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Steve

The NicePaper
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Stop! Hey! What's That Sound?

Probably Boneyard.

by Steve Dubois

Just weekend's Cactus Jam at the Church House Inn's outdoor funhouse may or may not have saved the local alternative/original music scene. By judging from the club's record breaking attendance I can safely say that the "scene" is alive and well.

All cold and totalled 2,000 zealots filed into the Red Brick Canyon, a fenced-in urban Woodstock, to fill up on live, blowin' in the wind music and cold, cold beer.

Every homeband played with their pride on their sleeves and helped to prove that the point was always and has been the music and that the cutting edge has become so dull that it can't even slice through the corporate red tape that it helped promulgate. Rockers without riders, scruples, or major label support made enough noise under the stars to be heard from Foun­

tain Street to Haven Inn.

The curious Providence Police force arrived each night fascinationably dressed in both brown and white shirts to see just how everyone was having so much fun without breaking any existing laws. There sure was some unlucky ranting and chanting and Loophole City last weekend in Victor Brown's concrete jungle, I can tell you. Some points of interest:

*Slagge sat in the dunking booth

*Boneyard and Rash payed far and beyond their appointed call of duty and proved that rock and roll is a breeding pond for stand-up comics

*Victor, giving Meltdown the bum's rush with a harmless, swinging, samurai stick display

*Nick Yogi's "Rockin' in the Free World" as the festival's anthem (Hats off to Dan Lilly of Tyger Tyger for singing it twice on Saturday — ed.)

*Gail Greenwood's beards. "I sewed them into my costume."

*Christmas, unannounced in any of the papers, played the Church House event, and almost didn't make it to their rounds at AS220, because some guy in a Buick with Massachusetts plates (of course) blocked the band's van. The vehicle in question was moved, and more than one adversity was conquered last weekend at the Church House Inn.

Agitation? What Agitation?

Not here, amigo. Just chill out and watch the bands.

by Cassandra Pavlas

The sad part was, not as many people realized it at the same time "Save the Scene" was happening. Chris Adams had assembled a won­

derfully imaginative weekend of film, music and mayhem at AS220. Friday, the Wish started off with some pretty 12-string tune-taming, plying their array of pop-singin' minor key melancholia which was both crisp and clean. Keep an eye out for this trio, and meanwhile, find their cassette, Through the Ice, at fine record shops near you.

Kevin Fallon rescued a rocky Cousin Doppler set marred by technical problems (borrowed drummer, bad cords). Fallon, who could doubtless play a clenchedwell, flipped from fiddle to lap steel with his usual cocked-smile aplomb, providing a nice extra folky sound to Phil Maigret's vox. Fig. Alright. The Frogs' Kevin Sullivan loved 'em; I liked them a lot, too, I thought I would never know where to look onstage. Between host Chris Farfisa, Dave England's still razin-sharp chord cuts, Rick's upturned bass (note: three gigs in one night, Clea was duly impressed) (so was I — ed.) and Paige's drum cascade and extended big horn solos, I wish it lasted longer. More to come, I hope. Dave and Alec of What Now next showed that their abundant talents haven't abated, either, as they played an incredibly tight, slick and quick set whose only shortcoming was its brevity. If you haven't seen them in a while, then may you be an idiot. Meanwhile, somewhere in the evening, someone gave dialogues while someone else danced around in a pink tutu. The Lercy Hoke Band conjured up nightmarish images tantamount only to reading Lovecraft in a creaky old house, alone, in a rainstorm, to close the evening and send everyone home looking over their shoulders. Not to be overlooked was the film by Russ Pedro, whose ability to imbue a Ken doll with a hilarious non­

plussed look actually created physical pain from splitting a gut. Only at AS.

Saturday's highlights were equally captivating, as Miracle Legionnaire Dave McCaffrey teamed up with KAOS boys Cummins and Knoop for an Ein­

stürzende tribute. It was Raving, and very, very much better than the last KAOS gig I saw; Rick Menke, from Velvet Crush, after a brief sermon, launched into a Westerbergian chinga-chinga set. If you missed Crush opening for The Bread at Ty's doomed Charles Street bash, make sure you see them next time.

I still wonder why a whole lot more hasn't been written about Christmas (though MC promised a story soon). Their set was magnificent. To say any­

thing else wouldn't even come close. The diva's dress closed the Agitation Free Zone with another strong set which had the slightly diminished crowd bobbing and smiling, as if they were being let in on a neat little secret. Unfortunately, they're leaving town for the west coast, to catch their last show this Saturday.

All in all, a wildly diverse, sometimes joyous, sometimes dangerous weekend. Kudos to Chris — let's do it again sometime.