No Taxation
(without an explanation)

A Documentary Preview of America: Freedom to Fascism

By Tayvis Dunnahoe
Staff Writer

What do politics, war, economics, and legislature have in common? In 2006, these events develop rapidly and often under the radar of mainstream media. The feeling that the world is developing a new personality that is somewhat augmented by technology, political control, and the specter of diminishing resources is felt by millions.

A new documentary, directed by Aaron Russo, is currently raising questions about such developments and attempting to formulate a common goal by which these rapid changes may be stifled.

In America: Freedom to Fascism, Russo draws attention to what he is calling “the two great frauds of 1913.” Russo claims that he is attempting to “wake America up” by exposing the little known truth behind the creation of the Federal Reserve and the origins of national income tax. According to Russo, most Americans are not aware that the Federal Reserve is a private corporation that, in 1913, accomplished a major coup over the American economy by convincing congress to award the them the concession to print and control the flow of currency in the United States. “Those who make the money also make the rules,” said Russo.

Russo explains in an interview with the Conscious Media Network that, while many people believe the Federal Reserve is a governmental institution necessary for the survival of the U.S. economy, the Fed actually exists as a central bank much like what was prescribed in the Communist Manifesto. In nearly a century of control, the Federal Reserve, in conjunction with large corporations, have successfully geared an economy where average citizens are laden with debt, overly taxed, and sustain themselves with a currency that is virtually worthless without its historically intended gold-backing.

Russo adds that this fight was not new in 1913. He explains that throughout the history of the United States many leaders, such as Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, as well as Andrew Jackson, have fought against the development of a central bank to control the nation’s currency.

The primary theme to Russo’s documentary focuses on the passing of the Federal Reserve Act in 1913. What began as the Aldrich Plan, named for the Senate Republican leader Nelson Aldrich and current head of the National Monetary Fund (1910) eventually became the Federal Reserve Act after Woodrow Wilson provided his support for the plan. It was touted at a government-owned central bank and was given the concession to produce currency for the Federal Government that, in turn, would be supplied through private loans. Russo claims that the 16th Amendment, ratified that same year was passed in an effort to alleviate the cost of interest on these loans from the Federal Reserve.

Prior to the development of the Federal Reserve Act and the 16th Amendment, Congress attempted to institute a tax on labor in 1894. According to the U.S. Treasury’s Website (www.treasury.gov) the U.S. Supreme Court found that the tax was unconstitutional the very next year because it was not directly apportioned among the states equally as required by the Constitution.

A tax on labor would not appear again until 1913 with the passing of the 16th Amendment. Russo documents that even after this new law took effect the tax on labor was again found unconstitutional and was stopped for a period of three years. From the time that the tax was resumed in 1917, “there have been at least eight cases brought before the Supreme Court where a tax on one’s labor was declared unconstitutional.” He goes further to assert that no law exists that requires one to file a 1040. While this claim is hard to believe, his documentary does provide some credibility.

Aside from the historical nature of this film, it revolves heavily on the current economical and political status within the United States. Essentially, Americans live in a society where consumerism and debt is heavily encouraged while laws are manufactured in conjunction with private banks to make this same debt virtually inescapable. For Russo, this represents a totalitarian society that operates.
were planning to travel abroad at any point in the near future? Maybe you’d like to stroll the Thames on Christmas morning or wade neck-deep through the insanity that is Edinburgh’s Hogmanay celebration of the New Year? Unless you have the means and the luxury of time to travel on the QE2, the extravagant cruise liner, you’ll be getting on an airplane. You can prevent your European vacation from turning into a Chevy Chase movie with a little advance planning and even more patience. Life for the weary traveler will be much easier if you know what you need and at least a little about where you’re going and what to expect.

At present, you can still use a birth certificate and driver’s license as identification to enter Mexico, Canada, the Caribbean and Bermuda, but the U.S. State Department will be phasing in the passport requirement for these countries by the end of 2007. You will soon need it to go anywhere outside our borders. There is no reason to wait until you have a trip scheduled. Prepare now and get it out of the way. A passport is good for ten years and will cost $85. As an added incentive, many companies require two legal forms of identification as a prerequisite for employment.

In addition to the passport, you may need a tourist visa, vaccinations records and an international health certificate, or an international driver’s license. Learn what travel documents you will need, how and where to get them before you travel. Passports are easily ordered online through the State Department: (http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html).

Allow about two months for processing, but it can be completed sooner for an additional $65 rush fee. Though, rarely required, information on immunization requirements can be found at the Center for Disease Control: (http://www.cdc.gov/travel/vaccinat.htm). The international driving permit instructions can be found on ARA’s website: (http://www.csa.com).

A visa is an endorsement stamped on your passport by foreign custom officials that allows you to visit that country. You get a visa from the destination country’s embassy or consulate (not the U.S. consulate). Many, many types of visas exist based on country, purpose, and length of visit. Currently, few countries require visas for tourist visits. At the time of this writing Africa, Australia, Brazil, China, Cuba, Egypt, Japan, Russia, and Turkey do require visas for entry, which may change at any time. Visa requirements for all other countries will need one if you wish to leave during your student travel.

E-mail all your travel document copies to an account that you can get to from anywhere that has internet access. Yahoo (mail. yahoo.com), Hot Mail (www. hotmail.com) and Google (gmail. google.com) all offer free email accounts. (Scan the appropriate pages and turn them into PDF digital files.) If you lose your passport, travel visa, traveler’s checks or driver’s license, you can download copies while you’re traveling and possibly get them replaced. Leave copies of all your travel documents with someone whom you can contact easily, like a parent. Now you have two ways to access copies if you lose anything. Make sure that you have the documents together that you will need at the airport, like your passport and e-ticket/itinerary.

Never put your travel documents in your checked luggage. Keep your cash separate, preferably in a zipper or buttoned pocket on a garment that you are wearing. Cargo pants are great for this.

All this and you haven’t left for the airport yet. This is where your preparation and planning will pay off. Remember to pack an abundance of patience, though. It will still feel like the Bataan Death March before it’s over. Travelers face tighter security and longer lines because of new airport rules in the U.S. and U.K., after a plot to blow up airliners bound for U.S. destinations was uncovered. Here’s what you need to know about the upgraded restrictions.

The new carry-on bag rules ban almost all liquids, creams, and gels from being carried aboard flights. Do not pack sunscreen, lotion, shampoo, toothpaste, hair gel or beverages in a carry-on. If you can pour it, squeeze it or smear it, put it in your checked bags. If you are in doubt about an item, put it in a checked bag or leave it at home. You are permitted to bring your laptop, cell phone, and other electronic devices, such as GameBoys, on flights within the United States. But all the rules may be different in the foreign country you are leaving.

There are very few exceptions to these rules. You can generally return to the U.S. rules only.

If you’re on a flight leaving the United Kingdom, there are more restrictions. You will need to check your entire luggage. No carry-ons, whatsoever. You may be asked to open your checked luggage for inspection and every passenger will be hand-searched at security checkpoints. Only a few personal items, such as pocketsize wallets and purses, glasses (but not the case), medications (in the original bottles with your name on the prescription label), diapers and female sanitary items (unboxed), as well as essential travel documents are permitted. A bag used to carry these items must be plastic, and ideally, transparent. Get a gallon-size Zip-Loc freezer bag. It won’t be very chic, but you will be less hassled. On flights bound for the U.S., passengers will be searched again at the gate before they board.

If you forget and have any restricted items in baggage where it’s not allowed, you may have the opportunity to place it in checked luggage, but generally it won’t be discovered until the screening process at which time your bags have already been checked. It will be confiscated at that point. These security restrictions extend to the boarding area as well. Once you’ve passed the final screening point don’t rush your bags. Even a gallon-sized Zip-Loc freezer bag on your shoulder will be confiscated at the airport.

Most European and U.S. airlines waived penalty fees for changes and eased restrictions on what otherwise would be nonrefundable tickets. These revised policies applied to people whose travel plans fell between Aug. 10th and Sept. 1st, with tickets purchased on or before Aug. 10th. Booking restrictions and cancellation penalties have generally returned to normal now.

My advice to you is: if you had dreamed of traveling abroad, then by all means do so. Be wise and be aware. With proper planning and preparedness and lots of patience the “getting there” can be just as adventurous as the “being there”. Remember, if you let the acts of the terrorists alter your quality of life, then they’ve already won.
The Internet Tech Job Wire

By Timika Simmons
Staff Writer

Being a college student approaching graduation, I’m starting to experience a fear of what will happen next. After all the years of studying, taking exams, serving on committees and associations, what will become of my life now? What classes should I be taking, and what activities should I be involved in this last year that will give me a competitive edge? The job market is not as simple as going through a catalog, picking a class, paying for it and then showing up. Jobs will not just fall into your lap simply because you obtained a certain GPA. No, there are legions of college grads out there, as well as experienced and well connected people going after the same jobs that I am and so I need to know—how do I stand out?

A couple of weeks ago, I attended a panel discussion featuring some of Houston’s successful IT companies. In front of local reporters, students, and other business professionals, these companies were questioned about the future of IT and current struggles with finding qualified employees to fill positions. Michael Garfield (The High Tech Texan) moderated the group of panelists and attendees which included representatives from Hewlett & Packard (HP), CITOC, Axessphere Technologies, MANISLLC.com (Mems and Nanotechnology Integrated Solutions) and Atos Origin to name a few.

The main concept of the evening was that (1) no one can be taken seriously anymore without good IT skills and (2) simply having those skills does not guarantee you a spot in the job market. IT skills and the application of them across any discipline is a necessity. As students, if we’re not familiarizing ourselves with technology and figuring out ways to apply it to our field of study, we are already at a disadvantage. Curt Bludworth from the Human Resource department at HP mentioned that they hire those who are capable of being “business analysts.” They are looking for “skill differentiators and leaders who are always looking for change.”

Companies are experiencing growth not by just hiring IT certified people, but IT certified people who are multi skilled and can bridge IT and the business world. For example, today’s engineers are also business people who are able to explain their concepts in plain language and communicate profit to the most elite of business executives. Marketers are no longer just degreeed professionals, but IT specialist who understand industry as a whole and the technical requirements to keep companies moving forward. This new era of employees are well informed of their industries as well as others and know what is needed to stay ahead. One panelist suggested that having mechanisms for staying connected is vital. Education should go beyond college and you must be a student of your field.

Being able to integrate technologies and concepts across disciplines is an obvious yet lacking requirement of today’s employers. College and professional associations, conventions, internships and publications are highly recommended venues for skill and information. MANISLLC.com’s Space Technology Requirements Conference coming up in a couple of weeks was discussed throughout the evening because at the event, NASA project managers and other technologically advanced companies (including academia) will be discussing not only the latest advancements in technology but also what is lacking. NASA is looking to get industry involved in missions and have stopped doing research and development. “One issue with NASA is that newcomers are not competent enough to perform what is needed for shuttle missions and they have to bring in retired scientists to do the work,” said an unknown participant. Events like this drive industry and should also be used to drive college students. We need to have information like this from the conference on our minds when selecting majors and courses so that we can be able to fit in and know exactly what employers will be looking for regarding IT capabilities.

The panel did advise that we should not be alarmed. We should think of ourselves as a brand. We must constantly develop our product and make it as marketable as possible. Be careful in decisions as students. Use electives to gain IT and or business knowledge to give us a competitive edge in the job market. IT skills and the business world. For example, today’s engineers are also business people who are able to explain their concepts in plain language and communicate profit to the most elite of business executives. Marketers are no longer just degreeed professionals, but IT specialist who understand industry as a whole and the technical requirements to keep companies moving forward. This new era of employees are well informed of their industries as well as others and know what is needed to stay ahead. One panelist suggested that having mechanisms for staying connected is vital. Education should go beyond college and you must be a student of your field.

Preparing for the Writing Proficiency Exam

By Monica Maza
Assistant Editor

What is the one thing that all UHD students have in common? We all have to go through that two and a half hour experience called the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE) in order to graduate. Beginning this semester, students are required to pay a $10 non-refundable service fee each time the test is taken, so preparation for the test is essential. The exam is not as bad as it sounds and it is in our best interests to have some kind of writing competence for the future. No matter what your major is, writing skills will be necessary in your future career, whether that is in the form of e-mail correspondences, inter-office memos, or handouts for a meeting. For those of you considering graduate school, you will have to write essays and/or personal statements as part of the application process to be accepted. The WPE may seem daunting but there are resources available to all students as they prepare to take it.

The Writing Center in N925 offers many resources for students needing to take the WPE, such as grammar handouts, practice prompts, and workshops. The handouts contain various grammar exercises on topics such as subject/verb agreement and verb forms. I found the handout on irregular verb tenses useful because I could never remember when to use swim, swim, or swum in a sentence. The great thing about these handouts is that you are allowed to have them with you when you take the WPE. The WPE packet contains information about the test as well as tips on managing your time, editing your writing, and organizing your essay. This packet includes practice prompts that are similar to the ones that are on the actual test. The workshops are two-hour prep classes that teach students writing strategies helpful in passing the test.

The Writing Center’s workshops are sponsored by the Writing Center and offered to students on various days each semester. These workshops help students brainstorm different WPE topics and examine passing and failing tests. The three workshops available this semester are on Thursday, August 31st, Friday, September 8th, and Monday, September 18th. Because space is limited and the actual time and location for each workshop varies, check with the Writing Center for availability. Registration is required for these workshops and students must register in person at the front desk of the Academic Support Center in N925.

I have already taken the WPE and I wish I had known that these resources were available for us. When I took the test, I was very nervous about it because I didn’t know what to expect. Classmates had told me to practice before taking the test but I didn’t know how to do it. A less conventional way to practice is to keep a journal (even an electronic one such as an online blog) because it makes you elaborate on events you are involved in; therefore, you are actually practicing a writing technique without even being aware of it. When you write about going to a movie, describe what happened, and what you thought about it, you are using a skill that is necessary in writing. You are stating a thesis (I went to a movie), giving details about the plot (the main points), and then stating why you liked or disliked it (the supporting detail for the main points). This is the same skill that you need for the WPE. The only difference is that, for the WPE, you have to write an organized essay in response to a given prompt while making sure your main points defend your thesis. Of course, the ideal way to practice would be to get the practice prompts from the Writing Center, write an essay, and then return to the Writing Center to have a tutor go over your essay with you.

For information on how to register, available test dates, getting your results, and what to take on test day, go online to www.uhd.edu/admissions/testing/WPE/aboutWPE.htm. Questions about the WPE workshops? Call Professor Fadely at (713) 221-8663 or visit the Writing Center in N925.
Paris In Summer

By Sean Augabright
Staff Writer

They say everyone should see Paris in springtime. I agree. Paris throughout April, May and into early June is breathtakingly gorgeous. This was the stuff of inspiration for Claude, driving him to paint his sun-dappled water lilies. Even the brief rain showers were romantic. The cool nights sweeten the air with the a sachet of apple and pear blossoms.

What they, whoever they are, don’t tell you is that Paris in the springtime is the only time to go. I’ve been there a number of times and have witnessed every season. The fall is not so bad, but the lush greeneries are dying off, days shorten and the street scenes turn brown and grey. Winter nights can draw on forever. The December winds can claw through that small crevice between your thick, woolen scarf and upturned collar to rake its frigid fingers down your spine. You don’t dare turn into the maelstrom. Your face will break off.

Summer, however, is the worst time of year to be in Paris. You wouldn’t think so, would you? Imagine long-legged Parisian beauties flouncing out of Galleries Lafayette in a gossamer summer shift dress and new Prada stillettos. Or perhaps, René sitting casually at a café in his tailored trousers and short-sleeved Yves St. Laurent shirt - his light, linen jacket tossed smartly over one shoulder, showing his well-defined arms. Summer in Paris is a visual feast, but the brochures neglect to mention the olfactory assault that will drop you to your knees.

First of all, July and August in Paris can get hot. I mean Houston-hot. It’s not as humid, but makes him look all the more defined arms. Summer in Paris is one shoulder, showing his well-linen jacket tossed smartly over St. Laurent shirt - his light, trousers and short-sleeved Yves casually at a café in his tailored Stilettos. Or perhaps, René sitting summer shift dress and new Prada Galleries Lafayette in a gossamer something. (There are a lot of them.

It’s hard to keep them all straight.)

The gentleman is conservatively dressed and looks very dapper in his tan two-piece suit, sensible brown wing tips and cream-colored shirt and tie. His salt and pepper hair is a bit unruly, but makes him look all the more professorial. We nod and smile as he passes by and he courteously returns the gesture.

Have you ever been slapped by a smell?

About 2.3 seconds after he passed, a thick, ectoplasm funk grabbed me by my right nostril and wouldn’t let go. My first thought was Bill Murray’s line from Ghostbusters, “I’ve been slimed.” We were trapped in his stench wake. My eyes were tearing. I reached for my wife, but she’d already gone down. What is that? I can’t begin to describe it. We staggered for another 15 meters along the path he’d just come from. It didn’t dissipate. I turned back over my shoulder for another look at him, thinking maybe he had a dead skunk stapled to his sport coat. Normal – no warning signs whatsoever – except . . . was the air shimmering slightly behind him? Maybe it was my eyes - they were still tearing up.

We seemed to cross paths with Monsieur Funk quite a lot on that trip. Standing in the queue, elbow-to-sweaty-elbow on a steamy July day with the rest of the public, stewing in their own juices, in a country that doesn’t believe in air-conditioning gives a whole new meaning to “soaking up the experience.”

This with a prolonged lack of hygienic attention and you have a nasty little odoriferous cocktail just waiting to spill out on some unsuspecting passerby.

Now, let me just say that I am not trying to raise a big stink about any cultural stereotype. Stereotypical behavior is defined as, “a widely held but fixed and oversimplified idea about a particular thing or individual.” I only offer the following as anecdotal evidence based solely on personal contact with individual(s) that may or may not be representative of any group as a whole. I leave the reader to make up his own mind. That little disclaimer should keep most of the letters off the editor’s desk.

Summer is striding towards the Pantheon one July afternoon. We marveled at the architecture of the enormous rotunda and the huge murals on the walls that surround it. An elderly man is striding towards us as we pass in front of the grand statue of Napoleon celebrating victory over . . . something. (There are a lot of them. It’s hard to keep them all straight.)

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Music Industry Loses Reggae Legend

By Cody Roberts
Managing Editor

Joseph Hill, the lead vocalist of the veteran reggae group Culture, suddenly became ill and passed away in Berlin, Germany early Monday, August 21st while the group was in the middle of an European tour.

Hill was the singer behind the epochal 1977 hit album, “Two Sevens Clash,” a reference to the numerical coincidence of July 7, 1977 (7/7/77), as well as other roots staples like “Natty Never Get Weary,” “Stop The Fussing And Fighting,” “I’m Not Ashamed,” “Jah See Them A Fussing And Fighting,” “I’m Not Never Get Weary,” “Stop The Fall of July 7, 1977 (7/7/77), as well as his contribution to “The Harder They Come” film soundtrack, “Shanty Town (007).”

Hill, born January 22, 1949 in Linstead, Jamaica, began his career at the legendary Studio One as a percussionist with the Soul Defenders.

I was fortunate to see a very intimate show featuring this noble man and it affected me profoundly. There was a true essence and spirit tangible and alive in his presence and in his music. The time I saw him, the band had waited to come on until about two and a half hours after they were supposed to, because few people had shown up (this was in Tucson, Arizona in the Fall of 2000 at Twelve Tribes Dancehall, which may or may not still be there).

Josey Hill himself, known as ‘Dr. Dread’ long before there was a Dr. Dre, came out and played as if there was 50,000 audience members instead of the 100 or so that were there that had waited all night for Culture. I remember him seeming very old for a performer, with salt and pepper dreadlocks, and I was surprised at the vitality and fervor he demonstrated when the music began. It was truly a great experience that will have me jamming Culture forever. I recommend the CD/DVD “Live in South Africa” from the year 2000 or else suggest you spend a few dollars on some Culture hits off of iTunes.

He was beyond tremendous live and I was fortunate to meet him and shake his hand after the performance, and have since added Burning Spear and Toots Hibbert to that list of handshakes, added Burning Spear and Toots Hibbert to that list of handshakes, thanks in part to Mr. Hill’s influence on my now voracious appetite for great reggae music.

Rest in Peace Mr. Hill.

By Lavina Kirkendoll-Smith

Guest Writer

Manhattan, Los Angeles, Chicago.
A gorgeous, fabulously successful young woman in pink stilettos stomping all over Manhattan, Los Angeles, or Chicago, a Dirty Goose martini in one hand and a fully-loaded tube of expensive lip gloss in the other...

Unfortunately, the above is not a description of my life. Rather, it’s what I was bombarded with upon entering my local Barnes and Noble recently: Beach Reads.

(…hold your breath and wait for it…)

I, Lavina Kirkendoll-Smith, am writing an epic Beach-Read series of my own, inspired by (yet raunchier than) the Original, Mother-Of-All Beach Reads: Sex In The City. (Tentatively titled The Ho’ Bag’s Guide, Dot Dot Dot). The term “Ho’ Bag” is a derivation, of course, from the term “Shop Bag”. Now, without further ado...

Coming soon to your neighborhood Barnes and Noble:

Book #1: Confessions of a Ho’ Bag or, The Ho’ Bag’s Guide to Slutty Behavior

Book #2: Ho’ Bag Takes Chicago or The Ho’ Bag’s Guide to Gettin’ Crunk and Drunk in The Windy City

Book #3: Ho’ Bag Ties the Knot or, The Ho’ Bag’s Guide to Money-Grubbin’ Whoredom

(….of course, by then, we’ll have to add….)

Book #4: Ho’Baggin’ It: The Life, Loves, and General Ho’Baggery of Lavinia Kirkendoll-Smith, author of the Critically Acclaimed Ho’Bag Series.
Sixties Flashback:
Former Idol Gary Puckett

By Danial Arp
Staff Writer

Believe it or not, in 1968, Gary Puckett and his pop group “The Union Gap” sold more records than Elvis Presley and The Beatles. Gary’s hit songs included “Lady Willpower,” “Young Girl,” “Woman Woman,” and many others. These songs have been played so many times on radio stations for the past 35 plus years that their melodies are firmly fixed in the minds of music lovers everywhere, especially the Baby Boomers.

When I found out Gary would be doing a concert at The Stafford Center, a new performance venue serving Stafford and Sugar Land, I contacted him for an interview.

**Dateline:** So Gary, when will the public see you make a guest appearance on American Idol?

**Puckett:** (Laughs) That’s a good one. I don’t know about that, if ever. I would like to think American Idol would look back in time a little bit and choose some of the artists. I noticed that somebody on American Idol used one of my songs and I thought it was pretty terrific even though I’m not sure that the reviews were so great on the person singing it. But I don’t know that I’d ever be on it. But it would be nice to be so, though.

**DD:** Personally, I think they should have already had you on there. As well a night devoted to your hits. Can you speak to that?

**GP:** Oh, well, I appreciate your faith or whatever. I think it would be great to do. I just don’t know that that’s what they’re all about. I think that if they were to spread there wings just a little bit and include the Baby Boomer generation in it, it would be an absolutely great thing and I would love to do it.

**DD:** I personally will be sending in an audition tape to “America’s Got Talent” of me performing on the piano and singing one of your hits. However, somebody told me I would be better off performing a current hit. What do you think?

**GP:** Well, I don’t know. That’s a tough question, too. You know a lot of the songs are great and true. And I’ve been fortunate enough to make some great records that have become a part of the fabric of American Pop Music. You know, as the generation before me and the generation before that. So all the way from the great songs of my parents’ generation through the fifties and the sixties, you know there’s a lot of great music. So I think its music that is recognizable. And you may be wise in making your choice instead of theirs.

**DD:** Has performing live ever been drudgery for you?

**GP:** No. It’s always wonderful. The people are great. I’m fortunate to have lots of great fans. They love the music that we were able to create during our “fifteen minutes in the sun” and fortunately for me all these years later, the oldies stations have played that music until, like I said, it has become a part of the fabric of American Pop Music. So in fact, yesterday my wife was having a baby shower for her sister here at our house and they had nearly fifty women over. And just prior to that she called me from the other side of the house and said, “you gotta come and see this” and on satellite radio they were playing “Young Girl” I think it was, and there was a picture of me on the screen. So it actually is a part of our music fabric. So what can I say? I do not get bored with the people or the music and I have a great time with it; always.

**DD:** And here’s a question I’ve always wanted to ask a musician—are you fully cognizant when you are performing, that for many people—I for one—attending a live Gary Puckett performance or a Rolling Stone performance or what have you, is one of the great moments in many people’s lives?

**GP:** Well it’s an honor to me that anybody would think that. You know I too am a fan. I recently went to see a B.B. King concert. I had a wonderful time. I watched the person that I knew to be the person that I loved all my life. In fact, I got to meet him afterwards and he signed one of my guitars. You know that to me is...it’s an experience. You know, it’s a wonderful time. And I’m always glad to hear the people in the merchandise line, which is where we sell our CD’s and T-shirts and DVD’s and all that. I’m just really pleased to hear them say what you have said, “It’s just great to be here and we’ve waited a long time to see you and here we are and we’ll be glad to come back soon.’

**DD:** I read your records outsold The Beatles’ in 1968. Can you elaborate on how all that fame and success changed your life and how long it lasted?

**GP:** Well, it immediately had a great burst of energy and it was overwhelming. It was a lot of fun. I always tell people The Beatles were having a bad year. I don’t know the truth of it. The history books and statistics and some things like that say that we were the number one record selling artist of the year. Like I said, it was overwhelming, it was fun, and we traveled a lot.

We got to do a lot of wonderful concerts with all the artists of the day, from you know, Mitch Rider and The Detroit Wheels to Junior Walker and The All Stars to The Association, Three Dog Night, and The Grass Roots. The list just goes on and on and on. We got to do the command performance and an ad for the Houston Comets, a women’s professional basketball team.

“I don’t like basketball and I don’t like women’s basketball,” he grumbles into his cellphone. “If it was roller derby, it would be different.”

He listens for a while, puffing away. “All right, I’ll do it,” he says, “and in September you’ll have your candidate in a mental hospital.”

He hangs up, then starts trying to figure out what to say in this ad. It’s got to be something different, something funny, something . . . Kinky. He tries out a few jokes but rejects them. Then it comes to him -- the perfect line. He starts grinning mischievously.

The Trailblazer pulls into a parking garage beneath the Toyota Center, where the Comets play. A young woman leads Kinky into a TV studio and sits him down behind a fake anchorman desk. It’s the Comets’ 10th anniversary, she explains, and Texas celebrities are taping greetings that will be played at the arena during games.

The cameraman gives him the signal.

“Hi, folks, it’s Kinky Friedman, here to wish the Houston Comets a happy tenth anniversary.” He pauses, then leans forward and jabs his cigar at the camera. “Houston Comets basketball -- it’s just not for lesbians anymore!”

The cameraman cracks up, then quickly stifles his laughter and asks Kinky to do something a bit more conventional. Kinky obliges, but he’s not happy about it.

Back in the car, he starts grumbling again. “If those [bleeps] don’t see that as the perfect slogan for them,” he says, “they’re crazy.” (to be concluded in the next Dateline)
The Satin Hooks

Take Home Music Award

By Woodie Stephenson
Staff Writer

It’s already smoky when I stride through the doors of Walter’s on Washington, a seedy live music venue that straddles Houston’s Historic Sixth Ward. Throngs of hip and not-so-hipster music enthusiasts crowd around the length of the bar and stage giving the tiny bar the near appearance of being swallowed. The varied crowd itself is a fair representation of the dynamics of Houston’s own Satin Hooks, a band that has just received the cherished Houston Press Award for Best Experimental/Avant Garde Act. However, such critical acclaim has not come easy for a group with a style and sound that cannot be classified easily.

Formed in 2003, The Satin Hooks have been called everything from a party band to Nirvana on acid; however, to give the band any justice one would have to take notice of the veritable cornucopia of influences the group possesses. Kerry Melanson and Lucas Gorham, the group’s two original members, came up playing in improvisation jazz groups but cite a range of interesting influences. Indian throat singing, punk, Pakistani, metal, indie, electronic drum & bass—these are the ingredients that spice up The Satin Hooks blend of eclectic rock. Then toss in some hardcore with Gomer, the groups latest addition as muscle behind the drums, and you have a serious power-trio.

The crowd sits lethargically through two opening acts that warm up the stage before The Satin Hooks light it on fire. As The Satin Hooks take the stage, bodies in the crowd begin to sway and eventually thrash in a show of strange improvisational dancing that can only be fittingly juxtaposed with music so original. Deep, menacing bass lines bounce buoyantly over the charging drums and distorted guitar licks. The quick rhythms of drum & bass inspired drum beats make for a rhythm section that send bodies into convulsions. Gomer, who handles lead vocal duties for the Hooks, wails in a slightly hoarse voice over the organized chaos in a manner which eerily reminds many of the late Kurt Cobain. The Hooks offer the excited crowd a crop of new tunes as well as fan favorites such as “Atmospheric Untratrance”, a track with an undeniably catchy loop, and “Soda Song,” a powerful yet poppy song with immaculate pauses in timing.

Marketing themselves on word of mouth and DIY principles, The Satin Hooks have extended an international fan base through the interactive websites MySpace and PureVolume. Although the group has ambitions to bring their sound to an even wider audience, for now they are just happy making people dance. Lucky for you, The Satin Hooks have nearly completed their debut album, which is expected to be released later this year.

Catch The Satin Hooks opening up for The Advantage at Walter’s on Washington, September 6th, or visit the bands website at myspace.com/satinhooks.

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for Prince Charles and Princess Ann and we got to receive many many gold records, as you know, during that year and it changed my life insomuch as, though there was the great burst of and overwhelming charge of energy for a while, it had to subside through the Seventies into the Eighties. But as the radio stations started to play this music again, I’m referring to the music of my era, the Baby Boom Generation; then things started to accelerate again. And through the Eighties we did the “Happy Together Tour” which was the first oldies tour, with The Association, Spanky and Our Gang and The Turtles. In ’86 I did The Monkees Twenty Year reunion tour. Can you believe its twenty years later now? But we did that with Herman’s Hermits and The Grass Roots and it was the biggest grossing tour of that summer. In fact it toured for nearly six and a half months, something like that, so things started to build. So here we are, all these years later, and the music has, like I said, once again I’m repeating myself. But being a part of the fabric of American Pop Music, I’m fortunate enough to go out and make a great living, playing the music, having fun with the people, and working all the venues from Casinos to theatres, Performing Arts Centers, fairs, festival, you name it, we’re able to do them. So that’s how it’s impacted my life.

Gary Puckett was known in the sixties as being on of the premier balladeers by his legions of fans. You won’t want to miss his concert. For ticket information on Gary’s upcoming September 23rd Houston area performance go to www.staffordcentre.com.

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above the laws as they are defined by the Constitution. He is calling for the banishment of the Federal Reserve first and foremost as a gateway to finding solutions for all other problems Americans currently face.

As a director, Aaron Russo is best known for movies such as The Rose starring Bette Midler as Janis Joplin and Trading Places with Eddie Murphy and Dan Akroyd. In addition to directing, Russo has acted as agent to many performers, both actors and musicians. After producing a documentary entitled Mad as Hell, Russo was asked to run for Governor in the state of Nevada. In 1998, he ran in the Republican primary of that state and was not taken serious until he received 26 percent of the vote, placing second and defeating the sitting Lieutenant Governor. In 2004, Russo announced his candidacy for the Libertarian Party Presidential Primary. Again, Russo finished second and lost the nomination on the second ballot. Shortly after his defeat he left politics and dedicated himself to directing his latest film.

America: Freedom to Fascism officially opened on July 28th. Unfortunately, due to the films independent status it is currently showing in only five cities including New York, Chicago, Kansas City, Austin, and Tampa. It is scheduled to open in Portland and Tucson by early October. The film has been highly acclaimed and, as touted by one critic, “this film makes Fahrenheit 9/11 look like Bambi.” To watch an extensive interview about this film with Aaron Russo log on to his website of the same name, www.freedomtofascism.com. The site contains trailers and links to related news as well as contact information for individuals who wish to contact local theatres to request that this film be shown.

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more depth and breadth to skill sets. Also take advantage of internship and volunteer opportunities as they can count as “experience” on résumés as well as help develop skills. In actuality, this information should be encouraging to students as they now possess the insight of knowing that they need to always be informed of industry news in general and look for ways to apply even now. By graduation time, we can be just as competitive if not more competitive then those who are more experienced in the job market.
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