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SPOKE(a)N(e)

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We do our best to make sure all items are accurate and complete, if you notice a mistake, let us know and we will do our best to rectify the error.

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W R I T T E N

Hello Tyson-

I'm traveling in N'Awlins for Mardi Gras. However, a couple of my customers were kind enough to send the humorous article on Bob and 4,000 Holes.

Bob's memory is a bit suspect on a great many issues. One of these issues is him consistently telling customers, publications that he's closing, in order to get a free puff piece.....he's done a new twist, he's then recruited people to refute the same freebie gaining more exposure, and now a piece to refute the piece he created!

However, this isn't about that.

One of the largest myths is his recollection of the music scene when he started 4,000 Holes.

At that time the local RECORD STORES which is what he started at consisted of NOT JUST Little Nells.

There were Campbells and Ambers and Julie Smith from Mirage Records & Tapes had Chameleon.... and others...as well as a place called Ray's!

I bring up Ray's because Ray's is in fact the longest standing music store in Spokane at this time. Bob forgets this. He also forgets that Recorded Memories, my business was started prior to his.

So, if you'd like to congratulate a local proprietor, fantastic! I think you should interview Ray Spanjer from Ray's 747-5449!

We excell at customer service, special orders, music knowledge.and more importantly we don't embellish our accomplishments at the expense of others.

Sincerely,

Richard Terzieff

Recorded Memories

SPOKE(a)N(e) Magazine would like to take a moment to thank Mr. Terzieff for taking the time to send us a letter. We chose to print this one to show that differences in thought are welcome here at SPOKE(a)N(e). If you've got something that you don't like in the magazine, let us know. We're open minded.

That said, we'd like to touch on a few of the concerns addressed. While one can argue the quality of Bob's opinions and memories on and of the record store scene in Spokane in the late 80s, they are just that, his opinions and memories. For the sake of clarity, according to the IRS, Ray's first opened for business in 1987. Recorded Memories opened in 1988, and 4000 Holes opened in 1989. Ray's is still in business and is the oldest standing record store in Spokane. We don't disagree that there is certainly something to be said for that.

The reason SPOKE(a)N(e) loved the idea of a profile piece (not, in fact a puff piece as indicated) on Bob and 4000 Holes, is that we feel 4000 Holes has become a Spokane icon. Regardless of age or any other factors, many people think of 4000 Holes first when they think of independent Spokane record stores. We're among them. That certainly doesn't indicate that we think anything negative about the customer service or quality of other local proprietors. We salute anyone and everyone doing their own thing and providing a service to the Spokane community.

No one but Bob himself can say for sure whether or not the store will be able to weather the storm of declining music purchasing from physical stores, the current economic climate, and rising costs on all ends. So we here at SPOKE(a)N(e) are of the mind to take him at his word.

Once again, thank you to Mr. Terzieff. We would love it if the citizens of Spokane would continue to write us when they see something they don't agree with, see something they love, or just to say hi. We like the feedback.

Tyson Habein
tyson@yellowhousephoto.com



T

In several religions and cultures around the world, the number three is considered holy. There's the Holy Trinity, there's the three levels of peace, there's the fact that Hindu gods have three times the number of arms compared to mortals, and the Om from Buddhism just happens to look a little like a three.

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While there's certainly nothing holy about SPOKE(a)N(e) Magazine, this issue is a bit of an important one for us. It contains a new page size (11x14, in case you were concerned). That should give our stories and our images a little more room to breathe and from a design perspective, it will open up a few more options. I think the third issue of a publication is important for other reasons as well. It shows that there's some level of sustainability to it. It shows that it's not entirely a flash in the pan. If issue one was us testing the waters, and issue two was us getting our sea legs, issue three is all about heading out into the big waves and checking out the view off the starboard side (though I don't really know which side that is).

R

More importantly than technical specifications, or sea-going metaphors, is that this is our first issue specifically targeted in its content. This is the music issue. And as the cover said, this one goes to eleven. Outside of our regular feature "First Friday Art Walk," we cover only music. From a profile on local writer/host/multi-media maestro Isamu Jordan to a piece on KYRS's own Bob Rice to a local concert review and photo editorial, we've got it covered this month.

N

This is your music, Spokane. Enjoy it.

This issue also marks us hitting the point of having twice the number of staff from the first issue. That's right, besides myself, and copy editor/writer Sara Habein, we now have two staff writers/photographers. Lloyd N. Phillips and Alex Toney are now helping us generate content for this beast, which we appreciate more than they can know. And imagine, like Sara and me, they're doing it for free. If everyone could refrain from telling them that other publications have money and actually pay their writers and photographers, that would be great.

I

We didn't start out planning for this to be our music issue. It just kind of happened. We started putting together the stories and profiles that we wanted and lo and behold, it was a music issue. That's great. As we come out of (we hope) this harsh winter, what better to sound our arrival into the better seasons but local music. There's a lot of it around. It seems that every block has someone strumming a guitar or tickling the ivories. And some of those folks even go out and play for others. We appreciate those people who get up on the stage and open themselves up for our enjoyment via song. That's who this one's for: the people who are singing, strumming, or humming. Keep it up. It's the soundtrack of Spokane. Well, that and perhaps the sound of dolphins off the starboard side.

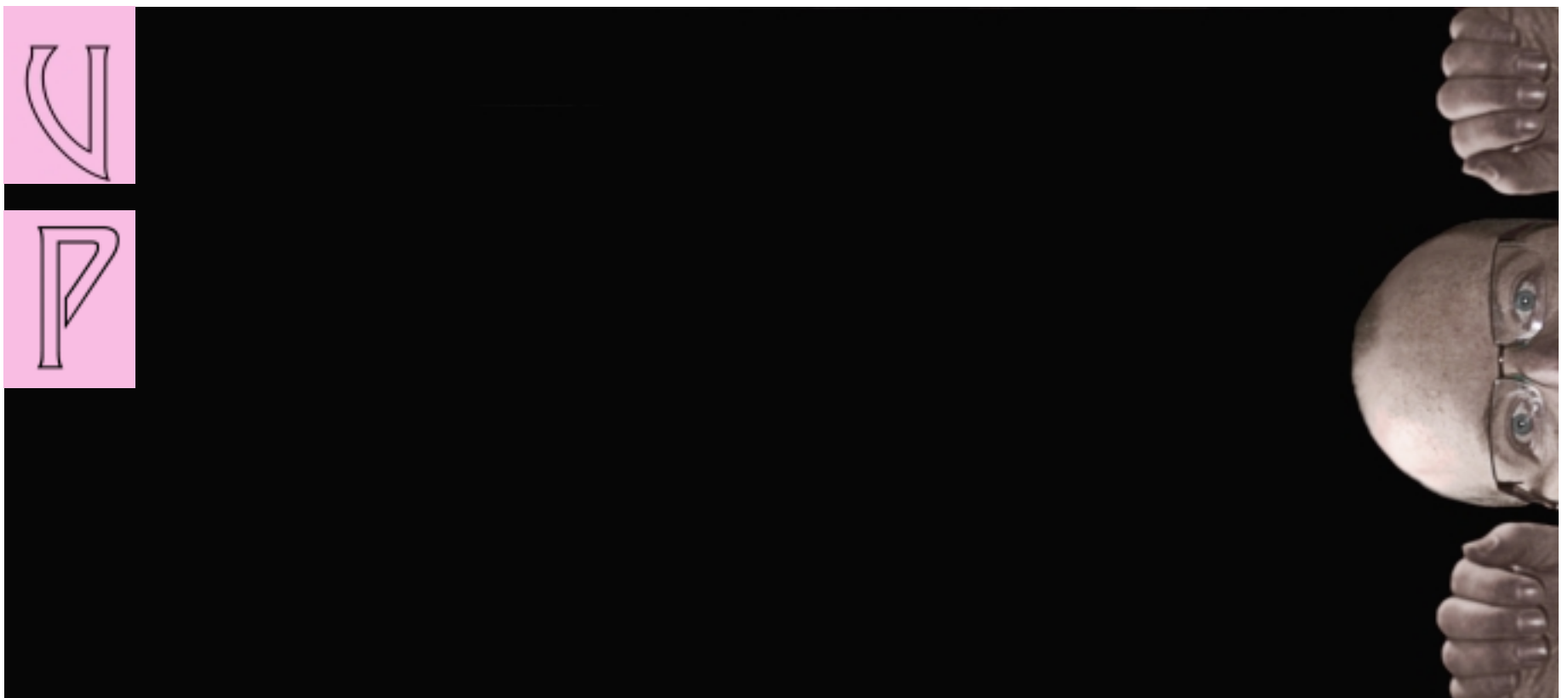
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P.S. On the back page of this issue, there is a SPOKE(a)N(e) poster. If you like the magazine, feel free to print and hang this poster wherever appropriate. Just select "scale to fit" when printing.

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Isamu Jordan is the man who brings you the music, or at least tells you where it is. As long as I've lived in Spokane, Jordan has been writing about the local music scene in one capacity or another. He regularly tells the citizens of Spokane where the local show is going down, and why you should be there to see it. When he says something's going to go off, he's almost never wrong.

While other music writers may just put in this town, hoping to go somewhere bigger and better, Jordan is all about the local scene. He writes about the musicians in and around Spokane with the respect that they deserve and others often neglect to give them. He'll tell you who's writing the great stuff, who's putting on the best stage show, and who's about to blow up. And he'll do it from several places. Via two radio shows and while writing for three publications, Jordan often seems omnipresent.

It's not your regularly scheduled programming, it's the Som Show. Tune in.

The basics: Name, age, occupation, where you're from, and if it's Spokane, what keeps you here?

Isamu Jordan

33

Freelance Multimedia Journalist

From Spokane. What keeps me here: You can walk to any place you need to go to, and you're about 4 and a half people away from knowing every one in town.

How did you get into music writing?

As a freshman in high school, I was a founding member of the *Spokesman-Review's* Our Generation teen page. My very first story was a Q&A with Mr. Baby Got Back himself, Sir Mix-A-Lot, who was the first major rap concert to come to Spokane. I got to hang out backstage and eat pizza with him before the show - front row seats at the concert, I got to hang out with his whole posse at the afterparty... I figured, if you can get paid to party with rock stars, I want in.

So, the *Spokesman's* arts and entertainment weekly, 7, went away not too terribly long ago. You seemed to jump right into freelancing all over the place. You're currently writing for the *Spokesman*, *The Inlander*, and *Spokane Metro Magazine*. Anywhere else we can read you stuff?

You can read my stuff in *The Spokesman-Review*, *The Inlander*, *Spokane Metro Magazine*, and *The Som Show* (thesomshow.com) and I'm interested in exploring all aspects of media, including radio, TV, print, and of course online. I host two shows on KYRS (89.9 and 92.3 FM) - The Dark Park bi-monthly on Fridays from 8-10 p.m, and cohost Battlestar Eclectica bi-monthly on Sunday's from 8-10 p.m.

Tell us about *The Som Show*. What sort of long term goals do you have for that?

The Som Show (thesomshow.com) is a multimedia music Web site I created. It's Spokane's Online Music Show. On it you'll find events listings, artist profiles, mp3s, live video and audio, interviews, a blog and more. It's basically my way to continue to hold the megaphone for the local music community. Eventually I'd like to have my own channel, but for now, a show will do.

So why local music? So many folks dream about writing the *Spin/Rolling Stone* pieces on the biggest band in the world at the moment. You seem lovingly entrenched in the local scene.

I'm from Spokane. Born and raised. I love Spokane. I live Spokane. I remember about a decade ago, being at The B-Side and watching James Pants deejay, with like 40 other people on a Thursday night. We'd all be having a blast, dancing and swearing that James (who then went by the name Brainchild) was easily a world-class level DJ. Now he's on a world tour. To this day, one of the best James Pants shows on the planet is likely on a Wednesday night in front of 85 people at The Baby Bar. A lot of people complain about what Spokane lacks in culture. They're missing out.

Who is the local musician you're most excited about right now?

I'm really happy for James Pants. He's worked very hard, he's really talented, and he's just a really good person. He deserves every bit of recognition he's getting and I can't wait to see him play Sasquatch. Also, Karli Fairbanks never ceases to amaze me. Everything she touches sprouts wings. The fuse is lit for Mon Cheri to blow up.

What do you like about the Spokane creative community and music scene, and what would you like to see more of?

I love that Spokane is a community. People are supportive. When you go to shows, you see other musicians in the audience. The down side of that is sometimes it feels like the audience is made up entirely of musicians. I wish there were more people actively seeking out live music.

And we can't let you get away without the classic music top five list. Top five favorite albums of all time:

Radiohead, "OK Computer"

Wu-Tang Clan, "Wu-Tang Forever"

Donald Byrd, "A New Perspective,"

J Dilla, "Donuts"

Sly and the Family Stone, "Anthology"

-Photos and Interview by Tyson Habein



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Photo by Alex Toney

Jazzy pop. Pop influenced post-modern swing. Mon Cheri is one of those bands that defies most classifications. Let's just classify it as good. That's all you need to know. If you go to a Mon Cheri show, you'll likely see the band on stage smiling. They like what they do, and it shows. The way they play music, you know they're happy to be there. And if you're like most everyone who goes to a Mon Cheri show, you'll be happy you're there as well.

--Tyson Habern



Photo by Alex Toney



Photo by Tyson Habein

Names:

Kurt Olson (Bass)
Brandon Vasquez (Drums)
Wayne Patrick (Vocals/Guitar)
Caroline Francis (Vocals)

What are your musical influences?

Rufus Wainright
The Beatles
Nat King Cole
BB King

What is the general process of writing songs?

Wayne usually wakes up with a song in his head and calls up Caroline to come up with harmonies. Kurt and Brandon usually take little to no instruction to accomplish the song.

What is the goal with your music? Do you plan doing it professionally?

We don't plan on quitting our jobs and touring for 3 months, but being on the road has proven to be a great experience for us. The group is great around each other.

What is your favorite venue?

Caterina Winery. The energy of the crowd was great. It was probably one of our best shows.

Where can we hear you?

www.myspace.com/moncheriband
We're having a CD release party on April 25th at the Caterina Winery for our self titled CD, *Mon Cheri*.

-Interview by Alex Toney



Photo by Tyson Habein



Photo by Alex Toney

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Spokane's Bob Rice is one busy person. To radio listeners around the world, he's known as 'Crossroads' Bob; to those here at home he's a well-known and gifted musician, a multi-instrumentalist with 35 years experience in the business who at one time played in 5 different bands. He's also a professional photographer and instructor, and one who has given his time through fundraisers and other help to his fellow musicians. And through it all, he still manages his role as a family man to his wife of eight years, Rhonda, daughter Courtney and their cats.

"I used to juggle while walking the tight rope for Mr. Ringling back in the day," he jokes in an e-mail about how he balances his time. "My real answer very creatively!"

Rice was born in Columbus Ohio in 1959, the son of military parents. "My father was a pilot in the Air Force, flew KC-135's and did a couple of tours of duty in Vietnam." As with many military families, they moved around and eventually settled in Cheney.

The young Rice would develop an interest in both photography and -- to his parent's horror -- mini-bikes. His first camera was a Brownie box camera. "I sold greeting cards door-to-door to buy that first camera back in the 60's," he says. "We lived on an airbase and those families are very supportive." His parents believed riding mini-bikes was too dangerous, so Rice shot pictures of his buddies riding theirs.

A career as a professional photographer began in 1990, after attending classes at Spokane Falls Community College. He'd returned to Spokane from Nashville with the idea of moving on, but that didn't happen.

"When I was on the road, I fell in love with photography," he reflects. "One day I decided that I wasn't going to keep moving and I got tired of partying; so I decided to stay put [in Spokane]. I'd get up and just go photograph." Eventually he ran into an old friend, local photographer Rick Singer, who looked at his work and encouraged the budding pro to enroll in classes at SFCC. Rice points out, "As far as photographic training goes, the program at Spokane Falls Community College was rated number three in the nation."

Today, in addition to operating Bob Rice Photography (www.bobricephotography.org), he's teaching photographic skills to others. For 11 years, he's been instructing classes at the Corbin Art Center through the Spokane Parks and Recreation Department and also teaches at the Women's Hearth, a division of the Transitional Living Center & Educare program.

Musically, Rice currently plays bass for both Dead Man's Pants and Mosaic, although he once performed with 5 different bands. He is also a talented multi-instrumentalist, playing piano, guitar, tuba and bouzouki, a Greek instrument similar to a mandolin. It began with the piano: "Six years of lessons from the same teacher who taught my mother," he says. From there, he picked up the guitar while in Junior High. "I also wanted to play brass in the school music programs, but I had braces. So I played clarinet for four or five years, and once the braces came off I played the tuba, which was the only brass position open at that time."

"When I was a freshman, I wanted to join this band out in Cheney, but they already had a guitarist. They suggested that I play bass," he recalls of his first band, Angel. Since then, Rice logged time in: Midnight, a piano/bass/drum trio that played everything from Carole King to Heart; a hair-metal band called Alibi; a duo with guitarist Sam Endress called Sam and Bob; Pointed Sticks [not the band from Vancouver BC] with guitarist/steel guitarist Hidde Hanenburg now of The Dearly Departed.

Dead Man's Pants (www.deadmanspants.com) describe themselves as, "a quartet of aging hippies that play country blues, folk, roots, rock, blue grass and jug band [music]." They band began in the Spring of 2001 as a trio and later added the Northwest music veteran Alan Fisher. Of his other band, Mosaic, a project formed 6 years ago with ex-Doc Rocket guitarist Martin Bond, Rice says they were originally a duo for 2 years, before trying different drummers and eventually finding Seth Holder. Rice also managed the now defunct Eucalyptus Records during the late 70s and Early 80s.

'Crossroads Bob' came about almost by accident.



KYRS-LP, known also as Thin Air Community Radio, began as an idea with Lupito Flores, the current station manager, when someone suggested the need for a different radio station. "I wanted to be involved, although the idea of the station stood in the works for awhile," Rice says. Flores had seen the need for broader, unbiased media coverage and when he learned that the FCC was opening up airspace for a low-powered, 100-watt FM station he decided to act.

In 2003, they were granted a license and raised funds to purchase equipment. Flores also found parts of two towers, and a local ironworkers union donated labor to build the 120-foot tower. In October of that year, The Prometheus Radio Project, a Philadelphia based non-profit active in building the low power community radio movement held a station 'barnraising,' which drew some 100 volunteers from around the country. KYRS-LP was Prometheus' fourth such project, and they built the station inside donated space at the downtown Spokane Community Building, helped raise the tower, and train those taking part in the station operations and programming. On the 26th of October, they were on the air.

By coincidence, Rice one day acquired a new next door neighbor. He turned out to be his old friend Flores. They talked and Rice's show 'Crossroads' debuted on December 17th, one of two shows on at the time.

"I had zero training," Rice admits, but 'Crossroads Bob' can still be heard today and he boasts the largest audience of any KYRS program. Streamed over www.KYRS.org, his live program can be heard all over the world, Sundays from 1-3 pm Pacific Time and over local airwaves at both 89.9 and 92.3 FM.

"'Crossroads' started out as strictly an all-acoustic show. I started adding the live guests about one or one-and-a-half years ago, and I'm now trying to put my focus on new independent artists." But not all the guests (which have included Tamara Lewis of Seattle, Matt Palka of Ohio, locals 6 Foot Swing, Hot Club of Spokane and Hannah Reader) have been live or even up-and-coming. There have also been phone interviews with Roger Clyne of Roger Clyne and the Peacemakers and more recently, Alan White of Yes. Nor is he limiting the live guests to up-and-coming indie artists as, he says, he'd like to also be more involved with established acts coming to the Spokane area. He also hopes to some day have his own Internet-only based radio station.

Today, Rice is resting at home as he prepares for his Sunday broadcast with Spokane's The DBC Band on March 15th. But is he really resting? From the looks of his office, probably not. Bob Rice is one busy person.

-Photos and Text by Lloyd N. Phillips

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Great live music should make your heart swell, your breath catch and question why it is you never learned to play or sing. And at a minimum, it should make you wonder when these musicians next spin through town because you know you'll have another great night out when they do.

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I'm not entrenched in the local music scene. I have a passing knowledge of who sounds like what, and I get terribly cranky when I plunk down my dollars on a rare night out, only to hear something substandard. The last thing I want to be thinking is *I could have gone to a movie with this ten bucks.*

O

So with a cautious optimism, I stepped into Empyrean's back room to hear Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, Kevin Long, and Blind Pilot. Straight away, my concerns vanished.

W

If Damien Rice and Tom Higgenson [from Plain White T's] threw their vocal genes together, what might come out is something like Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's Tyson Motsenbocker. Both captivating and melancholy, the band played songs which stab the heart in that good, freeing way. They made me regret I'd arrived late, only able to hear just a sample of their well-crafted sound.

With the crowd warmed-up and happy, Kevin Long sat with his acoustic guitar and a mix of songs old and new. Writing tales of rejection, escape and complicated love, Long took the open mic-style, one-man-show to a more practiced level. Often singing directly to the subjects of his songs, he displayed care for how the music unfolded, rather than use it as an excuse to publically dump feelings.

When he noted that his set had become "dark," I thought of a conversation I once had with a male friend regarding break-up songs. My friend pointed out that there are more songs where a woman rails against how someone's done her wrong, how the fault lies with the other person. He wondered why instead the men tend to blame themselves. Never one to shy away from a music challenge, I told him I'd find those male accusatory examples. With lines like "*Find yourself another heart to break,*" Long might have more than one song for my ongoing list.

Portland's Blind Pilot closed the night with a great assortment of instruments, pitch-perfect harmonies and an energy that kept the audience ablaze. At one point, someone called out, "More banjo please!" Kati Claborn put a hand to her instrument and laughed. "You don't hear that too often," she said.

Somewhat reminiscent of *Pneumonia*-era Whiskeytown, they played big, heart-stealing numbers that paired a pedal steel sentiment with Dave Jorgensen's snaking trumpet. And although I find the sudden vibraphone presence in alternative music a tad irritating, Blind Pilot manages to use one in a non-distracting way. Throwing in a stand-up bass, keyboards and the standard drums and guitar, the band filled the stage. Playing the first date of their tour, they took the time with the sound man to make sure one instrument did not overpower another, and the result was fantastic. Of the three acts that night, Blind Pilot were the ones who made me think *I would buy this*.

It's easy to get apathetic about new music, when one sound dominates and dilutes the rest. Falling back on old favorites is an easy, safe use of time. However, even when spare cash falls thin, it's good to take a chance. By supporting these small shows, reigniting the thrill of the undiscovered can be its own reward.

For more information on the bands, please visit their webpages:

<http://www.blindpilotmusic.com>

<http://www.myspace.com/kevinlong>

<http://www.myspace.com/keeppennsylvaniabeautiful>



Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful

*Text by Sara Habein
Photos by Tyson Habein*



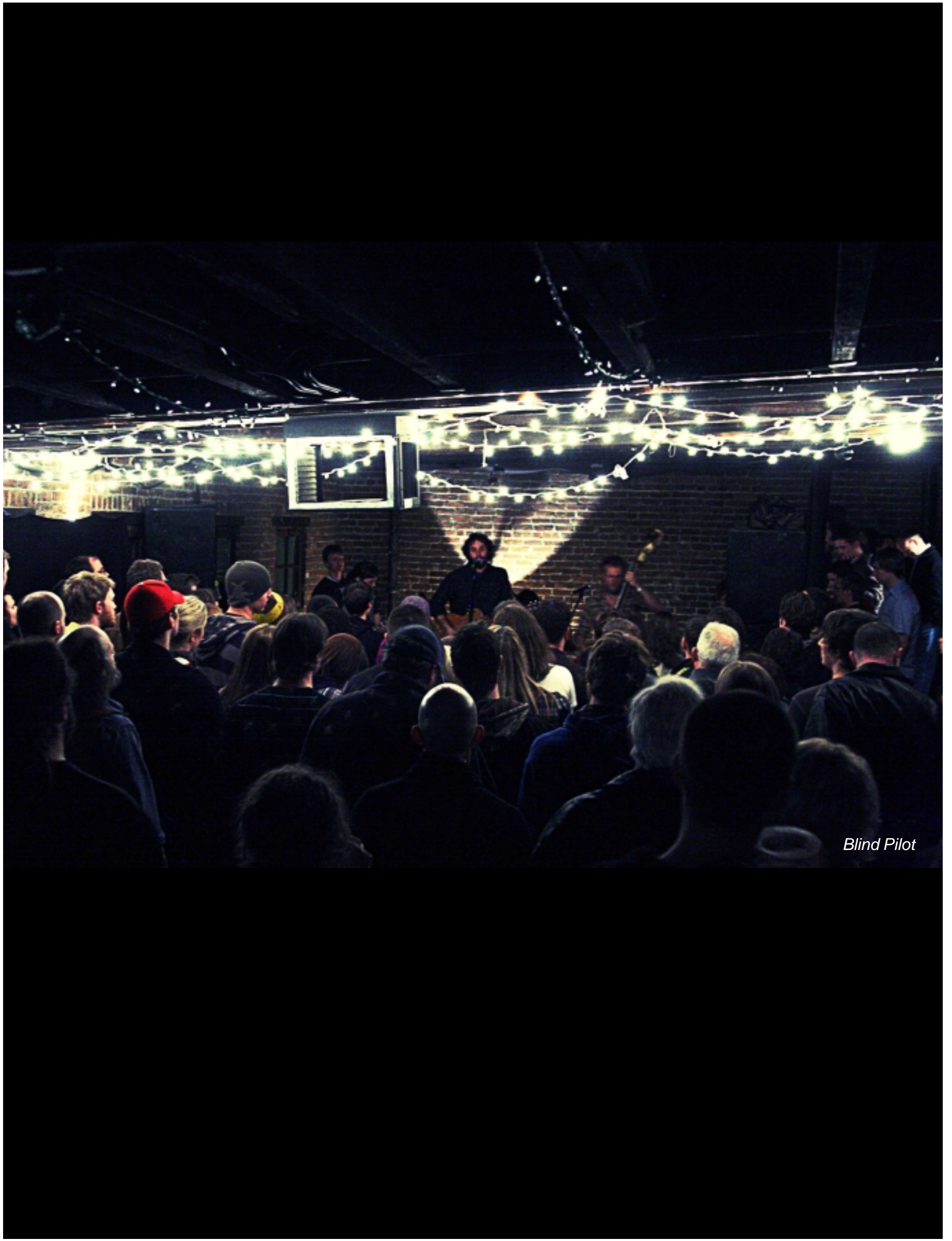
Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful



Kevin Long



Kevin Long



Blind Pilot



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Patrons and Artists discuss works at Gallery of Thum' (Photo by Tyson Habein)

This First Friday was filled with interesting pieces at multiple galleries. The following is a run down of some of the highlights the staff of SPOKE(a)N(e) encountered during the course of the evening.

Gallery of Thum' had pieces of all shapes and sizes from a huge variety of artists. This is likely one of the most inclusive and consistently packed galleries in Spokane. Especially interesting were the oil paintings of Katrina Burns, with each of her pieces filled with light in a way that makes one wonder how she does it. Tim Phillips' slightly cartoonish watercolor pieces defy the traditional meaning of that description as they appear to be looking in on someone's life. They are very real in emotion and are very atypically beautiful.

Also of note at Thum': Katrina Brennan's "We Make a Great Team," Kara Orcutt's wine bottle clocks, and Debbie Hughbanks' "Crow Bar." This last piece caught my eye from the moment we entered the gallery.

Next on the itinerary: Avenue West. Avenue West is a co-op where the artists who hang work at the gallery also work there. The gallery is always filled with a huge variety of pieces, from photography to paintings to pottery to handmade clothing. This First Friday was no different.

The pieces that struck me most while at Avenue West came from Olivia Waterman. Her acrylics on canvas had a surreal quality to them. While they were of seemingly odd characters, there was definitely a human quality to that brought the viewer in. Absolutely worth checking out.

While at Avenue West we made a previously unplanned stop at Brooklyn Nights. I was glad we went through that side door and into the bar/cafe/coffee shop. It was a very non-traditional venue for fine art, but it worked well. This was a single artist show and Eric Anderson deserved the show all to himself. Anderson's blown glass pieces amazed every member of the SPOKE(a)N(e) staff and everyone else we were with. The level of detail and color in Anderson's artfully blown glass is something I have not seen before. Many of the pieces have a intricate, spiderweb-like design in white or color woven through the very fabric of the glass. These aren't painted pieces. They are stretched to the length of a room and then blown into one cohesive unit. Anderson seemed to be able to make just about anything out of glass, from traditional (if ornate) goblets to lamps to hanging wall pieces. Amazing work, to say the least.

Anderson himself was there and explained much of the work to viewers. Incredibly friendly and informative on the subject matter, Anderson certainly added to the quality environment of his one man show.

After a brief pinball break for our copy editor/writer Sara, we moved on. This First Friday was packed with shows we wanted to see, and we knew we weren't going to get to them all.



Harpman Hatter and unknown guitarist at Avenue West (Photo by Tyson Habein)



Eric Anderson and his blown glass at Brooklyn Nights (Photo by Alex Toney)



Live DJ and Video Installation at Art Music and More (Photo by Tyson Habein)

My favorite gallery of the evening had to be Art Music and More. Sara and I loved the family-friendly nature of the gallery. While other galleries can sometimes become too stuffy for smaller children, Art Music and More kept the family vibe alive and well, even going as far as to allow children to participate in art pieces. This is what Spokane art should be about: inclusion. Like other galleries, Art Music and More had a huge variety of artists, but more than that, it gave them all equal footing in terms of display space and on First Friday, and invited them to show how their art is created in the environment of the gallery. With all this put in place, they then topped it off with live music from a DJ (we were informed that on future First Fridays, they would have live bands play), a large screen video installation, food, and a massage chair. When was the last time you got a good rub down at a gallery?



Massage Chair at Art Music and More (Photo by Tyson Habein)

Artist highlights at Art Music and More included the work of Jeremy Stebbins. Some of his work seemed to meld a great multi-layered esthetic with traditional painting and comic book style art. His is the sort of work I would hang in my home. Also at Art Music and More, I was struck by the beautiful photographic work of Dave Ainly. His photos seemed almost ethereal, but were brought down to the viewer via their non-traditional display. One large piece was displayed in the window of an old door. I don't recall the last time I was this struck by the way in which photography was presented. It was as if I was looking in through the door and onto the scene, which I assume was the artists intent. Beautiful.

I look forward to seeing what Art Music and More brings to the table in the future, and I highly recommend a visit.



Tango Dancing with Anne Marie and Dick at the STA Plaza (Photo by Lloyd N. Phillips)

Our last stop of the evening was at the STA Plaza. As another non-traditional venue for art, it presents an ideal of bringing art to the people rather than making them come to the art. This idea is interesting to say the least. On display was the photography of Boet Waldbjorn.

I loved the mentality and the mood behind some of Waldbjorn's photos. Some of the city streets at night (all of Waldbjorn's displayed photos were night/low-light shots) had a very moody cinematic quality, with light bouncing off of wet pavement, and streetlights and signs pointing the way towards the coming light of the next day. They had the atmosphere of a good film noir piece.

If anything detracted from the quality of Waldbjorn's pieces, it's that sometimes technical aspects of shooting in low light were forgotten. Some of the shots weren't high enough resolution for the size at which they were printed. This caused technical flaws to show through. Things like camera shake and seemingly unintentional blur (though I can't truly speak to the artist's intentions with any certainty) presented themselves as troublesome in an otherwise nicely done body of work.

These things said, as Waldbjorn works out some of the kinks in his photography, I'll be excited to see what else he produces.

In another act of bringing the art and culture to the mass audience, the STA Plaza also included tango dancing demonstrations. While viewers wandered through the plaza, they could watch individuals like Anne Marie and Dick showcase the classic moves of tango.

If you happen to see anyone from SPOKE(a)N(e) Magazine out and about during the next First Friday, say hello and tell us where your favorite pieces of the night are.

-Text by Tyson Habein

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A friend of mine once commented, “You should have been born in the North of England about ten years earlier.” I’d been going on about The Stone Roses, saying how I knew I was about twenty years late to the party, but that I could not stop listening to “She Bangs the Drums.” Given the bands I listen to most, she had a point.

Though only half of the music I own comes from England and its surrounding countries, my favorites are primarily from that area of the world. When I want to read a music magazine, it is almost always Q or *MOJO*, not *Rolling Stone*. (Though *Filter* is a good American example.) I’m not saying that British music is superior to other music, but it is what has most set my heart on fire.

Around the time I turned thirteen, when music critics were labeling anything popular coming out of the UK as a second British invasion, I latched tightly and irreparably to both Bush and Oasis. If my tastes as they are now had a starting point, that was it. Soon came The Verve, The Frames, Doves, and more recently, Glasvegas.

:Compulsive Chronicles:

And though I have a strong affinity for much that came about in the 90s, I've been working my way backwards. Say, finding the tributaries that lead into the constant stream. I'm annoyed by the practice of dismissing music because it supposedly rips-off another, and I find that coming from a place of knowledge helps counter those claims when they are invalid. Sure, there are legitimate criticisms of copycat music to be made, but one can't speak with authority unless one really knows what has come before. I'm trying, but there's so much to rediscover.

Thanks in part to VH1 Classic's airing of *120 Minutes* — which isn't quite like the version that used to air on MTV, but I'll take it — I've been able to further devote attention to bands like Echo & The Bunnymen, The Cure, and The Jesus and Mary Chain. The Stone Roses get an occasional spot, as do The Jam and Joy Division. Not every video is a band I like (The Fixx, Erasure, I'm looking at you), but mixed in with songs from the 90s, it earns its space on the DVR. On the downside, it's made my list of albums of I'd like to buy grow to an even more insurmountable level.

I've waded back into the bluesy classics too, reacquainted myself with old Fleetwood Mac (who are at least half English at any given time), Small Faces and Chicken Shack. Whenever the British music magazines have CDs attached with themes like 'Heavy Mod' or 'Rule Britannia,' I end up trying to justify the \$10 import price. *Hey, \$10 for a sampler CD is way cheaper, and you'd never get around to checking out these bands otherwise. And look! They've got an article about Oasis! You know you want to have that . . .* As anyone even a little familiar with me knows, I lose all sense of reason once Oasis gets involved.

To simplify, I like guitar bands more than anything else. I like bands who aren't trying to get too arty or stretch the definition of rock music into over-synthesized territory. I will take an old Radiohead song over a new one any day. Some people will cast a wide net to find music they love, sample a little of everything and see what sticks. Me? I harpoon. I will zero in with the fervor of a teenage girl — minus the shrieking — until I know everything I feel is worth knowing about that band or artist. I will go on and on about them probably to the point of annoyance for some people.

However, other people come around. Sometimes they end up saying, "You know, you were right. This *is* really good." I've no interest in being an indie critic, judgmental of anything that's a little too popular. I don't harbor delusions of becoming *The New Yorker's* next Sasha Frere Jones, treating music more like an intellectual exercise rather than a visceral one. I used to care about being ahead of the curve, but now I just want what's good. I don't care if I'm one of 25 or 25 million people who have heard it. My enthusiasm will remain the same.

I mention all this as a fair warning to any ongoing followers of this column. It occurred to me that along the way, readers might say, "Um, this doesn't seem to be very current. You kind of go back to the same sort of music all the time." Don't worry, I've got a sense of humor, and I know I get obsessive. Why else would this be titled 'Compulsive Chronicles?'

When Nick Hornby wrote *Fever Pitch*, people who didn't care about football/soccer still enjoyed reading it. The mix of excitement, self-deprecation and tenacity was recognizable to anyone who had ever really loved anything. Though he and I play on different leagues, perhaps I'm trying to bring a little of that to my pocket of this magazine. Maybe you won't always agree with me or care on the same level, but you'll appreciate the sentiment. If anything, I'm promoting the idea of standing by what you enjoy without embarrassment. When all your friends shake their heads and say, "I've never devoted that much thought to anything," you can say *It's okay. I've got it covered.*



Sara Habein is a writer in the Spokane area who has far more than the five magazines you see that she could have used to take this photo. She understands that she may have a problem.

Before she became the rock fan you know today, she had a pop radio past like everyone else. To see what she used to obsess over, visit <http://glorifiedloveletters.blogspot.com>

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