, and craft great pop songs. Two cd's of "hits," (Whip It), hard to find (original version of Be Stiff), and the bizarre (a remake of Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka-Dot Bikini and NIN's Head Like A Hole). Disc one is excellent – from their very early demo days to arguably their best release "New Traditionalists." Disc two quickly devolves into synth trappings and monotony. The 52 page booklet is colorful and informative. So dance the poot and relive your spudboy years!
Disc one) 9.6/10.0 Disc two) 5.5/10.0

MOLTEN MIKE – GENUINE BLUESMAN/BLUES MELTDOWN – (IMP)

Sometimes blues just isn't so in your face with the 1-4-5. Sometimes, the blues is subtle. Sometimes jazz gets thrown in. Sometimes rhythm and blues gets stirred in. Molten Mike melds the blues. Not so heavy...but it's still the blues as these two releases will attest – the first title from '98 and the other from the previous year. Still worth checking out.
7.5/10.0

ROBERT REILLY – SOMETIME NOW (T.I.N. RECORDINGS)

Jangly folksy pop that sounds like late 80's Mellencamp or even Badlees, sung by a vocalist who offers a dry delivery like Doug from the Canadian group Doug and the Slugs. Kinda boring.
4.5/10.0

INCUBUS – MAKE YOURSELF

Kind of a modern day Rush with a guy on the turntables. Strong songs, powerful vocals, and 180 degree turns that keep my interest. Even the instrumental throwaway track "Battlestar Scralatchtica" is cool. Hope these guys are around a long time. Keep up the good work!
8.9/10.0

BILLY BOB THORNTON – PRIVATE RADIO (UNIVERSAL MUSIC)

It's all a part of the act! Pseudo country and phony enthusiasm do not a cd make. But hey, he's married to Angelina Jolie...
2.3/10.0

PINK FLOYD – THE WALL LIVE 1980-'81 IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE?

(COLUMBIA) Though I'm not a big fan of the Floyd, I will admit they package their product for their fans better than most bands, as attested to by this impressive two disc collection. Many a tale has been told about this famous concert tour when it hit the road in '80, and now the proof is in the puddin'. The sound quality is (dare I say) better than the studio version, and the inclusion of a previously unheard track "What Shall We Do Now?" that precedes "Young Lust." Included are two booklets of info – including incredible photos and interviews with everyone who even remotely had anything to do with this. If you like the original, you'll love this, and you probably already own it since this came out over a year ago.
9.0/10.0

ALIEN LOVE CHILD – LIVE AND BEYOND

Guitar whiz Eric Johnson's new band has a weird name and a very blues-based direction as this live disc of new originals demonstrates. Shades of Hendrix come into play, as well as SRV when you hear this. Eric's understated vocals come into play, but he does feature a guest vocalist on a few tracks. Still, it can't live up to his

landmark cd Ah Via Musicom from '89. (I know, it's hard to believe it was that long ago!) 8.0/10.0

WHISKEY HIGH – CONTROLLED DISSONANCE

I know I'm a little late on the review, since the band no longer exists under this name. But, the music's still great! I've always been impressed by their releases, and scared to death of their earsplitting live shows. This one disc live with one singer/one disc studio with the other singer is a cool A/B test that shows their versatility. Holding it all together is guitar axeslayer Mike Palone. Still a worthy find of hard-rockin', amazing vocals (both), and smart songwriting. I already miss these guys...(of course, my ears are still ringing after seeing them over six years ago!

9.1/10.0

ALL – PROBLEMATIC (EPITAPH)

Basically three-quarters of The Descendents (hold the Milo), All is all that AND a bag of chips! One of my favorite cd's of the year, even though it was released in 2000. Concise pop punk in your face – with tight playing and singing. Themes range from the silly (She Broke My Dick), to the serious including songs about indifference (What Are You For?) and prejudice (The Skin). This band (and their alterego's The Descendents) should be huge! It's a shame that they're not!

9.6/10.0

REFUSED – THE SHAPE OF PUNK TO COME (EPITAPH)

Once in a while a band comes along and challenges the listener. And when it comes to punk, the Clash comes to mind right away. Now comes Refused – a band that is attempting to push punk to the limits. Not so much songs at times, as it is experiments in sound – almost straight jazz, but twisted. The cover and inner sleeve are made to look like the old record covers of the 50's – with the stereo sound logo and cropped b&w photos. I want to hear more from these guys.

8.9/10.0

GARBAGE – BEAUTIFUL

An impressive collection of pop-friendly alternative music by a supergroup of music producers backing an even more impressive (and not shabby to look at) female singer, Ms. Manson. The third release finds the band stretching out into ballads and deep lyrics, including a song about rape. This group has the staying power that the other 90's alterna-bands don't.

8.9/10.0

DOUBLE TROUBLE – BEEN A LONG TIME (TONE-COOL RECORDS)

Thanks to J.P. for this one! Stevie may be gone, but his band lives on in this all-star tribute of sorts to blues guitar god SRV. Drummer Chris Layton and bassist Tommy Shannon are the glue that holds it all together. Much kudos to blues upstart Susan Tedeschi for a stellar vocal take on Led Zep's "Rock & Roll." However, more midtempo numbers downplay the collection.

8.0/10.0

THE DWARVES – COME CLEAN (EPITAPH)

Not only is the cover of two nude babes with a nude dwarf guy (soap suds in place) a sight to see, but also the music is spic and span! Fast and furious...as Green Day as they wanna be...just a bit more aggressive on other songs. Not so squeaky clean lyrics at times.

8.2/10.0



Luke ("Da Boy's Boy") with the "Demon" at the KISS Konvention in Pittsburgh Nov.18.

SNEAK REVIEWS

By Da Boy Lyons and D'Scribe Ebert

QUEENSRYCHE-LIVE EVOLUTION(SANCTUARY)

DA BOY: I hope that The Professor and I can be friends after this review, but, pardon my French, this BLOWS! Just like Billy Joel's Millennium two disc set, this two disc set follows the Seattle band grasping for any former glory it can muster. Singer Geoff Tate sounds weathered, almost a parody of himself in spots as he barely hits the notes that were once stable. Even the rest of the band plays sloppy – as they take liberties with songs that used to be performed “just like the record” in the past. Use your money and buy the re-release of Live Mindcrime with bonus live tracks. Now if they can evolve back into the band they once were.

RATING 4.5/10.0

D'SCRIBE: MEMO TO DA BOY: As a famous philosopher once said...“Kneecaps – what a great commodity! Ever imagine life without them?” Seriously, though...Admittedly I am a huge 'Ryche fan, but I tried to give this album a good, objective listen. And I still disagree with Da Boy nearly a full 180 degrees. The closest we come to agreement on this is that given the choice between the original studio versions and the live performances given us on Live Evolution (recorded this past July 27 and 28 at Seattle's Moore Theater), I would clearly prefer the studio versions. But as Jackyl frontman Jesse James Dupree once so eloquently said, “You can't polish a terd.” Live versions usually don't eclipse the studio versions, particularly with music as complex and multidimensional as Queensryche's. At least to my ears, Geoff Tate's voice is on the mark much more often than not; and his rangeful displays on “Walk In The Shadows,” “The Lady Wore Black,” “Suite Sister Mary” and “Eyes Of A Stranger” outweigh his slight lapses on “Take Hold of the

Flame" and "I Don't Believe In Love." As for the band being sloppy, I don't detect the 'Ryche being any more sloppy than any other band in the live situation. Yes, they improvise on a few songs, but if I wanted to hear it exactly like the record...I'd listen to the record. (Hell, at least they're doing the stuff the fans want to hear – something Da Boy was ranting about bands not doing in the last issue.) Though both discs have their highlights, most 'Ryche fans will likely favor the first disc, which focuses on the band's output through Operation: Mindcrime. I particularly like the song selection here, as the 'Ryche took this special show to pull out some material not as common to their live shows, such as "Roads to Madness," "London," "Queen of the Reich," and from the *Rage/Mindcrime Suite*, the aforementioned "Suite Sister Mary." The second disc focuses on Queensryche since Mindcrime, including most of the hits from Empire and Promised Land, and select tracks from Hear In The Now Frontier and Q2K. No, it isn't perfect, but few live albums ever are. But I'll gladly take Live Evolution and its occasional glitches over most of the current crop of albums out there. If you're not already down with the 'Ryche, this double-disc set won't likely change your mind. If you are a 'Ryche fan and don't own this yet, WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU WAITING FOR? Yes, Da Boy, I guess we can still be friends. Have you fitted any new knee braces lately? RATING 8.7/10.0

VERDICT: ONE THUMB DOWN, ONE THUMB UP

WISDOM FROM THE BEER GOD

By the Final Cut Beer God, Mike Fornari



I...AM...THE BEER GOD!!!

Beer God watch NFL football game recently and become VERY ANGRY!!! Beer God see striped zebras make controversial call on field, and Cleveland football fans throw beer bottles on field! Beer God not angry at zebras...Beer God angry with stupid Cleveland fans for throwing beer bottles on field WITH BEER STILL IN THEM!!! Waste of good beer is OUTRAGE!!! BEER GOD SAY: Cleveland fans will pay for angering Beer God, when Browns sit at home in January and NOT MAKE PLAYOFFS!

Beer God say DO NOT WASTE GOOD BEER, or your favorite team sit on sidelines during playoffs, too!

THE BEER GOD...has spoken...GO NOW!!!

FROM THE BUDGET BIN

Pinching Pennies for Good Music Cheap and Cheap Music Good by D'Scribe

PAUL SHAFFER – THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS PARTY (SBK, 1993)

Purchased for less than a buck at the Ebensburg Walmart, this has to rank as one of the absolutely most stupid albums I have ever heard. Unless you have lived in a cave all your life, you no doubt know that Paul Shaffer is the longtime bandleader for David Letterman's late night escapades, and Shaffer's band in the NBC days was called "The World's Most Dangerous Band." On Letterman's show, we hear Shaffer and his bandmates leading into and out of commercial breaks with hot renditions of both current hits and classics. Having been impressed with these performances many times, I was hopeful of more of the same as I popped this into the cassette deck. Not the case. What we hear is a nearly nonstop instrumental soundtrack of rock hits played by Shaffer and his band, with Shaffer talking over the music to welcome each musical guest as they show up for this session. The guests – including Ringo Starr, Joan Jett, Joe Walsh, LL Cool J, Aaron Neville, George Clinton, Tony Bennett and others – do not seem to make any significant contributions to these tracks, they just quietly blend into the mix. And Shaffer's voice is undermixed, so we actually have to strain to hear what guest he is actually welcoming. Musically Shaffer, his band and guests sound unexcited and going-through-the-motions, and we don't get any of the excitement we hear from the band when they're entertaining a studio audience going into a commercial break. The whole album comes across as a platform for Shaffer to namedrop all these famous people he is jamming with. The World's Most Dangerous Party ranks as one of the world's most dangerous cures for insomnia. Mundane and BORING! Worth the less-than-a-buck price tag if you record over the cassette.

RATING 4.2/10.0

HIGHWAY CHILE – STORYBOOK HEROES (Mirus, 1983)

RATING 8.7/10.0

HIGHWAY CHILE – FOR THE WILD AND LONELY (Mirus, 1984)

RATING 8.5/10.0

There were the memorable names of hard rock and metal who made their fame and fortune in the 80's, but there were many more who didn't. Holland's Highway Chile was one of the latter. I bought both of these albums on vinyl when I first spotted them in the import bin of Altoona's Music Hut back in the day. Back then, Highway Chile was shooting for the stars. Now, cassette versions of both of these album can be purchased for a quarter at an Altoona CD chain store. Highway Chile's base sound was rooted in the early 80's New Wave of British Heavy Metal, circa Def Leppard and Diamond Head. Eight songs in all, Storybook Heroes was hungry, rowdy, and to-the-point. The group's title song, "Highway Chile" (no relation to the Jimi Hendrix deep cut), was a fast, hard-driving statement of purpose, where singer Armand Vander Stigchel declared that this band was out there and ready for action.

The other seven songs further painted this band's personality musically and lyrically – from the bluesy opener “The Fever” to the slower “Headbangers” (another statement of purpose), to their ode to a hooker “Carol (Lady of the Dark Room)” to their fascination with the American West on the rowdy rocker “Jesse James.” As players, Highway Chile were solid – we hear rumbling, driving rhythms from bassist Eric Finck and Ernst Van Ee; and chunky, churning guitarwork from Peter Barnouw and Ben Blaauw. As songwriters, the melodies connected more often than not, and the lyrics were passable, at least comparable to anything else out there at the time. Storybook was a strong album, with only the last two tracks - “Going Blind” and the acoustic-leaning ballad “Endless Trail” – not holding up after repeat listens. A year later, Highway Chile released a six-song EP, For the Wild and Lonely, a sampler that found the band attempting to experiment with their sound more. We hear more use of synthesizers, and the drum sound was beefier and more prominent, particularly on the opening track “Power And the Force” and the curious ode to organized crime, “The Omerta (Lucky No More).” The group again displayed a fascination with the American West on the driving rocker “Custer’s Last Stand,” and a further fascination for battles on the closing rocker “Horses And Shields.” For me, the two strongest tracks here were the romantic-leaning rocker “Pale Blue Eyes” with its catchy hook and fluid guitarwork, and the explosive rocking ode to success in the music biz, “Brand New Star.” Apparently, Highway Chile pulled some of the right strings, because the band eventually landed a major recording deal, and with new singer Sav Pearce, released the 1985 album Rockerama on 21 Records. But alas, the promotional push wasn't there, the American public wasn't interested, and Highway Chile came to a dead end. If you spot either of these two cassettes (or even Rockerama, another strong album) in the cut-out bin, both are a steal, especially if you spot them for 25 cents each like I did!

ELECTRIC BOYS – FUNK-O-METAL CARPET RIDE (Atco, 1990) A recurring theme about many bands who appear in this feature – how fleeting this thing called fame can be! Ten years ago, every local band and their brother were scrambling to cover Electric Boys' dance-metal hit “All Lips'n'Hips” from this album. Now, Funk-o-Metal Carpet Ride can be had for a quarter from the cut-out bin! While “All Lips'n'Hips” garnered this Swedish foursome their 15 minutes of notoriety, it wasn't enough to prevent them from being swept out the door by the early 90's grunge movement from Kurt Cobain, Eddie Vedder and their ilk. For what it's worth, though, if you liked “All Lips'n'Hips,” you'll find plenty to celebrate on this album. Funk-O-Metal Carpet Ride delivered exactly as advertised, feisty metal-meets-funk with a nod to Bon Jovi and Aerosmith. The band's focal point was charismatic frontman Conny Bloom, whose ability to blend vocal power and sass convincingly sold many of the songs on this album. Conny had a very capable band that could lay down the funk grooves and pack some metal crunch behind him – guitarist Franco Santunione, bassist Andy Christell and drummer Niclas Sigavell. Electric Boys were at their best when they funk'd up their metal, on the album's opening track “Psychedelic Eyes,” the hit “All Lips'n'Hips,” “Captain of My Soul,” “Rags to Riches,” “Electrified” and “Into the Woods.” Another highlight was the group's melodic rocker “Who Are You.” Lyrically, these guys didn't offer solutions for world hunger, but then again; you bought this album to crank on your stereo and bump and grind with your favorite member of the opposite sex to, not for enlightenment! Electric Boys would go on to issue two more albums, 1992's Groovus Maximus and 1994's Freewheelin.' but the world was more interested in rockers feeling sorry for themselves at that point, and Electric Boys subsequently died an unceremonious and largely unnoticed death. If you enjoyed “All Lips'n'Hips” and Aerosmith/Bon Jovi-styled funk-metal,

Electric Boys' Funk-o-Metal Carpet Ride is an absolute steal at 25 cents in the Budget Bin. Indulge freely... RATING 8.8/10.0

THE FINAL FRAME

Movie Reviews with D'Scribe

D'SCRIBE'S NOTE: I don't get out to see movies much any more. First, there are very few films that intrigue me enough to want to shell out 7 bucks to see them. Secondly, my busy schedule doesn't allow me to do a whole lot of movie watching. But recently, my boss at Q94, Adam, handed me a pair of passes to check out movies at Park Hills Theater in Altoona (thanks much!), so I decided to spend a Wednesday night recently seeing two of the latest Hollywood had to offer...

THE ONE (Columbia) I had to wait through about 15 trailers for upcoming films to get to the main attraction here, but eventually the movie did begin...The premise for this flick: Our universe is supposedly one of 124 different parallel universes contained in a multiverse. (Where the number 124 comes from is not explained.) Martial arts expert Jet Li portrays Gabe, a modern-day Los Angeles sheriff's deputy with a unique dilemma – one of his parallel beings in one of the other universes, Yulaw, has managed to kill off the other 122 of his parallel beings in the other universes, and becomes more powerful and god-like with each parallel being he kills. Gabe is the only being left to kill, and doing so would make Yulaw "The One," an all-powerful being. Gabe's evil counterpart shows up in Los Angeles and tries to do Gabe in, but fails. Two trans-universal cops, played by Jason Statham and Delroy Lindo, pursue and try to apprehend Yulaw to no avail, and soon it is a battle to the finish between Gabe and Yulaw – all boiling down to a film-ending martial arts battle in an industrial complex with lots of steam and flames. As movies go, this combination sci-fi/action-adventure/martial arts flick is nonstop rock 'em sock 'em action start-to-finish, and is a film that doesn't sit in one place for very long. Good points – The One is fast-paced and exciting, with numerous chase scenes, violence and special effects. (I especially like how the characters transfer from one universe to another by grotesquely disintegrating and reassembling.) Bad points – its plot and premise are not very believable, and character development is minimal. But if you are a fan of action and special effects, The One has more than enough to hold your interest, and is satisfying in a comic book sort of way.

RATING 3 BAGS OF POPCORN OUT OF 5.

THE LAST CASTLE (DreamWorks) This combination prison movie and military flick casts Robert Redford as General Irwin, a three-star general who has been court-martialed for disobeying orders (which led to the deaths of 8 servicemen). Having pleaded guilty, Irwin has been stripped of rank and sentenced to ten years in a maximum-security military prison. In the film's opening scenes, Irwin is warmly greeted by the prison's warden, Colonel Winter, played by James Gandolfini. The warmth doesn't last; though, and Colonel Winter soon resents General Irwin's presence, and the increasing respect and loyalty he receives from his fellow prisoners. Sensing Irwin's popularity as a threat, Winter sets out to break Irwin by any means necessary with his iron fist policies against both Irwin and his fellow inmates. These moves backfire, though, serving only to galvanize the inmates

behind Irwin. Eventually, Irwin plots to seize the prison and relieve Winter from his command, and the film builds up to an action-packed finale. The film's biggest highlight is the development of the resentment of the pompous and sadistic Winter towards the patriotic and humble Irwin. To that end, both Redford and Gandolfini develop their respective characters well, enough so that I found it easy to cheer for Redford as the prison uprising finale unfolded. There is a fair amount of action throughout the movie, especially towards the end. And while the actual prison uprising contains a few flaws (namely, how the prisoners were able to construct and conceal a huge rolling catapult without being discovered by the prison guards), I largely bought into this movie's themes of patriotism and loyalty. Bottom line – The Last Castle kicks ass, suggesting a fusion of Cool Hand Luke, Apocalypse Now and Taps. Not the most believable movie ever made, but an exciting and alluring two hours I'm glad I spent inside the theater.

RATING 4 BAGS OF POPCORN OUT OF 5.

THE FINAL CURTAIN

Theatre review with D'Scribe

ALONE TOGETHER (Altoona Community Theatre) @ MISHLER THEATRE, ALTOONA 11/16/01 Even rarer than my going to see movies is my going to see plays. Theatre has just never been my thing. But never let it be said that I can't be persuaded to sample something new once in a while. After meeting and being invited by Alone Together actress Heather Hunter to check out this production, and then by chance having my name put on the guest list by Mishler soundman Brian McConnell (thanks much!), I was there! And believe it or not, as an Altoona native who has lived here all my life, this was the first time I had ever set foot inside the Mishler Theatre! Very nice room to say the least, the ceiling artwork and the ornate interior are well worth checking out. But I was here to see a performance, and here's the recap...Alone Together is a 1983 comedy written by Lawrence Roman, and is set in the Los Angeles residence of George and Helene Butler (played by Cliff Drury and Valerie Stratton respectively). George and Helene are a middle-aged couple set to enjoy their golden years together now that their children have left the nest – or so they think. Enter eldest son Michael (played by Jonathan O'Harrow), who shows up late one night to announce that he has left school at M.I.T. and is moving back in with his parents – much to their chagrin. George and Helene have little time to recover from this bombshell before another son, Elliott (played by Jordan Yarwood) shows up at their door with suitcases in hand, announcing that his wife has thrown him out. With Helene approaching a nervous breakdown, enter another unexpected houseguest when Janie Johnson (played by Heather Hunter) – a college co-ed friend of youngest son Keith Butler (Michael DeRensis II) – shows up at the door with Keith's blessings and promise that mom and dad will provide her with room and board as well. All hell breaks loose, as George and Helene attempt to cope with all of these new houseguests and the various squabbles between them (Michael and Elliott battling over phone usage, Janie's attention, etc. Eventually Keith himself shows up and takes Janie back to San Francisco with him, leaving George and Helene to figure out how to politely get rid of their other two sons and reclaim their own house. Both Cliff Drury and Valerie Stratton are effective in their roles, Drury as the wishy-washy and passive father who attempts to be the peacemaker between all involved, and Stratton (my psychology professor when I attended Penn State Altoona) as the whining, paranoid housewife who gets nearer and nearer to a nervous breakdown as the plot unfolds. Of the three sons, Jonathan O'Harrow is the

most convincing as intellectual slob son Michael – perfect as the uninvited houseguest that will not leave. This story had some good laughs and moved along well. Overall, it was an enjoyable evening at the Mishler for my first time there ever, and the ACT production of Alone Together was enough fun that return visits to the Mishler for future ACT presentations are likely.

THE FINAL ENCORE

Concert reviews by D'Scribe



A sea of humanity at the 2nd annual Rolling Rock Town Fair.

ROLLING ROCK TOWN FAIR @ WESTMORELAND COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS NEAR LATROBE, PA 8/5/01

After the huge success of the inaugural Rolling Rock Town Fair last year, it was not a surprise that there would be a sequel. And like the first one, the second Rolling Rock Town Fair sold out fairly quickly when tickets first went on sale. Fortunately, Big Jim was able to procure tickets early, so when August 5 arrived, the entourage of Big Jim, Joey, Jason and I were able to attend.

Unlike last year, we didn't park near the Westmoreland County Fairgrounds this year. Instead, we picked one of the first parking areas we found when we arrived in Latrobe, and took the shuttle bus to the Fairgrounds. This was an adventure. We rode a school bus, driven by an older gentleman who already looked weary from dealing with drunken concertgoing passengers. On board the bus with us was a group of rowdy concert fans from New York City, these guys were hilarious! As the bus came to a near halt in gridlock traffic approaching the festival, several of the New York passengers jumped off the bus to relieve themselves in nearby weeds. At one point, with the bus alongside an apparent electric fence surrounding a farmer's field, one of the New Yorkers started to relieve himself along the fence, with his drunken friends warning him that he could get zapped. (He didn't.) The ride took some 45 minutes to get from Latrobe to the concert grounds, most of that time was spent waiting in the gridlock to get into the grounds.

But we did eventually arrive, relatively early in the show. One big difference between last year's Fair and this year's was the elimination of the second stage for this year's event, so all the musical action took place on the main stage. We worked our way through the massive crowd towards the mainstage area, with Big Jim and I separating from Jason and Joey as we proceeded. We had missed the first band of

the afternoon, Tantric, but were hopeful of getting to the stagefront area in time to see at least part of Staind's set.

It had rained the day before, and as we descended the turn towards the main concert grounds, we discovered that much of the grounds was a sea of mud. We gingerly stepped our way forward, and initially settled in a less populated spot midway back, towards the left side of the grounds. The sound tower prevented us from having a direct view of the stage, so we observed most of Staind's set on the jumbotron.

I had seen Staind earlier in the year at Penn State's Bryce Jordan Center, opening for Godsmack. During that performance, Staind frontman Aaron Lewis sang the tunes and didn't address the audience at all. This set was different, as Lewis addressed the mass of humanity several times and seemed to be in more of an upbeat mood. We arrived just in time, as Aaron and Staind went into the ever-popular "Mudshovel." The group mixed songs from their two CD's, and performed several new songs as well. The group did "Fade," before Aaron strapped on the acoustic guitar and performed the hit "Outside."

Though we were pretty far back and couldn't see the stagefront area from our vantage point, we knew there were probably a few moshpits in action as Staind proceeded through their set. And the crowd was putting the mud to use already, as Aaron addressed a small number of individuals who were tossing mud up at the stage. At one point, Big Jim and I observed as two muddied up fans made their way back near where we were, one hunched over and clutching his stomach in pain. As his accomplice tried to assist him, the injured fan swatted and swore at him – apparently suffering a drunken moshpit-oriented injury. We found this incident amusing; and fortunately, it would be the closest thing to a fight we would see for the rest of the day.

After Staind's set, we decided to head back up to the upper fairgrounds to get something to drink and check out some of the vendors and displays. As we climbed the hillside, we noted that the condition of the turf was rapidly deteriorating as the mass of people walked and climbed over it, and the hillside was becoming very muddy. We could hear Incubus' set get under way as we made our way through the grounds, and heard as Incubus performed their big hits, "Drive" and "Pardon Me."

One big improvement at the Town Fair this year was an abundance of drink vendors, and it didn't take us long to locate and obtain sodas. We browsed some of the other vendors and displays, such as the circus sideshow attraction, a model railroad inside one of the fairground buildings, and a Fender guitar stand, where we registered to win a guitar and obtained a few free guitar picks. After grabbing a frozen beverage, we headed back down to the main concert grounds to attempt to find a closer vantage point.

We succeeded, getting up past the sound tower on the right-hand side and now able to view the stage directly. Soon the Deftones commenced their set, and performed tunes from their CD's – including the popular "My Own Summer" and "Bored," new songs such as "Change" and "Digital Bath," and more. At one point during one of their songs, the group broke into Weezer's "Say It Ain't So." Frontman Chino Moreno gave a strong performance, rallying the crowd into moshing, body surfing and other mud-coated fun. We were seeing more and more people covered head to toe with mud, and considered ourselves lucky to not get much mud on ourselves just yet. Chino demonstrated a powerful voice and a rapport with the crowd; he did seem to have something against microphones, judging by the sounds we were hearing as he slammed his mic around. Though still not all that familiar

with the Deftones catalog just yet, I thought the Deftones gave an impressive showing, and stepped up the excitement level of the Town Fair.

After a very short intermission, Live took the stage. This would be my first time witnessing the superstar rockers from York. The group opened with "Lakini's Juice" from their Secret Samadhi CD, and proceeded with a set featuring most of their major hits, along with tunes from their new CD, V, which was coming out in September. The group dipped back to their Mental Jewelry CD for "Operation Spirit," after which singer Ed Kowalczyk told the western PA audience that Live was from York – not too far away – and reaffirmed that small town musicians can make it in the music business. Also from Mental Jewelry the group performed "Beauty of Gray;" and Live played the hits "Selling The Drama," "All Over You" and "Lightning Crashes" from Throwing Copper; all three of these Live faves became crowd singalongs. From the same album they introduced "Sh*t Towne" as a song about their native York. From Secret Samadhi the group also performed "Turn My Head," and did "Dolphin's Cry" from their disc The Distance to Here. From the group's new CD, V, Live performed "Deep Enough" and "Simple Creed." The group sounded clean and powerful, and Ed's voice sounded clear and on target through the sound system. Live quickly had the crowd fired up, and muddy body surfers launched into the air atop the crowd throughout the set. The excitement level remained high, building to the climactic closer "I Alone." I was impressed with my first look at Live, and judging by the euphoric state of the audience, so was almost everybody else.

The intermissions had been very short between bands throughout this year's Town Fair, but the layover was a little lengthier between Live and the headliners Stone Temple Pilots – about 45 minutes. It was sunny, hot and sweaty, and a large hose at the front of the stage was used to water down the audience and cool everyone off. They ran the hose almost continuously throughout the intermission, and sustained it on our area for a while – not only cooling us off, but making for even more mud. Rolling Rock Town Fair had become the Rolling Rock Mud Fair! Virtually nobody on the grounds – including Big Jim or myself – were immune to the mud, and we all had at least some on us – if not from the mud directly, from mud-coated passers-by rubbing mud off on us as they squeezed by in search of positions closer to the stage. By this point, we had pretty much conceded that we wouldn't escape the mud, and were happy not to be coated head to toe in the stuff like a number of fans were.

Eventually, Stone Temple Pilots were set to begin. With Scott Weiland stepping onstage decked out in black leather biker gear, Stone Temple Pilots launched into "Down" from their No. 4 CD to kick off their set. After the song ended, Weiland jokingly announced to the audience "We're Judas Priest" – obviously a reference to the Rob Halford-like gear he was wearing. The group then went into "Vaseline," and the crowd really came to life. Wearing their mud like war paint, many mud-coated members of the crowd began body-surfing with reckless abandon as Stone Temple Pilots continued with "Meatplow" from the Purple disc. Several beach balls became airborne as the set progressed, and soon these beach balls rivaled Chuck E. Cheese's for being filth-covered. Weiland happily worked his way back and forth onstage, addressing all sides of the Rolling Rock crowd. He and STP proceeded with favorites such as "Big Empty," the more recent hit "Sour Girl" and "Creep;" before introducing "Days of the Week" from their new CD, Shangri-La Dee Da. From the Tiny Music... CD, Stone Temple Pilots then did "Trippin On A Hole in a Paper Heart," before doing two more songs from the new disc - the latter being "Hollywood Bitch." As the band continued with favorites like "Interstate Love Song" and "Plush," the muddy crowd continued to be festive, with several young ladies removing tops and baring "the

goods" – mud-coated – from atop their boyfriends' (or other male concertgoers') shoulders. In the midst of all this Town Fair euphoria, Weiland proclaimed that it was a "M-F'ing good thing to be the original," before he and STP proceeded with "Sunday Girl" from the No. 4 CD to end the set.



Weiland appeases the masses at Rolling Rock Town Fair.

Obviously, the Rolling Rock mudfest masses weren't letting this show end just yet, and instantly demanded the encore. It took a few minutes, but eventually Robert DiLeo surfaced, donned his guitar and started playing some riffs, teasing Led Zeppelin's "The Ocean." Soon Weiland, draped in an American flag, surfaced onstage, and the group launched into "Dead & Bloated" off the Core CD. The crowd went nuts, with body surfing en masse. The group then segued into their final song, "Sex Type Thing." Towards the end of the song, with his back to the audience, Weiland disrobed from the American flag, revealing nothing on underneath. The audience again went crazy, and the other band members draped the flag back over Weiland and rushed him from the stage as Stone Temple Pilots' set – and the Rolling Rock Town Fair - came to a close.

As Big Jim and I joined the rest of the mass of humanity and began our trek to exit the concert grounds, we observed two young ladies walking nearby, totally covered head to toe in mud. Big Jim got one of them to pose while I took a picture. Another group of mud-soaked fans walked nearby, and I remarked "That looks like a bunch of happy guys" - they cheered in response, happy to have enjoyed the mudfest that was this year's Rolling Rock Town Fair.

We grabbed a quick bite to eat from one of the few vendors that wasn't already closing up shop for the day, and made our way outside to await our shuttle bus ride back. With the massive crowd awaiting bus rides, it took about a 45-minute wait to get a seat; but once we were aboard the bus, it only took about 20 minutes to get back to our car in the parking area - about an hour and fifteen minutes total to get back on the road homeward. Considering an audience estimated at around 50,000 concert fans, not bad...and still shorter time than it usually takes to leave Star Lake near Pittsburgh.

Once again, Rolling Rock Town Fair was a good time, and my hat's off to the show organizers for again doing their homework. They resolved one of last year's big problems by providing more drink vendors (some folks were complaining about the prices, but they were still largely lower than Star Lake's). The concert organizers provided water canteens near the stage area, and water was again obtainable in

paper cups, eliminating any major projectile-throwing problems. The wood-chip-turned-mud stagefront area didn't lend itself to being good for projectile-launching, either. In fact, the worst flying projectiles we would witness all day were mud-soaked shirts, ballcaps and an occasional sneaker launched above the crowd - hardly anything that could cause injury. Unlike Ozzfest the weekend before at Star Lake, walking wounded couldn't be seen at Rolling Rock Town Fair (other than the mosher I mentioned earlier who caught the elbow). By and large, everybody seemed to have a good time, especially the mudfest participants towards the front of the grounds. I heard reports in the days afterward of mud-dancing fests, mud-wrestling, mud break-dancing and other mud-soaked fun.

Ultimately, the festive atmosphere, the mudfest, and a stronger slate of performers overall made the second annual Rolling Rock Town Fair an improvement over the first, at least in my book. And it is more than likely that I will be attending the next Town Fair should they decide to do it again in 2002.



Big Jim and a Rolling Rock Mud Fair survivor.

SCREAM/HALF TEMPTED/FELIX & THE HURRICANES/NEVERMOURE/CLOUD 9/ELECTRIC BLUE @ Q-FEST 2001, PPG PAVILION IN TIPTON 9/15/01

To anyone who follows the local music scene with any regularity, this summer was the summer of benefit concerts. Starting with the "Juke Joint Jam" benefit in June (reviewed later this issue), this area hosted a long series of benefit shows, both outdoors and in.

Q94's annual Q-Fest concert was not supposed to be a benefit - initially. The idea for an annual Q94-sponsored summer concert actually dates back to the early 80's when the station was just getting off the ground. The concert was organized as an event that gave area rock fans and Q94 listeners something to do; and an event to help promote the station and get its name out there. This year's concert was to be no different...that is, until the events of Sept. 11.

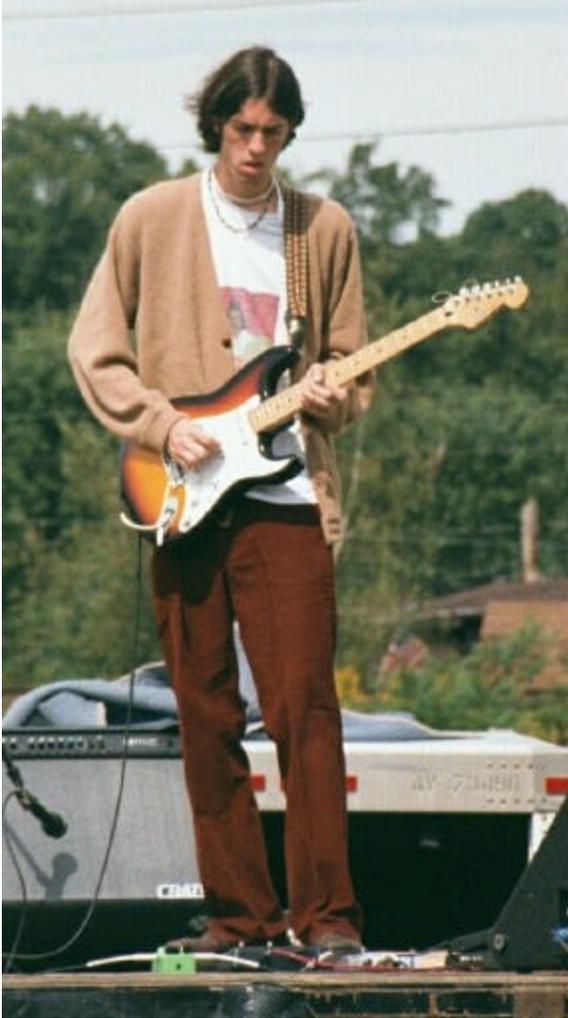
With the terrorist attacks on New York, Washington and Somerset County occurring just four days in front of Q-Fest, we seriously contemplated pulling the

plug on this year's concert altogether. After all, who would want to attend a rock concert after such a massive national tragedy? But as we thought about it more, the idea struck us – that since the American Red Cross is always the prominent organization to pitch in during times of disaster, why not turn Q-Fest into a benefit to raise funds for Red Cross disaster relief, and make the concert count for something? We set the wheels in motion, and a groundswell of support quickly came together, with most of the bands offering to donate their services for free (since we had initially agreed to pay the bands to perform at this show and changed it to a benefit after that agreement was made, we gave the bands the option of being paid or donating their talents to the cause). The sound company, Jim Colyer and Lizzard Productions, donated their services, only asking for money to cover transportation costs (they even persuaded Duncansville U-Haul to lend them a van for free that day. G&R Excavating donated two flatbed trailers to use for the stage, and several other area businesses pitched in tents and other items to help in the effort. Special commemorative patriotic Q-Fest T-shirts were produced, with proceeds from their sales benefiting the Red Cross. As the week progressed, we sensed that this Q-Fest was going to be a special one like no other. And as the show unfolded that Saturday, our sense was proven right.

As the event drew nearer, we knew we had made the right decision by making the show into a benefit concert. People, musicians and businesses were coming together to make it happen. And after three days of watching the events of Sept. 11 unfold on the television screens over and over again, many people needed a release from it all. They needed to start to get back to living a normal life again. Furthermore, they needed to get together with other people - to talk about the tragedy, to reflect, to come together as a community. And after watching the events of the past week, they wanted to do something about it, however small. Attending this concert would help the Red Cross in their relief efforts - that was a logical place to start.

By the time the show was ready to begin, a good-sized crowd had already taken up positions on the PPG Pavilion lawn. Like last year's Q-Fest, this year's event would utilize two stages. The mainstage would be atop the two donated flatbed trailers, and the second stage would be located under the pavilion.

After a moment of silence to remember the victims of Tuesday's tragedy, young Tyrone blues trio Electric Blue - after presenting me with my own personalized T-shirt (thanks again guys!) - did the honors of kicking off the day's music. Singer/bassist Sean Johnson, guitarist Jimmy Tangeman and drummer Jim Barry brought the crowd to life with a stirring set of blues classics and originals, starting with their version of "Born Under a Bad Sign." The group continued with a series of their original blues-rock compositions, including the psychedelic-flavored "Perseus Starlight," "Broadway Shuffle," "Shades of Blue" and others. Electric Blue brought their set to a close with their smoking version of Jimi Hendrix's "Voodoo Chile," highlighted by dazzling fretboard pyrotechnics from Jimmy Tangeman, which brought a rousing round of cheers.



Jimmy Tangeman of Electric Blue.



Electric Blue kicks off Q-Fest 2001.

Alternating between stages, the attention of the crowd was then thrown over to the pavilion stage for that stage's first group of the afternoon, Cloud 9. This Altoona-based foursome - singer/guitarist Scott Walters, keyboard player Brett Fanelli, bassist Kicker and drummer Tim Wilkins - specialize in groove-oriented rock, especially the Grateful Dead. And as the band kicked into their set of mostly Dead

grooves, several fans instantly began grooving and dancing in front of the band. Not a huge Grateful Dead fan per se, I didn't recognize a lot of the songs that Cloud 9 performed, but I did recognize the group's version of Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode," and their set-closing rendition of the Dead's "Shakedown Street." Cloud 9's groove grew more energetic and confident as the set progressed, and they had the pavilion audience firmly in their grasp as their set concluded.



Cloud 9 lays down the groove at Q-Fest 2001.

Though they had a show later that evening 2½ hours away in Pottsville, Nevermore were still able to be a part of this year's Q-Fest, and they made their performance count. Nevermore stepped up the tempo with their energized set of original songs, including songs from their recently-released Product of Modern Need CD and several newer songs. Frontman Adam Marino rallied the Nevermore fans assembled at stagefront as he belted out voice on "Troubled Waters," "All Along," and the 'hit' from the new album, "Sweet Christine," during which several fans along the stagefront sang the song's chorus back to the band. Adam, guitarist Mike Ritchey, bassist Big Dawg and drummer Shawn Hochehl slowed things down briefly on the ballad "Always," before introducing two new original songs and the high-octane "Tollbooth Fantasy." Nevermore then did their other big ballad, "Still," and rocked with "Luvlust" – leading to the first major special moment of the afternoon...Adam began singing, in solo voice, the first verse and then chorus to Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the U.S.A." As soon as people started realizing what the song was, they started cheering Adam wildly in a show of patriotic support. After completing the chorus, Adam and Nevermore then launched into their explosive rocker "Forever Yours," which closed the set.



Nevermore escalates the energy level of Q-Fest 2001.



Shawn Hochehl of Nevermore.

This brought the show to the midway point, as the halftime ceremonies, the Q94 Calendar Girl Contest, took place under the pavilion, affording yours truly an opportunity to grab a bite to eat.



Georgia (left) and Amanda (right) became Q94 Calendar Girls at Q-Fest 2001.

After the Calendar Girl Contest concluded, the music resumed on the mainstage with Felix & the Hurricanes. Felix took the opportunity to show his patriotism to open the set, performing his solo guitar rendition of the "Star Spangled Banner" to the supportive cheers of the crowd. The Hurricanes then proceeded to play several original songs – "People Helping People," plus "I Just Had to Play The Blues" (with John Stevens joining in on harmonica) and "Icy You" from their CD The Feeling. The 'Canes then gave the audience a dosage of classics, including Stevie Ray Vaughan's "Tin Pan Alley," the Allman Brothers' "Blue Skys," Cream's "Sunshine of Your Love" and Grand Funk's "I'm Your Captain (Closer to Home)." Felix then turned the original "Free" into a rallying cry against terrorism, prompting the crowd to become vocal in showing their support for America. After a version of Bob Dylan's "Knocking on Heaven's Door," The Hurricanes closed their set as Electric Blue did earlier, with a scorching version of Jimi Hendrix's "Voodoo Chile."



Felix & the Hurricanes with guest harmonica player John Stevens.



Lead Hurricane Felix Kos.

During last year's Q-Fest, Half Tempted was the right band in the right place at the right time. It had started to rain, forcing Half Tempted to move their gear

underneath the pavilion to perform; the rain also forced the crowd under the pavilion, too, giving Half Tempted a captive audience which they proceeded to rock into a frenzy.

This year, Half Tempted was under the pavilion again, but it wasn't raining. But the crowd still piled under the pavilion to get rocked yet again, as Half Tempted launched into their set of high-powered classics from AC/DC, Judas Priest, Steppenwolf, KISS, AC/DC, Floyd, Tom Petty, AC/DC, Three Doors Down's "Kryptonite"...did I mention AC/DC? Frontman/guitarist Ron Dalansky rallied the crowd and escalated the party further after every song, and by the middle of the set the band – Ron, guitarist Tood, bassist Joe George and drummer Steve McCulley – had a few folks dancing on picnic tables, and even children dancing on the speaker stacks. Like they did last year, Half Tempted fueled this party by giving the crowd just what they wanted – enthusiastic, hard-hitting rock and roll.



Half Tempted rocks the Q-Fest masses.



Joe George and Ron Dalansky of Half Tempted, rockin' in the U.S.A.

The sun began to set on the PPG Pavilion as the final band of the day, Scream, kicked off their set on the main stage. As Q94 had recently introduced its new Saturday night program, "Concrete Classics," which showcased harder-edged classics and 80's rock, Scream – featuring former members of 80's metal juggernaut Bashful – was a natural choice to have on the Q-Fest bill.

Scream – singer Jeff Hoover, guitarists Ed Miller and Skip Henry, bassist Robert Port and drummer Mike Dooley – didn't waste any time getting down to business, opening their set with Quiet Riot's "Metal Health (Bang Your Head)." Scream quickly had fans up front and celebrating as they continued with The Cult's "Fire Woman" and Rhino Bucket's "One Night Stand." Scream then started to mix a few newer numbers and 70's classics into the set, breaking out versions of The Offspring's "Go Away," Grand Funk Railroad's "We're An American Band" and Creed's "Higher." The group then slowed the pace down for one ballad, Def Leppard's "Love Bites," before stepping up the tempo for the homestretch run with Motley Crue's "Kickstart My Heart," Nazareth's "Hair of the Dog," Bulletboys' "Smooth Up In Ya," and Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train" to end their set.

The Q-Fest audience didn't want the show to end, and loudly called for an encore. Scream singer Jeff Hoover answered the audience with what would be a special moment to end the show. Jeff stepped up to the microphone and told the crowd they could have one more song. He continued by telling them that the toughest thing he has ever had to do in his life was to try to explain to his children the events of that past Tuesday, Sept. 11. Jeff then asked the crowd to sing along, as he began a solo voice rendition of White Lion's ballad "When The Children Cry." As more and more fans recognized the song and its chorus, they joined in and sang along. It was an emotional moment, as performer and audience connected; and several wet eyes could be seen on the PPG grounds. It was a very special moment to bring Q-Fest to a close.



Scream rocks Q-Fest 2001 into the night.



Jeff Hoover of Scream.

The tale of the tape: Q-Fest raised over \$5,000 for American Red Cross Disaster Services. For everybody who participated and attended, this was an important and special day. It was a first step forward to doing something to help in the aftermath of Sept. 11. It was a first step toward trying to get life back on track and return things to some sense of normalcy after the tragedy. It was, for many, the first opportunity to get away from the television set and out of the house, and spend time with others. It was a chance to reflect and talk about Sept. 11, and get the shock and trauma of that fateful day off their chests. And it was a chance to celebrate America and its spirit, and the privilege of living in a country where we can enjoy the music of our choice and stage public gatherings of this sort. When all was said and done, Sept. 15, 2001 – at least at the PPG Pavilion in Tipton – was a very good day.



Women on Harleys at Q-Fest was a non-musical highlight.

TOOL/FANTOMAS @ HERSHEY PARK ARENA, HERSHEY 9/25/01

Once Tool released their latest CD, *Lateralus*, it was a given that the area's most fanatical Tool fan, Schtiv D'Ump, was excitedly awaiting the announcement of Tool's tour dates in support of the album. Though there was initial confusion about where exactly in Pennsylvania Tool would be playing, the picture soon became clearer, and Tool would actually do three shows in the state within one week - in Scranton Sept. 24, in Hershey on Sept. 25, and three nights later in Pittsburgh Sept. 28. Out of the three, Hershey was closer than Scranton and earlier than Pittsburgh, so Schtiv determined that this would be the Tool concert he would target.

As the show drew closer, Schtiv and I both got ourselves into "concert shape," so we could work our way towards the front of the stage. Schtiv's goal was to be at the stagefront for Tool, so we readied ourselves to do battle, preparing ourselves for moshpits, crowd crushes, the whole nine yards.

Something unexpected happened on the way to September 25 and our appointed round with Tool - September 11. On the roadtrip to Hershey, we openly wondered how security was going to be at Hershey Arena this night. After all, during our last Hershey experience - two summers ago at the Black Sabbath/Godsmack concert - security there was already overblown, with bike and horseback security Gestapo and state police searching for beer consumption in the parking lot with the zeal of a manhunt. And at the gate during that show, it took me two tries to get a small point-and-shoot camera through the gates. After the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, how oppressive would security be now?

We quickly learned upon arrival in the Hershey Arena parking lot that the beer Gestapo were out in full force - bike patrols, roving security and local police patrols, plainclothes officers, probably some Secret Service, National Guard and Delta Force troops as well. We saw one car getting busted for beer consumption two rows ahead of us. Beer Gestapo were all over the place. Schtiv and I wondered what head of state was expected to arrive at Hershey Arena this night?

It all made for interesting viewing as I quaffed a few pre-concert brews...within the solitude of the tinted windows of Schtiv's Jetta! It was like one-way glass - you

could see everything going on outside in the lot, but anyone outside the car couldn't see anything within the black tinted windows. I toasted the Hershey Beer Gestapo with a hearty "Sieg Heil!" from the back seat!

After Schtiv took his turn enjoying his malt beverage concert prep in the back seat, we made our way over to the long line to get in to the Hershey Arena floor area. And this line was LONG, stretching out to the end of the parking lot. We were not at all sure we would make it in to the floor area. As we got closer, our expectations were realized – the security was MUCH tighter in the wake of 9/11. Those entering the arena had to empty their pockets of all items, and then be patted down AND be scanned twice by electronic wands. I was quickly glad that I had decided against even trying to get a camera into this venue, it never would have cleared! Observing these hefty security measures, we concluded that women likely got treated better by the Afghanistan Taliban than concertgoers were being treated by Hershey Arena security this night! Schtiv theorized that anyone who jumped over the wall onto the arena floor area would probably be publicly caned outside the front of the venue!

Anyway, we did make it into the floor area, and worked our way forward. We actually didn't advance all the way to the front, settling for a vantage point about 40-50 feet from the stage, just right of center. Not the stagefront position Schtiv had anticipated, but a still a satisfactory vantage point to observe the show from.

Soon the opening act would emerge onstage, Fantomas. All I knew about this band heading in was that it was fronted by former Faith No More singer Mike Patton, and featured Slayer drummer Dave Lombardo. Knowing these two names were in the line-up, I was expecting something consistent with their respective past resumes. What we got was the unexpected.

As Fantomas entered their first selection, Hershey Arena looked on in bewilderment. We heard what amounted to an erratic, wildly unpredictable series of heavy metal soundbytes, seguing into orchestral passages, bluesy interludes, and Mike Patton doing everything from singing to monkey-like chattering to screaming to shouting whatever types of utterances he could imagine. It was insane! After the first six-minute selection, we heard one bewildered fan behind us shout, "Was that a song?" Fantomas entered another selection, and a number of onlookers in the Hershey audience – obviously not getting it – started jeering their disapproval. Undaunted, Fantomas – featuring Patton, Lombardo, guitarist Buzz Osbourne of the Melvins and Mr. Bungle bassist Trevor Dunn – continued on, and the booing steadily grew louder. A few paper drink containers flew onstage near the band, but they played on. Schtiv and I laughed as this cacophony of modern metal incidental movie music unfolded and the crowd grew more discontent. We didn't know what to make of Fantomas or what page they were on. And we weren't sure whether this band was to be taken seriously or was a big joke. We thought maybe Tool had presented this band to get the crowd into an uproar to better set the stage for Tool's own set. Whatever was up, Fantomas was definitely an unusual way to begin the evening.

Though both Schtiv and I contemplated jockeying for better position in front of the stage, we ultimately both decided we were in pretty good shape where we were. The crowd wasn't parting to enable us to get closer, and considering the security zoo we endured to get to this point, we felt quite fortunate to be as close to the stage as we were.

I had seen Tool two years prior at Star Lake near Pittsburgh during Ozzfest, while they were supporting the Aenima CD. While an impressive set, it was daylight, and Tool was opening for somebody else (Ozzy/Sabbath), thus their full visual aspect wasn't being utilized this day. Somebody burned a CD of this Ozzfest performance for me, and I still vividly recall Maynard James Keenan acknowledging the crowd with

a hearty "Happy Sunday to all of you!" This night at Hershey Arena, I wondered what headgames Maynard and Tool would unleash on us. It didn't take too long to soon find out.

What I would witness in the next 90 minutes was the most cerebral concert set I have ever witnessed! Tool's set hit us from all sides – musical, visual, mental, subliminal – and left us mesmerized. From the new Lateralus CD, Tool's assault on the senses commenced with "Grudge," then segueing through the interlude "Ions (-)" into "Stinkfist" from Aenima. The band was barely lit on the stage, relegated mostly to silhouette images. The visual attention was focused towards the jumbotron, where video presentations played out some intense imagery. On "Stinkfist," we were reminded of Tool's Claymation-type video experiments, as we saw clay figures undergoing bizarre and grotesque transformations that amazed and boggled the mind. Tool continued in the Aenima vein with "46 & 2," before initiating the most volatile moshing and body-surfing action of the entire set with the popular "Sober" – where they expanded upon the Claymation imagery of the original MTV video for the song. Back to the Aenima disc for "Pushit," before Maynard James Keenan donned a guitar for "Schism." From here we would enter the most bizarre portion of Tool's set. "Disposition" from Lateralus featured some wildly bizarre video images, with repetitive footage of a shadowy, cluttered room – Tool's playground to play some mind games with the audience. We would witness zoom-in shots towards and into a toilet; shots of a picture hanging on the wall, where we would see the picture image change to something else as the video zoomed in; and as "Disposition" ground to its plodding and repetitive ending, the video image would also slow down and repeat the same passage through the doorway and room. This was bizarre! But it was clever, as Tool was able to tap into images you might see in a bad dream – images that change as you try to get closer to them. It was very cerebral stuff. After "Disposition" finally ended, enter the contortionists...Two contortionists, clad in silvery body suits, climbed up two ropes hanging behind the stage, UPSIDE DOWN! About two-thirds of the way up, the contortionists stopped and remained hanging upside down. As Tool entered the two-part epic "Parabol/Parabolis" from Lateralus, the two figures began going into a complete routine of calisthenics, both individually and together. The contortionists held the audience mesmerized during the course of the piece, as everybody looked on and took it all in. In between the two parts of the epic, Maynard James Keenan finally spoke to the audience – though I forget his exact words here, he understatedly thanked the audience for sharing in the experience. Then "Parabolis" kicked in, as the contortionists further did their thing – all told, these two folks were hanging upside down and performing for close to 20 minutes! (That takes some conditioning!) Maynard again spoke briefly to the audience, again thanking them for sharing in this experience, and expressing hope that this experience would provide a "catalyst for healing" – perhaps a subtle reference to Sept. 11. At this point, Tool entered the homestretch run of their set, digging back for the title track to "Opiate" – it was only after the crowd started swaying and moshing here that I realized just how spellbound Tool had held this crowd during most of the rest of this set; people had been so mesmerized, they weren't moshing or body-surfing! After a brief pause, Tool closed the show with the title track to "Lateralus."

There was no encore this night. But as intense and mind-boggling as Tool's entire set had been, no encore was really needed. Tool had already said all they needed to say during the set. The show felt complete, without the encore. The house lights came back up, and the Hershey Arena crowd slowly exited their collective trance, looked at each other and slowly began leaving the building.

As I said, this was cerebral stuff. Tool left the music and the video imagery do the talking, themselves remaining in the shadows and avoiding the spotlight. The

musical performance was flawless, just like – and at times, transcending – the studio versions of these respective compositions. The combined effects of the entire audiovisual presentation was stunning. For days after this concert, images from the show kept recurring in my mind...the claymation images, the room shots during “Disposition,” and one image in particular – I forget from which song – which showed two nude women quivering and cowering in fear, as a giant mechanical scorpion-like stinger reached out and tried to prick them! Talk about intense!

The inescapable conclusion I drew after witnessing this concert: Tool is the modern-day heir apparent to Pink Floyd. They have combined compelling music with a highly artistic, mind-altering – dare I say hallucinogenic? – visual presentation, to create one of the wildest spectacles in today’s rock climate. Tool has managed to maintain a mystique through it all, never telling us what exactly is going on, but leaving our imaginations to decipher and interpret the experience. That makes for an unforgettable concert experience, as we discovered this night in Hershey.

CLOUD 9/9 LB. HAMMER/FELIX & THE HURRICANES/FAT VINNY & THE WISEGUYS @ PA CLEANWAYS PROMOTIONAL CONCERT, PPG PAVILION IN TIPTON 10/6/01

For anybody who doesn’t know, I am a member of the Blair County Chapter of PA Cleanways. Cleanways is a statewide nonprofit organization whose goal is to clean up litter and trashed out areas across the state, and work with state and local authorities to prevent further littering from occurring. In its infancy, the Blair County Chapter works on cleaning up trashed out areas in Blair County.

My interest started when I took up fishing. I would take my mother along on fishing journeys to local rivers and state parks, and would be angered by the litter along the stream banks and lake fronts – mainly bait containers, fishing line and beer/pop cans and bottles. It became our regular practice at the end of our fishing trips to take a few moments to pick up what trash we found where we fished, and leave the area looking better when we left than when we arrived.

But we would often see bigger problems, such as areas along the Little Juniata River and Blacksnake Road (en route to Prince Gallitzin State Park), were slob dumped old beds and furniture, roofing shingles and bigger amounts of trash that two people alone couldn’t even begin to start cleaning up. I learned about PA Cleanways through Blair County Chapter Executive Director (and Still Holdin’ harmonica/percussion man) Dave Thomas, and have been a member for close to two years.

As a fledgling chapter of the organization, the Blair County Chapter is in need of new members who can become active and help us in our mission to beautify Blair County. It was with the idea of attracting new members that Dave Thomas devised the idea of a Cleanways Promotional Concert, as a way to attract prospective new members and get the word out about PA Cleanways and its mission. After several months of bringing together bands, sponsors and a venue, the concert was set to happen on a cold and blustery early October afternoon at the PPG Pavilion in Tipton.

Fortunately, the PPG Pavilion has an indoor facility, which is where the concert was staged when we realized it was too blustery and cold to try to do it outdoors. Dave Parry of 9 Lb. Hammer supplied the sound system for the day, and given the indoor location of the show, it turned out being quite satisfactory for this show.

As a first-time concert event, we weren’t at all certain how many people would actually show up to partake in the concert. Compounding this uncertainty was the breaking news at the noon hour that the United States had launched its offensive against the Taliban government in Afghanistan in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist

attacks. Would this breaking news cause people to stay home and not attend the concert?

Fortunately, while not a huge crowd, at least a number of people were already in presence as the first band of the day, Fat Vinny & the Wiseguys, kicked off the event. The group kicked off their set of blues and classics with a version of Howlin' Wolf's "Commit a Crime," and proceeded to mix blues and classic rock favorites with original songs from their two CD's. The Wiseguys performed "There's a Lot of Blues Around," the opening track from their debut CD, The Blues You Can't Refuse, before going into a Chris Isaac number. The Wiseguys then introduced their own version of AC/DC's "The Jack" – the first time I had ever heard this, I liked the way Fat Vinny & co. took the song and stripped it back to its blues roots. This song aroused the attention of part of the audience, who gave the group appreciative applause. Fat Vinny & the Wiseguys continued with Stevie Ray Vaughan's "Cold Shot," Pittsburgh rock legend Norman Nardini's "Just Like a Woman," the original song "The 'Where You Been' Look," Hank Williams' (via George Thorogood's) "Move It On Over" and the Rolling Stones' "Brown Sugar" before pausing for a brief intermission. Upon returning, the group resumed where they left off – with more Rolling Stones, doing "Honky Tonk Women." The group continued in the cover song vein, doing more tunes from George Thorogood, Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan, and a pair from ZZ Top – "Balinese" and "Tube Snake Boogie." Fat Vinny & the Wiseguys dug into the Elvis archives for a bluesy take on "Teddy Bear," and finished with two John Lee Hooker classics, "Boom Boom" and the George Thorogood-popularized "One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer."

By Fat Vinny & the Wiseguys standards, it was a fairly laid-back performance, as the group realized that most of the attendees were still recovering from their Saturday night misadventures. The group still sounded crisp, with Eric "Fat Vinny" Kelly demonstrating some hot lead and slide guitarwork, backed by the steady rhythms of bassist Randy "Dawg" Ketner and drummer Mark Panek. The group was in jovial spirits, and kept the mood of their presentation pleasant and relaxed. The slowly-growing crowd of onlookers seemed to appreciate the group's efforts.



Fat Vinny & the Wiseguys open the Cleanways Concert.

The audience still was relatively quiet as Felix & the Hurricanes started their set a short while later. The group started with an instrumental composition Felix entitled "Walking Through Afghanistan," before mixing original songs with Southern and classic rock favorites. The Hurricanes proceeded with versions of Lynyrd Skynyrd's "I Know a Little," Charlie Daniels' "Leave That Long-Haired Country Boy Alone," ZZ Top's "Just Got Paid" and another Skynyrd classic, "That Smell." Special guest John Stevens then joined in on harmonica as the Hurricanes did the bluesy original "Free" from their CD The Feeling, followed by another song from that album, "I Just Had To Play The Blues." The audience politely applauded each song with a quiet round of handclapping, prompting Felix to remark that the show felt like a school recital. After another bluesy original, "On The Bottom Again," the 'Canes picked up the pace with versions of the Outlaws' "There Goes Another Love Song," Grand Funk's "I'm Your Captain (Closer To Home)," their instrumental ode to Santana "Song for Carlos," and the Allman Brothers' "Jessica" to close their set.

Though still relatively small in number, the audience was starting to show more signs of life, with several audience members taking to the dance floor during the latter stages of the Hurricanes' set.



Felix & the Hurricanes at the Cleanways Concert.



Blair County Cleanways Executive Director Dave Thomas gives out some door prizes.

At this point, Cleanways main man Dave Thomas stepped up to the microphone and did several door prize giveaways, before making way for the next act of the afternoon, 9 Lb. Hammer. The Cleanways audience was about to hear something different. Mississippi blues. With "The Blues Doctor" Dave Parry seated on a chair, 9 Lb. Hammer - Dave on vocals and guitar, Ryan McFarland on guitar and Lee Appleman on drums - broke out two sets of Northern Mississippi-styled blues, from names like R.L. Burnside, T Model Ford, Muddy Waters and others. The emphasis was on Burnside, though, as 9 Lb. Hammer performed "Miss Maybelle," "Skinny Woman" and a number of other songs from Burnside's catalog. And the band's arrangement itself - two guitars and a drummer, with no bass - is based on R.L. Burnside. Performance-wise, Dave was the focal point onstage, as he belted out his gravelly bluesy growl, and along with Ryan played some smoking guitar leads and slide guitarwork. All three band members kept the pace uptempo through most of the set, and kept toes tapping. Dave Thomas joined the band onstage and chimed in on harmonica a few times during the set. Though much of this music was new and unfamiliar to the audience, 9 Lb. Hammer's Mississippi blues still connected with much of the audience, and drew a good round of applause at set's end.



9 Lb. Hammer, with guest Dave Thomas chiming in on harmonica.

The sun was setting upon the PPG Pavilion as the final band of the day, Cloud 9, set up and performed. As Cloud 9 commenced their set of Grateful Dead-inspired jams, they quickly generated the busiest dance floor action of the day, as a number of their fans took to the floor and grooved. The group jammed on numerous Dead numbers, including "Shakedown Street;" and they also performed fresh-sounding jam renditions of Warren Zevon's "Werewolves of London" and the Beatles' "Maxwell's Silver Hammer" to the delight of the crowd. Cloud 9 - singer/guitarist Scott Walters, bassist Kicker, keyboard man Brett Fanelli and drummer Tim Wilkins - hit their groove early and maintained it all set long, having fun playing off each other on their respective instruments and letting the jam take them where it would. Cloud 9's set was just the upbeat, fun set needed to cap the day and finish things on an up note.



Cloud 9 grooves the Cleanways Concert to a close.

Although blustery weather conditions, the NFL and the beginning of the Afghanistan offensive no doubt kept a lot of folks away, the Cleanways Concert was still successful in achieving its goals. The organization recruited over 50 new members, and the event helped get the word about PA Cleanways out to at least a few more people. And ultimately, it was a fun, laid-back afternoon of music for a worthwhile cause.

FROM BENEATH THE BAR

Gigging and swigging with D'Scribe

THE DESPERADOES/TWO OLD MEN/BIG DADDY & BABY BLUE EYES/FELIX & THE HURRICANES/DUSK TILL DAWN/U.S. HOUSE BAND @ "JUKE JOINT JAM," BLAIR COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER, ALTOONA 6/10/01



Jim Rossi 1/22/53-12/25/00

Photo taken 11/92 at U.S. Hotel

On Christmas morning last year, this area's music scene lost a treasured member and friend with the sudden passing of Jimmy Rossi.

It was through my involvement in local music that I came to know Jimmy Rossi, both as a musician and as a friend. Shortly after I began to cover local music for Pennsylvania Musician Magazine, I started hearing reports about hot jam sessions occurring at the U.S. Hotel in Hollidaysburg every Wednesday night. Soon I decided to investigate for myself. Jimmy Rossi, then the owner and manager of the U.S. Hotel, and his brother, Mark, had started a weekly jam night with several other prominent area musicians. The group would become known as the U.S. Hotel House Band, and the weekly Wednesday jam nights would become local music legend. Every Wednesday night was different, the musical excitement generated by whatever cast of local and regional musical talent that was in attendance. Different musicians would show up every Wednesday, and the jams were always fresh.

Also along the way, Jim Rossi would bring other regional – and eventually, national – bands to the "Us" Hotel...regional names like Queen Bee & the Blue Hornet Band and Tino Gonzales; and national names like Leon Russell, Richie Havens, New Riders of the Purple Sage, and before he relinquished ownership of the hotel in 1994, Badfinger. (Jim also brought Robby Krieger of the Doors to the Lakemont Casino in 1992.)

Through it all, Jim Rossi provided the catalyst through which a brotherhood of musicians and their fans came together. Every Wednesday night became more than just a show; it became a musical community gathering of performers and the fan

base the weekly jams generated along the way. Jim welcomed the musicians and fans into his venue every week to witness the magic unfold.

That bond of musicians and fans continued even after Jim turned the U.S. Hotel over to new owners in 1994. The U.S. Hotel House Band would continue on, shortening their handle to just the U.S. House Band. The group soon took up residence on the stage at Peter C's and occasional other venues, and when they were scheduled to perform, you knew that various musicians and fans would be in attendance to reconvene the musical magic and camaraderie.

In the days immediately following Jim Rossi's passing, Jim's closest friends in the musical community quickly put together a benefit jam at Jack & George's in Altoona. Assembled and promoted with only a few days notice, this jam itself turned into a special evening, as Jack & George's – a small neighborhood corner bar – saw a jam-packed, standing-room only crowd. In attendance was the largest gathering of local musicians under one roof I have ever seen in my years of covering local music – all present to remember Jim Rossi, and many of those present stepped up and participated in the continuous jam night, raising money for Jim's surviving family. Jim's son, Jarius, and eventually brother Mark Rossi, attended and took part in the jam – to the supportive cheers of the massive audience. Several thousand dollars was raised this night, and the evening was one huge, continuous good vibe.

Although this benefit itself was very successful on such short notice, it was felt by many of Jim's musical friends that a bigger, more organized benefit should be set up to allow more musicians, friends and fans to remember and celebrate Jim Rossi's life and music. Thus, the wheels were set in motion to organize the "Juke Joint Jam" (named after Jim's recent stage name of "Juke Joint Jimmy"). The event was set for a Sunday evening in June at a much bigger venue – the newly-opened Blair County Convention Center outside Altoona.

A few words about the Blair County Convention Center – this facility was very impressive! The main hall, where the show would take place, is big and spacious, reportedly seating up to 2,000 people. As the preparations for Juke Joint Jam took place, I was able to tour the facility – including the kitchen, and the electronics nerve center downstairs, where the massive in-house sound and PA system was centered. The Blair County Convention Center is a huge, state-of-the-art facility, and has the potential to be a major center to stage events in the future. Juke Joint Jam would be the first major music event to take place in this facility.

Despite an early 5 PM start time, a healthy crowd was already on hand as The Desperadoes commenced the evening's music. The Johnstown trio – singer/guitarist Mark Middleton, bassist Mike "Soupy" Suppes and drummer Harold Knapenberger – kicked off with versions of Jimi Hendrix's "The Wind Cries Mary" and Tom Petty's "Mary Jane's Last Dance," before Mark informed the audience that the Desperadoes did requests, and he asked them to call out songs they wished to hear. Several songs were called out, including "Roundabout" by Yes. Up for the challenge, The Desperadoes tackled this Yes classic, despite never having performed it before. Their version was condensed, but they managed to pull it off fairly smoothly. After performing Jimmy Buffett's "Margaritaville," Mark Rossi came out and joined The Desperadoes onstage for the rest of the set, contributing voice and keyboards to versions of Lynyrd Skynyrd's "That Smell," "Grateful Dead's "Friend of the Devil," and the set's action-packed closer, a fiery rendition of Deep Purple's "Highway Star."



The Desperadoes.

Under the coordination of the show's stage manager, Randy Rutherford, intermission was relatively short between the Desperadoes and the second act of the evening, acoustic duo Two Old Men. Only they were "Three Old Men" this night, as Rick Wertz and Bobby Bryant were joined by Bill Glass, tapping out the rhythms on congas. With both Rick and Bobby sharing lead vocal duties, Two Old Men performed several acoustic classics, including Jimmy Buffett's "Son of a Son of a Sailor," Crosby Stills & Nash's "Southern Cross" and more – both demonstrating great harmonizing on the vocal end, and equal technique on their acoustic guitars. Rick and Bobby's presentation was warm and friendly, with both performers wisecracking each other lightheartedly. Two Old Men saved their best for last, though, finishing their set with Crosby Stills & Nash's "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes." This song built in energy and intensity as it progressed, with Rick going all-out on guitar in the song's latter stages, and all three performers leaving heart and soul onstage with their respective instruments. It was another of what would be many powerful moments this night.



Two Old Men.

Things shifted electric for the next act of the night, Square One. Square One performed a set of 60's and 70's classics, based at "square one" – The Beatles. The group performed "Nowhere Man," "A Hard Day's Night" and "Eight Days a Week" from the Fab 4, along with the Temptations/Rare Earth's "Get Ready," the Byrds' "Mr. Tambourine Man," and the Hollies' "Long Cool Woman." Like the two acts before them, Square One saved their best for last, too - first performing their passionate rendition of Crosby Stills Nash & Young's "Cost of Freedom/Ohio," and then firing up the audience with a rowdy singalong version of the Doors' "Roadhouse Blues" to end the set. Added highlight on this song was guitarist Tom Fronauer breaking into a Jimi Hendrix "Third Stone from the Sun" solo during the song's midsection.

Because a keyboard needed to be set up, intermission was slightly longer before the evening's next performers – father/daughter duo Big Daddy & Baby Blue Eyes – were set to perform. Father Dave and daughter Christa Cherry commenced things with Gerry Rafferty's "Baker Street," with Dave yakking out some sax and singing alongside Christa's keyboards. Then an early highlight of their set, as Jarius and Mark Rossi both joined Big Daddy & Baby Blue Eyes for a special rendition of Pink Floyd's "Wish You Were Here," dedicated to Jim Rossi. There were a number of wet eyes in the house as this song was performed, despite some early technical problems with Mark's keyboard. Big Daddy & Baby Blue Eyes continued with versions of "Proud Mary," Patti Smith's "Because the Night," and the Beach Boys' "Sloop John B," before Christa sang her original song "Down." Christa then did her best Grace Slick on Jefferson Airplane's "White Rabbit," before the duo ended their set with Eric Clapton's "Tears in Heaven."



Big Daddy & Baby Blue Eyes, with Mark Rossi (left) and Jarius Rossi (right).

The audience had steadily grown since the beginning of the event, and though the crowd of over 400 was only a fraction of what the main hall of the Convention Center could hold, every table had people seated at it, and the hall looked fairly busy.

The tempo of the show was about to pick up with the show's next performers, Felix & the Hurricanes. And the timing couldn't have been better...lead 'Cane Felix Kos and his older brother, Dick, both had met their longtime idol, former Allman Brothers guitarist Dickey Betts, earlier in the week when Betts' new band performed at Crowbar in State College. Still riding the high off that experience, the two brothers were set to light it up onstage this night. With guest Frank Dixon chiming in on harmonica, The Hurricanes commenced their set with "I Just Had to Play the Blues," the lead-off track from their CD The Feeling. This song kicked off a showcase of tunes off the newly-released album which included "The Lonely One," "Free," "On The Bottom Again" (which was sent out to the late Jim Rossi)," "Black Widow," "Icy You," "Keep On Rockin'" and "Talk About Love." With Dick Kos onstage, I just knew the group would eventually shift into Allman Brothers mode, and at this juncture they did with "Blue Skys," featuring the two Kos brothers harmonizing on their respective guitars side-by-side. The Hurricanes then did a hot rendition of "Statesboro Blues" to finish off their set. But the Convention Center audience wanted more, and just moments later – with Mark Rossi joining the band on keys – The Hurricanes encored with an Allman Brothers clinic rendition of "Jessica," showcasing more hot guitar harmonies from Dick and Felix. This further electrified the audience and escalated the energy level of the night.



The Hurricanes with guest Frank Dixon (right).

At this point of the evening, a little bit of mystery...Dusk Till Dawn – the new project featuring former Queen Bee & the Blue Hornet Band guitarist Mark Ross and drummer Jack Wilkinson, along with U.S. House Band bassist Pat McGinnis – was about to make their first ever Altoona area performance. Most of the audience – myself included – had yet to witness this band. We were in for a treat. From the offset of their performance, the focus of Dusk Till Dawn centered not on their instrumental players, but on their singer, Dawn Nolten. Dawn's sultry vocal presentation held the audience spellbound as Dusk Till Dawn entered their set of Americana-styled country blues and folk. Dawn's presentation brought to mind Patsy Cline had she hung out with Chryssie Hynde and Courtney Love prior to the show – country croon with the acidic bite of a woman scorned. Many of the songs were Dawn's own original compositions, with a few standards such as "I Can't Stop Loving You" and "Jamabalaya" thrown in to offer musical points of reference. Mark Ross seemed happy to be back on the stage, as he dealt playful bursts of guitar finesse along the way, backed by the sturdy and sound rhythms of Pat and Jack. Dusk Till Dawn's set was an eye-opener, and was met with loud, heartfelt approval after each song.



Dusk Till Dawn.

For many of those in attendance, Juke Joint Jam had come down to the finale – the U.S. House Band all-star jam. This, after all, was the late Jim Rossi's band, and everyone knew that the who's who of area musicians about to gather onstage was going to toss caution to the wind and give all in memory of the man who started the musical magic at the U.S. Hotel over a dozen years ago. A large gathering of musical talent was already gathering on the stage as things were being set up for the finale; you knew this was going to be hot! As the jam commenced, the key players were in place – Mark Rossi on keys and vocals, Pat McGinnis on bass, Randy Rutherford and Chuck Knepper on guitars, and sitting in on drums, Jack Wilkinson. In addition, there was a four-piece brass section made up of Bob Scholl on sax, and Kent Martin, Jeff Morgan and Altoona Area High School's Steve Donnelly on trumpets; and two additional percussionists, Blaise Michaels and Lee Appleman. Fittingly, this gathering of musicians commenced their set with a Jimmy Rossi favorite, "T-Bone Shuffle," sung by brother Mark. Almost instantly, the dance floor in front of the stage – which was quiet much of the night – came to life as revelers cut the rug in memory of Jim Rossi. Randy Rutherford took over lead vocal duties as the musical entourage entered into the James Gang's "Funk #49," and Mark Rossi again belted out lead voice on the salsified House Band rendition of "All Along the Watchtower" and Marc Cohn's "Walking In Memphis." The House Band then broke into Chicago's "Beginnings," giving the brass section an opportunity to flex its muscle with a heated display. Pat McGinnis fronted the band on "Mustang Sally," as Felix Kos joined the musicians onstage and traded guitar licks with Randy Rutherford in a memorable display. With Mark again on vocals, the House Band performed Jim Rossi's best-known original tune, "Walking Along In Time." And former House Band bassist Jason Ebersole – these days jamming reggae with State College favorites The Earthtones – joined the musical gathering for the finale rendition of the Allman Brothers' "Whipping Post."

This set was an hour of pure adrenaline rush, as the musicians and audience fed off each other's energy to send it all to the stratosphere. Every song showcased at least one section of the House Band line-up, and the musical action was nonstop as everyone gave all in remembrance of Jim Rossi.



The U.S. House Band brass section.



Felix Kos and Randy Rutherford exchange licks during the House Band jam.

If there was any complaint about this night, it was that it ended too early. Just about everyone in the house wanted this night to last forever; but alas, the Convention Center wanted things wrapped up by midnight, and thus the night had to come to an end.

Over \$4,000 was raised for Jim Rossi's surviving wife and children. And the area's music fans and music community took advantage of one big opportunity to say farewell – and thanks for the memories – to Jim Rossi. There was already talk this night about making Juke Joint Jam an annual event. Whether this becomes reality remains to be seen.

Thanks en masse to those who made this event possible – especially Blaise Michaels, who worked tirelessly to set the wheels in motion to bring the musicians and the Convention Center together and make this night possible. Big thanks also to Randy Rutherford, who ran a smooth stage the whole night, making the transitions

between bands happen with little delay. And obviously, a big thanks to all the musicians involved, also to those musicians who attended to show their support for the cause. And most importantly, thanks to all the friends and fans who attended and showed their support, making this a night not soon to be forgotten. Juke Joint Jam was one big positive vibe the whole evening, and became the celebration of the life and times of Jim Rossi that everyone hoped it would.

SPINEBELT/BULLET/BALISTIC/HALESTORM/SPELLBOUND/SEVENTH HOUR/DEBTOR'S MILL DUO @ ACCESS YORK BENEFIT, TOURIST INN, HALLAM 7/14/01

Some of us are cut from a different cloth in life.

There are some guys whose aspirations in life are to sit in front of a net on ice and have pucks fired at their bodies at speeds in excess of 100 mph. There are people who choose to be rodeo clowns, putting their bodies at risk of being kicked to smithereens by enraged bovines with little or no warning. There are individuals who race cars and cycles at speeds over 200 mph, and who will willingly climb in behind the wheel even after suffering critical injuries in accidents.

And then there are rock music fans. There are diehard fans who will endure massive amounts of moshing and crowd surges to get within just a few feet of their favorite performers onstage. And there are diehard music-o-holics – enter yours truly – who spend upwards of five, six, or even the occasional seven nights a week checking out bands onstage. And in extreme cases, logging hours and miles to catch bands on the road, to seek out new venues not yet explored, to go boldly where 'Toona music fan has not been before...

I digress...On a warm, upper 80's July Saturday, and having been there and done that with everything happening in the 'Toona and its environs this particular weekend, I opted to roadtrip three hours to the Tourist Inn in the northern York suburb of Hallam for a benefit concert. The proceeds from the show would benefit Access York, an organization which works to combat domestic abuse and help its victims in the York area. The event was co-sponsored by Pennsylvania Musician magazine.

Prior to this show, it had been advertised that York-based classic rock station WEGL, "The Eagle" 92.7, was the radio sponsor for the event. As I approached the Harrisburg/York/Lancaster area, I tried to tune in "The Eagle" to see if they were broadcasting any late information about the concert. I was surprised to find that as I tuned into 92.7, instead of classic rock and "The Eagle," I was instead hearing oldies. The station advertised itself as "the NEW oldies 92.7," and instantly the red flag went up in my head – FORMAT CHANGE! The Eagle was no more. How would this affect the concert I was en route to? How recently did the station change formats, and were they still a sponsor of the event? And what of the Eagle's announcers, several who I had met previously – were they still employed, or given pink slips with the format change? I would learn the answers to these and other questions as I arrived at the Tourist Inn.

Thanks to Pennsylvania Musician cohort Shel Hoachlander's accurate directions, I located the Tourist Inn with relative ease, and didn't even screw up on the heretofore confusing and intimidating Harrisburg/York/Lancaster interstate mess.

At least early on, there were few cars in the Tourist Inn parking lot, but it was 3 PM after all, not prime time for crowds to be at bars and nightspots. Upon arriving, I was greeted by Spellbound singer Mark McNelley, surprised that I had made the three-hour trek to be there. I entered the Tourist Inn as Debtor's Mill Duo was ending their set, and only got to witness their last song as I greeted Shel and the Halestorm contingent and procured a strategic observation post close to the stage.

What I heard from singer Roman Murray and guitarist Rick Dibello sounded good, I only wish I could have arrived sooner to catch more.

During intermission, Shel informed me that one of the advertised bands, Tickled Pink, did not show up to perform (they must not have been tickled pink about doing this benefit) – so the show was a little late in getting started, and Debtor's Mill duo went on earlier than expected. (Gotta love a band that blows off doing a benefit concert – what a class act!)

I also got to speak with show emcee Gina Rockey-Powers, who confirmed the bad news – she was now FORMERLY of The Eagle 92.7, and yes, the entire announcing staff got pink slips with the format change. And with the format change, the station was no longer a sponsor of this concert event. The change actually went into effect some three weeks before the concert, leaving the show with no official radio promotion leading up to the benefit. More proof positive...CORPORATE RADIO SUCKS!

But the show must go on, and it did. Gina introduced the next band of the afternoon, Seventh Hour from Pottsville. I had just received a demo CD from this band back at Q94, but hadn't had a chance to listen to it prior to this performance. But after witnessing Seventh Hour live, listening to that CD was one of my top priorities upon returning to the 'Toona – these guys rock! Singer/guitarist Jay Knorr, guitarist Jim Munster, bassist Jeff Sallada and drummer Ed Burke played hard-hitting, melodic modern rock originals in the Seven Mary Three/Candlebox vein, with the emphasis on the latter. Seventh Hour performed nearly all the songs from their forthcoming debut CD Never In Vain, including the title track, "Hey Hey," "Drag Me Down," the fast and punkish "The Devil Is My Neighbor," "Forgotten Flowers" and "Breathe;" plus a number of new songs the group had written. Singer Jay demonstrated ample power and range, and the group's harmonies were crisp, their playing tight and energized. This was an all-around strong performance from Seventh Hour, serving notice to this small audience that this was a new Pennsylvania rock force to be reckoned with.



Seventh Hour.

A few more people – but not a whole lot – were beginning to show up as the day's next band, Spellbound, prepared to take the stage. I had last seen this band earlier in the spring, and was curious to witness how their show had progressed. Singer Mark McNelley, guitarist Andy Dulak, bassist Ray Miller and drummer Mike Caldwell started their set of hard-rocking, melodic tunage with two brand new originals I did not readily recognize – obviously these guys have been writing some new tunes. The group soon did "City of Angels" off their new CD Risk It All, and continued to step up the energy level with a version of Motley Crue's "Girls Girls Girls." Spellbound performed several other tunes from the Risk It All disc, including "Little Angel," "My Imagination" and the acoustic-geared "Wasting My Time," mixed in a few more newer songs, and concluded their set with an Ozzy/Black Sabbath medley of "Paranoid" and "Bark At The Moon." Spellbound's game continues to improve onstage – this set showed more aggression and urgency, and more onstage movement and excitement. Andy Dulak's guitar solos smoked, and drummer Mike Caldwell was constantly tossing and twirling drumsticks behind his drum kit. While the audience was not large, those assembled appreciated Spellbound's efforts and cheered the group throughout the course of their set.



Spellbound.

Now approaching early evening, business was starting to pick up more at the Tourist Inn as Halestorm got set to perform. Getting hungry myself, I decided to sample a few finger foods from the Tourist Inn kitchen. Not surprisingly, I had to put their wings to the test to see if they met D'Scribely standard (they did); and I also sampled their crab balls (like hush puppies, only with crab meat – good!), and some fries. My hunger pangs relieved, I was ready to rock with Halestorm.

And rock they did! This actually was my first opportunity to witness the state's First Family of Rock since they had added new guitar player Nate Myotte. Would the 'Storm energy level be back to where it was with their earlier axeman, Leo Nessinger? And what surprises would the Halestorm Rock Show hold this night? These questions and more were about to be answered.

As had been the norm the past few times I had seen them, Elizabeth Hale commenced Halestorm's set by entering from the rear of the Tourist Inn, singing the opening bars to Heart's "Crazy On You." Liz's high-flying voice brought the Tourist Inn crowd to life, and soon all eyes and ears were focused towards stagefront. The

group then proceeded with a brand new song, "Open Your Eyes" – which quickly answered any questions about this band's energy level being back up to par...Liz's voice delivered on all cylinders, and Nate's heated guitar histrionics quickly left me awestruck and asking myself the question..."Leo WHO?" The group proceeded with one of their better-known rockers, "Shout It Out," as a few fans gathered towards stagefront to headbang and cheer the band on. Then another surprise, as Liz donned a guitar and Halestorm broke out a version of Ozzy Osbourne's "Perry Mason!" And before I could get over this surprise, for the first time I ever I witnessed Shel Hoachlander up and aggressively headbanging at stagefront! Liz then introduced another new original from the group, "The Children," a hard rocker with a spoken-word midsection - very impressive. Liz and Halestorm then ripped into a version of Heart's "Barracuda," maintained the tempo with another new original, "You Can Try," before finishing the set with versions of Guns'n'Roses' "Sweet Child Of Mine" and Pat Benatar's "Heartbreaker."

Halestorm had convincingly answered my question about energy level – Nate's addition has brought this band back up to full strength with a vengeance! And at 17 years old, this guy can shred! And Nate's energy on the fretboards appears to have made this whole band more explosive; Liz sang with more intensity and passion, and young Arejay could be seen twirling his sticks and levying big beats upon the drumheads. The excitement level of Halestorm's whole set nearly made me forget that this was the same band who did sweet ballads such as "Rose In December" and "I Forgive You!" This was definitely the Halestorm Rock Show, and it pounded!



Liz Hale (left) and Nate Myotte (right) of Halestorm.

While still not by any means crowded, the Tourist Inn by now at least had some people in it, and more continued to arrive as the next band of the evening, Balistic, set up to perform. Balistic was set to release their second CD, The Journey Within, and I was curious to hear the new material and witness this band's further development since last seeing them at the Millenium Music Conference. Balistic did not disappoint – after a passage from Beethoven to open, the group launched into

"Through The Gates" to commence a showcase of tunes from the new disc. Singer/bassist Dave Fox introduced various tunes from the CD, including "The Darkness," "Psychic Man," "Into the Grey," and then "Lean On Me" – prefacing this tune by explaining that it was about domestic abuse, hitting home with the theme of what this benefit concert was all about. Balistic then did "Land of the Living" from the new album, before finishing out the set with three songs from their self-titled debut disc – "Hear My Prayer," "Man of the House" and "Get It Right." Balistic was impressive, with Dave Fox's bass, Bran Kneasel's and Mike Bordner's guitars and John Lohman's drums providing a Sabbath-y metallic backdrop to Dave's dark, baritone vocal presence. The set was heavy and hard-hitting, yet melodic and somber. Balistic kept the Tourist Inn crowd interested, and their set was another show highlight.



Balistic.

More folks had made their way into the Tourist Inn as the next band, hometown York metal favorites Bullet, set up to perform next. A relocated 'Toona couple made their way over to me and reflected on the old 'Toona days at Pellegrine's and Sebastiano's, and told me they were there to see Bullet. They even recounted listening to me during my old stint at WFBG!

This would be my first time seeing Bullet. I had first met several members of the group during the Millenium Music Conference, and had only recently received the group's self-titled full-length CD. But I knew after a few quick listens to the disc that this was going to be one slamming set, and the most volatile group of the show thus far. True to expectations, Bullet came to play, kick ass and take names right from the get-go. Their style is high-velocity rap/rage/core metal that throws caution to the wind. Frontman Johnny – what a wildman! Blending vocal spit and rage with an irreverent and eloquent sense of humor, Johnny established himself as the front and center of this group early on. Introducing nearly every tune as being about "how f**ked up the world is," Johnny and Bullet unleashed numerous tunes from the CD such as the opener "Get Back Up," "Big Diga-Dee," "Beef," the Prong-like "Stronger," the slower and Sabbath-y "Boot," and "A Lovely Cinco de Mayo." Bullet also did a number of new songs, and one interesting song about cheeseburgers. Through it all, though, these guys slammed with reckless abandon – sending a few uninitiated non-metalheads out the door early, but holding the rest of the audience in their grasp the

rest of the set. Good, rowdy, bodyslammng fun – my first time witnessing Bullet will definitely not be my last!



Bullet.

Due to their technical needs, intermission before Spinebelt's set took a bit longer than the other intermissions, and it took its toll on the Tourist Inn audience, as a few folks had departed for the evening by the time the group was ready to begin. It had been since last fall's Salvation Army benefit at D'Alexander's since I had last seen Spinebelt perform, and I was especially interested in hearing the band's new material and seeing how their cyber-metal stage show had further progressed.

At least early on, Spinebelt experienced some technical difficulties that resulted in nasty feedback and Josh Warsteiner's electronics not coming through clearly. But after the first two songs, the problems began to clear up, and Spinebelt began to hit their stride, performing tracks from both their EP A Small But Very Permanent Hell and full length CD The Throne of the Hive. Frontman/guitarist Butch Lloyd, keyboard man Josh, bassist Bill Atkinson and drummer John K entranced much of the remaining Tourist Inn audience – many apparently witnessing the band for the first time – with tunes such as the popular "Christopher Walken" and "Buckle and Strap," "It's All Running Out," "Mine," and at least one newer track, "The Politics of Breaking Down." Despite the technical problems, this set afforded me a closer work at Spinebelt's stage presentation and what makes it unique. Frontman Butch Lloyd evokes a steely, stern presence at lead microphone, his barren howl effectively selling Spinebelt's lyrics of futility, a bleak future and a world going to hell. Josh Warsteiner's synthesizers further mold this sound, establishing a terse cyber edge and backdrop that adds to the futuristic, even Orwellian feel of the song material. And bassist Bill Atkinson, besides rumbling out his monstrous bass lines, is the source of those monstrous bellows which embellish many of the choruses of Spinebelt's songs. Overall, Spinebelt delivers an intense, technically precise show; and while this performance wasn't under the best circumstances, it was still effective, and at least a few fans – myself included – stood at stagefront and took it all in.



Spinebelt.

As quietly as the show began, it ended with only a scattered few onlookers left. Due to circumstances largely beyond anyone's control, the Access York benefit concert only raised a few hundred dollars for its cause. But for those who did attend, it served notice of several very promising up and coming bands – each unique in their own way – who are steadily etching their niche in the state's music scene. And for me, the show was an opportunity to "get out of Dodge" for the weekend and hear some bands that normally don't get up into our neck of the woods – at least just yet.

THE 2001 WING-OFF'S, LAKEMONT PARK, ALTOONA, PA

Summertime in Altoona has its share of highlights and fun events every year. But these days, the pinnacle of summer fun in Altoona comes down to two words...WING OFFS! For six Thursdays in July and August, Altoona converges on Lakemont Park for this weekly after-work party, featuring all the essentials for summertime survival...buffalo wings from various area restaurants and taverns, beer (for those of legal age to enjoy it), lots of members of the opposite sex in skimpy summertime attire, and live band entertainment. Wing and live music addict (not to mention girlwatching addict) that I am, I was present to catch all six installments of this year's Wing-Off's – and the plot twists involved – for the Cut.

NEVERMOURE 7/12/01

It was a no-brainer that the first Wing-Off of the 2001 campaign, combined with Nevermoure's skyrocketing popularity, was going to draw a huge crowd. It did.

Being an experienced Wing-Off veteran, I have learned a few pointers over the years in plotting my strategy for best enjoying the Wing-Offs. First, get all your wings early, because the lines will only get longer as the event progresses. The beer line seems to move fairly steadily, so you can go back for beer refills as needed and not have to wait too long.

Regarding the wing lines themselves, you have to be able to read the lines. If one or two lines are long and the other ones are short but have people in them, that likely indicates that the wings are good at all four wing vendors, and you can save some time by going to the shorter lines for your wings. If, like this night, one vendor has a long line and NOBODY is waiting in line at the other vendors, this might indicate that this one vendor has the only edible wings in the park, and the others suck. This night, City Limits had the long line - and the only line - so I opted for the sure thing and decided to wait out City Limits' line - about a 20-minute wait. But I

still obtained my wings and first beer and returned to my picnic table observation post in front of the soundboard moments before Nevermoure would launch into their set.

Nevermoure was fired up as they launched their first set, letting it rip with current rock favorites and original songs. Singer Adam Marino discovered, though, that crowds tend to be on the silent side during the first set of a given Wing-Off, because they are too busy stuffing their faces with wings – like I was!

But the Wing-Off crowd started to finish their wings and come to life during the second set, and a number of Nevermoure's female fans assembled at stagefront to cheer the band on. Nevermoure started responding in kind, with Adam, guitarist Mike Ritchey and bassist Big Dawg running out into the audience and leaping atop picnic tables for jams and assorted highjinks. The excitement level rose as the group performed popular original songs like "Sweet Christine" and "Tollbooth Fantasy," with a number of fans singing back the lyrics to the band. The second set's big highlight, though, had to be the Nevermoure edition of Jimmy Buffett's "Margaritaville." Advised by Lakemont Park officials beforehand that they weren't permitted to swear on stage, Nevermoure informed the audience that while the band couldn't swear, nobody said anything about the audience swearing. So Adam and co. left the audience fill in the words on the popular chorus chant "Where the ____'s my shaker and salt?"

The expected massive crowd had amassed as Nevermoure launched into their final set and the sun began to set on the inaugural 2001 Wing-Off. The crowd was winged-up, beered-up and festive, and the band was likewise charged as they mixed original tunes like "Troubled Waters" and "Always" with tunes from Billy Joel, 3 Doors Down, Greenday, Metallica and more. It was the full-out party, as Nevermoure rushed back into the crowd to get into more mischief atop the picnic tables. It was just the blast needed to get the 2001 edition of the Lakemont Park Wing-Offs started on the right foot.



Nevermoure rocks the first Wing-Off.



Adam of Nevermoure rallies the Wing-Off masses.

THE RHYTHM KINGS 7/19/01

Now that Nevermoure had ushered in the 2001 Wing-Offs with a bang, it was up to the Rhythm Kings to pick up the ball and run with it. Fortunately, I arrived early and lines were very short in the early going, and I procured wings and brew quickly and was back at my observation post in plenty of time to see the Kings' performance.

As was the case the week before, the crowd was relatively subdued and quiet during the Rhythm Kings' first set. Singer/guitarist Tony Mollick, keyboard player Harold Hayford, bassist Big Jimi Cee and drummer Buzzy Robinson stuck with blues and classics early on, performing selections from the Allman Brothers, Marshall Tucker Band, the Classics IV's "Spooky," B.B. King's "The Thrill Is Gone" and more. Tony Mollick's soulful howl and stinging guitarwork plus Harold's inventive keyboard edge provided most of the fireworks early on.

But not all of the fireworks. A pretty large crowd had assembled at the picnic tables in front of the stage to eat wings, socialize and enjoy the band. We had noticed several members of Lakemont Park's rent-a-cop security force, Henneman Security, posting vigil over the crowd to watch for underage drinking and other possible misconduct. Nobody paid much attention to this security presence until one burly security officer descended on one picnic table and took action against some people at that table. At the time, we didn't know what was up. But a small, middle-aged woman on crutches got up and started jawing into the security officer's face. The verbal exchange rapidly picked up in intensity; you could almost see spit flying between the woman and the security goon. Then, the officer grabbed the woman's arm, handcuffed her, and paraded her off the Wing-Off grounds, to the astonishment of the rest of the onlookers.

Some fifteen minutes later, the woman returned to her picnic table with handcuffs removed, and nearly received a standing ovation from the rest of the crowd! (We later learned that this woman had allegedly permitted somebody without a wristband to take a sip of beer.)

Fortunately, that was the only non-musical highlight of the Wing-Off. The Rhythm Kings soon returned and again lit up the Wing-Off stage with ample classics, blues and funk. The big musical highlight for me had to be Harold Hayford's incredible keyboard intro to Jethro Tull's "Locomotive Breath," which also brought most of the crowd to full attention. Also good were hot versions of the Allman Brothers' "Whipping Post," Dr. John's "Right Place Wrong Time," Eric Clapton & B.B. King's "Riding with the King," and "Sweet Home Chicago" to end the show.

Security highjinks notwithstanding, this was another fun Wing-Off; life was good in Altoona in the summertune!



Big Jimi Cee and Tony Mollick of the Rhythm Kings.

FELIX & THE HURRICANES/SQUARE ONE 7/26/01

Nevermoure had furnished their own sound for the first Wing-Off; Big Jimi Cee and Lizzard Productions furnished sound for the second Wing-Off. For the next three Wing-Offs, Harlan Cox and Doug Cruse would furnish the sound system, and the group Square One would play the opening set for the next two Wing-Offs (and provide all the music for the fifth Wing-Off).

So as I arrived for this third wing-Off, Square One was in the midst of their set of 60's, 70's and 80's classics, highlighted by songs from the Beatles, Byrds, Crosby Stills Nash & Young and more. Again, I arrived early and was able to get my wings and brewski without waiting in any long lines, and was able to enjoy the bulk of Square One's set.

After a brief intermission to change over bands and equipment, Felix & the Hurricanes let it rip with their two sets of Southern-leaning rock, blues and original tunes. While perhaps not as huge as the two preceding weeks, a good-sized crowd nonetheless watched as lead 'Cane Felix Kos, bassist Jeff Clapper and drummer Bobby Watters performed ample amounts of Allman Brothers, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Stevie Ray Vaughan and more, plus most of the original songs from their recently-released studio offering The Feeling.

The big highlight of this particular Hurricanes performance was when guest harmonica player Jimmy McConnell stepped onstage from the audience and wailed

harp on the Hurricanes' original "Just Had to Play The Blues" and Eric Clapton's "I'm Tore Down." (Another occasional Hurricanes guest harmonica player, John Stevens, was in the audience - giving hope that maybe we would see two harp players onstage with the 'Canes this night. But alas, John didn't bring his harmonica along this evening...damn!)

Other Hurricanes highlights included Felix's ongoing guitar mastery, and Jeff Clapper's voice on Grand Funk's "Closer To Home."

At the time, there didn't appear to be any lowlights to this particular Wing-Off, at least from where I was sitting. But as we would learn the following week, there apparently was a serious lowlight – one that would threaten the very future of the Wing-Off event itself.



The Hurricanes with special guest Jimmy McConnell.

TEN SENT WINGS/FULL TIME KINGS/SQUARE ONE 8/2/01

As this particular Wing-Off drew closer during the day Thursday, I had heard rumors that other radio stations had aired announcements that nobody under 21 would be permitted to attend this particular Wing-Off. When I first heard this, I thought somebody had misheard the announcements – how and why could they possibly ban kids from attending a public event such as the Lakemont Park Wing-Offs?

But as I arrived at the gates of Lakemont Park, I realized the rumors had been true. Signage at the gate indicated that nobody under 21 would be admitted to the Wing-Offs, with the exception of kids 10 and under accompanied by their parents. I entered Lakemont Park and walked towards the Wing-Off area, and arrived to see a disturbing sight – a steadily increasing number of under-21 folks stranded at the entrance to the Wing-Off event, barred from entering. Families were showing up at the gate to learn that while their child age 10 or younger could enter and enjoy wings, their teenage child aged 11 to 20 could not enter. Several parents angrily

argued with security and other folks at the gate about this decision, other parents and concerned people (myself included) denounced the decision and questioned the flawed rationale behind it. (We would later learn that a teenager was nabbed holding a beer during the July 26 Wing-Off, and that the local branch of the state's Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement – LCE for short – had given Wing-Off organizers an ultimatum 48 hours before this week's Wing-Off...bar folks under the age of 21 from entering the event, or law enforcement would shut the event down. While the decision was forced upon the Wing-Off organizers by the LCE, the initial perception during the Wing-Off was that the organizers themselves were responsible for this, and numerous parents could be heard loudly proclaiming that this would be their last visit ever to Lakemont Park. Several folks openly wondered if this might be the beginning of the end for the Wing-Off event; after all, why would people attend it if they couldn't bring the entire family to enjoy it?)

Once inside the Wing-Off area, I started hearing rumors and concerns that the barred teens might attempt to break down the fence or storm the gate, and I observed a large security contingent comprised of Henneman Security goons, state and Logan Township police gathering near the gate area in case of trouble. Compounding this situation was its horrible timing – two of the bands performing at this week's Wing-Off, Ten Sent Wings and Full Time Kings, were local punk band favorites whose primary fan base was under-21...the exact audience forced to stand outside the gates of the Wing-Off! It was an ugly situation, seemingly getting uglier by the minute as more barred and disgruntled teens assembled outside the gates, while angry and disgruntled parents assembled within the gates...

Square One performed their opening set, periodically announcing the new policy as more Wing-Off attendees arrived. At this point, shock was the prominent mood, as people were still trying to sort out what was going on and why.

The Full Time Kings set up their gear after Square One's set. I wondered how the Kings would react, and what they might do or say onstage in response to the ban on their teenage fans. I didn't have to wait long...almost immediately, the Kings acknowledged the teens gathered outside the gate, with frontman/guitarist Ben Dumm telling the Wing-Off crowd to "look at these kids, they wouldn't do anything wrong...they're angels!" The band fired through a roughly 30-minute set of punk rock originals, briefly commenting on the ban situation along the way, and urging folks to boycott the Wing-Offs in protest. The security contingent, just a few feet away from the band along the front gate, maintained its vigil over the barred teens, who seemed to be keeping their composure despite this travesty against them.

After Full Time Kings finished their set, Ten Sent Wings proceeded to set up their gear. But unlike the two bands before them, Ten Sent Wings set up their gear along the left side of the stage, facing out towards the Wing-Off entrance where the barred crowd of teens was standing. Soundman Harlan Cox remarked to me that this was the first time he ever had to set up gear at the side of a stage. But I understood what was happening – Ten Sent Wings were showing solidarity with their fans, and were setting up to play to the people who supported them show after show. It was a classic display of loyalty.

Unlike Full Time Kings, Ten Sent Wings avoided any angry commentary or rhetoric regarding the ban. They instead simply explained to the Wing-Off audience that they were playing out to their fans, the young people outside the gates who had come to see them play – perhaps even more so than to enjoy wings. The young fans outside the gates looked on and cheered the band, while a few over-21 fans danced in front of the band and drew stern looks from the security Gestapo and police.

Miraculously, no incidents took place. To their credit, the barred young people outside the Wing-Off gates behaved themselves and never gave the security force any reason to show muscle or force. While security said a few words to some of the over-21 fans who danced a little too close to the kids at the gate, the rest of the Wing-Off was incident free. But things had changed for this Wing-Off, and as people left the event this night, there were questions in the air on just what impact this ban would have on the Wing-Off, and even if we might have witnessed the final Wing-Off.



With law enforcement uniforms making sure the peace is kept, Ten Sent Wings plays towards their fan base outside the gates of the Lakemont Wing-Off.

SQUARE ONE 8/9/01

Reaction to the previous week's ban on teens at the Wing-Offs was fast and furious. The ban became the instant hot topic on an Altoona talk radio station's daily local talk show, as irate parents vented over the ban and questioned the LCE's authority to be able to impose such a ban. The ban made the front page of the following day's Altoona Mirror newspaper, with local LCE commandant "Herr" Strobert defending the bureau's actions against a growing tide of public protest. On Rockpage's message board, several music fans, myself included, vented over the situation, and a grass roots campaign was organized to write the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board, local and state legislators about the controversy. After all, if the LCE could impose a ban on young people at an event like the Wing-Off, what was stopping them from imposing a similar ban several hundred yards away at Blair County Ballpark, to prohibit teens from attending Altoona Curve minor league baseball games (where alcohol was sold and served in the proximity of minors)? Or banning teens from attending concert events at venues like Post Gazette Pavilion at Star Lake near Pittsburgh, Cambria County War Memorial Arena in Johnstown or Hershey Stadium, where alcohol is sold? Or banning young people from firemen's festivals or church picnics where beer tents are present? Or any backyard barbecue where somebody shows up with a cooler full of beer cans? Just where did the LCE draw the line?

The Wing-Off ban was the hot topic in town in the week leading up to the Aug. 9 Wing-Off. Knowing that Square One's brand of older classic rock and roll appealed to an older demographic and likely wouldn't attract many teens anyway, I wasn't expecting much in the way of crowd or controversy as I arrived for the Wing-Off this week. When I did arrive, though, I was greeted by a surprise development – the ban on teens had been reversed! The announcement was officially made on the 5PM edition of WTAJ-TV 10's Action News, the ban was lifted! Did the public outcry prove to be the deciding factor? (The local newspaper accounts stated that the decision was actually handed down from LCE in Harrisburg, who learned of the ban through

media reports and publicity – including quite possibly, citizen letters, phone calls and e-mails about the ban!)

The good news was that the ban on young people was lifted. The bad news was that it was too late to draw young people to this particular Wing-Off, so business was relatively slow for this week's event.

But there were folks present, and Square One did a decent job entertaining what masses there were with ample 60's, 70's and 80's classics - including heavy dosages of the Beatles, Byrds, Crosby Stills Nash & Young, Rare Earth, Hollies, Animals, Tom Petty, Georgia Satellites and much more. Singer/guitarist Don Osborn, lead guitarist Tom Fronauer, bassist Bill Hunter and drummer Jeff Crownover were tight on their instruments and harmonized fairly well throughout their sets. The expected highlight of Square One's performance this night was the group's treatment of Crosby Stills Nash & Young's "Freedom," segueing into "Ohio." Especially in light of the events of the previous week's Wing-Off, this combo of songs seemed to take on added significance.

While the crowd was lighter than usual for this Wing-Off, it was actually a more relaxed Wing-Off. You weren't elbow-to-elbow with other people; you could stretch out and relax; and I even went up to one of the wing vendors late in the event for additional wings without having to wait in any long lines. So in that sense, this was still an enjoyable Wing-Off, despite the lack of crowd.



Square One plays to the controversy-stunted crowd at the Wing-Off.

STEPT ON 8/16

With the controversy over the ban on teens resolved, and with this being the final Wing-Off of the year, and with one of the state's most popular rock bands, Stept On, on the bill to perform, a large attendance was anticipated.

For all the preceding Wing-Off's this year, the weather had cooperated. But the forecast this day was for thunderstorms, and one passed through the Altoona area just a couple of hours before the event. Not taking any chances, the organizers and

Stept On agreed to set up under one of the pavilions rather than on the regular stage (which had a roof, but wasn't nearly as big).

I arrived, procured my wings from City Limits (their medium-hot and Italian wings both kick butt!) and my first brewski, and joined cohorts Big Jim and WVAM one-man radio station Gerry Gamber to observe Stept On in action.

As had become the norm in most of the previous Wing-Off's, the crowd was relatively quiet during Stept On's first set, more concerned with stuffing their faces with wings than getting rowdy with the band just yet. It appeared that it would just be a routine Stept On set, but leave it to the hired rent-a-cops from Henneman Security to provide some extra entertainment. After Stept On had set a heavier-rocking tone through most of the set with tunes from the Deftones, Godsmack, Tool and several original songs from their Lonely disc, they introduced a new original entitled "Locked Up Again." During this song, a single teenaged fan stood up and began dancing and grooving by himself in an open area in front of the stage. This young fan wasn't bothering anybody, and several members of his family were laughing as he did his thing. However, a member of the Henneman gestapo – in fact, the same burly goon who busted the crippled middle-aged lady during the second Wing-Off – moved in on the kid and made him sit back down. Another young fan – apparently a friend of the first, vocally protested the action, and several more security goons converged to silence this uprising. This brought a loud and immediate chorus of boo's from the rest of the seated Wing-Off crowd under the pavilion, including yours truly – given their Gestapo-like tactics, I shouted a loud "Sieg Heil!" at the security contingent. It caught their attention, as one officer turned around and glared at me.

Stept On finished out their set, and then I observed several of the security detail approach singer Chuck behind the stage area. They talked for a short while. Eventually, when Stept On was set to start their second set, Chuck told the audience that security informed him that it was okay for people to get up and dance in front of the stage, they just didn't want to see any moshing. Fair enough; after all, the floor under the pavilion was concrete, so this wasn't the safest place in the world to mosh anyway.

As Stept On proceeded with their set, a crowd quickly and steadily grew in front of the stage, as fans had eaten their wings and were looking to burn off some chicken calories. Stept On rocked the pavilion with tunes from Linkin Park, Drowning Pool, Staind, Static X, Limp Bizkit and many more. The group performed a number of their originals, too, such as the title cut from Lonely, "Snowed In," "Voices In My Head," "Day After Day" and others. Stept On proceeded to do a concert set, not taking any more breaks the entire rest of the Wing-Off. And as the band kept playing, the crowd kept growing - but remained well-behaved, limiting their festive antics to jumping up and down. Eventually the group announced their final song of the set, System of a Down's "Sugar." The crowd still kept their composure, even during this torrid song. But Stept On made one crucial error - they granted the audience's demands to do one more song. It turned out being one song too many. As Stept On reached the midway point of Slipknot's (), you guessed it - several nimrods began moshing and slamming each other around, and an army of security guards quickly moved in, and Stept On ended the show in mid song. Somebody onstage hit it on the head when he yelled into the microphone, "WAY TO GO, ASSHOLES!" Stept On's performance – and the Wing-Offs themselves for 2001 – crashed to a halt for another year.

It will be interesting, given the controversy which surfaced during this year's Wing-Off campaign, how the event will look next year. Will there be any changes in light of the temporary ban on teens? Will the Lakemont organizers book as wide a variety of rock entertainment next year, or stick to safer, more mass-appeal bands? The answers to these questions and more wait in the "wings," and will unfold in the summer of 2002 at Lakemont Park.



Chuck and Stept On rock the jam-packed crowd at the final 2001 Wing-Off.



Jim Bagrosky of Stept On.

FINAL CUT FLASHBACK/IN REMEMBRANCE

By D'Scribe

Recently, I learned of the passing of two prominent area musicians, Barry Russell and David Learn.

It was one of Barry's former bandmates, former Black Angel frontman Todd Giornesto, who first informed me about Barry's passing. We lost Barry back on August 13 from heart failure; he was 50. Barry was one of the members of the original Bashful back in the early 80's. After leaving Bashful, Barry played guitar for several other area metal bands, most notably Black Angel and Jet Black. Barry had stepped away from live performance in recent years due to health reasons, but I still heard from him every so often, usually asking me if I knew of anyone wanting to buy his equipment.

One of David Learn's former bandmates, former Petey Gets Around bassist Michael Feight, informed me of David's passing. David was the drummer for Petey Gets Around and Love In Ruins; he too passed away from a massive heart attack back on July 27; he was 49. Besides being a drummer, David had artistic talents beyond the scope of music; David was also a gifted painter, whose paintings were exhibited from Pittsburgh to Altoona; and for three years he was the coordinator of the Blair County Extension of the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art.

I figured beyond just writing memorials to both of these fallen musicians, I would remember them by flashing back to two legendary gigs (legendary for me at least), one gig that each musician appeared in that left its mark on me during my career of covering local music. And believe me, both of these are classics – enough so that while I am sad at both musicians' passings, I will always chuckle at these two memorable nights I was able to experience with them in their respective bands...

BLACK ANGEL @ THE LOOP TAVERN, HOLLIDAYSBURG, PA – SOMETIME LATE WINTER OR EARLY SPRING 1985 (by my best recollection)

Late 1984/early 1985...let me set the stage. I had begun working for WFBG-FM on New Year's Day 1984, and in my rookie season in radio was playing easy-listening music on pre-Froggy WFBG-FM 98. My weekly gig was Saturday nights from midnight to 6 AM, and I worked down the hall from WFBG-AM, where Jay Randyll was hosting the best damn rock show in the history of Altoona radio, WFBG's All Night Album Rock (R.I.P.). In between my voice breaks on FM 98, I soon found myself hanging out down the hall, helping "Dawg" out with menial chores, and soon starting a weekly album review feature called "The Final Cut" (yes, the birthplace of the mag you are reading now!).

Anyway, cutting to the chase...Late one Saturday night, around 2 or 3 AM, a knock came at the station door. Jay answered the door, finding a motley-looking group of metalhead rock and rollers with demo tape in hand – Black Angel. Clad in black T-shirts, and sporting long hair and tattoos, the five members of Black Angel – guitarist/ringleader Barry Russell, rhythm guitarist Todd Hoover, bassist Ken Baitzel, drummer John Anderson, and an aspiring wildman singer named Todd Giornesto (yes, this was the night I first met Todd Gio) – plus several lady friends – had stopped by to introduce themselves, drop off their tape and ask if we could play one of their songs on air. (We soon did, and their title song "Black Angel" eventually

became one of the most-remembered local tracks we played on the show.) Black Angel also invited us to one of their upcoming gigs, a Friday night show at the Loop Tavern in Hollidaysburg.

At this point in time, I was still a virgin to the Altoona area bar scene, and had only seen one band on the local bar circuit to date (the Adam DiFlaviano and Marta Ahmed-fronted Rockit, at the upscale Larchmont Restaurant in Sylvan Hills – not a particularly rowdy gig, to be sure). But I decided to tag along with “Dawg,” and check out Black Angel at the Loop Tavern.

Our first indication that it would be an interesting night was when we first pulled in along River Road near the Loop Tavern. We observed another car pull in ahead of us, and park into a drainage ditch at a 45-degree angle to the road. The driver got out, left the car sit where it lay, and went into the tavern. Oh-ka-a-ay...

We went inside, and Black Angel and their entourage had reserved a table up front for us to sit at. The Loop Tavern looked like a rather rough place, but we were seated away from most of the crowd, so we were able to breathe easy, at least for a little while.

Black Angel soon started their first set of the evening. I don't recall the exact songs the band did (I didn't take notes back then), though I know they mixed a few of their original tunes with heavy metal favorites of the day from Judas Priest, Black Sabbath, Ozzy, possibly some Scorpions, etc. I remember the band being instrumentally solid and powerful, with Barry being quite an accomplished lead player – and Todd Giornesto as the fiery metallic frontman belting the voice and swinging the mic stand. The first set rocked well, and was your typical rocking set.

Musically, the second set was along the same story line as the first, with pounding heavy metal favorites and a few original tunes. Towards the end of the set, though, a minor skirmish broke out at the back of the room between two patrons – it was quickly separated, and all returned to normal. Somehow, though, I could sense that something was about to happen. Whether it was people speaking louder in the back of the room, or just the sense of tension in the air – I just had that strange feeling...

The night's second intermission came and went, and Black Angel commenced their third set of the night. Then it happened...during the second or third song of the set, we heard commotion erupt, and turned around to see a major battle royal on the dance floor towards the back of the room. Tables and chairs knocked over, bottles, glasses and beer flying, and a huge scrum of bodies with fists swinging at any jaws they could find. I think “Dawg” and I unilaterally agreed at that moment – it was time for us to depart. We hastily slunk our way towards and out the door, into “Dawg's” car, drove past the ditch-bound jalopy parked ahead of us and GOT THE HELL OUT OF THERE!

In the days that followed, we heard word that in that melee, somebody got cracked in the back of the head with a crowbar. It was the first – and only – time I ever set foot in the Loop Tavern. And as both Todd's would leave Black Angel later that year (Giornesto to front Slammer; Hoover to play rhythm guitar in Bashful), this would turn out being the only time I ever saw Black Angel – and Barry Russell – perform. But it was a night I remember well, because it was one of the first bar gigs I had ever seen, And it was THE FIRST BAR FIGHT I ever saw! And to this day, I can safely say – if that night at the Loop Tavern didn't scare me away from checking out live music – NOTHING WOULD!



BLACK ANGEL (clockwise, from top left): Barry Russell (holding Flying V), Ken Baitzel, John Anderson, Todd Giornesto, Todd Hoover.

PETEY GETS AROUND @ PELLEGRINE'S, ALTOONA 11/10/96

Until the Love In Ruins web site was recently taken down (Love In Ruins was the band entity Petey Gets Around evolved into in early 1999), David Learn cited this show on his page of the site as his most memorable gig. Of the several times I saw Petey Gets Around before they got heavier and became Love In Ruins, I agree with David that this, too, was my most memorable Petey gig...Because while I was ultimately impressed with the band, it was the three-ring circus sideshow on the dance floor that night that made this one of the most memorable gigs I've ever seen.

I actually reviewed this show in the Nov. 4, 1996 edition of the Cut (I obviously added the review after I dated that issue) – the same issue of the Cut which recapped Mark Da Boy's wedding). To quote myself..."It started normally enough...Petey Gets Around, an Indiana, PA-based foursome making their Pelly's debut, displaying their talents during the first set. I had heard the buzz about this group beforehand from folks who had witnessed them at earlier shows at Howard Johnson's in Ebensburg and the Altoona Gingerbread Man (opening for the Clarks)."

During Petey's first set that night, I was wowed by the talents of frontlady Ruschelle Regula, who blended vocal power and range on tunes from Pat Benatar, Garbage, Hole and several Petey originals. David Learn also sang vocals on tunes from Matthew Sweet and Everclear, and the band's other two members at that point – guitarist Lou Lombardi and bassist Michael Feight – each sang songs as well.

I noted in that original review that a pesky drunk – who eventually had to be led away from the stage and dance floor by Pelly's in-house security – was the only thing out of the ordinary during Petey Gets Around's first two sets that night. But

then came the legendary third set. We'll pick up the action with that original Cut review...

"The third set, much like the first two, started normally, with Ruschelle singing Alanis M's "You Oughta Know." Mike then took the vocal helm for Toad the Wet Sprocket's "Fall Down." Then the circus arrived on Pellegrine's dance floor, and all hell broke loose. As David Learn began singing Everclear's "Santa Monica (Watch the World Die)," an unidentified brunette female began thrashing wildly all over Pelly's dance floor, obviously in her own chemically-enhanced world. Audience members and I looked on in awe as this woman collapsed in front of the stage, and appeared to try to make snow angels on the dance floor! Ruschelle, noticing this woman's strange performance, commented at song's end to 'put that sister on the payroll.' Petey then did another original song, which seemed to settle this wildwoman down...But when the group launched into The Clash's "Should I Stay or Should I Go," Wildwoman was again up and freaking out on the dance floor, crashing off other dancers in her delirium. I feared a fight might erupt, but everyone else kept their cool, and just laughed at Wildwoman, knowing she was way beyond hope. She even crashed into me as I was seated at a front table...she drunkenly apologized and continued her crazed journey.

At this point, two new characters entered the developing plot...two middle-aged gentlemen; one decked out in Dick Tracy attire, wearing a trenchcoat, hat and peanut-butter-jar-bottomed glasses; and his friend, a graying fellow in a light blue (leisure) suit and tie. These two walked up to the side of Pelly's dance floor and observed what was going on. I first thought these two might be law enforcement people, Liquor Control Board agents, etc.

But then, as Petey Gets Around launched into Bush's "Everything Zen," Wildwoman resumed her freakout mode again, and the guy in the blue suit jumped onto the dance floor and started dancing wildly with her!

What all happened after this was moreless a blur to me, because I was howling so hard with laughter I wasn't altogether sure what was going on! Other loonies, including the drunk (from the first set) and people mocking and mimicking the above-mentioned characters, joined the fracas on the dance floor! And then the climax of this bizarre spectacle...In the heat of her delirium, Wildwoman lost total control...not mental control (she was already way past that point),,,but BLADDER control! ON PELLY'S DANCE FLOOR! Anybody watching this sequence of events, myself included, was in total hysteria from laughing so hard! As freakshows go, Primus couldn't orchestrate a video this entertaining!

All the while, Petey Gets Around did their best to maintain their composure before all this insanity and continue to play this set; though you could tell by the smirks on the band members' faces that they knew they had lost control of this circus."

"In the aftermath, people just sat and stared in amazement at what they had just witnessed. The fellow in the blue suit went onstage and chatted with band members; bass player Mike walked past me and commented that it was a shame the guy wasn't a Depends salesman. One lady at an adjacent table next to me told me she was embarrassed to be an Altoonan this night...I gave a disclaimer to the band, explaining that Altoona crowds don't usually do stuff like this, and that there must have been a mass escape from the local insane asylum. Pellegrine's staffers, including Natalie Pellegrine and club main man Harry Jr. himself, all remarked that they had never seen anything like this night before."

"In a stupor, I started to leave Pellegrine's, noticing that Wildwoman, freshly soiled, was now sitting at Pelly's main bar, while staffers and patrons were politely trying to coax her to leave."

In the years that I covered Petey Gets Around and Love In Ruins after this gig, this night would almost always come up in conversation when I went to see the group. David Learn referred to it on his web page as the night of "The lady who pissed herself and two men in leisure suits." I refer to it as "the ultimate freakshow," and one of the hardest laughing fits I have ever had in my life.



David Learn of Love In Ruins/Petey Gets Around.

AFGHAN TV GUIDE:

A public service to our troops stationed in Afghanistan...

MONDAYS:

- 8:00 - "Husseinfeld"
- 8:30 - "Mad About Everything"
- 9:00 - "Suddenly Sanctions"
- 9:30 - "The Brian Benben Bin Laden Show"
- 10:00 - "Allah McBeal"

TUESDAYS:

- 8:00 - "Wheel of Terror and Fortune"
- 8:30 - "The Price is Right If Usama Says Its Right"
- 9:00 - "Children Are Forbidden From Saying The Darndest Things"
- 9:30 - "Afganistans Wackiest Public Execution Bloopers"
- 10:00 - "Buffy The Yankee Imperialist Dog Slayer"

WEDNESDAYS:

- 8:00 - "U.S. Military Secrets Revealed"
- 8:30 - "When Northern Alliance Attack"
- 9:00 - "Two Guys, a Girl, and a Pita Bread"

9:30 - "Just Shoot Everyone"
10:00 - "Veilwatch"

THURSDAYS:

8:00 - "Matima Loves Chachi"
8:30 - "M*U*S*T*A*S*H"
9:00 - "Veronicas Closet Full of Long, Black, Shapeless Dresses and Veils"
9:30 - "My Two Baghdads"
10:00 - "Diagnosis: Heresy"

FRIDAYS:

8:00 - "Judge Laden"
8:30 - "Funniest Super 8 Home Movies"
9:00 - "Captured Northern Alliance Rebels Say the Darndest Things"
9:30 - "Achmeds Creek"
10:00 - "No-witness News"

RADIOACTIVE

Bitching about my line of work by D'Scribe

"IF YOU PLAY IT, SAY IT!"

MTV and a number of record companies and artists used to heavily proclaim the credo "If you play it, say it!" to radio station programmers and deejays across the country, in an organized effort to make sure groups and artists received the credit they deserved for the music they made. After listening to this area's modern rock stations and their announcers over the past few years, I think those stations need to get back to following that advice a bit more closely.

Now before anyone from the stations in question – locally speaking, The Revolution 101.1, The Buzz 105.9 and QWK-Rock – takes me to task for this criticism, let me explain that I say the preceding comment more as a listener myself than as a radio announcer. And let me clarify my own situation here at Q94, and where I am coming from on this. At Q94, saying what I play on the air isn't as crucial. Why? Because as a classic rock station, we play music that already has become entrenched in the minds and consciences of most of our listeners. Most people already know the names of the songs we play and who does them, so it is not vital for us to constantly rehash "You just heard "Free Bird" by Lynyrd Skynyrd" or "This is Led Zeppelin and "Stairway to Heaven." Once in a while we will mention song titles specifically for classics, and occasionally we will receive calls asking about certain songs we play (mainly from younger listeners who may have just heard a classic for the first time).

On the other hand, you will hear us give the song title and artist when we play a new song from a classic rock artist. Why? Because that song is new and unfamiliar to most people. Most radio programmers will tell you that on average, it takes some 250 spins of a new song before people actually start to recognize it and remember the artist who performs it. So for new music, it is important to identify the song title and performer, so listeners can start identifying the song (and subsequently know whose album to purchase if they want to own a copy of that song).

I also speak from a personal level as a listener. As somebody whose "night job" is to check out bands and artists on area stages, I constantly am hearing new music I am often not familiar with. In some cases, the songs are the band's own original songs – and in most cases, the band will take credit for those songs. But in the case of new cover songs, the band onstage usually will not identify the covers they are doing, especially if the dancefloor crowd already recognizes the song and is up and dancing to it. Thus, to find out what songs area bands are covering, I often have to rely on announcers on local modern rock stations to identify the songs they play and who does them. All too often, though, I'll recognize a song on the air that I heard covered by a local band – and then get frustrated when the announcer fails to identify that song after it played. This dilemma is compounded by the current trend of bands to name their songs with a title which isn't the main catch-phrase of the song; thus, it is not automatic that you can find out who does a song by going on the Internet and typing what you THINK is the song title into a search engine. For new and often unfamiliar music, announcers need to front-sell and back-sell songs and their titles. And ultimately, even beyond my need to identify current songs for the job I do; perhaps I happen to like a song enough to want to buy the album, but can't do so if I do not know who does it!

To be fair, QWK-Rock does a fairly good job identifying the music they play. The Buzz does a so-so job. But The Revolution – who arguably plays more newer and fringe alternative artists than the other two stations – is the most guilty of not identifying the music they play. I've openly hollered at my car radio "Identify that last song, DAMMIT!" numerous times when Revolution announcers leave me hanging over what they just played.

Bottom line – the main purpose of a modern rock, alternative or new rock-geared station is to sell new music to its listeners, so those listeners will go out and purchase the singles and albums those songs come from, and go to see that artist in concert. Not identifying the songs being played works against this purpose. It would be comparable to a restaurant giving you a sample of a new dish, but not telling you what that dish is so you cannot order it. Or Hollywood showing an exciting trailer from an upcoming movie, but not identifying what that movie is so you can go to the theater to see it.

Memo to the announcers at all three local modern rock stations - don't assume we all know the music you are playing. Treat us like dummies, and tell us the song titles and artists. Please! You'll help the artists sell more albums and concert tickets, and prevent people like me from swearing at our radios. Thank you.

THE FINAL CUT is recklessly spewed from an emotionally and physically abused computer in an inner sanctum in the heart of Northeast Altoona, PA. The opinions spouted off with total disregard for the feelings or weak emotional stability of lesser beings are solely those of D'Scribe (Jim Price), D'Drummer (Kevin Siegel), Da Boy (Mark Wesesky), D'Ranter, Schtiv D'Ump, D'Pebble, Sparky D'Engineer and any other mentally unstable riff-raff with an axe to grind, and do not reflect the opinions, attitudes, or massive corporate policies of WBXQ/WBRX, Majic 104-Dot-9, 3-W-S, Coconuts Music & Movies, PA Musician, The Blair County Chapter of PA Cleanways, Fat Vinny & the Wiseguys, families, friends, acquaintances, pets, the Monday night Pellegrine's wing-eating think tank, other local bands, insects, mold and related spores, radio station prize pigs and other lower life forms, Claudio at City Limits, Big John and Jodie K at Peter C's, the Miller, Genesee, or Heineken Brewing Companies,

the makers of Rupleminz, Jim Rome, the Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, Nissan, and Harley-Davidson Companies, all national record companies and touring bands, or anyone we tend to irritate by writing this crap. Translation: We Just Don't Care. Comments, recordings, artwork, letters and FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS (!!!) are always welcome...send to our snail mail address: The Final Cut, c/o Jim Price, 1104 South Catherine St., Altoona, PA 16602, or e-mail us at jpnwcent@charter.net. Also, check out The Final Cut website at www.rockpage.org/finalcut (because once in a blue moon, when we do update this rag, Ron the Webmaster updates it as well). Be sure and check out both the print and online editions, because each has stories, photos, diseases and general drivel not found in the other. Unauthorized copying of the print edition is mandatory, it saves us money (like we have any), and copier paper (see comments after money). When you finish with this edition, give it to someone you like...or someone you hate...or someone you don't even know...we really don't give a damn; we here at The Final Cut are really damn cheap and PROUD OF IT!!! Keep out of reach of children, small animals, clergy, John Rocker, Marge Schott, Britney Spears and other household pets. Back issues are available, should you run short on bird cage liner or need paper for constructing paper airplanes, footballs, spitballs, etc. Send 2 or 3 first class postage stamps for each issue desired. We're thirsty and need beers. OUTTA HERE!!!

THE FINAL CUT

c/o JIM PRICE

1104 SOUTH CATHERINE STREET

ALTOONA, PA 16602