

The Raleigh Hatchet, 514 Daniels St., Suite 337, Raleigh, NC 27605

Editor In Chief Tara Rodriquez

tara@raleighhatchet.com

Music Editor Amanda Becom amanda@raleighhatchet.com

Publisher

Bart Tomlin bart@raleighhatchet.com

Founding Editor D.A. Nation

Assistant Art Coordinator Caroline King

Contributors

Tim Anderson, Matthew Anscher, Claire Ashby, Greg Barbera, Richard Barron, Amanda Becom, Brian Bedsworth, Matt Boswell, Melvyn Brown, Josh Bryant, Dave Cantwell, Vince Carmody, Charles Cardello, Joy Courson, Russ De Sena, Mike Dillon, Chad M. Dravk, Rose Dunnington, Michael Elvin, Cody Eyman, Greg Eyman, Brad Farran, Kelly Ferguson, Evan Foster, Robert Gaddy, Taylor Garrison, Jeff Given, Shannon D. Gray, Kevin Hales, Julie Hall, Brian Howe, Robyn J., Cheetie Kumar, Dan Kuszaj, William Lee, Benton Lowry, Daniel Lynch, Libby Lynn, Charles Mangin, Christy Meyer, Tanya Montoya, Mathew Nanney, Ashley Nation-Gaddy, Sarah Pasell, Cy Rawls, Drew Robertson, Patricia Rogosich, Marley Ryan, Drew St. Clair, Peter Schmehl, Phil Solesky, Marco Soto, A. Spencer, Chris Stapleton, Richard Stone, Shaun Taylor, D.H. Westmoreland, Jay Winfrey, Eric Wolf, Joe Yerry, Jon Yu

Illustrators

Sean Balkwill, Tyler Baum, Daniel Gallant, Daniel Lynch, Ed Marsden, Kristin Matwiczyk, Lindsay Petrick, Chris Plankers, David K. Rose, Jer Warren

Photographers Jeff Given, Sarah Pasell, Jay Winfrey

Advertising ads@raleighhatchet.com

Distribution distro@raleighhatchet.com

Cover art by Erin Deneve August cover art by Breigh Stanfield

The Raleigh Hatchet is published monthly and available free of charge where distributed. For subscriptions visit www.raleighhatchet.com All individual content is the property of its creator. Reproduction without consent is strictly prohibited. If you would like to distribute The Raleigh Hatchet at your location please email info@raleighhatchet.com

Please E-MAIL all press releases, submission requests and general inquiries to info@raleighhatchet.com

contents:

- 4. Food Love Potshots and Potluck by Charles Mangin
- 5. Inside Animal Collective **An Interview with Brian Weitz** By Shaun Taylor
- 7. Judged by the Cover Marco Soto investigates: Is it really Cooler By the Lake.
- 8. Listen Up!

Reviews of new releases by Do Make Say Think, Stars, Robert Pollard, Sunset Rubdown, and Radiohead

- 14. Haggard Heathen The Chronicles of embattled secularism By Benton Lowry
- 15. Hatchet Horoscopes



Potshots and Potluck

By Charles Mangin

This is the time of year that most reminds me of my first solo trip abroad, a two-week jaunt through the Emerald Isle. As such, I had fully intended this month's column to be a three way battle-royal of Raleigh's Irish pub grub, comparing the offerings of downtown's three biggest Irish bars to one another, and to what I remember of the authentic experience. Unfortunately, my pub crawl from Tir Na Nog to Napper Tandy's (née Rí Rá), finishing up at Hibernian never materialized. Maybe because I'm older than I once was, and an evening downing beer and pub grub, wandering from bar to pub to tavern doesn't hold the same appeal. Maybe it's because I'm married now, and it's just harder to justify such excursions as "research".

Maybe next month. Send me an email at the Hatchet if you care to join me.

This month, then, I was a little stuck for a food-related topic on which to write. Stuck, that is, until I received an e-mailed request for the recipe. The dish in question is one I have made a few times over the last several months as my contribution to various potluck dinners and picnics. As I've written before, most of what I cook doesn't come from a recipe, but instead from a vague notion completely in my head.

It's a simple thing, really, consisting mainly of cherry tomatoes, basil and mozzarella. When casting about for what to make for the first of these social gatherings, I was inspired by the bunches of cherry tomatoes stacked most appealingly in the produce section at Sam's. I didn't know what I was going to do, but I knew I wanted to use these tiny jewels of summer in some manner.

The classic combination of tomato, basil and mozzarella made perfect sense, and a plan was quickly formulated. This being in the height of the season, my own small herb patch supplied most of the basil, augmented by a small bunch plucked

from the grocery store on the way home. Quickly assembled from only a handful of ingredients, the resulting salad was a hit, and quickly disappeared.

This was, of course, not my first foray into potluck cookery. I have many a picnic under my belt. As a result, I have pondered many times the proper potluck protocol, and come up with a few rules for those who intend to partake.

First, make something simple.

Complicated concoctions may be just the thing to show off your culinary prowess, but I prefer to leave the landmark creations for the host or hostess. There are time constraints to be considered, especially if you're going to an event after work.

Something that can be thrown together in a few minutes means you'll be more likely to get there in time to enjoy it.

If you insist on spending all day pulling your dish together, make it something that can be reheated indefinitely without being rendered inedible, or served room temperature. The biggest mistake to make is to bring something that must be assembled at the last moment, in the host's kitchen. You inconvenience yourself, as well as the host, and you're more likely to run into portability problems.

Which leads to the next rule: make it portable. This can be made much easier by procuring the right serving vessels. Any decent home goods store will carry a few casserole or baking dishes that come with an insulated carrying case, usually with handles and pockets for stashing serving utensils. Soups and other liquid creations may pose a problem if you try to transport them in the same vessel you intend to serve from. Instead, pour your liquid assets into Zip-loc bags (doubled up, if you're leakparanoid or just a particularly bad driver) and stash them in your serving vessel for the trip.

Since you may get stuck with the leftovers of whatever you bring, be sure it's something you and your household enjoy. If the potluck isn't well attended, you may have *a lot* left over. Don't assume you can inflict something you'd never touch yourself

on your friends or family and return home with a dish, scraped clean.

On a similar note, don't use a potluck as an opportunity to experiment or try something new. Stick to the familiar. You're less likely to screw up something you've made a dozen times, and you're not going to find yourself surprised halfway through an unfamiliar recipe, realizing you need something not in the pantry, or that you skipped an important preparation step. This also goes back to the simplicity rule.

While it may seem boring to always be bringing the same thing to every picnic and family outing, the upside is that you'll not only perfect your recipe, you'll gain a reputation. My brother, known best for his culinary skills involving charcoal and burned animal flesh, has gained a following with his deviled eggs. Among his circle of friends, it's typically assumed what he'll bring, and rarely does anyone else bring deviled eggs. There's a rush to the table when the eggs arrive, and there are never leftovers.

I usually inquire of my host as to what kind of group will be at the event, and what, if anything, other people are already committed to bringing. Are there any particularly vocal picky eaters coming? Do they think the bacon-wrapped shrimp skewers would go over well? At a bar mitzvah? Not so much.

Finally, I'll leave you with this: share and enjoy. I close all of my columns with that phrase, but when it comes to potlucks, it's especially important. As a contributor, print up a few copies of your recipe, or at least be able to rattle off the list of ingredients. This is not just good citizenship ó share and share alike, I say ó but a food safety issue. In any suitably large group, there are likely to be some people with food allergies or otherwise restricted in what they can eat. For instance, it's usually bad form to serve vegans something made with beef broth or flavored with back fat. And anything with seafood or nuts in it should be made apparent, unless you've got an EpiPen handy.

Share and enjoy.

AXE THE BAND \

Inside Animal Collective: An Interview with Brian Weitz

Over the days of September 26 and 27, I conducted a phone interview with Brian Weitz (Geologist) of Animal Collective. Despite life on the road, dying cell phone batteries and schedule conflicts, Weitz found the time to give us insight into what works for one of the biggest experimental rock bands today. A new label, a new record called *Strawberry Jam*, and rumors of an impending box set release set the stage for an extensive interview Mr. Weitz.

RH: Your sound is so complex and layered

compared to most bands -- is there a particular process that Animal Collective follows when writing and developing songs?

BW: It actually starts with a pretty big core of just a melody and lyrics that could be played on something like a piano or guitar. Also, we've always been really attracted to environmental music, music that seems produced with a visual sort of picture, or viewing the song within a certain kind of landscape. After we think about the song, David or Noah will usually bring a melody like that to everybody and

we think about how we want it to sound, and we all produce it together with the different sounds. It sounds kind of "hippy dippy," but we create a home for the melody to live in based on the visual images the melody conjures up.

RH: What prompted the Animal Collective's move to Domino?

BW: We were without a record contract at that moment; our Fat Cat contract was only for a few records, and so we did *Sung Tongs* and *Feels*. That contract ended and we had thought about resigning with them, but there were a lot of record labels wanting to speak with us, so we thought we owed it to ourselves to hear what everybody had to say.

We've all known Domino since we were kids, you know? Back when they were just licensing "American Indie Rock," from Drag City or Matador, we would get the Domino singles because

they would usually have a special b-side or something on them. We had been following the label for a while and were very familiar with it. Very few artists are on Domino, and we know a fair amount of them and were happy with them. Especially now as they've been pretty successful over the past year, and they have the resources and experience to get our music out to a wider group of people, which was what we wanted.

At the same time, they offered us complete creative control, you know?



They don't ask to hear the record. We're free to do whatever we want and just turn it in. In the end, it seemed they were the best one to go with, and we talked to five or six labels about it, even considered doing it ourselves on Paw Tracks, the label we're involved with, but Domino seemed like the best option, so, that's what we did.

Also, we're friends with the people who work at Domino in the U.S., and they have been long-time Animal Collective fans and supporters before they even worked at Domino. So we knew we were working with people who were excited about our music and not just excited because they pay attention to Internet hype or whatever.

RH: Seems that having complete creative control is a big issue with Animal Collective, as I assume it is with many bands...

BW: Yeah, whatever contract we sign with a record label there has to be a

creative control clause, and we get a guarantee that if we turn in a record, and they don't want to put it out because they don't think it will sell or whatever, or don't want to put it out for financial reasons... any "non-musical" reasons, then we have the right to take the record to another label and release it somewhere else. We also have a guarantee that our line up can change, because certain contracts usually say that if a band changes membership it will void the contract, which doesn't

work for Animal Collective because our membership does rotate based on who feels like playing on a certain record or a certain period of time.

RH:There's a new video for the *Strawberry Jam* opener, "Peacebone." What ideological influence did the band have for this video concept and were you pleased with the result?

BW: We met the photographer on a photo shoot for a magazine and we really liked working with him, and what he did. He

had heard "Peacebone" and really liked it and he wrote the story for it. We were actually going to be out of the country traveling when it was going to be shot, so we just sat down with him beforehand and sent each other different clips from horror movies or things that we liked and thought about incorporating into the video. Then, we sat in at the end, just sort of editing it, to make sure we were happy with the final edit of the video. Most of the credit should go to the guy, Tim, who was the director. He supervised, oversaw everything and came up with the concept... whether you love it or hate, give Tim the credit.

RH: What can you tell me about the "vinyl only" box set of live material that is to be rumored to be released sometime in 2007?

BW: It's been in the works for a while. We've actually finished it -- we've gone back through our collection of live

see it that way, but I think if there's any versions, or else rare stuff, from *Danse* them. Also, I think it generates a lot of press and a lot of word of mouth. Manatee. We've already edited it and justice in the world it should be seen turned in the masters. It's going to be on The negative side is: the way the that way. That's sort of from a "home a label called Catsup Plate, which makes record was specifically leaked, it was team" standpoint... all of its releases by hand, so the box multiple songs at a time, but not necessarily in order of how the record RH: And I agree with you, there... that the records are going to come in -- he's actually going to construct all of was sequenced and it wasn't all at once. those. But he's actually getting married We thought that was kind of a bummer, BW: (laughter) Great! It's definitely either next week or the week after, so because we put a lot of thought into inspiring to me to see somebody use he's understandably extremely busy and how the record should be heard from these samplers to create something hasn't really had the time or the money start to finish and the sequencing. We totally different than you normally to sit around his apartment and make a also hoped people would listen to it on hear from sample-based music. For me, bunch of packages for this box set. good speakers, but instead, people were someone who has always done samples getting one or two songs at a time, out and loops in more of an ambient sort of RH: I have read where you guys referred to of order, listening to them out of order way, I find it really inspiring. I would say, your last release, *Feels*, as your "love album." non-stop and then another two songs yeah, to a certain extent it wasn't like Was there a particular theme in mind for would pop up. That wasn't really the "the next Animal Collective has to match way we intended the record to be heard, or top these solo projects," or anything Strawberry Jam as well? but that's just a personal thing and not like that. That's something we've seen in BW: No, not really. Our lives are a little necessarily harmful for the record. the press since Strawberry Jam came out, but that record was done when those more all over the place after Feels - starting families or getting married, RH: I understand that you attended records came out. or whatever -- all living in different Columbia University for your places, so all of us have had a lot more undergraduate degree and graduate RH: What three albums of the 1970's were experiences, and we come in with all degrees, what did you think about your most influential on Animal Collective as a whole? these ideas that we have been working alma mater hosting Iranian president on in the absence of each other, so it's a Ahmadinejad? lot more "all over the place." Obviously, BW: That would be tough. We all have different tastes in music. From the '70s? Noah's songs are very influenced by BW: I thought it was fine. I believe in free him having a child; a lot of his lyrics speech and the free exchange of ideas. I'm I guess Tago Mago by Can came out in are about that. There's still a lot of Jewish, and even as a Jew I have always the '70s, and Tago Mago, Ege Bamyasi relationship stuff in there, but not really supported the rights of anti-Semitic groups and Future Days, those were pretty the euphoric, falling-in-love type of to meet and to march. I take a fairly liberal influential. But, I guess Tago Mago was the first one I heard of their '70s records, thing that *Feels* was. It's more like, you stance on free speech. I was okay with it. fell in love a couple years ago, and now so I would put that one on the list. Let It seemed like there may have been some me think... I have a bad sense of time. you're in a relationship where you live agenda on Columbia's part to have him speak and make him look, well, expose him Maybe I should go through my iPod or

sort of helps. Because then, by the time

the fans are excited about the songs and

they have had some time to get used to

it comes out and by the time we tour,

together, and there are responsibilities and more consequences of growing up. Contrary to everyone thinking that our records are all about regressing to childhood, they're actually about growing up. RH: Your album was so highly anticipated it seemed that leaked tracks were springing up everywhere over the course of the last few months. Do you think that your fans hearing leaks before the actual release is

tapes from our shows.It's only going

first record up through Sung Tongs. We

went back and picked out different live

to be from 2000 to 2003, so from the

rights issues, so I thought it was a good opportunity to do that. We were on tour so I haven't even seen what was said and what was asked just beyond a few headlines in the newspaper. I didn't see anything controversial about him speaking from a

BW: Not really, because people have

been stepping away from Animal

Collective since the beginning; it's

for how ridiculous the guy can be. Also,

are kind of controlled, he rarely gets

in Iran or the Arab world where questions

confronted on domestic issues and human

personal standpoint. more harmful or helpful? RH: Does the band feel that Avey Tare BW: I don't really know. I guess there's and Panda Bear stepping away and doing nothing really harmful about it other their respective solo projects in between than the fact that people won't buy it, the release of *Feels* and the recording of Strawberry Jam added an extra creative but they're not going to buy it anyway if they're going to download it. They'll spark? download it anyway whenever it

And there's a Jarone record from Sweden called Sulrabe that came out in the early '70s that's been very important to us as well, so I'll go with those three. RH: If you could collaborate with any current band or solo artist in the world,

something. The Sparks record, #1 Song In

Heaven. That one is from the '70s -- '79,

maybe? That has been a big influence

on us especially on Noah (Panda Bear).

of watched the whole process and that

album took the whole idea of sample-

don't know if the rest of the public will

based music to a whole other level. I

who would it be? BW: We've been trying to collaborate with Madlib, the hip-hop producer for quite a while. At least, we've been trying to get him to re-mix a track for us or

sample us, or something. We would be

really psyched about that. He's difficult

man to get in touch with...he's always

releases. But, we have been waiting for that one to happen. - Taylor

super busy and putting out tons of

There were two aspects of it -two sides to it. The helpful aspect is obviously that the record may not be the most immediate thing, so sometimes a leak helps in terms of -- if your record is

becomes available.

a grower, if it takes repeated listens, that

not the first solo or side project that either of them have done. Creatively, what Noah did with Person Pitch was mind-blowing for everybody. We sort

judge by the cover

Cooler By The Lake Cooler By The Lake Rory Lake Presents

The Cover:

Your standard "band on a rooftop" shot. Big city buildings in the background (Is that Chicago?), band in the foreground. It looks like a pretty high production

value -- this is a CD & DVD combo, which seems like a bit much for a debut release from an artist on an independent label. The band members are pretty goofy looking.

But wait! Further inspection reveals the clever machinations of the irony squad. One band member appears to be wearing "Bubba Teeth." Two others sport mullet wigs. Pulled up socks, tucked in ugly clothes, and an outfit for a female member which looks like it came from Ms. Swan on MAD TV further confirm my suspicions.

The exploding message which uses the words "Rockumentary" and "kickass package" is the final nail in the coffin, as nobody has used the word Rockumentary in earnest since 1993. You want me to guess bad metal, but I know better. This is bad, tuneless indie-rock. Probably complete with an ironic cover of a Springsteen song.

The CD inside the cover:

Whoops. I was wrong; this is bad metal. Whether or not it's intentionally bad metal is irrelevant at this point, I just want it off my CD player and out of my house (and preferably out of the city of Durham). Bass guitar and bass drum are practically incognito. Hammy, throaty singing plagues the entirety of the album, but is nowhere more apparent than on the obligatory power ballad, here in the form of a duet.

The lead singer's growling combines with the comically shrill voice of the keyboardist to produce an un-listenable chorus from hell. Look for lots of Kirk Hammett-style hammeron and pull-off solos which last way



too long, all of it seemingly thrown together and mixed in the back of a speeding pickup truck.

Think of a bad '80s romantic comedy. (Were there any good ones?) Think of the scene where the couple is on a date and they decide to

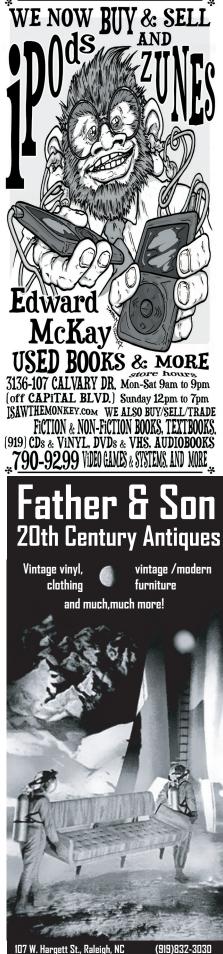
try someplace that neither of them has visited. It ends up being a poorly conceived caricature of a 'rough' dive bar. There are people with Mohawks (oh dear me!) and "biker"-looking dudes walking around looking tough. Cooler By The Lake sounds like the band that's playing at that bar. They went straight from an after school special about the dangers of metal and Dungeons and Dragons to this other ridiculous stereotype.

In the end, it's too crappy to be good metal, and not crappy/funny enough to be a good metal parody.

The Bonus DVD inside the cover:

Because I love you, gentle reader, I subjected myself to the painfully unentertaining "Feature-Length Rock-You-Mentary DVD." It definitely clears up the question of the artists' intent: this is 100% parody metal, which has never been done before. Terrible acting, cheap costumes, and more of the god-awful music from the CD plague this production from the start. The documentary follows the singer Rory from a pointless scene wandering in the desert, to a contretemps during a gig with Asia over space on the stage. There are lots of live performances to bewildered Chicagoans and people in on the joke. I found myself longing for the old Raleigh cable access show "Metal Method with Sledge." At this point, making fun of arena rock bands is the music humor equivalent of people dance like this."

"black people dance like this and white - Soto



Listen Up!

3 2 1 8 9 10 11

emember when you got to do those fun little genealogy trees in school, tracing the lines back and finding the forgotten name that comprised some tiny part of your DNA? Somewhere in that double helix was evidence that the smelly kid in class, who also happened to be the lunch money bully, was your third cousin twice removed. Hey, it gave you some rationale to attempt to make peace with the little bastard and keep your Hostess Cakes, right? Funny thing was, you shared this common origin, yet the final products, after being a few steps removed, were two completely distinct and unique individuals. Hell, you didn't even look remotely the same and there were peers you shared more corresponding traits with than this "relative."

Broken Social Scene is one of a handful of bands to establish a great indie rock "family tree." The Canadian super-group can have any variant of nineteen members working and performing on recordings at the same time. That large number of collaborating musicians has spawned a variety of solo acts and bands, from The Apostle of Hustle to The Weakerthans, with an iPod-pimping Leslie Feist somewhere in the middle.

Two bands that form significant branches on the Broken Social Scene tree are the Toronto-based Do Make Say Think, sharing members Charles Spearin and Ohad Benchetrit, and the Montreal band, Stars, whose members Torquill Campbell, Amy Millan, and Evan Cranley also play with the rock conglomerate. Despite these two acts being somewhat significantly intertwined, the recent recordings by Do make Say Think and Stars would never allow one to draw a conclusion as to their kindred project.

Do Make Say Think *You, You're A History In Rust* Constellation

Do Make Say Think released their fifth fulllength record, You, You're A History In Rust, back in February after coming off the road in support of Broken Social Scene. Now, some things need to be set straight first. Broken Social Scene didn't exactly "spawn" this band, they merely employ a couple of their members, as Do Make Say Think have been churning out records for over a decade.

Perhaps the reason this particular album is generating more buzz than their previous releases is due to the success of Broken Social Scene in 2006, but DMST are no newcomers. That being said, this particular listener is ignorant when it comes to most of their previous work. A few songs here and there have been taken in, but You, You're A History In Rust was my first exposure to them in terms of sitting down and listening to a full-length



album, and many others may encounter this same fate for the reasons mentioned above. Luckily for Do Make Say Think, they released one hell of a record.

Often I find myself assigning certain records a "seasonal" label. There are just certain albums that evoke the feelings often associated with a particular time of year. One of the last records that initiated such a feeling was Grizzly Bear's Yellow House, and I must say that Do Make Say Think brought out a very similar line of feeling here. Listening to this record, staring at the hardwood floors of my very old abode, unearthed thoughts of living in a different time and place.

You, You're A History In Rust is an album that is best experienced in the aggregate. When allowing the record to play uninterrupted, it moves seamlessly from track to track with a subtle grace that refuses to allow the listener to skip ahead. My past exposure to Do Make Say Think, although minimal, imparted me with the knowledge that they were a solely instrumental act. Two tracks in to their latest release and gone was that characteristic shared by earlier records."A with Living" features the vocal talents of Akron/Family and spans the course of nine minutes. The adding of the vocals on this track certainly enhances a tune that would feel very thin without them. As the Akron/Family sings "What they turn from green to brown/ As any child would tell/ what makes the sound/ What shakes the ground/ It is the greatest," I cannot help but be reminded of why this record sounds as seasonal to me as it does. "The Universe" follows and does its best to jar you out of the comfortable tone set early in the record with its blistering, frenzied guitars and bombastic percussion.

A personal highlight from the record is "Herstory of Glory". A meandering song that takes its minimalist beginnings to the brink of an exploding crescendo before snapping the listener back to a bare bones ending, it is a mentally exhausting tune. The astute layering and building of tension with no release has the ability to draw one to the front of his or her seat while never letting up. The band manages to reach the peak, but insists on

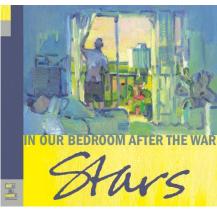
allowing the arrangement to fall back down the slippery slope they just guided you up.

The closing track for the record, "In Mind," also features vocals, which came as a shock. The vocals on the acoustic guitar and banjo centered "In Mind" play a diminished role compared to "A With Living," as their fuzzy and distorted delivery do not enter the song until the latter half of the track.

As the chilly nights of October and the impending cold seasons approach us, this record has made its way into my rotation when it was destined to. I may be over six months late listening to this album according to the release date, but for me, the timing is perfect.

Stars In Our Bedroom After the War Arts & Crafts

Love lost, love found, love attempting to be discovered in personal ads, and a disco-tinged



tune about a ghostly war veteran returning home -- over the span of one hour, Stars runs that aforementioned gamut in their new record, In Our Bedroom After the War. This latest release comes on the heels of Set Yourself on Fire, a record ripe with subtle anti-war sentiment.

In this way, In Our Bedroom after the War somewhat mimics its predecessor, but not to the point of seeming obnoxious. The formula that carried them on Set Yourself on Fire may not be enough to maintain their relevancy much longer, however.

Have you ever listened to a record and thought, "Which song was what?" It happened to me after completing a first listen to *In our Bedroom after the War*. There are a few standout tracks on the record that certainly make it worthy of recommendation and a listen, but it struck me as a band holding themselves back. *In our Bedroom after the War* opens with great promise. The first track, "The Beginning After the End," plays ping pong in your surround sound with layered synths and electronic percussion for over two minutes until the instrumental piece ends with a few

lines of spoken word in a feminine voice. Wait, didn't they start their last record off like this? A quick flip through the iTunes and a listen to "Your Ex-Lover is Dead" revealed much the same technique, only this time an old man reading spoken word. Oh, and it was at the beginning of the song, silly me. Enough nit picking, it's time to move on.

Moving on is exactly what happened and

in the process In Our Bedroom after the War proved itself to be a record that seemed to alternate between good and mediocre tracks for the entirety of the album. Its schizophrenia is best summarized in analyzing one song: "My Favourite Book." What begins as the next cheesy track heard on the latest Fox teen soap opera blossoms into a wonderful arrangement of horns wrapping around Amy Millan's gorgeous voice. Lyrically the epitome of a "happy relationship" song, it fits very well with the instrumental composition, but simultaneously continues the love theme present throughout the Stars catalog. Analogous to the structure of this song, this album seems to straddle the line between being clichéd or artful.

"The Ghost of Genova Heights" and "Window Bird" find Stars at their best. "The

Ghost of Genova Heights" tells the story of a deceased war veteran who returns home to haunt the girl he left behind. Despite such morbid overtones, the content is almost unnoticeable as disco beats and synthesizers back the song while Torquill Campbell does his best Prince impersonation. The falsetto notes as he hits the chorus made the song fun, while also making me ponder: Does he need to visit a urologist? And what the fuck happened to my copy of Beck's Midnite Vultures? "Window Bird" has Amy Millan on the lead on the highlight of this record. Her voice, although perhaps not the most unique in the industry, is still striking and warm. The song has a second highlight as it culminates in a very Beatles-esque orgy of guitar distortion and layered sound.

Now, back to the schizophrenia. No song is more clichéd on this record than "Personal." The track features Campbell and Millan singing alternating lines about placing and responding to a personal ad. I'm using the term "singing" loosely here, as it borders on spoken word over piano. Over the course of four minutes, the listener is told the story of two lonely souls placing personal ads, replying to these ads, never to follow through with the arranged meeting. It seems as though the two subjects in this song tend to hold themselves back as much as the band that is singing about them.

Stars didn't put out a "bad" record with this release, but rather an uneventful one. I know the old saying goes "if it ain't broke don't fix it," but that does not apply to music. Experimenting, pushing yourself and ignoring comfortable boundaries are all encouraged. Maybe next time.

- Taylor

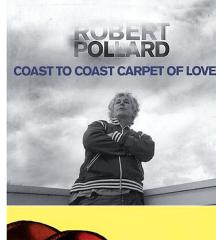
Robert Pollard

Coast To Coast Carpet of Love

and

Standard Gargoyle Decisions *Merge Records*

Well, it's 2007. I think at this point writing a review of anything by Pollard/Guided By Voices should be somewhat unnecessary. You know what you're getting by this point, or at least you should know. If you're already a fan of GbV, you should probably just stop





reading right now and go out and buy both of these records, if you already haven't, but you probably already have.

I'm not going to say anything you haven't heard before. Pollard might have had his detractors throughout the years, but even they can't deny that the man is at least consistent. GbV released some of the finest pop records of the 90's. You know going into one of his albums exactly what you're going to get and you nearly always get it. I mean, Bob Pollard, while not totally responsible, is at least partially to blame for my somewhat minuscule drinking problem. How many times in college did I hoist a Budweiser and shake it in the general direction of the speakers, blaring Bee Thousand or Alien Lanes, before chugging that fucker down? How many times did you? OK, you know what? Bob Pollard represents drunk music for drunk people, so, to do this proper justice, I'm going to go get drunk...

All right, it's been four hours now and I think I'm somewhat on my way. I went out to the bar for a while, talked to an ex-girlfriend and picked up a sixer on the way home. I'm much more in the mood for it now and Coast to Coast Carpet of Love fares the better for it. This is probably the best record Pollard has released in years. It's not as strong as the classic GbV releases, but it's at the very least consistent and that's what I think most fans



want. Coast to Coast Carpet of Love and Standard Gargoyle Decisions actually represent the dichotomy I feel between the "classic" Guided By Voices and the post *Under The Bushes, Under The Stars* GbV.I'm not sure I get Standard Gargoyle Decisions. Coast to Coast Carpet of Love has all of the hooks, drunken charm and brevity of old Guided By Voices standards in all of their Who/Beatles-worshipping glory. (How many times has that been said before in any GbV review?) Standard Gargoyle Decisions represents that point where Pollard lost me with his revitalized interest in 70's-ish psych-rock. Not that there's anything wrong with that, it's just not what I wanted to hear. I guess I'm a hypocrite; I continually harp on about how "the new album by so-andso shows no sign of progression over their last few records, blah, blah," but there are some who do something so well that you don't ever want them to change. Bob Pollard is one of those people to me. Several people I know have this extreme emotional attachment to

the classic GbV. As I stated earlier, they informed a lot of my ill-informed youth. I know this sounds really trite, but those albums represent a simpler time, probably colored by the pleasantly golden and halcyon haze of a drunken mind. I remember the first white belt I ever saw at a show. It was in Chapel Hill, the summer of '97, and it felt like something was over. The fashion kids were muscling in on my territory. The girls in their glasses and T-shirts at those summer house parties, well, they just became those girls in their glasses and T-shirts at those summer house parties blasting Bhangra big beat dance mixes or whatever, instead of Archers of Loaf. I guess it's still the same, but it felt a lot smaller, a lot more familiar then, not so big and hip and sort of put-on. That's what Coast To Coast Carpet of Love makes me think about, the last summer party I went to that didn't have a DJ "spinning records." Not that there's anything wrong with that. Hell, I probably listen to more of "that stuff" than anything else these days; as I've been told, I'm just grouchy and set

Eh, enough of this reactionary shit, lets get to the meat of the thing. If you're a Guided By Voices fan, you're going to buy both records. You can't help it. It's a part of you. If you're going to just buy one, I recommend Coast To Coast Carpet of Love. It has the catchiest songs and feels more like an older GbV record. Standard Gargoyle Decisions,



Open for Dinner:

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday from 5-11pm Friday& Saturday from 5-12pm

Bar Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday &

Friday & Saturday

until 2pm



RALEIGH 829,9222

while not all that bad, just falls a bit short in my opinion. At least, by simultaneously releasing two records that contain both sides of his musical personality, Bob Pollard, while twirling his microphone around and doing a scissor-kick, is throwing us all a can of Budweiser to chug in his name once more.

- Garrison

Sunset Rubdown Random Spirit Lover JagJaguwar

Random Spirit Lover begins with a sweet little guitar solo and a pounding piano, setting your expectations for a jaunty little sing along. Seconds pass, and things get dense, and stay that way. It's an album that's thick like a molasses and motor oil cocktail (a Molatorhito?). When



Sunset Rubdown started out, they (he) sounded like Sebadoh fronted by a Thanksgiving Day David Bowie balloon: all jaunty lo-fi overpowered by Spencer Krug's big emotive voice. Ever since that first album, Snake's Got A Leg, Sunset Rubdown have built intensely ornate additions on top of their foundation. Like Manhattan gargoyles on Lincoln's log cabin.

The whole affair is drowned in reverb; pools collect at your feet while you listen. So when all effects are dropped off, like 2/3 of the way through "Upon Your Leopard, Upon The End Of Your Feral Days," and all you hear is Krug, the drums and a gentle, unadorned, electric guitar strum, it breaks your heart, even more so when he accuses you of "kissing your captor's hands." "Upon Your Leopard..." is a fantastic, towering song that barrels toward and then past you, barely giving you time to catch up with it. Almost instinctively you sing along with Krug's "whoah oh ohs." They serve almost as reminder to Krug and the band that there are people listening to this record, and it'd be nice to include them in the games they're playing.

"She said 'My sails were flapping in the wind,' I said 'Can I use that in a song, she said 'I mean the end begins', I said 'I know, can I use that too?"There's something about conversations in songs that I absolutely love. It's a trick that must be used sparingly and only by someone who knows what he's doing. Clearly, Spencer Krug is one of those people. The previous quote is dropped in the middle of "The Taming Of The Hands That Came Back To Life," a rollicking little stomper of a song that is more of a narrative wherein the conversation is part of the story, whereas "Wicked/Winged Things" is a conversation between two people who've seen something they can't quite explain, like "50 Ways To Leave Your Lover" but completely different.

One thing that definitely sets this record apart from previous Sunset Rubdown albums is how this is not a solo side-project anymore. Sunset Rubdown is officially a band, and they're tight and virtousic. Guitarist Michael Doerkson's feverish solos bring to mind Television's Marquee Moon. Like that 30 year-old masterpiece, Doerkson's solos weave together lattice skyscrapers, unconnected and without avenues. They rest atop the purposefully queasy sea of the rest of the band. Krug's lyrics eventually pull up and take you around town in verbal gondolas.

So, after trying to avoid mentioning Krug's other full-time band, I find myself here mentioning Wolf Parade. Both bands have become leviathans, muscular and imposing figures with different compositions. Where Wolf Parade are built like a professional wrestler, Sunset Rubdown is more like one of those mountain climbers that doesn't use ropes: more sinew than huge biceps and forearms. Not that one is better than the other; the mountain climber can't pull off a convincing pile driver, and the wrestler can't, well, climb mountains. One thing is sure though, they both could kick my ass.

- Given

Radiohead-to-head

In Rainbows: "It's Awesome." "No, It's Amazing."

t seemed to me that In Rainbows was such an important album to so many people and symbolized a greater change in the music industry such that one opinion is not enough. Though both writers do in fact, love the album, the reasons why are vastly different, sometimes directly contradicting each other. (Notice the Kid A references in particular.) If Radiohead can release and sell an album on the Internet then I can publish two reviews of the same album. The world's gone mad.

-Becom

Radiohead *In Rainbows*

I paid 3 pounds. Not because I'm cheap, which I am, but primarily because its a download, the bitrate is slow, there's only 10 songs, and no artwork is included. Not even a cover. In principle - and I'm a principled man - I should've supported the band's visionary, envelope-pushing blah blah blah. The truth is, I entered 4 pounds and the site crashed on me, so I decided to deduct a pound for my trouble. Welcome to the digital frontier!

Its wholly unsettling to download albums without the tactile pleasure of a CD tray, an insert, lyrics sometimes -- a visual representation to couch the whole thing in a physical context. I grew up with vinyl, Michael Jackson lounging with a baby Bengal tiger on cheap, shiny black cardboard, which would then be hung on the wall and deciphered while the needle found its groove. He and the baby Bengal hung out with me each time we listened to the glory of "P.Y.T." and "Human Nature."Whenever I couldn't figure out why Billie Jean said he was the one, I'd look at Michael's reassuring grin and realize all was well. These days, iTunes gives us a Flashbased digital artwork "booklet" to fiddle with...a poor substitute, to be sure, but it's something to look at while we listen. Radiohead doesn't think we need any of that.So...what do we touch? What do we hang on the wall? Are there walls anymore? Is this thing even an album? What does the music look like? Is it a leak they're charging us for, or is it the real thing? The answer is YES. This is a real, honest-to-

god Radiohead album. It's brief, and the

first time you spin it, you might find it too

understated, maybe even unremarkable.

There is no "Creep" or "Fake Plastic Trees" or "Paranoid Android" or even a "Pyramid Song" to hang your hat on. This is not a record of singles. Like Kid A, it ebbs and flows. Unlike Kid A, it has no highlights. Like "Fake Plastic Trees," it's beautiful, unique, a moving confluence of melody and meaning. Unlike fake plastic trees, it grows on you. At first, In Rainbows sounds like a bunch of demos; sketches, touched lightly by Nigel Godrich's glowing E.T. fingers. But after awhile, you hear a sort of aural fractal — sounds getting deeper, resonating, echoing, turning in on themselves, revealing bigger themes, bigger tones, a big, singular, colorful,

If Radiohead can release and sell an album on the Internet then I can publish two reviews of the same album. The world's gone mad.

ever-expanding picture. Beautiful bits of puzzle with no box to work with. This is the beauty of this band — this is what Radiohead do. And we are fools to deconstruct it, but that is what we do.

They waste no time by shooting us into their orbit straight away with "15 Step" and "Bodysnatchers." In the former, Thom sidesteps the march of crunching beats, Jonny waltzes around him in the left channel, a quicker version of their pas de deux in "Scatterbrain" from the last record. Colin dives in with a short jumble of bass, just briefly, enough to remind you there's a band at work here. It becomes a speedy British bossa nova. Children cheer, Thom's voice echoes. Things veer away into something else. Chords modulate, the drums stop.

Jonny rips some chunky notes, cloaked in rust. Phil kicks in with some human rhythm, and Thom goes haywire. This is the way we remember them, back when the guitars sounded like guitars. It comes out of nowhere. Jonny rips strings out trying to keep up with Phil. Thom whines, howls.

"I've no idea what I am talking about!" he yelps. "I'm trapped in this body. I can't get out!" You're moving along with it all, head nodding furiously. Then, the noise winds down, stops. It's over before it began, and Nigel returns us into a gentle bed of humming tones.

A voice slides in, floating, like an airborne castrato. "Don't get any big ideas,"Thom intones over a gentle, plaintive strum. "They're not gonna happen." But the song is all big ideas, heavenly rays piercing banks of clouds. The strings sweep in, unnoticed, transforming into shimmering guitar and whistling Godrichisms. Thom's voice doubles, triples, multiplies into a glorious boy's choir, ending on a hymnal high. That's "Nude."

Phil starts into a trot, a steady clip, and Thom sighs approval. Jonny plays quick arpeggios, triplets rising and falling in varied chord progressions, joined by Ed's own watery arpeggios. This is "Arpeggios."

Then it's "All I Need," which is quite beautiful. "Faust ARP," a quick, gorgeous sweep. "Reckoner" — lovely.

And this is where I tune out. It's clear that despite the glowing sounds coming out of my speakers, Thom's overarching theme is one of alienation, loss, and confusion. Missed connections, letdowns, breakdowns in communication. This, also, is what Radiohead do. You hear the stunning, inventive musicality, the way it interlocks with Thom's vocalizations, and you might find hope settling in among the lines of despair. But you also might wonder if Thom will ever sing about anything else. You might wonder what Radiohead would be like with more interstellar bursts of universe-saving energy like "Airbag" and fewer bouts of inscrutable alienation as evidenced by virtually every track on In Rainbows. No other band has been as successful in crystallizing its alienation in these troubled times while throwing their syntax in the blender. But because we've become accustomed to Radiohead throwing everything else in the blender as well, maybe our expectations are out of whack.

At this point, I get the sense that In Rainbows is a series of pretty Radiohead songs with no standout to hold onto, with a huge, rocking B-side ("Bodysnatchers") wedged in to give the album some much-needed balls. I decide to remove "Bodysnatchers" and listen

to it again. (If there is no cohesive physical construct to this puppy, I can mess with it But something is missing. It's too calm, too slow, too one-note. "Bodysnatchers" goes back in. And while it remains an anomaly, it's a much needed one. Thom shrieks, with hogtied rage, a declaration that atomizes and floats like dust motes in the scattered rays of sunlight found in the rest of the album: IT'S unlocks it, and "Bodysnatchers" is that key

for me. It soon becomes my favorite song, shortly followed by the rest. Each song is thrown into new relief – instead of sounding vaguely conflicted and very pretty, the songs begin to come to life. Soon, all the songs seem to make small declarations. This is what good albums are supposed to do. They reveal glimpses of the big picture, whatever it is, and the rest of it is up to you to find. Radiohead has chosen to provide no guidance or comfort in terms of album art, and they leave it up to us to figure out how much we value what they do. So finally, we look to the music itself, and we each start from our own place. -Elvin

THE 21ST CENTURY, he says. I'M ALIVE.

Every inscrutable album has a key that

How many times in your life have you been able to name your own price for a product you were about to purchase? Obviuosly, because of how it was releases, it is imperative for me to talk about the way this album

Radiohead

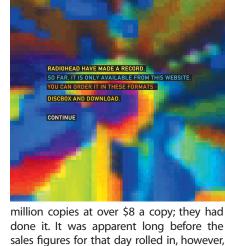
In Rainbows

however I please.)

merits of the music therein. On October 1st, Radiohead lead guitarist, Jonny Greenwood, made an announcement via the Internet that his label-less band would be releasing their seventh record entitled In Rainbows on October 10th. No matter where you read about this event or who you heard about it from, that announcement was always paired with one other essential piece of information; the record would be available for digital

was released in addition to addressing the

download on that day and the consumer could pay his or her self-determined price. The smile that crept across my face when hearing of this news was actually a mix of expressions, as my visible excitement about the release wrestled through my laugh lines to override the suspicious, "What are they up to?", inquisitive smirk that attempted to emerge. In pondering the ramifications this could have, it became apparent it was about more than just the music, and this was important. The exigency with which I spread my new found knowledge to friends was a bit ridiculous in retrospect, as it made the next ten days almost agonizing for myself and others. October 10th finally arrived and with it, In Rainbows, selling a rumored 1.2



that Radiohead had done something special. That was ascertained after one listen to In Rainbows. I made an interesting observation after my initial listen to *In Rainbows*. Other than

the two book-end tracks on the album, "15 Step" and "Videotape", gone were the heavy influence of electronic percussion and experimentation that was seen in the previous three recordings, especially Kid A and Amnesiac. In between the two were intricate string arrangements, amazing The outstanding drumming by Phil Selway and the aforementioned Colin bass lines make In Rainbows feel more akin to a live performance record than any Radiohead album to date. Yorke and the gang had hinted at taking a more minimalist approach to the record, and it was obvious they had done just that. "15 Step" opens up with hard hitting electronic percussion, while Yorke's all too familiar, yet distinctive, vocal style cuts

Greenwood bass lines of their entire catalog

through the beats before the introduction of a Jonny Greenwood guitar riff. As Yorke sings over a backing loop of sound effects sounding like swirling whispers and a pause from the bass and percussion sets in, a chorus of children let out cheers of elation, as if cheering on the band and their extraordinary beginning to their seventh record. "Bodysnatchers" follows the opener with distorted guitars at a breakneck pace reminiscent of their Bends period work Selway's drumming was immediately

noticeable on "Bodysnatchers", as is a return to more guitar-oriented work suited for using the talents of both Greenwood and O'Brien. "Nude", a Radiohead fan favorite formally known as "Big Ideas" that first appeared during the tour for the 1997 release of OK Computer, makes a shocking appearance on the record for the third track with a more ornate composition than its previous live performances. Lyrically, Yorke sets a melancholic tone as he opens with the lines "Don't get any big ideas, They're not gonna happen". The pessimism of the lyrics goes

almost unnoticed; they are overshadowed by the beauty of the arrangement and Yorke's haunting, heart wrenching delivery Displaying a crispness and clarity in his voice like never before, Yorke's meandering and soulful crooning hits peaks and valleys of his range effortlessly; the layering evokes the auditory imagery of a one-man chorus This was the first display of a technique that would reveal itself several more times throughout the record, as his voice acts as

Open 7 days a week. Serving food and drink from 4pm-2am half price appetizers from 4pm-7pm Monday thru Friday free wifi

guitar work by Ed O'Brien and Jonny

Greenwood, and some of the best Colin



Eating Contest! first Monday of every month

ww.theboroughraleigh.com

317 W. Morgan St. Suite 117, Raleigh 27603 (Dawson and Morgan, downtown) 919-832-8433

another vital instrument, bouncing from speaker to speaker in a manner dizzying to the senses. "Weird Fishes/Arpeggios" and "All I Need" follow on the record. "Weird Fishes/ Arpeggios", a song that made its appearance

on many of Radiohead's live shows from 2006, is an upbeat guitar and rhythm section driven piece. The song is also one of a few on the album that was clearly influenced by the classical training of, Jonny Greenwood, as his use of the ondes martenot on this track and orchestral arrangements on songs to follow would provide evidence. "All I Need",

rumored to be the among the final tracks recorded, is a fervent ballad with Yorke nearly whispering the line, "I am a moth/ Who just wants to share your light," over steady bass and synthesizers before the tune culminates in a jaw dropping wall of sound. From, "All I Need" through the end of the record could be the best six track sequence of Radiohead's catalog to date, with "Faust Arp" and "Reckoner" anchoring this impressive feat. "Faust Arp" opens with Yorke singing over a Beatles-esque string arrangement and the plucking of acoustic guitars. A song that could be as easily at home on Abbey Road as In Rainbows, "Faust Arp" is the most prolific and impressive display of orchestral arrangements on the record from Jonny Greenwood (a BBC resident composer). Almost as prodigious is the sheer volume of lyrical content on the song, as it is one of the most verbose on the album in barely over

The Eraser, just last year. "Reckoner" is such a track demonstrative of that reborn quality, as the falsetto of the lead singer takes several different forms over the course of five minutes. What was once a much "heavier" live track had become a very ethereal and stirring composition that left me floored after first listen. The emotion in Yorke's voice is transparent and what you

The melodic twists and turns that Yorke

takes the listener on are refreshing contrast

to the style he exhibited on his solo effort,

two minutes time.

see inside is simultaneously inspiring and dispiriting. The goal of writing a great song is that it makes people feel something and the conflict of emotions generated by the sublime arrangement and lyrical delivery of "Reckoner" does just that...twice. The ballad, "House of Cards", and guitar driven "Jigsaw Falling Into Place" continue the

effortless listen that is In Rainbows. "House of Cards" opens as Yorke's high pitched voice echoes in indecipherable bliss, faded in the back- drop of a Greenwood guitar riff before blossoming to the forefront while uttering the lines, "I don't wanna be your friend, I just wanna be your lover, No matter how it ends,

"Jigsaw Falling Into Place", formerly known as "Open Pick" during the 2006 tour, provides a quick turn around, as lush quitars and

No matter how it starts".

percussion dominate. "Jigsaw Falling Into Place" builds to a fever pitch, before the tension breaks, the guitars and steady Selway drumming become over shadowed by several loops of vocals, subsequently ending the song just as it appears to reach its climax. In Rainbows ends with the touching,

"Videotape", telling the story of someone both reminiscing and saying goodbye from beyond the grave. Or perhaps what they perceive the replaying of their life during their final judgment will be like when they pass away. The song itself is essentially Yorke on piano over a repetitive drumbeat that is eventually swallowed up by an electronic looped beat. The electronics begin to overshadow the conventional percussion, like a movie projector reel reaching its end, spinning over an over as the loose film snaps with each turn. Yorke serenades "This is my way of saying goodbye/ Because I can't do it face to face" after opening the tune with the line "When I'm at the Pearly Gates/ This will be on my videotape". In the lyrics, Yorke also makes reference to Mephistopholes, the name given to the devil in the Faust legend. The story of Faust has been re-told in various forms and by a host of authors from Marlowe to Goethe. In Goethe's rendition of the tale, readers follow the title character as he seeks the true meaning of life. He makes a deal with the devil, the conditions of which allow Mephistopholes to have his soul once he is shown true happiness. Unfortunately for the devil, the Lord saved Faust as a reward for his perseverance. Thomas Mann's Dr. Faustus is based on a similar theme, telling the story of a young composer who agrees to renounce the idea of finding love to obtain artistic success. With at least two Faust related songs on In Rainbows ("Videotape" and "Faust Arp"), one can't help but wonder how greatly the penning of this record was influenced by one of these classic literary works. (Ed. note: Or if, in fact, Yorke sold his soul to the Devil to achieve such talent and success.)

As the timing of Phil Selway's drums drifted lightly away into the end of the exquisite, "Videotape", an electronic loop fades the bang that was In Rainbows into a whimper. I considered whether Radiohead's experiment in record releases had garnered future freedom for their peers in "the business" from the Mephistopoles' of the record industry. Perhaps now, established artists can realize the option of self-releasing their record without a label and make the music they truly love rather than having to cave to the demands for commercialization to survive. Not only has Radiohead managed to release yet another masterpiece, they challenged the public to ponder what they thought *In* Rainbows was worth. Testing the free will of man doesn't always have to end tragically after all.

---- Taylor





Asheville, Athens, Atlanta,

Chapel Hill, Charlotte, Durham,

New York, Raleigh

The Haggard Heathen

Chronicles of Embattled Secularism

By Benton Lowry

Money troubles: we all have them from time to time. Even the most frugal and financially prudent individual will occasionally run low on funds, so it should come as no surprise that God, too, stands at the mercy of the free market. Actually, it seems like God has the most money troubles of anyone. You can't even flip through the channels without running across some of his friends imploring us to chip in a few bucks to help

Maybe God's just bad with money. I mean, the math in that book of his is pretty sketchy. And of course, all you have to do is read Job to see that Yahweh has a pretty serious gambling problem too. But then, maybe he's just struggling with a hefty child support payment ("look Mary, I just don't have it this month!") Regardless of the explanation, I've always had a tough time understanding why a supernatural being that supposedly has the ability to give me anything I ask for has to press-gang his followers into begging me for my pocket

My wife and I recently moved from a tiny apartment in North Raleigh into a more spacious duplex in the area around NCSU. As with any move, ours was fraught with difficulty and frustration, not the least of which was finding lots more furniture to fill up all of that extra square footage. I'm sure that some people love furniture shopping, but those people probably aren't as desperately poor as I am. I won't be popping in to my nearest Ethan Allen showroom to purchase a new living room set, or even into my nearest Rooms-To-Go branch, or even Crazy Willie's Deep Discount Factory Direct Bright Neon Signage Everything Must Go Today Only Okay Maybe Tomorrow Too 72 Months Same As Cash Furniture and Crystal Meth Emporium for that matter.

When I need furniture, I hit the thrift

store circuit. Now, I can't help but feel slightly uncomfortable shopping at many of these establishments considering that they support and promote an overtly Christian agenda, but the only other place that has furniture in my price range is the curb on trash day. I'm willing to undertake a little hypocrisy to score a used sofa that hasn't been urinated on by all of the neighborhood dogs.

As I was pulling into the parking lot in front of one of Raleigh's many thrift stores, I noticed a minivan laden with youngsters parking just a few spaces away. Because of my general aversion to children, I tried to avoid the throng of them that seemed to be pouring out of said minivan by crossing over to another row of spaces. My attempt at escape was foiled by a pair of spunky little girls, who bravely dodged their way through both parked and moving cars to intercept me before I could get inside the shop.

"Excuse me sir!" One little girl called up to me from behind the empty mason jar held in her outstretched hand. "Will you make a donation to help our church group?" I resisted the temptation to tell her what I thought of her "church group" (which would almost certainly have taught her a couple of new words), and instead just told her "absolutely not" as I sidestepped her and her friend on my way into the store.

I didn't find any of the pieces I was looking for in the crowded shop, so I was already in a bad mood as a second pair of prepubescent panhandlers accosted me on my way out.

"Excuse me sir!" I didn't even break my stride as I passed right between them and made a bee line for the minivan from which these children had emerged. There in the driver's seat was a bloated modern day Fagin, watching over her troupe of urchins and shoveling hot-fries into her mouth. She must have thought herself to be rather well camouflaged in the crowded parking lot,

because she was downright shocked when I leaned into her window.

"What the fuck is wrong with you?" I asked her. As she rummaged for her pepper spray (which she was luckily unable to find), I continued, "Hasn't it occurred to you that sending a bunch of young children out to hassle strangers for money might not be all that safe or responsible?" She shot me a wild-eyed stare.

"They're doing God's work! He's gonna look after them!" she proclaimed.

"Oh!" I exclaimed, "I didn't realize that God had branched out from pestilence and genocide into unlicensed panhandling and exploitative child labor." Her cheez-stained mouth hung agape for a moment before her Christly indignation returned.

"Get ye behind me Satan!" she shrieked (seriously), to which I couldn't help but reply.

"Sorry sugar, I'm not into that kind of thing." I know it was a cheap shot but it was just too easy to pass up.

"AAAAAAH!" she screamed back at me, then a hasty "Y'ALL GET BACK IN THE CAR!" to her minions. I chuckled as I walked away.

I know that there was no real victory there. I didn't convince that crazy old bat of anything, I just pissed her off a little bit more than she pissed me off. Oh well, at least those kids got to come in out of the heat for a while. Maybe she even shared some of her hot-fries with them. Of course, maybe she was right and those kids were doing God's work.

I guess that if his churches don't have to pay taxes, then he might be exempt from child labor laws too. Sometimes I wonder why God doesn't just go and get an honest job like the rest of us, but then again with the resume that he's got I probably wouldn't hire him either.

Since I moved downtown I've had the chance to meet a lot of bums, but none of them even come close to the biggest bum of all.



919-682-2594

hatchet horoscopes

Aries (March 21 - April 19)

A butterfly flaps its wings in China, setting off a series of events that leads to your purchase of a new blender to replace the one you burned up making Strawberry Peach Kiss daiquiris.

Taurus (April 20 - May 21)

The Q3 final reports are in, and word is you're still destined to fail. I'm seeing signs of a warming trend, however, and if it continues, I'll consider upgrading your status to "Questionable."

Gemini (May 22 - June 20)

Your ongoing campaign to insert yourself permanently into the Matrix encounters a snag when your ISP shuts you down for excessive sharing. Apparently, you overlooked the "TMI" clause in your user agreement.

Cancer (June 21 - July 23)

The way you tear into a can of sardines can only be described as a beautiful act of violence. The Jaws of Life have got nothing on you.

Leo (July 24 - August 23)

Who says girls can't pee in urinals? You've come a long way, baby.

Virgo (August 24 - September 23)

Your body is the only physical manifestation you have. Keep treating it like that, and you'll be rid of it in no time.

Libra (September 24 - October 23)

Dancing with death and flirting with disaster are not exactly what your therapist had in mind when she suggested that you work on your social skills.

Scorpio (October 24 - November 22)

Ok, so you finally made Employee of the Month. Good for you. The question is: what are you going to do with that free carwash? Weigh your options carefully, my friend.

Sagittarius (November 23 - December 21)

Someone needs to revive "erstwhile" into the vernacular. That someone is you.

Capricorn (December 22 - January 20)

Terminal velocity for a human being in free-fall is approximately 120mph. You can exceed that by a factor of two or more if you tuck your arms and quit whimpering. If this information seems irrelevant, just wait a week or two. You'll figure it out eventually.

Aquarius (January 21 - February 19)

There will come a time in your life when, early in the morning, you're walking on the deck of a U.S. Navy vessel of war. You have a nasty head cold, and as you round the corner, one of the long-range cannons goes off. The shock wave completely evacuates your sinus cavity. That time, however, is in the distant future. For this month, you should just take it easy. Nothing of consequence will happen.

Pisces (February 20 - March 20)

The fish in the supermarket fall silent as you approach. They've probably been talking about you.



919.833.4559

For the best Tattooing and Piercing experience in Raleigh

Find us on the 1200 block of Hillsborough St.

Between Ashe Ave. & Morgan St.

- Health Department Certified
- Appointments, Walk-ins Welcome
- Clean, Comfortable Environment



919.834.8055

