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THE AUSTIN

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of **NO KILL**

What has the city learned,
and how far does it have to go?

BY NINA HERNANDEZ • P.24

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Tearing Down the Social Safety Net Will Be a Lot Easier Than Building It Back Again When It Is Realized How Necessary It Is

Returning to the discussion of those so disgusted with the Democratic Party and its candidate that they followed their conscience either by choosing a third party candidate or not voting, what is troubling is how they became so hostile. That though driven by progressive politics, they dismissed the consequences of their decision, even though Trump's stated ambition was the diametric opposite.

The fear of Trump's presidency is not partisan. It is not that he is conservative and a Republican, which would not be a problem, but that he really is neither. He lacks political identity. Rather promiscuous with promises and guarantees on the campaign trail, Trump was a master of sound bites, but was also devoid of ideas. Especially concerning is rather than as with most populist demagogues where the audience both need and expect only to be told just exactly what they want to hear, he's proven his ability to get away with saying anything.

Historically, conservatives, even when decrying liberal dominance, have held sway. The Kennedy and Johnson presidencies were followed by Richard Nixon's hard shift to the right, an even sharper reverse when Jimmy Carter was replaced after one term by Ronald Reagan. When successfully passed, leftist legislation is vulnerable, with reversal always a possibility.

Many of those who followed their conscience rather than the Democratic Party, sharing a humanist idealism, found themselves finally unable to handle politics as usual, especially as practiced by liberals. Elected serving legislative Democrats' con-

sistent failure to pass legislation began to seem deliberate, suggesting that the cowardly officeholder would always rather pull back when they should be pushing forward.

Older veterans of progressive causes, having been so engaged most of their lives, had far more modest expectations concerning legislation. Understanding that laws are not enacted in a vacuum, they appreciated that the conservative right was always there pushing back hard. Routinely, even when enacted, invariably it would seem too little, too late.

Still, there are those who loudly proclaim that settling for anything less than desired utopian leftist vision is selling out.

Not to get too deep into a Sanders discussion here, the anti-Washington message of his progressive campaign

certainly resonated with many who ended up voting for Trump. As an actual candidate, his landslide victory would have been nowhere near as assured as some of his supporters insist. Yet considering the cross-cultural potential indicated by his progressive politics should be crucial when developing future strategies.

Certain the next president will achieve his loftiest goals - bringing jobs back, while forcing illegal immigrants out; sealing the borders, while also resurrecting manufacturing - Trump's supporters believe this is a permanent shift to the right, the silent majority finally vanquishing the welfare

warriors. Certainly pleased that America will be great again, they seemed even more excited about gloating at Trump rubbing liberalism's face in its failure. You can almost see how in their imaginations, trumpeters are savoring the complete rout: liberal professors driven off campuses, left-leaning media dismantled and political correctness dispatched, fully silencing minority, feminist, and LGBT activists.

Don't want to rain on anyone's parade, but the country's ideology has never settled in any extreme permanently. Instead it has always slowly swung back and forth, moving like a pendulum to the hard right for some time then drifting left.

Many of Trump's supporters seem pleased at the forthcoming mauling and

destruction of the welfare state. With denial triumphing over reality, they clearly believe that diminishing government aid won't affect them.

The corruption and failure of government is one of the few things on which the left and right agree. Sweeingly condemning its corruption and inefficiencies, they ignore its successes and the aid it provides. Taxpaying Americans, dismayed by government welfare, aggressively denounce this redistribution of their money to poor neighbors clearly too lazy to work.

When Obamacare passed, Alabama militiaman Mike Vanderboegh was furious at its

outrageous message: "We, the Imperial Federal Bureaucracy, have determined what is best for you and you will get it regardless of whether you want it or not. You will be FORCED to play or pay in our wonderful new system of good intentions."

He urged "all modern Sons of Liberty" to "send a message that Pelosi and her party cannot fail to hear, break their windows. Break them NOW. Break them and run to break again. Break them under cover of night. Break them in broad daylight. Break them and await arrest in willful, principled civil disobedience But BREAK THEM."

Evidently it never occurred to him that, dependent on his Social Security disability payments, he was living off government aid. As is all too common, he knew in his case he had earned the money, rather than it being the kind of handout given the parasitic welfare class bred by liberals.

Over decades the social safety net has been painstakingly built. But now too often its successes are taken for granted, and its failures exaggerated.

It will prove far easier and quicker for Trump and his team to destroy, ironically cheered on in the process by many who, though dependent on it, think they are somehow exempt. Once dismantled, eventually it will be rebuilt, because it is not a communist intrusion or bleeding heart liberal wet dream, but necessary to society's healthy functioning.

Once torn down, however, think of how much more expensive and difficult it will be to rebuild. ■

PAGE TWO
BY
LOUIS BLACK

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GO PROTEST YOURSELF

Dear Editor,

Apparently opponents of the Trans-Pecos Pipeline have not considered what will happen if they are indeed successful in blocking it ["Big Bend Lockdown," News, Dec. 9]. They will force Mexicans to continue generating electricity with fuel oil. Burning fuel oil generates roughly twice as much CO₂ to generate the same amount of electricity as burning natural gas. Do the protesters really want more CO₂ in the atmosphere we all share? Also generating electricity with fuel oil is more than twice as expensive as using natural gas. Do the protesters really want to impose economic burdens on Mexicans? Finally, the protesters should consider that, even a generation later, residents of the Mexican town of Boquillas – across from Big Bend Park – remember that the Sierra Club opposed their being connected to electric lines in the park. Do the protesters really want another generation of Mexicans to resent U.S. environmentalists? Americans, who use five times as much energy per capita as Mexicans, should be protesting our own extravagant use of energy.

Philip Russell

ALL CLEAR HERE

Dear Editor,

Louis Black is understandably bitter about the outcome of our recent presidential election, as are so many of us. However, his "Page Two" commentary ["Time for All Those Who Voted Their Conscience to Claim Their Credit in Trump's Election?" Dec. 16] makes him appear completely clueless about our political process. Mr. Black, have you heard of the Electoral College? My vote in Texas for Nader in 2000 had exactly the same effect on the outcome as if I had voted D. If I lived in a swing state, I might take his scolding to heart and self-flagellate in atonement. As it stands, my conscience is clear.

Keith Babberney

CONTINUED ON P.8

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DREAM TEAM

Dear Editor,
 The photo collage of Gary Clark Jr. and Stevie from the "Playback" article [Dec. 2] brought a much-needed smile to my face. Not bad for a couple of local six-string slingers. They make Austin very proud of "our" boys. I mean, it is Carnegie Hall! I was also happy to see Homer Henderson get a little recognition for his decades as an influential one-man band musician. I know this will probably never happen, but wouldn't it be terrific (as well as the right thing to do) if Gary had Homer open some shows for him? He should probably extend that same invitation to his longtime friend Eve Monsees. Now, that would be a show I'd like to see!

Jack Pott!

"I'm a pragmatic person and I voted for Clinton (lesser of two poor choices) because I truly believe that Donald is dangerous and a ho-hum Hillary for four years was a much better choice. What I suggest, now that he is in power and soon to have too much power in our great USA, is that we turn our attention to the 2018 Congress and get some Republicans out of there to help balance out the far right-wing agenda. So quit worrying about who made a better choice or a worse choice - we're all going to pay for this. So get organized and get going. This is important."

-4spaniels

MORE ON THE ELECTION:

"Page Two: Time for All Those Who Voted Their Conscience to Claim Their Credit in Trump's Election?" Dec. 16

"This. Massive, reflexive recoil to the left's endless cacophony of know-it-all preachiness is what handed Trump the swing states. Countless posts from left-leaning friends with the air of superiority, ordering them to vote Hillary or else. Remember the day before? The din of Hillary-inevitability that polls, the press & Facebook were generating? THAT'S what people were voting against - you. You and your judgment. Your dictates. Hillary didn't lose the swing states, her supporters did. In the most emphatically ironic way possible. Bear in mind these kinds of rants were plastered everywhere BEFORE the election, too. How effective were they then? How consequential will they be now? So perhaps continuing to act superior online with perpetual judgment sans introspection isn't actually the most effective path forward. Maybe contact your local Dem Party chairperson and ask how you can help in future elections." -Brad_E

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

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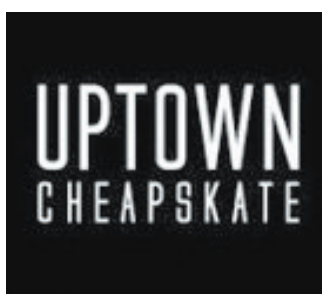


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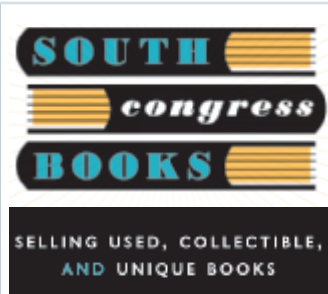


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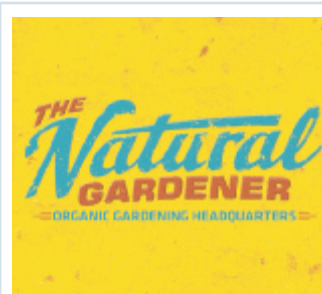


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QUOTE of the WEEK

“Texans deserve to decide where to receive their health care, and for more than 80 years they have counted on Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas for that care.”

— Ken Lambrecht, CEO of Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas, in response to the state’s latest attempt to end Planned Parenthood’s Medicaid funding, in violation of federal law

HEADLINES

LAST WEEK’S COUNCIL meeting (Dec. 15) featured the final approval of **the Grove at Shoal Creek** PUD, after some tinkering with the affordable housing component and a few other details. There was plenty of additional business, including the next big PUD: **Austin Oaks**. See “Closing Time at the Grove,” p.14.

CITY COUNCIL’S FINAL meeting of 2016 today (Dec. 22) is the ceremonial confirmation of the results of the Nov. 8 city election – new Council Members **Jimmy Flannigan** (District 6) and **Alison Alter** (D10) will be sworn in on Jan. 6, when Council will also choose its Mayor Pro Tem (currently CM **Kathie Tovo**).

AUSTIN’S CENTER FOR EVENTS announced application deadlines for March’s **Spring Festival** period, scheduled March 10-19. See www.austintexas.gov/citystage for details.

WAR ON CHRIST(MAS): Lt. Gov. **Dan Patrick** voiced his support of Sen. **Joan Huffman’s** SB 24. The proposed bill would prohibit government entities from obtaining copies of sermons, and safeguard religious leaders from testifying on said sermons. Atop Patrick’s long list of priorities is to protect religious liberty – “something we particularly treasure during the holiday season,” he quipped.

THE DAY AFTER the Electoral College voted for President-elect **Donald Trump**, Texas Gov. **Greg Abbott** unleashed on **Chris Suprun**, the Texas Elector who made headlines for his refusal to back PEOTUS. “You’re fired!!!” the state leader tweeted in all caps. Abbott then tweeted that a bill has been filed to punish “**faithless**” electors, referring to Rep. John Raney’s HB 543, fines “faithless” electors \$5,000 and bans them from the Electoral College.

STATE AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER **Sid Miller** and former Texas Comptroller **Susan Combs** remain candidates for Trump’s secretary of agriculture. Republican U.S. Rep. **Mike Conaway**, who chairs the House Agriculture Committee, endorsed Combs. Miller has made headlines for defending fake news; suggesting the Islamic world should be bombed; and sending a tweet that referred to Hillary Clinton as a “cunt.”

H-E-B IS EXPANDING, and headed where Austin’s next big population growth is expected. The grocery chain has purchased 17 acres near Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, near the **Pilot Knob** development and several other new and planned housing tracts.

CITY OF AUSTIN offices will be closed Dec. 23-26, while city **libraries** close at 3pm on Dec. 22 and reopen Dec. 27. **AISD** is now closed until Jan. 3 for staff, and students return for classes Jan. 4.

Jacob Rubio protests outside of the Texas Capitol’s House chamber on Monday as electors met to cast their votes to officially secure Donald Trump’s presidential victory. Two of the state’s electors – **Chris Suprun**, who pledged to vote for **John Kasich** instead of Trump, and **Art Sisneros**, who announced plans to resign so as to avoid voting for **DJT** – sparked hopes that the Electoral College would bar Trump from the presidency, but the effort came up short: Only **Suprun** and one other voter – who cast their ballot for **Ron Paul** – proved faithless electors within the state.

IANA BIRCHUM



Changing of the Guard

THE MAYOR AND THE NEXT CITY COUNCIL WILL HAVE PLENTY TO DO

Last Thursday’s City Council meeting – the final regular meeting of 2016 – began with informal farewells to two departing council members, part of 2014’s first 10-1 class. Mayor Steve Adler paid tribute to District 6 Council Member Don Zimmerman, crediting his “consistent and strong” advocacy for a viewpoint “that frankly had not been on this Council before” (at least, not since those heady days before desegregation). Adler also thanked D10’s Sheri Gallo for her service, which he described as “a bridge between differing views” on the dais, and he obliquely referred to her occasional role as a swing vote – a “fulcrum,” he put it – on difficult debates that sometimes left her taking heat for positions silently shared by other CMs.

Gallo responded by paying emotional

tributes to staff and to each of her colleagues, distinguishing each by some personal detail. Zimmerman thanked his colleagues, and credited “the hand of

Providence” for placing him in office, for arranging for a re-election campaign in a presidential year, and for his November loss. Providence has indeed been busy.

Zimmerman will be succeeded in January by Jimmy Flannigan, Gallo by Alison Alter. Flannigan defeated Zimmerman handily after narrowly losing to him in 2014, and Alter pounded Gallo in a run-off that the incumbent had entered only two percentage points from a majority.

Zimmerman’s defeat is readily explained by his polarizing tenure – although his policy positions reflected the most conser-

vative elements of his district, his irascible treatment of city staff and his condescension to his colleagues (and often to citizens) produced a voting backlash. Gallo’s defeat is less easily explained. She was a professional and effective council member, but she got caught in the whiplash over the two big PUDs – the Grove and Austin Oaks – and in the November of the Trump Ascension, there was no room in Austin for even a moderate Republican.

NEW FAULT LINES

It won’t be clear for some months what the changeover will mean for Council going forward. Flannigan has been an energetic, relentless campaigner, a voice for northwest infrastructure, and on social issues will certainly be voting with Council progressives more often than his predecessor. Alter may also be to the left of Gallo on social spending – although her similar support for the homestead exemption is



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Sit down for a home-cooked community luncheon with Amala. Meals are vegetarian with vegan options, gluten free, organic, and local when possible. Families welcome. *Noon-1pm.* Amala Foundation, 1006 S. Eighth, 512/476-8884. \$10 suggested donation. www.amalafoundation.org.

INKS LAKE TWILIGHT HIKE

Meet at Devil's Waterhole trailhead. 5pm. Inks Lake State Park, 3630 Park Road 4 W., Inks Lake, 512/793-2223. www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/inks-lake.

DUA NIGHT FOR ALEPPO: WITH SHEIKH MOHAMED JEBRIL

A Quran and Dua Night offering an opportunity to come together as a community and honor the people of Aleppo. 7:15-9pm. Islamic Center of Greater Austin, 5110 Manor Rd.

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Meet at the bird blind. Gate code given at HQ. 10am. Inks Lake State Park, 3630 Park Road 4 W., Inks Lake, 512/793-2223. www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/inks-lake.

WEDNESDAY 12/28

BOOK DISCUSSION: NO DOUBT: THE MURDER(S) OF OSCAR GRANT

Author Thandisizwe Chimurenga will lead a discussion on state-sanctioned violence, police brutality, and black power movements. Hosted by Black Lives Matter. 6:30-8:30pm. Carver Branch Library, 1161 Angelina, 512/974-1010. Free. www.fb.com/blacklivesmatteraustin.

ONGOING

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likely to teach her very quickly that the city budget will not stretch as readily as Council rookies like to believe.

The real question for the 2017 Council – often separating “progressives” from “progressives” – will be land use, and how to make policy about land use. Alter owes her victory in large part to her opposition to the Grove – she remains miffed that Council didn't wait for her inauguration for final consideration – and she will likely become an ally to Council's “neighborhood-defense” wing: currently Ora Houston, Ann Kitchen, Leslie Pool, and Mayor Pro Tem Kathie Tovo.

In his campaign, Flannigan has supported increasing the housing supply as the most effective way to bring down housing costs, particularly for renters. If he holds to that position, he's a more natural ally to “more housing” promoters: Delia Garza, Pio Renteria, Greg Casar, and the remaining free marketeer, Ellen Troxclair. It will be interesting to see if this nearly equal but precarious balance plays out in debates over specific projects, as well as the yearlong marathon that will be CodeNEXT.

GETTING TO YES

If that's indeed how the pattern develops, it should put Mayor Adler in the catbird seat, as the agenda-setter and the logical swing vote on most of these growth and development questions. The mayor was

audibly pleased by the compromise result of the lengthy Grove controversy, and he's simultaneously promoted increased housing supply while insisting that the Council can protect the “character” of the city's traditional single-family neighborhoods. Earlier this week, he told me that he believes the CodeNEXT process can produce a housing supply reflecting what would be required to finally generate downward pressure on Austin's housing costs, and that it can be

accomplished primarily along “the corridors” and in “city centers” that are central to his just-approved mobility plan.

Moreover, Adler said believes he can bring together the “traditional neighborhood” defenders with those folks agitating for greater and faster supply – which include not only real estate interests, but many folks who have been priced out of the Austin

market – and get them all to collaborate on a citywide plan that accommodates scale, supply, and price. “When the new code is mapped,” said the mayor, “people will see how it can be done.” The alternative, he said, is to let growth overwhelm Austin, destroying any hope of affordability and exacerbating regional economic inequality.

“I'm trying to fashion a social compact,” Adler told me. “If we don't do anything, everybody loses. ... What do we have to lose, other than the spirit and soul of the city?” That's quite an ambitious project to present to next year's City Council. ■

IT WON'T BE CLEAR FOR SOME MONTHS WHAT THE CHANGEOVER WILL MEAN FOR COUNCIL GOING FORWARD.

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Closing Time at the Grove

WITH ONE PUD APPROVED, ATTENTION TURNS TO AUSTIN OAKS



Unofficial buzz at City Hall last week was that the over/under for adjourning the Dec. 15 City Council meeting was 3am. So the fact that Council completed its last regular meeting of the year by 1:15am can be considered a minor victory, accomplished with a predictable portion of postponements and withdrawals (roughly 20% of the 101-Item agenda) – along with second and third readings, matters that will drift like fallen oak leaves into the new year – but all in all, Council managed to complete a good bit of work within a fairly steady 16 hours of business. (And they don't get paid overtime.)

The headline accomplishment, of course, was final approval of the planned unit development ordinance covering the **Grove at Shoal Creek** – mostly along the lines established by the mediated agreement between the **Bull Creek Road Coalition** of nearby neighborhoods and developer **ARG Bull Creek Ltd.** Prior to the meeting, there had been a flurry of apprehension (and some reflexive outrage) that Council was considering amendments that would upset that appletart – specifically, allowing greater commercial acreage in return for more affordable housing units, or improving internal connectivity by extending **Jackson Avenue** (just southwest of the Grove tract) through the development and onto 45th Street. Both tentative proposals (discussed in Tuesday's work session) were strongly opposed by the BCRC, and it was clear there was little enthusiasm on the dais to reopen still oozing wounds.

Instead, Council Member **Greg Casar** successfully proposed increasing the city's "buy-down" contribution to the affordable housing to \$13.15 million (from \$10.2 million), allowing an eventual boost from 138 units to 160 or more (tied to the eventual total number of units), and CM **Delia Garza** reluctantly reduced her Jackson Ave. connectivity proposal to only a bicycle and pedestrian easement to 45th Street, while lamenting that the mediated agreement – to which the city was not a party – had somewhat tied Council's hands on PUD refinements. "We're not going to solve these issues [of affordability and connectivity]," Garza said, "doing it neighborhood by neighborhood."

Additional tweaks included a requirement that at least 50% of the affordable units be two-bedroom (to enable more resident families), and a pilot program intended to create "employer-assisted" affordable housing from nearby businesses. With these and a few other provisions, the ordinance passed 10-1, with only CM **Ellen Troxclair** (who opposed the additional city funding for affordable housing) voting no. Some other highlights of the long day's journey:

- **Keep On PUDDing:** The last item of the night was the **Austin Oaks** PUD (MoPac at Spicewood Springs Road), which eventually passed on first reading only, in a very preliminary form and with the public hearing remaining open. An exhausted Council heard from supporters and opponents of the mixed-use development; the **Northwest Austin Civic Association** supports the PUD, but other neighbors are fiercely opposed. Barring postponements, the next Council discussion will take place in early February.
- **A Pile of Manure:** Amidst ongoing opposition from competing waste recyclers, a proposed contract to manage biosolids at Austin Water's **Hornsby Bend** plant was withdrawn, and Council directed staff to

issue a new Request for Proposals. Controversy includes both rival companies and a new charge that Austin Resource Recovery is effectively planning to replace private recyclers with its own operations. Council hasn't heard the last of this shit.

- **Gun Grab?:** A resolution (sponsored by Mayor Pro Tem **Kathie Tovo**) to support the Austin Police Department's free gun-lock and safety information program (funded via a private foundation) ran into trouble from CMs Troxclair and **Don Zimmerman** (who called the whereas clauses of statistics describing the risk of guns to children "political advocacy for gun control"). Offered a split motion, CMs Troxclair and Zimmerman voted against the whereas clauses, with Zimmerman the only no against the resolution.

- **Second Chances:** Under the city's new transportation network company regs (adopted during the **Uber** and **Lyft** controversy), some shuttle, taxi, and ride-hailing drivers have learned that previous criminal convic-

tions, some long ago, will prevent them from continuing to drive. Several testified movingly to Council about their predicament, as did **Billy Carter**, who operates **SuperShuttle**. Council re-created an appeal process (initially through the Transportation Department) to allow reformed drivers to reclaim their jobs.

- **Immigrant Defense:** A resolution to find emergency funding to support immigrants' legal defense – primarily to improve access, the amount and extent yet to be determined – brought sharp objection from CM Zimmerman that "**the taxpayers**" should be defended instead. He was brought up short by CMs Casar and Garza, who reminded him that immigrants (legal or undocumented) are also taxpayers, who generally see little return on those taxes. Troxclair and Zimmerman voted no.

In addition to the few surviving zoning cases – plenty to carry on into 2017 – **Rotel & the Hot Tomatoes** delivered a stinging rendition of **Cheryl Lynn's** 1978 hit, "Got to Be Real." Not a bad idea. – *Michael King*

Officially, there's one more 2016 meeting: today (Dec. 22), to canvass (confirm) the results of the Nov. 8 city election, but that's a ceremonial obligation requiring attendance by only a couple of members. See you in 2017!

A Grove PUD Checklist

The final form of the ordinance concerning the Grove at Shoal Creek PUD was a hybrid of the mediated agreement between the Bull Creek Road Coalition of nearby neighborhood associations and the developer, ARG Bull Creek Ltd., with amendments added by City Council on Dec. 15. Following are the major elements approved by Council for the 75.7-acre tract. – *M.K.*

- Office development limit: 185,000 sq. ft.
- Retail/commercial limit: 140,000 sq. ft.
- Single tenant retail/commercial limit: 35,000 sq. ft.
- Cocktail lounge total limit: 10,000 sq. ft.
- Number of residential units: Capped at 1,515 (at full build-out, over 20 years)
- Percentage of affordable units: 12.5% (city contribution capped at \$13.15 million)
- Rental units: 11.85% at 60% median family income; 1.6% at 80% MFI
- Owned homes: 7.9% at 80% MFI
- Employer-assisted housing pilot: Employers to partly subsidize employees (40% MFI)
- Outside amplified sound limit: 10am-9pm (Sun.-Thur.); 10am-9:30pm Fri./Sat./holidays
- Certain restrictions on heights, setbacks along Bull Creek Road
- No vehicle connection at Jackson Ave./45th St. (bike/pedestrian easement only)
- Developer contribution of \$400,000 in traffic mitigation/calming/sidewalks; city will put in \$900,000
- Drainage review: no adverse drainage impact downstream; \$50,000 put in escrow for future claims.
- Total credited parkland: 14.48 acres; managed with neighborhood input
- Plans for tree preservation, green building standards, landscaping standards

NAKED CITY

All Interim Everything (Police Monitors Included)

Interim City Manager **Elaine Hart** expects to name a replacement for outgoing Police Monitor **Margo Frasier** before the beginning of the new year, according to City Media Manager David Green. Any potential suitor would first get hired on an interim basis until a new city manager is hired to replace Hart, at which point the permanent CM would go to work finding a long-term PM with whom to move forward. Green says a framework for what the interim hiring process will look like "hasn't been made yet" – which, given that 2017 is 10 days away, suggests the hire could come from within. **Louis Gonzales** is currently Frasier's first assistant. Frasier officially retires Jan. 31, but tells the *Chronicle* she's planning to spend the true bulk of January burning accrued leave. – *Chase Hoffberger*



JOHN ANDERSON

Texas Blocks Planned Parenthood from Medicaid

Texas officials have followed through with their months-long promise to kick **Planned Parenthood** out of **Medicaid**. More than a year after Gov. **Greg Abbott** announced such an intent, the state finally sent its legal notice to the health care provider, the Texas Tribune first reported Tuesday night. Citing widely discredited fetal tissue sting videos, the state claims PP violated state and federal law. State and federal taxpayer funding for abortion services is prohibited in Texas. Kicking Planned Parenthood out of Medicaid will result in blocking access to free and low-cost health care, such as birth control, HIV tests, well-woman exams, and breast and cervical cancer screenings, for at least 13,500 poor and uninsured women, including 1,000 Austin clients who come to the clinics each year. The provider has vowed to fight the exclusion in federal court. See "Texas Sends Final Notice to Kick Planned Parenthood Out of Medicaid" online for a full history and rundown. – *Mary Tuma*

CONTINUED ON P.16

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Dead on Arrival

MANLEY PUTS "OPERATION: REOPEN CRIME LAB" ON ICE

The **Austin Police Department** has officially ceased all operations geared toward reopening its DNA and Serology lab, Interim Police Chief **Brian Manley** announced in a press conference Friday afternoon. "We have failed in the area that's under question now," said Manley. The interim chief told reporters that the department will no longer proceed with plans to hire eight additional lab staff, and will no longer need the \$1.4 million that had been approved for those hires by City Council in this year's fiscal budget.

Manley's announcement marked a significant development in what's been a disastrous six months for APD and its DNA lab, which closed in June after an audit from the **Texas Forensic Science Commission** revealed a hefty list of longstanding issues: unapproved DNA testing procedures, inaccurate quality assurance methods, unqualified lab technicians and management, and clear signs of contaminated evidence. The list of oversights has only continued to grow as more information about the lab's troubles has made its way into public knowledge. On Nov. 30, the *Austin American-Statesman* reported that an eight-day-long malfunction with a freezer containing hundreds of affected DNA samples had occurred – lab staff reportedly chose not to alert any other organizations within the criminal justice system because they were "unsure whether heat had damaged critical evidence in pending cases."

Lab technicians were beyond repair. On Dec. 12, after a series of failed efforts to retrain select members of APD's forensics staff, Texas Department of Public Safety Deputy Assistant Director **Brady Mills** delivered a letter to the District Attorney's office stating that four of the six APD technicians receiving DPS training would not continue to receive instruction. Manley said Friday that APD does not yet know what it plans to do with the two who are set to continue with retraining. "After training, we'll decide what role they'll

play in any work with APD under DPS supervision," he said.

Both Austin and Travis County must now approve an interlocal agreement to conduct the required science and legal reviews of APD's lab and the cases already tried using the department's forensic evidence. It remains unclear how much money these reviews will cost both entities, but estimates show that the legal review alone could range from \$6.6 million to \$14 million over the course of the next five to 10 years. Residents are expected to foot that bill through taxes, though grants could potentially offset the cost. The science review should address what went wrong at APD's lab and ultimately determine how to move forward, while the legal review will work to identify any wrongful convictions brought on by faulty evidence. **Trudy Strassburger**, deputy director of Capital Area Private Defender Service, told county commissioners on Dec. 13 that up to 5,000 cases could potentially be affected by the DNA lab's incompetence.

Manley said on Friday that **Michael Eveleth**, who previously oversaw APD's homicide unit, has been made commander of the department's forensics unit. The lab will continue to operate its blood work, chemistry, ballistics, and fingerprints sections. Eveleth replaces **Scott Milne**, who had been hired as chief forensics officer to assist with the DNA lab's reopening, and to oversee the aforementioned sections that are still working, but was soon found to be unqualified. Despite holding a degree in science, "he did not have the



JASON STOUT/THINKSTOCK

qualifications that I want running the parts [of the lab] still operating," said the interim chief.

Manley concluded Friday's news dump with a disconcerting update regarding APD's partnership with **Dallas County's Southwestern Institute of Forensic Sciences (SWIFS)**. APD had been set to begin sending 484 backlogged rape kits collected over the past two years to Dallas for DNA testing as recently as Nov. 3. However, Manley reported that "lots of places" are currently using SWIFS right now, including the Travis County D.A.'s office. The Dallas lab has requested that APD only send 20 cases per month, which will not "assist us in clearing the backlog or keeping up with current cases," said Manley. "We are

actively looking within the science community for a solution to the current cases."

Currently, no timetable exists for when the DNA lab will reopen or if a new lab will open at all. (Speculation has it now that APD may try to enter into a working agreement to send its future incoming evidence – and some salary money for technicians – to DPS.) While the county has already approved both the scientific and legal studies of APD's lab, the city has yet to approve the request. Assistant City Manager **Rey Arellano** spoke briefly on Friday after Manley to say he hopes to have the interlocal agreement in place by the end of January.

Manley was adamant about APD's determination to put a system in place that "works best for our community and the criminal justice system. ... We recognize the failure in our lab. [We're] taking responsibility, and pushing forward."

– Sarah Marloff

NAKED CITY CONTINUED FROM P.14

AISD's Transfer Freeze

For the third year in a row, the **Austin Independent School District** is freezing 23 campuses to student transfers. And for the third year in a row, it's a different list of campuses. Trustees approved the 2017-18 school year list at their Dec. 19 meeting, and the locations reflect an ongoing conundrum for facilities: While many campuses in East and Southeast Austin are underenrolled, clusters in North Central and Southwest Austin are bursting at the seams. The schools frozen to transfers are:

High Schools: Akins, Bowie, Lanier, and McCallum

Middle Schools: Burnet, Lamar, and Murchison

Elementaries: Baldwin, Baranoff, Blazier, Casis, Cowan, Doss, Graham, Gullett, Hill, Kiker, Maplewood, Menchaca, Perez, Ridgetop, Wooten, and Zilker

AISD has long prided itself on its open transfer policy, allowing students to request to move from their home campus to any other school within the district. However, that can only happen when the receiving campus has space. This year the district continues its policy introduced last year of only allowing priority transfers (keeping siblings together, following a vertical team tracking pattern, or majority-to-minority transfers) in non-frozen campuses.

AISD board president **Kendall Pace** said some of those capacity issues reflect successful policies, as Maplewood, Ridgetop, Wooldridge, and Wooten have all introduced successful two-way dual language programs. Moreover, some campuses have a wait list but

are not included on the list, such as Blackshear Elementary. Pace said, "It's got capacity, but those extra rooms are being used by administration." Her concern is that parents on that kind of wait list will eventually give up and move their kids to a charter or private school, or a nearby district. "If people want to go to our campus, and there's space, then it's our job to make sure that they can."

The district will take in-district transfer requests (either in person, or via mail, email, or fax) Jan. 3-31, and then accept out-of-district applications beginning Feb. 1. More info and forms at www.austinisd.org/transfer.

– Richard Whittaker

The ADA Done Right

New developments in the saga of **Texas Civil Rights Project** founder **Jim Harrington** and **Omar Rosales**, the local attorney recently ordered to pay nearly \$176,000 in penalties for filing frivolous lawsuits charging businesses with violating the **Americans With Disabilities Act** ("Talk About Your Ultimate Backfire," Dec. 16): On Tuesday, Harrington announced the creation of the **Texas ADA Defense Project**, which will "combat exploitive threats and litigation" of the federal labor law. Harrington says he established TADP after receiving "numerous reports" from health care providers who'd received a "demand" letter from Rosales stating that their website was inaccessible to people with visual disabilities, and that Rosales would file a lawsuit if they didn't pay him \$2,000 and attorney fees. "This is about as close to a shakedown as you can get," said Harrington in a press statement. – C.H.

AISD's Overtime Ailments

If President **Barack Obama's** overtime rule ever goes into effect ("Welcome to the Working Week-and-a-Half," Nov. 18), an estimated 4.2 million salaried employees who make less than \$47,476 per year will either make more money or stop working overtime, assuming their bosses follow the law. You might think most workers would welcome such changes, but at least one group of local employees appears unhappy about the prospect – and the effect the potential changes have already had on work conditions.

A nurse in the **Austin Independent School District** who spoke to the *Chronicle* on the condition of anonymity said her colleagues have been distraught about plans announced by **Ascension Health**, the nonprofit behemoth that employs **school nurses**, to reclassify AISD nurses from salaried employees exempt from overtime to hourly non-exempt workers. Despite a ruling from U.S. Federal Judge **Amos Mazzant** putting a hold on the new rule (which appears increasingly unlikely to be implemented), Ascension is going ahead with reclassification plans. As a result, reports the nurse, about 60 of her colleagues paid under the proposed threshold have been told that they cannot work more than 40 hours a week without prior authorization, including answering calls and work emails from home.

Ascension told the *Chronicle* the company is simply putting in place the same policy it's currently implementing at its hospitals. Unlike those hospitals, however, AISD schools are only staffed by one nurse each,

and there may not be reinforcements available when the nurse hits 40 hours in a week. One parent of a child with Type 1 diabetes told the *Chronicle* she harbored concerns about the prospect of a nurse not being present to administer the insulin that her child depends on because the nurse had already met her hourly quota. **Tracy Spinner**, assistant director of health services at AISD, said she couldn't comment on Ascension's decisions, but maintains that the nurses' schedules will remain the same and the district does not "anticipate any decline in the quality of care." A spokesman for Ascension declined to comment, saying only that with the court's injunction being temporary, "at this time we have elected to proceed with complying with the revised regulations."

– Jack Craver

That's the Spirit

Earlier this month the *Chronicle* reported on local podcaster **Moisés Chiullán's** seemingly unwarranted encounter with six Round Rock police officers outside of a **Spirit Halloween** store after a temporary employee falsely reported he was threatening store staff ("No Returns at the Spirit Shop," Dec. 2). Turns out the involved parties have brought the case true closure: RRPD confirmed this week that the warning for criminal trespass issued to Chiullán has been rescinded. Chiullán also reports that Spirit's general counsel said the company had placed the seasonal employees responsible on its "do not hire" list. – R.W.

Sparks Blocks Fetal Burial Rule ... For Now

A draconian rule that would force women to bury or cremate their fetus after an abortion or miscarriage, regardless of gestation period, has been blocked – at least temporarily. Last Thursday, U.S. Federal Judge **Sam Sparks** granted abortion providers a temporary restraining order against the rule, which was set to take effect on Monday, Dec. 19. After an hourlong hearing, Sparks suspended the rule until Jan. 6. He has scheduled longer arguments for each side on Jan. 3 and 4.

Represented by the **Center for Reproductive Rights** and Austin-based attorney **Jan Soifer**, abortion providers (including local physician Dr. **Lendol Davis**) had filed a lawsuit against the **Department of State Health Services'** rule, arguing the fetal burial regulation is unconstitutional, imposes an undue burden on women, and forces them to adhere to the state's beliefs. Providers suggest the rule is just another attempt at restricting abortion access and increasing the shame and stigma of the procedure.

During a hearing at the **U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas**, Soifer and CRR attorney **David Brown** argued the rule would dissuade women from obtaining medical care; put abortion clinics in jeopardy as they've identified only one provider that offers cremation services at a reasonable cost; and does nothing to advance public health. Brown said the rule is simply a "pre-text" to deter abortion, as the health department doesn't require the same rule for other bodily remains.

Sparks appeared far more confrontational toward state defendants, commenting that Texas must show reasons for implementing the rule other than "political" ones. He also cast ample skepticism on the state's timing of the rule – filed just four days after their loss in the House Bill 2 case at the **U.S. Supreme Court** – calling it "curious," more than once. In a moment of commentary, Sparks said the war against abortion rights is raging "quicker and meaner" than it has in the last 40 years.

State Assistant Attorney General **John Langley** defended the rule as a "modest step" to protect the unborn, but failed to give evidence of any public health benefit. He argued that the rule in "no way regulates a woman's right to choose" or places an imposition on clinics. Revealing the intention of the anti-choice regulation, Langley was unable to answer how the rule practically advances a health and safety interest – the objectives the state health department is tasked with. When asked how the rule prevents the spread of disease and protects health, the attorney called it a "side issue" to the real goal: protecting the "dignity" of the unborn. "I acknowledge I don't have a satisfactory answer, Your Honor," he said.

Following the hearing, CRR's Brown called the state's inability to provide a health rationale "remarkable" and more evidence that the rule is meant to "disrespect" abortion-seeking women. "This rule is really intended to send a message to the Supreme Court that Texas is defying them," he said.



U.S. Judge
Sam Sparks

When Langley objected to the temporary restraining order, an agitated Sparks noted that "this is the first time the state of Texas has ever said it was going to go ahead [with a rule] when there's a suit of substance before the federal court," and before full trial arguments were heard. "I'm going to remember that."
– Mary Tuma

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A still from footage of Bailey's vehicle careening into Collins

APD Settlementality

WHAT'S IT COST THE CITY WHEN A COP HITS A CYCLIST?

The city didn't just settle with one Austin cop on Dec. 2 when it threw \$35,000 to **Geoffrey Freeman**, the officer who shot and killed 17-year-old **David Joseph** back in February. The same day Freeman waived his right to arbitration and ended his effort to get his job back, the city agreed to settle a case that involved a second officer, who hit a bicyclist in the road and later admitted in a deposition that he didn't know the section of the city's transportation code that governs **at-risk road users**.

In Oct. 2014, **Mark Collins** was biking westbound to work on Sixth Street when an unmarked APD car operated by **Brett Bailey** – a homicide detective at the time – crossed multiple lanes of traffic in an effort to turn right onto Sabine Street and swerved right into Collins' path. A video shows Bailey's car cut off Collins, who had been

pedaling along the right side of the road.

Collins remembers instinct taking over; he slammed his brakes, catapulting himself into the air. He said that the next moments remain a blur. He felt intense pain in his knee when he came to, and someone feeling his neck for a pulse. Two Downtown officers approached him in the time before Austin-Travis County medics arrived to transport him to a nearby emergency room. One cop, he said, requested he provide an on-scene statement. "Shortly after the car hit me a policeman came over and asked, 'Was that you that made the dent in the car?'" said Collins. As he sat in the ER awaiting medical care, Collins said he worried he would be arrested for damaging Bailey's car.

Initially, Collins said he tried to deal with the collision on his own. He requested that the city pay the medical bills he'd incurred

dealing with his knee injury, and handle repair expenses for his bike. City legal refused, he said, and said the accident was Collins' fault. Collins contacted Cyclistlaw, **Lenore Shefman's** legal practice which specializes in vulnerable road users like cyclists or motorcycle riders ("When's a Crash Not a Crash? When It's a Bike," Sept. 26, 2014). It took more than two years of negotiations to secure Collins' settlement: just under \$3,000.

Much of the reason for Collins' collection can be attributed to comments Bailey made during a deposition with city legal this May, in which the officer said he felt Collins was at fault for driving in the wrong part of the

road, but struggled when asked to recount significant and relevant parts of the city's transportation code – which dictates in which part of the road bikes can cycle. When asked about the **Vulnerable Road User Ordinance** that mandates cars maintain a safe distance from cyclists and pedestrians, Bailey said, "All I can say is I'm not familiar with that rule."

APD has been predictably tight-lipped about Bailey's collision; its public information office merely confirmed generally that a settlement had been reached. Austin Police Association President **Ken Casaday** told the *Chronicle* that the department had room for improvement when it comes to officer driving training. "We have extensive training in the police academy, however once you graduate there is no requirement to go back to the police academy and qualify every year, or to take updated training like other big city police departments," Casaday said.

For Collins, who has since moved out of Austin, the incident took away his love for cycling. Before he left, just biking past the Sixth and Sabine intersection would give him a panic attack. Now, he said, cycling is a means to an end – if he must travel somewhere without a car.

Bailey has since been promoted: He's now a patrol sergeant in South Austin. By now he undoubtedly knows the transportation code and how it

IT TOOK NEARLY TWO YEARS OF NEGOTIATIONS TO SECURE COLLINS' SETTLEMENT: JUST UNDER \$3,000.

pertains to cyclists, or did so when he read the code's language during his deposition. But do other city employees operating vehicles? What about the civilians who make up the

majority of this city's traffic?

"Texas drivers just feel the roads are for cars and not for cycling," charged Collins. "Fundamentally, that's what it is. There is very little consideration for cyclists, and I think anyone who rides in Austin is a brave soul."

– *Nina Hernandez*



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Healthy Choices, Healthy Foods

LOCAL NONPROFITS PLANT SEEDS IN DOVE SPRINGS

A banner that reads “Where Everybody is Somebody” hangs in the corner of **Cunningham Elementary** gymnasium, where students gather for their end-of-the-week assembly. The day concludes with a school-wide chant and students beaming with excitement for the weekend. Some head to their crossing guard posts; others hop into cars with their parents. One small group prepares for a nontraditional field trip to a nearby **7-Eleven**.

Sarah Tanguy, president of the Parent Teacher Association at Cunningham, walks the group of fifth graders to the store. The kids are participating in the **Healthy Corner Store Initiative** run by the local nonprofit **GO! Austin/iVAMOS! Austin**—often referred to as GAVA. The students greet incoming customers and tell them about the healthy options offered. In 2015, GAVA launched the initiative as a way to build relationships between the corner store owners and residents, and to promote accessibility to fresh foods in the 78744 and 78745 zip codes.

Diana Castro, another Cunningham parent, stops by the 7-Eleven to pick up some snacks for her three kids. She says the healthier options help busy moms like herself: The store “gives me more choices when I’m on the run,” she said. “Now there are healthier options versus chips and a Slurpee. The kids help draw attention to the store’s revamped food options. One customer, who identified himself as **G. Fox**, said the kids approached him with a brochure upon his entrance: “I tested the samples and really liked the options.” Fox, who lives in North Austin but commutes to the Southeast, was recently diagnosed with borderline type II diabetes. Having healthy food options is now a top priority. “Promoting healthy foods at 7-Eleven is a

great idea,” he said. “It will help those who don’t have a healthy body put healthy foods in them so they can have a healthier life.”

Cunningham Elementary is situated in **Dove Springs**, a predominantly lower-income, Latino neighborhood in Southeast Austin. Nearly 65% of the students at Cunningham are considered economically disadvantaged and receive free or reduced-price school lunches (about average for AISD schools). In 2015, according to the city’s Office of Sustainability, roughly 1 in 4 Dove Springs residents were considered food insecure because they lacked access to enough food for all household members.

Even though Dove Springs is located in the second most populous zip code in Austin, the neighborhood still lacks a full-service grocery store. In response, Austin nonprofits, including GAVA and the **Sustainable Food Center**, began looking at the area to offer solutions. Now, Cunningham hosts initiatives from both: GAVA offers the Healthy Corner Store program and the Sustainable Food Center helps residents with a weekly food stand that provides fresh, reduced-price produce.

“I see [farm stands] becoming a part of what schools do,” said the Sustainable Food Center’s **Simone Benz**. “They are such a great resource for families; why not be a point of access for healthy foods, too?”

The growing number of healthy food initiatives has teachers using produce as a learning tool, according to **Amy Lloyd**, the Cunningham principal. “The kindergartners were comparing the size of fruits and vegetables to the size of their heads,” she said. “The concept of large and small, greater than or less than, is a kindergarten concept. So you could do that with blocks, or you can do that with fruits and vegetables.”



Students line up outside a 7-Eleven to promote healthy eating in Dove Springs.

Tanguy became actively involved at the school and in the PTA when her daughter, Emma, was in kindergarten. Now, six years later, she leads her daughter’s Healthy Corner Store Initiative field trip, helps SFC set up the farm stand, and encourages other parents to participate in the programs. She appreciates the increased attention to Cunningham, but in the last few years has also watched healthy programs come and go as if they are in a revolving door. “We are an experimental school that tries a lot of different healthy initiatives, but programs don’t always stick,” said Tanguy. “We are always trying to get families to come and participate, but it’s challenging because a lot of our families are single-parent families or both parents work.”

Principal Lloyd remains confident, regardless of parent participation. “We have parents that don’t need any assistance, others that do,” she said. “They are all involved because the bottom line is they all want their kids to have healthy foods and grow up healthy. It doesn’t matter what background you have or where you are in your economic life. But it does matter that you care about your kids. It has been a unifying factor for our campus.”

—Shelby Knowles

In 2015, the elementary school piloted SFC’s afterschool, on-site farm stand program, where parents, children, and local residents could buy fresh produce from a pop-up stand run by other parents. Due to the high demand for fresh produce, SFC launched two more weekly farm stands in October and November, at the Dove Springs Recreation Center and Odom Elementary School.

THE HIGHTOWER REPORT BY JIM HIGHTOWER

Guess Who Joined Trump’s Barking Carnival Act?

Perk up people – for I bring you tidings of great joy: **Gov. “Oops”** is back!

Yes, **Rick Perry**, the former Texas governor who specialized in putting the “goober” in gubernatorial, is being brought back from well-earned obscurity in rural Texas to join the menagerie of characters in “The Donald Show.” For us lovers of low political comedy, Perry is literally an early Christmas gift from on high – not from heaven (not that high), but from the dizzying heights of **Trump Tower**. That’s where the orange-haired impresario-in-chief has been holding tryouts for his Washington cast, and Perry is a slapstick-perfect choice for Trump’s bizarre cabinet.

Who can forget Perry’s classic “oops moment” during his first failed run for the White House? Campaigning as a far-out, right-wing slasher of government services, he boldly declared in a televised debate that – by gollies – he would eliminate three federal agencies

entirely, reeling off the names of his three victims: the Department of Commerce, Department of Education, and ... and ... and, alas, as a national TV audience watched in horror, Rick’s brain just could not recall the third federal department he planned to kill off.

He was roundly ridiculed as being dumber than a dust bunny. But now – proving once again that being even quasi-smart is not a requirement for getting a high political job – Perry has been hired by Trump to be our next Secretary of Energy. Yes, that is the very agency that was third on the Goober’s elimination list! He is actually being appointed to head the \$32 billion department he couldn’t name during the 2012 presidential race.

Here’s another comic twist in Rick’s appointment. While briefly running for president again this go ’round, Perry assailed Trump as a “barking carnival act.” And now he’s a tail-wagging dog in Donnie’s carnival.

For more information on Jim Hightower’s work – and to subscribe to his award-winning monthly newsletter, “The Hightower Lowdown” – visit www.jimhightower.com. You can hear his radio commentaries on KOOP Radio 91.7FM, weekdays at 10:58am and 12:58pm.

Steve Adler’s Year in Review

Mayor **Steve Adler** isn’t letting the year end without polishing his annual apples. In a press release Wednesday, he listed some 45 “**accomplishments for 2016**,” under the five categories. We won’t list them all, but here are a few selections. Your call on the merits. The whole list is available on the mayor’s blog, www.mayoradler.com. —Michael King

Year of Mobility

- Crafted \$720 million Smart Corridor mobility bond package that will decrease congestion on major arteries and increase safety
- Voted on CAMPO to prioritize overpasses on Loop 360, drawing down \$204 million from Texas Transportation Commission to add to \$46 million passed in mobility bond
- Despite departure of incumbent ridesharing companies, Austin gained multiple transportation network companies operating at scale with a real choice for fingerprinted drivers

Affordability

- Reached settlement in Austin Energy rate case, saving rate-payers \$42.5 million
- 2% increase in homestead exemption to 8%, saving owners of a median home \$22.95 a year
- Cut tax rate for second year in a row

Public Safety

- Voted for Sobriety Center
- Voted to fund police body cameras
- Voted to fund work that will address the rape kit backlog

Reform & Progress

- Passed Secret Money Ordinance, increasing accountability and transparency in Austin elections
- Continued C40/Climate Progress

Spirit of East Austin

- Created Task Force on Institutional Racism & Systemic Inequities

Sustainability

- Reached settlement in Austin Energy rate case, financing the shuttering the coal-fired Fayette power plant in 2022
- Represented Austin at C40 Cities Summit on Climate in Mexico City



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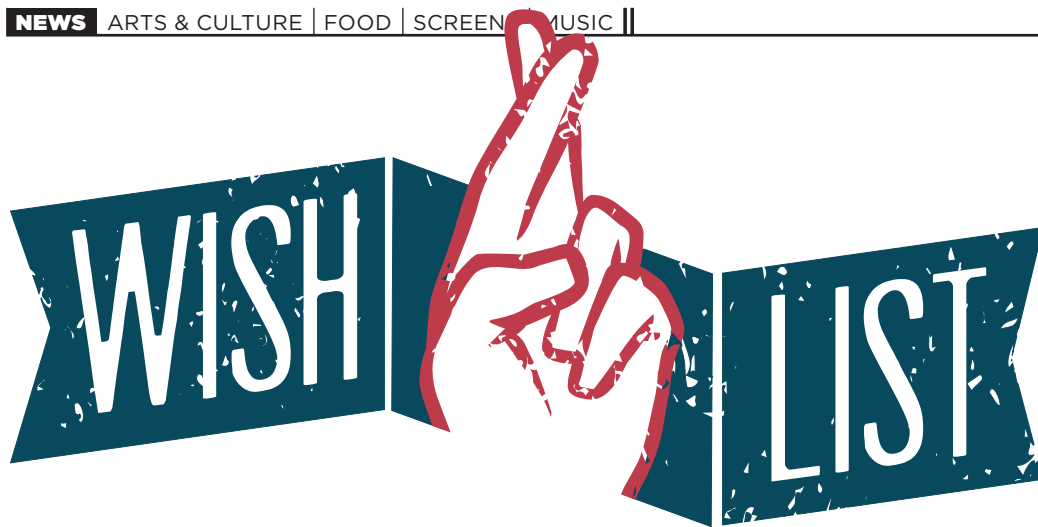
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Give 'Til It Helps 2016, Part 3

The time has come. This will be the last issue – until next year – to feature our annual holiday wish list. As you now know, each year *The Austin Chronicle* invites local nonprofits to submit a list of their most-needed donations to help better serve those of us who call Austin home. Here you'll find a sampling of our beloved organizations, but remember: Our list in its entirety lives online at austinchronicle.com/wishlist.

You, dear readers, can use our Wish List as your guide to giving. Of course money, computers, and volunteers make the world go round, so it's safe to assume that those are needed everywhere and anywhere, in addition to these specific items. A strange new era is about to begin so please, consider this list more like a New Year's resolution instead of a onetime do-gooder moment.

– Sarah Marloff

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GIRLSTART STEM CENTER

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GOOD VIBES



Chief Animal Services
Officer Tawny Hammond

Live Outcomes

It's been five years since Austin became a no-kill city. What has the city learned, and how far does it have to go?

BY NINA HERNANDEZ

Eighteen years ago, long before Jo Anne Norton ever became a volunteer at Austin Pets Alive!, she and her husband walked into the Town Lake Animal Shelter in search of a new pet. Scanning the rows of kennels, Norton was overwhelmed by the sheer amount of animals in need of new, permanent homes. While the couple did eventually adopt one of the shelter's many dogs, Norton still feels a sense of guilt whenever she thinks about what may have happened to the dogs she and her husband left at Town Lake.

She knew the ones she didn't adopt would likely die.

When Austin became a no-kill city in 2011, it immediately earned distinction as the largest such municipality in the United States, a credit that the city still holds today. Before the policy was instituted, the city's live outcome rate – that is, the rate of animals who leave the shelter to foster or permanent homes, or third-party organizations like APA, hovered around 60%. When Patricia Fraga, a media liaison at the Austin Animal Center, began working at the shelter in 2009, animals were routinely euthanized for space.

"It was a totally different environment," Fraga said. "No-kill shifted that mindset from euthanizing animals for space, to saying, 'OK, we're not doing that any longer, so what programs do we have to put in place to get these dogs out of here?'"

Since, hundreds of cities across the nation have adopted no-kill. Problems, particularly concerning overcrowding, have plagued some programs where partnerships between the community and shelters haven't been as robust. That includes smaller towns like Odessa, Texas, and Lebanon, Missouri, which two years ago experienced such overcrowding that the city's no-kill program had to get rescued by the state's Humane Society. Austin didn't become a

Maintaining no-kill status requires a coalition of the city's Animal Services Department, local nonprofits, and invested community stakeholders to work in tandem to create a framework that can care for the thousands of animals that go through the shelter each year.

no-kill city overnight, but those who advocated for the policy emphasize the importance of groups like APA – which took over the Town Lake Animal Shelter after city services moved east to Levander Loop – who play a vital role in ensuring the city shelter can maintain its 90% live outcome goals – the thrust of no-kill.

"No city can achieve this without that network and support," stressed Fraga. "[Austin] has a long history of being a caring community toward its pets and animals. So it was a natural progression, I guess, to actually have this no-kill plan, and actually have this goal – and the community could be a part of it."

Austin's animal loving community worked to weave no-kill into the city cul-

ture. But there were also questions in the early stages of no-kill from parts of the animal welfare community who remain skeptical of the city's policy to this day. Coming to consensus on the no-kill policy didn't happen quickly, and remains something the city, animal welfare groups, and community at large work hard to maintain. If animals aren't adopted out from the shelter, they generally – barring serious health or behavioral concerns – get another chance with a rescue group (for specific breeds) that has more time and resources to devote to placing dogs. Many fosters find homes for their temporary pets at work or through faith-based organizations.

"We don't do what we do to achieve the numbers," said Chief Animal Services Officer Tawny Hammond. "We make the right decisions for the right reasons, and when you do that the numbers are there when it comes to achieving a live outcome of whatever percentage your goal is."

Since her retirement last year, Norton walks dogs each morning at the same shelter where she once made her heart-wrenching choice. She's glad it's now run by APA.

"I don't think I could volunteer at a shelter that wasn't no-kill," she said.

GETTING TO 90%

This past February marked five years since City Council passed Austin's No-Kill Implementation Plan, a 34-point doctrine declaring how it plans to spare the lives of at least 90% of the animals who show up to its shelters. The city achieved no-kill status the following March, 2011, and the language that went into effect that month remains in place today. It requires a coalition of the city's Animal Services Department, local nonprofits, and invested community stakeholders to work in tandem to create a frame-

work that can care for the thousands of animals that go through the shelter each year. The Austin Animal Center took in more than 17,000 animals in FY 2015. During the same time, APA accepted more than 7,000 animals, either from the public or as transfers from the city or another entity.

It's a complicated machine; when each cog's not working in sync, the results can be horrific. *The Kansas City Star* ran a takeout in 2014 ("Growth of no-kill policies can jam animal shelters," Aug. 30) on the difficulties cities, particularly in the

Midwest, faced while adapting to the challenges of no-kill policies. The most readily apparent problem is overcrowding. This summer in Texas, the city of Odessa sounded the alarm about its lack of space and asked for help from the community to house some animals.

That's part of the reason why PETA told the *Star* in 2014 that euthanasia is sometimes "the more compassionate option than these other cruel fates" – to perish or to suffer? The *Star* also noted the emphasis on marketing and fee discounts as a way to encourage adoptions. Since no-kill came to Austin, promotions that cut or otherwise eliminate adoption fees for shelter cats and dogs have become somewhat of a routine.

Mike Martinez worked for three years to pass the ordinance during his term on City Council. He acknowledged the complexity of the no-kill issue, and said that community support and enthusiasm was key, especially because of the cost. (It was estimated the policy would cost the city \$1 million per year.) "Everyone's all for good policy, until they find out, 'Oh wait, they've got to spend money?'" Martinez said. "Maybe it's not so good. We had to go through that."

Martinez describes the beginning of his push for no-kill as "lonely." Council faced a lean budget; investing money in pet rescues was going to be a tough sell, at least early on. Martinez and other CMs, in particular Laura Morrison, won support from the community and city staff eventually, however – paving the way for a resolution's Feb. 2010 approval.

The policy proved a much different tactic than the status quo. Before no-kill, shelter staff would create space during times of high intake by euthanizing animals that could be considered less adoptable – because of age, health, or temperament. But that wouldn't happen anymore after Austin's no-kill policy went into effect in 2011. Now when the shelter is overcrowded, a team of foster homes is on-hand to take in animals. APA and other rescue groups pick up the slack. It takes many different parts of the machinery working together to keep no-kill humming.

"That was probably the hardest part. Our city staff truly didn't believe in [no-kill] at the time," Martinez remembered. "The leaders of our animal shelter and our staff leadership at the city really didn't care about no-kill and didn't want to do it. And there were some animal rescue groups that were also opposing us, and that was difficult."



Desiree Cabazos, age 12, and Osiah Cabazos, age 9, with a senior adoptable dog at the Austin Animal Center

PHOTOS BY JANA BIRCHUM



Mikaela Moya with an unnamed cat

THE NEW REGIME

Tawny Hammond took over as chief animal services officer in the summer of 2015. She says Austin's reputation as a no-kill city was one of the primary reasons she chose the job. Yet months after she took the position, the city auditor released a sobering report on the city's Animal Services Department, casting a specific eye toward the ways in which the center was functioning in its first four years under no-kill.

The report acknowledged that the city was complying with the 90% threshold for live outcomes, but noted overcrowding at its new facility on Levander Loop, animals not receiving necessary care, and a department that wasn't necessarily responding promptly enough to 311 calls about loose or aggressive pets. It recommended that Hammond review kennel practices, set in place better systems for collecting data, and come up with a better way to "safeguard shelter drug inventories."

The city had actually been experiencing issues with no-kill since as early as the summer of 2012. That July, the *Chronicle* reported that, while the city had reached a 92% live outcome rate, Animal Services was having serious capacity problems 17 months into the policy – at both its Levander Loop site and the aging Town Lake Animal Shelter that now houses APA ("\$1 Million: The Next Price Tag on No-Kill," July 27). "Certainly since the busy season started this summer we have struggled to keep up with enough personnel to adequately take care of all the animals," the city's former chief animal services officer, Abigail Smith, told the *Chronicle* then. "There's definitely some improvement that needs to be done there. But it's more difficult to give the highest level of care when you have more animals than you thought you would have There are a gazillion animals, and we're short-staffed. It's a nightmare."

Part of the reason for Smith's problems was that the city was never supposed to operate two shelters on its own. "Community involvement" wasn't just a term thrown around to make donors feel fuzzy. It's a necessity, in this case in particular. Ham-

mond told the *Chronicle* that the shelter has between 600 and 700 animals in foster homes at any particular time. It's during those foster periods that Animal Services is able to learn more about each pet's behavior: Shelters are so stressful on an animal's psyche that it's hard to get an accurate read.

In Hammond's tenure, the live outcome rate has steadily risen from 2014's 94% to as high as 98%. "Ever since Tawny showed up, she's put an incredible staff together," said Martinez. "She's taken it even further than we thought it would go. She's really committed to it."

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Last month, Council oversaw a series of contentious hearings concerning a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance on first impound. That means if an intact dog escapes its yard and ends up in city holding, its owner would have to agree to have the animal spayed or neutered before it's returned back home. Currently, the shelter has a mandatory spay/neuter in effect on second impoundment.

The discussion brought out the ugly side of animal welfare politics in Austin. Opponents painted a grim picture of the policy that they believe leaves animals elsewhere in the county in the cold – leading to people dumping unwanted pets rather than deal with city bureaucracy. Delwin Goss, a long-time East Austin resident and active supporter of animal welfare rights who still considers no-kill akin to "euthanasia by proxy," called any mandatory spay/neuter on first impound resolution "a teensy step in the right direction," but one the city should ultimately take in order to fully commit to spay/neuter. Animal Services staff told Council that there wouldn't be very many animals affected by the policy. Austin and Travis County together already spend close to \$600,000 on stray spay and neuter procedures each year.

APA Director Ellen Jefferson knows all about that cost, having founded the low-cost spay/neuter clinic Emancipet in 1999. Jefferson, a veterinarian, left Emancipet for her current job with APA in 2008. "I really believed that spay/neuter was the answer, and so I put 100 percent of my effort into it, working pro bono even, trying to get as many animals spayed and neutered in the community as possible," Jefferson said. "Over those nine years, I could see the positive and negative of that, and also that we weren't making that kind of impact. I didn't expect to spend almost 10 years of my life spaying and neutering and not see the city be anywhere close to no-kill."

Martinez suggested critics of no-kill are precisely why the people who worked so hard to pass the policy in 2011 stay in close contact today. "We do know the minute we take our eyes off of it, it could slip at any moment," he said. "When an issue comes up, and Tawny [Hammond] needs our support in front of City Council, we're there – we're calling our council members."

Hammond expects the next five years under no-kill to be data-driven and community-oriented. In December, Animal Ser-

vices announced a two-year pilot program aimed at three ZIP codes in Central and East Austin that experience a higher than average 311 call rate, a higher than average intake, and a lower than average reclamation rate. She hopes to learn what community resources are specifically missing in those neighborhoods and how Animal Services can connect people to those services. With more than 70% of dogs coming into the center as strays, this \$1.1 million pilot program could make an impact.

"The idea is if we can keep pets in homes, before that bond is broken, before the pet becomes lost, before the pet becomes surrendered, that's better for the animal and that's one animal that doesn't come in and sit in a kennel," said Hammond. "[In] the next five years, Austin Animal Services and this community we serve will be finding out what people need to keep pets in their homes."

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DECEMBER
22-29

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WEEK-MINDED



22 THURSDAY

CHRISTMAS WITH MAC BLAKE

Cap City Comedy Club, 8pm

COMMUNITY: **Trail of Lights** Zilker Park, 7-10pm
GAY PLACE: **Neon Rainbows: A Very Country Christmas** Cheer Up Charlies, 9pm
HOLIDAY BAZAARS: **Blue Genie Art Bazaar** 6100 Airport, 10am-10pm
DANCE: **The Nutcracker** Long Center, 2pm
LITERA: **Vanessa Jimenez Gabb Book Launch** Malvern Books, 7pm



23 FRIDAY

OCTANT: THE STUTTERING CLOCK

721 Congress, 8pm

MUSIC: **Legends & Legacies: Savannah Welch Benefit** Continental Club, 9pm
MUSIC: **The Joe Jacksons** ABGB
HOLIDAY BAZAARS: **VSA Texas Holiday Art & Gift Show** VSA Arts of Texas, 10am-4pm
FOOD: **Holiday Market** Dai Due, 10am
COMEDY: **Esther's Follies** 525 E. Sixth, 8pm & 10pm
COMEDY: **Penultimate Bad Boys** ColdTowne, 8:30pm



24 SATURDAY

CARSON MCHONE'S SONG SWAP

White Horse, 10pm

MUSIC: **Alvin Crow** Little Longhorn Saloon, 9pm
HOLIDAY BAZAARS: **Armadillo Christmas Bazaar** Palmer Events Center, 10am-10pm
THEATRE: **Santaland Diaries** ZACH Theatre, 2:30 & 7:30pm
COMMUNITY: **Stargazing & Santa Watch Party** Flat Creek Estate Winery, 7-9pm
GAY PLACE: **Naughty or Nice Ball** Oilcan Harry's, 9pm
FOOD: **Feast of the Seven Fishes** L'oca d'oro, 5:30 & 8pm



25 SUNDAY

DALE WATSON'S CHRISTMAS SHOW

Continental Club, 10:15pm

MUSIC: **Alex Coke Quartet** Elephant Room
MUSIC: **Christmas Day Dance Party** Antone's
THEATRE: **Santaland Diaries** ZACH Theatre, 2:30pm
GAY PLACE: **Christmas Day Potluck** Bout Time II, noon



26 MONDAY

SHEN YUN

Long Center, 6pm

MUSIC: **Augie Meyers** Strange Brew, 8pm
COMEDY: **Monday Night Mash Improv** ColdTowne, 8:30pm

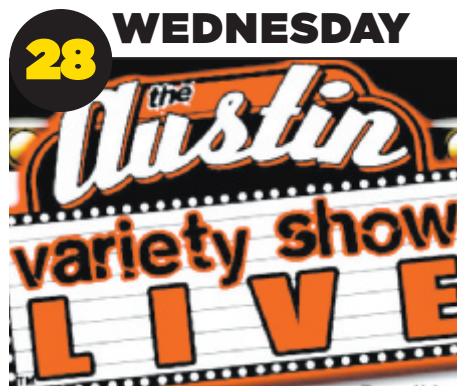


27 TUESDAY

BODEANS

Townsend

COMEDY: **Chick Schtick** Cap City Comedy Club, 8pm
COMEDY: **Screw Tops** ColdTowne, 8p:30m
THEATRE: **Shen Yun** Long Center, 2 & 7pm



28 WEDNESDAY

THAT EFFIN' GAME SHOW

Spider House Ballroom, 8pm

MUSIC: **Willis Alan Ramsey** Townsend
MUSIC: **Jungle Show II** 3ten ACL Live
THEATRE: **Shen Yun** Long Center, 2pm



29 THURSDAY

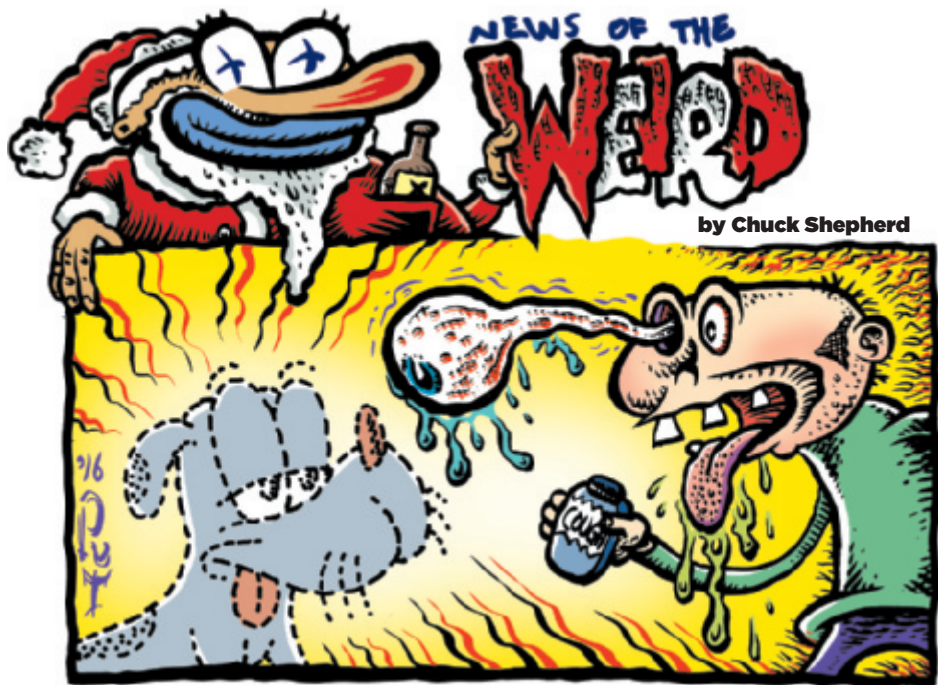
WILLIE NELSON

ACL Live at the Moody Theater, 8pm

MUSIC: **Mother Falcon: The Thank Y'all Show** Mohawk
MUSIC: **Mike Zito** Antone's, 9:30pm
CLASSICAL: **LOLA at 4th Tap** 10615 Metric, 8pm
COMEDY: **Comedians Recap the Year** Spider House Ballroom, 8pm

austinchronicle.com/calendar

SUBMIT! For FAQs about submitting a listing, contact info, deadlines, and an online submission form, go to austinchronicle.com/submit.



“Man Mixing LSD and Cough Syrup Saves Dog From Imaginary Fire” (WNYT-TV, Albany, N.Y., Oct. 15). (Panicked, he had first sought help from neighbors – who were unpersuaded by the sight of a fireless fire.)

Open Wide

Radical dentistry was on display in November in London’s Science Gallery, where installations offered “art-science collaborations” – including Taiwan artist Kuang-Yi Ku’s “Fellatio Modification Project.” Former dentist Ku, complaining that textbooks on mouths tragically underregard their value in sex, created (the ordinary way) a custom retainer for the client’s mouth but then added rubber “bumps” and “cones” and “ribs” and “ripples” that might be pleasing to a partner.

Suspicious Confirmed

Evolution, according to scientists, likely explains why some “prey” develop defense mechanisms to avoid “predators,” i.e., the prey who fail to develop them are unable to procreate (because they’re dead), but a team of scientists from Sweden and Australia recently concluded that something similar happens in a species of fish in which males mate basically by huge-appendaged rape. Growing nine generations of the species in the lab, the researchers concluded that the females who can avoid the “rapist” evolve larger brains than those who fall victim. (Researchers, loosely speaking, thus concluded that as males grow bigger penises, females grow bigger brains to outsmart them.)

Recurring Themes

Whistle-blower goes to jail; responsible industry executives make millions. Longtime Mississippi environmental activist Tennie White is 27 months into a 40-month sentence (for “falsifying” three \$150 tests in her laboratory), but high-ranking executives at the Kerr-McGee chemical conglomerate made millions on the case White helped expose: leakage of cancer-causing creosote into communities, including White’s Columbus, Miss., neighborhood. A detailed investigation by

TheIntercept.com in November noted the executives’ brilliant response to the 25,000 creosote lawsuits nationwide: Put all the liability into one outlying company (eventually going bankrupt) but selling off, highly profitably, the rest of the firm.

Compelling Explanations

Texas is among the most enthusiastic states for jailing low-income arrestees who cannot pay a money bail, especially during devastating family hardships, and the four Houston bail magistrates are particularly harsh, according to a recent report of the Texas Organizing Project. After hearing one financially overwhelmed woman beg sarcastically that \$1,000 bail is “nothing” next to her other bills, unsympathetic magistrate Joe Licata shrugged, “It’s nothing to me, either. It’s job security.”

Pervert – Or Not

1) When police in Port Orange, Fla., arrested Anthony Coiro, 76, in November, he admitted that he had a stash of “crazy” pornography, some featuring children. However, he adamantly insisted, “I’m not a pedophile. I’m just a pervert,” adding, “a law-abiding pervert.” He faces 52 counts. 2) In November in Osaka, Japan, an unnamed arrestee apparently had his sexual molestation charge (against a woman on a crowded train) dramatically downgraded. “Actually,” the man indignantly told the judge, he is not a pervert – but just a pickpocket (a lesser crime). The victim had testified that the man had brushed against her for “3 seconds” and not the “30” she originally told police.

Weird Quantities Recently in the News

1) Price tag for one round of a 155mm projectile shot from the Navy’s USS Zumwalt: \$800,000. 2) Trees killed in California by the now-5-year-old drought: 102,000,000. 3) Recent finding of water farthest from the

Earth’s surface: 621 miles down (one-third of the way to the Earth’s core). 4) Odds that statistics lecturer Nicholas Kapoor (Fairfield University, Fairfield, Conn.) said he played against in buying a \$15 Powerball ticket: 1 in 913,129 (but he won \$100,000!). 5) Speed police calculated Hector Fraire, 19, reaching in an Oklahoma police chase: 208 mph (but they got him, anyway). 6) Different languages spoken by children in Buffalo, N.Y., public classrooms: 85.

Hardly Need a Breathalyzer

1) Michelle Keys, 35, among those joyously caught up in Iowa’s upset win over highly ranked Michigan in football in November and celebrating that night in Iowa City, was slurring and incoherent and told police she was certain she was standing in Ames, Iowa (120 miles away), and had just watched the “Iowa State-Arizona” game (a matchup not played since 1968). (She registered .225.) 2) A 38-year-old woman was arrested in Springwood, Australia, in November when police stopped her car at 3am at an intersection – with a children’s swing set wedged onto the roof of her SUV. (She had shortly before mistakenly driven through someone’s backyard and through the swing set.) (.188.)

Perspective

“Sexually-based offenses,” a TV show intones, are “particularly heinous,” but to the small Delaware liberal arts Wesley College (according to the U.S. Department of Education) even an accusation of sexual misconduct is so heinous that there was no need even to interview the alleged wrongdoer before expelling him. (An informal meeting did occur, but only after the investigation was completed.) The expulsion was given even though the victim herself had not originally accused that particular student. The expelled student’s offense was to have helped set up video for a consensual sex encounter that was (without consent) live-streamed. (The Department of Education accepted a settlement in which Wesley agreed to revamp its code of student rights.)

Least Competent Artists

Apparently the plan by a 33-year-old unlicensed driver with an unregistered vehicle in Perth, Australia, in November to keep from being stopped by police was to print “POLICE” in large, “official”-looking letters on the sides of her white Hyundai, using a blue dry-erase marker. (She was, of course, quickly stopped by police.)

A woman in a quiet north Minneapolis neighborhood told reporters she became fearful after seeing a large swastika spray-painted on a garage door down a nearby alley (just after Election Day!). (Problem: The base “X” of the correct design has “hooks” that should always extend to the right, clockwise; three of the Minneapolis “artist”’s awkwardly hook left.)

Visit Chuck Shepherd daily at www.newsoftheweird.blogspot.com (or www.newsoftheweird.com).

Send your weird news to: Chuck Shepherd, PO Box 18737, Tampa, FL 33679 or weirdnewstips@yahoo.com. ©2016 Universal Press Syndicate

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ARTS & CULTURE

Not Very Statesman-like

The daily's release of its only full-time arts critic isn't getting good reviews

BY SETH ORION SCHWAIGER

There is a continual conversation about the lack of support for the arts in Austin that is so pervasive at openings and afterparties that it serves as a sort of dark, loathsome substitute for small talk. While universally accepted that funds are in short supply, there are signs that the scene is by other measures healthy. The coverage and dialogue about the city's creative output is, for example, relatively robust. Regional outlets like *Arts+Culture* and *Glasstire* pick up the occasional local show and broadcast it to other cities; lifestyle magazines like *Tribeza* and *Austin Way* cover some arts social buzz and drop in a bio or two along the way; and indie arts publications like *Fields*, *Austin Art Weekly*, and *Conflict of Interest* make solid internal circulation among arts insiders. Then there are the two sources for regular public consumption of arts journalism and criticism: the always-free and ever-trustworthy weekly *Austin Chronicle* and the daily *Austin American-Statesman*. Guided by two longtime arts advocates, Robert Faires (who edited this article) and Jeanne Claire van Ryzin, respectively, these outlets provide a broad readership with context and insight into what Austin arts have to offer.

But that will change very soon.

During the 2016 East Austin Studio Tour, that familiar dark, loathsome small talk took new shape with a fast-spreading rumor that one pillar of local arts criticism would soon be removed. Jeanne Claire van Ryzin's position was being terminated at the end of the year with no replacement to be made. Word of the action ricocheted around the tour, sparking outrage on social media. The *Chronicle* broke the news to the wider public with confirmation from the *Statesman* citing decreased readership and budget pressure for the move. The piece added fuel to the fire, inciting volatile debate online and elsewhere over the fate of arts coverage and the importance of a knowledgeable full-time critic – some decrying the *Statesman's* decision as others pointed out its inevitability with the drawn-out death of paid print.

While some claim that regional and indie publications should fill the void, and others give a hipster shrug to the outcry with complaints about van Ryzin's lack of attendance to their own hyper-specific artistic niche, many less quick to the social media pulpit point to what can't be replaced about her coverage. Aside from the sheer volume of writing produced by van Ryzin (a whopping 250 articles or so a year), the critic has a unique strength coming from 19 years on the beat, not only reporting but actively shaping the cultural landscape with access to the wide and the long views.

"Personally, Jeanne Claire played a major role in introducing my company, performa/dance, to Austin audiences," says founder Jennifer Hart. "It's very difficult to build an audience when you don't know the community and the community doesn't know you. She was willing to take a risk on us by reaching out and meeting us to hear what we're trying to do. Jeanne Claire's previews gave us the exposure we needed to jump-start performa/dance, and I owe some of our success to her. I'm very worried about how it will impact

our coverage. [Van Ryzin] is not just a critic but an advocate and illuminator on what's happening in the art world."

Van Ryzin has long been personally invested in Austin arts. Having tacked on a master's degree from UT in '88 to her bachelor's from Columbia, van Ryzin worked at both the Austin Museum of Art (now the Contemporary Austin) and the Ransom Center before moving on to freelance editing and writing for *The New York Times*, *Art Lies*, *Art Papers*, and the *Statesman*, among others, in '97. Two years later, she became the *Statesman's* full-time critic and since then has used her well-developed sense of the scene and the city's cultural history to piece together a cohesive picture of the arts in Austin and broadcast it to the public.

"An arts writer like Jeanne Claire, who has been embedded with the artists, performers, and venues of Austin through the growth of the past two decades, has an institutional knowledge that can't be replaced," says grayDUCK gallerist Jill Schroeder. "We have lost a voice that educates, excites, and makes people

"We have lost a voice that educates, excites, and makes people aware of the arts."

grayDUCK GALLERIST JILL SCHROEDER

aware of the arts. I couldn't disagree more with the *Statesman's* decision to fire Jeanne Claire. Her writing about Austin's cultural and visual arts was a vital part of the paper. The message this sends is that the paper doesn't regard the arts community as a very important part of the city."

Those who value van Ryzin's contribution most feel that the *Statesman* is (or was) not only a source of information, but a steward of the community – but by choosing to be only the former, as this recent rash of staff cuts indicates, it risks failing to be either. Responding to those who protest the *Statesman's* culling of its arts coverage, the remaining editors say that they'll still cover the arts with freelancers, but as van Ryzin's professional arc shows, it is the prospect of a full-time, viable writing gig that draws the best freelancers in the first place.

"Jeanne Claire so clearly engaged with the art community in Austin," says Andy Campbell, former *Chronicle* contributor and now assistant professor of critical studies at USC. "Many depended on her to provide critical context for their projects and exhibitions, and that critical context is only built up over years. People will see this as more evidence

that print is dying or that Austin is *really* a music town or a film town. Bullshit. Austin's artists are worth the critical attention of smart, engaged writers; otherwise, what people in the art world complain about – "There's no support for Austin's art communities" – will be further exacerbated."

Aside from the probability, or lack thereof, that the *Statesman* will be able to cobble together enough intelligent freelance writing to fill what's left of its arts section, the vital support and knowledge that a stalwart like van Ryzin provides freelancers will no longer be functioning at the *Statesman*.

"Jeanne Claire supported me from the moment I started freelancing for the *Statesman* in 2010," says print and radio journalist Luke Quinton. "As a freelancer, what you get from Jeanne Claire is unwavering support – both to cover obscure ideas that don't get coverage elsewhere and to critique art that doesn't quite hold up. But it's a small town, and critiquing shows by large organizations sometimes gets substantial pushback. It's hard to imagine a freelancer leveling that critique without someone of Jeanne Claire's

stature at the table. You'll be eaten alive."

Unassisted freelancers aren't likely to replace van Ryzin's sense of mission. For her, the writing is never about the author – never a platform to air one's wit, show how cerebral one is, or make grand displays of cultural acumen, as is always the temptation for the freelancer (I admit) – no, for van Ryzin, it's about opening up the artist's work for every reader.

Ballet Austin Artistic Director Stephen Mills says van Ryzin "has a wonderful talent for illuminating for the reader nuances about the art being created in Austin. She has an appetite for all art forms and has truly tried to get to the heart of that about which she is writing. She has been, in many ways, a collaborator with the arts community in helping people understand that art and culture define place and time."

Recent events have shown

all too clearly that many of us exist in our own echo chambers, our own insulated knowledge base and social circles; for art to be important in a society, it must reach those outside of the arts community. Jeanne Claire van Ryzin is one of very few voices that manage to break through to the uninitiated, to spark the imaginations of those whose imaginations too often slumber. She stitches together the disparate factions of the arts in Austin, but far more importantly, she stitches together the arts with consumers who otherwise would likely never even know they cared.

What little solace exists is that few think van Ryzin will abandon Austin's arts in response to the sense of being spurned. One can only hope she finds a new station where the respect she has earned is reflected by her employers, and somehow, one in which the community still benefits from her virtually unparalleled sense of art, place, and purpose. ■



Jeanne Claire van Ryzin will be gone from the *Statesman* as of the first of the year.

COURTESY OF JEANNE CLAIRE VAN RYZIN

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Warhol

BY THE BOOK

OCTOBER 16, 2016–JANUARY 29, 2017

This exhibition has been organized by The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, one of the four Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh.

Andy Warhol, *Self Portrait*, 1986, acrylic screenprint on canvas, 80 x 80 in., Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Museum purchase funded by the Charles Engelhard Foundation in honor of Linda L. Cathcart, Director of the Contemporary Arts Museum from 1979-1987 © 2016 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

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ARTS LISTINGS

Opposites Attract

In “Mapped Refraction: Andrea de Leon and Micah Evans,” a symmetry of haunting forcefulness and colorful zaniness

BY SAM ANDERSON-RAMOS

Oddly enough, the moment in “Mapped Refraction” where the work of Micah Evans and Andrea de Leon seems most in sync is not in *Interval*, the geometric and somewhat fantastical sculpture the two artists worked on together, but in de Leon’s installation, *Cocoon*. *Cocoon* is a series of seven gray porcelain objects hanging by cords from the ceiling. The objects are hung in a line, with the cords growing longer from the outside in, so that the longest hangs in the center, bringing the series to a point. The objects themselves have the narrow ovular shape of a cocoon, though their wormy texture reminds me more of brain matter. The organic aesthetic, along with the shatterable porcelain, echoes Evans’ glasswork. *Cocoon*

is different from Evans’ pieces, and so very much de Leon’s own – kind of haunting, kind of quiet – but those echoes affirm the symmetry between two artists, which is ideal in a two-person show.

Interval, which rests on the floor nearby, doesn’t resonate quite as much. This is

a counterintuitive conclusion on my part because, as I’ve mentioned, *Interval* is the only instance in the show where both artists literally worked together to make a single piece. The result doesn’t quite do justice to either artist. The form is rather simple: an angular steel frame, like a diamond, enclosing a large glass bulb. I have to assume, based on the rest of the work in the show, that the steel frame is de Leon’s and the glass bulb belongs to Evans. But the frame is so minimal, it loses the forcefulness of de Leon’s other pieces, such as *Void*, a dark wall piece with



“MAPPED REFRACTION:
ANDREA DE LEON AND
MICAH EVANS”
ICOSA Collective Gallery, 702 Shady #190,
512/920-2062
www.icosacollective.com
Through Jan. 7

a smoky emblem at its center, like some ancient warlock’s sword; and the glass bulb has none of the colorful, Dr. Seussian/hamster maze-ish zaniness of Evans’

glass bong. *Interval* ends up feeling rather confused and noncommittal all-around.

The bong, by the way, are the spectacular pleasure of this show. I’m not sure where the line should be drawn between Jeff Koons and Evans – possibly at irony. A classic Koons sculpture is a tongue-in-cheek commentary



Gallery view of “Mapped Refraction: Andrea de Leon and Micah Evans”

on pop culture, whereas Evans is sincere. His beautifully crafted bongos are not being presented as commentaries on much of anything, aside from the fact that glass bong production, at its best, is a highly skilled craft. All the same, it’s a subcultural visual language, like graffiti, so excuse me if I want to see it as more.

Concept aside, the bongos are fun to look at, and I don’t feel the least bit silly examining them the way I would examine a Tiffany lamp. The designs are satisfyingly diverse. *Artifact Stretch* looks like a tree branch; *Corning Stretch* reminds me of a motorcycle frame; *Seguso Stretch Set* is a glittering,

orange freak. Evans also displays significant range beyond the bongos. *Starling Trio* is a set of toppled glass birds, belly up and grasping quarters. *Needle Point* is a bright, topographical netting, also glass. De Leon’s quiet sculptures, as sober as they are, can’t really compete with Evans’ theatrics. This isn’t because Evans’ work is better, but because it has a different kind of dynamism that is overpowering in such a confined space. De Leon’s work can be appreciated in the context of this show, but it will take an extra degree of focus. It may sound stupid, but seriously: How do you share a stage with bong art, or art as bongos, or, well ... you get the idea.

THEATRE

OPENING

SHEN YUN In which the world’s foremost classically trained dancers, a unique orchestra blending East and West, and dazzling animated backdrops combine to create one spectacular performance. Dec. 26-28. Mon., 6pm; Tue., 2 & 7pm; Wed., 2pm. Long Center for the Performing Arts, 701 W. Riverside, 512/474-5664. \$70 and up. www.thelongcenter.org.

THE MUTT-CRACKER (SWEET!) Darren Peterson’s *Circus Chickendog* presents a fun holiday show for all ages, featuring talented rescue dogs performing circus feats, a talking parrot, world-class juggling, unicycling, live music, and many more magical acts. We recommend the show highly. Dec. 28-Jan. 8. Daily, 4 & 6:30pm. (No shows Jan. 4-5). *The Vortex*, 2307 Manor Rd., 512/478-5282. \$15-35. www.chickendog.net.

CLOSING

THE SANTALAND DIARIES Martin Burke rules the stage as the wisecracking Macy’s elf Crumpet in this David Sedaris classic – and the musical accompaniment is a fine show in itself. Directed by Abe Reybold. Bonus: Meredith McCall. Through Dec. 25. Thu.-Fri., 7:30pm; Sat., 2:30 & 7:30pm; Sun., 2:30pm. Zach Theatre’s Whisenhant Stage, 1510 Toomey. \$49 and up. www.zachtheatre.org.



ONGOING

A CHRISTMAS CAROL Jaston Williams as Scrooge leads a fine cast in this Zach version of the Dickens holiday classic, directed by Dave Steakley, with musical direction by Allen Robertson. Bonus: The final night, *New Year’s Eve*, follows the performance with a postshow party with the cast, replete with food, a DJ, champagne, and a fabulous view of Downtown’s annual fireworks display. Through Dec. 31. Wed.-Sun., see website for varying times. Topfer Theatre at Zach, 202 S. Lamar, 512/476-0541. \$29-69. www.zachtheatre.org.

COMEDY

IN THE CLUBS

CAP CITY COMEDY CLUB 8120 Research #100, 512/467-2333. www.capcitycomedy.com.

CHRISTMAS WITH MAC BLAKE That former (but also eternal) FPIA Mac Blake’s throwing a four-night holiday party at Cap City – and you’re invited. There’ll be stand-up from some of the city’s best (with a different lineup each night), a little music, some holiday surprises, and what are those drinks? Mo-ho-hojitos? With the muddled mint and the, what is it, ground-up reindeer antlers? A bit of powdered Rudolph in your frosty highball? In any case: Recommended! Dec. 22-23. Thu.-Fri., 8pm. \$7-11.

MYQ KAPLAN Pronounce it “Mike” when you call for reservations, because you’re gonna need those reservations: This Kaplan’s funny and a half, as you know from his numerous late-night TV appearances, if not his bestselling *Vegan Mind Meld* and *Meat Robot* albums. Dec. 29-31. Thu., 8pm; Fri.-Sat., 8 & 10:30pm. \$14-45.

CHICK SCHTICK Austin’s funniest female comics? That’s like most of Austin’s funniest comics of any gender. That’s like one hell of a terrific night of comedy. Wait, no, it’s actually two terrific nights of comedy. Dec. 27-28. Tue.-Wed., 8pm. \$7-11.

COLDTOWNE THEATER 4803-B Airport, 512/814-8696. www.coldtownetheater.com.

STONE COLD COMEDY Check out what’s happening in this down-the-road-from-that-California-burger-joint hotbed of comedy. Wednesdays bring us the love-stinks hijinks of *Loverboy*. Thursdays showcase longtime house troupe, the rightfully celebrated *Frank Mills* – now appearing with *The Knuckleball Now* on that *Thirty-Plus Party Bus!* The rest of the week rocks with *Maggie Maye* hosting stand-up, those nearing extinction *Bad Boys*, that *Movie Riot*, but note: The joint’s closed this Saturday and Sunday. But also note: In addition to everything returning next week, there’s a hella fine *New Year’s Eve Party* coming up on Sat., Dec. 31.

ESTHER’S FOLLIES 525 E. Sixth, 512/320-0553. www.estersfollies.com.

HOLLY, JOLLY, FOLLY! Musical comedy skits, magic, and a political satirical revue with the bustling backdrop of Sixth Street on view through the stagefront window! And now it’s time for the annual “Year in Review” from the Esther’s crew, the “Gospel of Shopping” wherein consump-

tion is next to godliness, and the horrors and delights of a “Bipartisan Love Story.” Bonus: the large-scale wonders and arch antics of magician **Ray Anderson**, featuring his fiery “Torched” illusion and the ever-clutching *Claw*. Reservations recommended. Note: No show this Saturday. Thu.-Fri., 8pm. \$25-35.

THE HIDEOUT THEATRE 617 Congress, 512/443-3688. www.hideouttheatre.com.

IT’S, YES, HIDEOUTRAGEOUS! Acclaimed house troupe *Parallelogramophonograph*, when they’re not touring the whole damned world, rocks the boards at least once a week. There’s a stage upstairs, there’s a stage downstairs, there’s coffee all over the place and all sorts of shows here. This Thursday brings you the *Threefer* and *Free Fringe* of improv. Check out Friday night’s showcase of *Jane Austen-inspired erotica* called *Heavens, Mr. Darcy!*, the snazzy-ass party of *Big Bash*, and *Pgraph* performing with *History Under the Influence* for the late show. (And yes, Virginia, the Hideout is closed this Saturday. But don’t miss the *New Year’s Eve party* on Dec. 31.)

THE NEW MOVEMENT 616 Lavaca, 512/696-2590. www.newmovementtheater.com.

TNM: BFD Monday nights feature a show called *Fuck This Week*, wherein your moans, groans, gripes, and complaints are turned into comedy gold. They let **Rob Gagnon** do his *Sandbox* thing on Tuesdays at 9pm, that *Handbomb* – **Michael Foulk!** **Vanessa Gonzalez!** – asplodes your minds on Thursday, and there’s more in between. And this Friday’s got *The Toyota Lopez Show* (featuring **Daniel Webb**) and another round of *Stoned vs. Drunk vs. Sober* before the place closes for the Christmas weekend. (And then, is there a *New Year’s Eve party* coming up? You bet your subterranean ass there is.)

Holidays. You love 'em, you hate 'em, and once in a while you're a confused mess of a person who loves them 'til you hate them. This time of year is notoriously difficult for queers, for "orphans," for those of us who are estranged from that messy web we call family. But, in true take-care-of-our-own mentality, gay bars historically open their doors for days when most businesses go dark. This year is no different. Highland Lounge, Cheer Up Charlies, Iron Bear, and Oilcan Harry's are hosting some merry dance parties on Christmas Eve (see Sat.) for the naughty and the nice. Sunday – aka Christmas if you wish it – will be a little mellower, and perhaps a little more home-like. Bout Time II gets into the spirit with a holiday potluck; bring a dish and dive in. Iron Bear opens later in the day for their usual weekend Beer Bust, while OCH hosts some classic drag with a fave *Drag Race* star. Cheer Ups will also open their doors for some QT time with the community. "We hope our friends find parking easily and come enjoy friendship under our little fort," says Cheer Ups owner Tamara Hoover. Happy holidays, bbs.



Light up the night

GAY PLACE
BY
SARAH MARLOFF

Kline's Pink Santa Toy Drive and get two free raffle tix per toy! *Sat., Dec. 24, 9pm. Oilcan Harry's, 211 W. Fourth, 512/320-8823. www.oilcanharrys.com.*
CHRISTMAS EVE WITH CUC AND DJ GIRLFRIEND Get into – or out of – that holiday spirit with tunes by GirlFriend and drinks by Cheer Ups. *Sat., Dec. 24, 10pm. Cheer Up Charlies, 900 Red River, 512/431-2133. www.cheerupcharlies.com.*

SUNDAY BEER BUST! We think a beer bust is the best way to spend a holiday. Gather the bears and dive in. (Christmas?) Karaoke with Murrah to follow. *Sun., Dec. 25, 5pm. The Iron Bear, 121 W. Eighth, 512/482-8993. www.theironbear.com.*

CHEER UP CHRISTMAS Despite shorter hours, CUC will open for Christmas night, offering cheer and friendship within their cozy fort. *Sun., Dec. 25, 6pm. Cheer Up Charlies, 900 Red River, 512/431-2133. www.cheerupcharlies.com.*

SUPER SUNDAY DIVAS' SHOW Christmas with the queens. Special guests include *RPDR's* Cynthia Lee Fontaine and Valentina. *Sun., Dec. 25, 8pm. Oilcan Harry's, 211 W. Fourth, 512/320-8823. www.oilcanharrys.com.*

POKER NIGHT WITH WILD WEST CASINO GAMES Ante up boys. It's time to throw down. *Tuesdays. The Iron Bear, 121 W. Eighth, 512/482-8993. www.theironbear.com.*

TUEZGAYZ Grrrr, it might be Tuesday but go ahead, dance like there's no tomorrow. *Tuesdays. Barbarella, 615 Red River, 512/476-7766. Free before 10, \$5 after. www.fb.com/barbarella.austin.9.*

BINGO-A-GO-GO Get yer bingo fill Wednesdays at the Warehouse. This ball game is sponsored by and benefits those rainbow Bobcats. *Wednesdays. Stonewall Warehouse, 141 E. Hopkins, San Marcos, 866/620-6667. www.bobcatpridescholarship.com.*

GREETINGS, FROM QUEER MOUNTAIN EP 44: MY FAVORITE THINGS QM wants to focus on the good. Tellers share tales of favorite things and brown paper packages tied up with string. Storytellers include Carina Magyar, Eboni Staten, Becky Schmader, and Austin Smartt. *Wed., Dec. 28, 8-11pm. Cheer Up Charlies, 900 Red River, 512/431-2133. Free. www.fb.com/greetingsfromQM.*

THEM//THEY A new movement in queer dance parties. Jams curated by DJ GirlFriend. *Wed., Dec. 28, 10pm. Volstead Lounge, 1500 E. Sixth, 512/680-0532. Free. www.girlfriendatx.co.*

GAYLY AHEAD

THE MERRY MERRY MARTINI MIXER Mix it up with EQTX as they raise funds for LGBTQ Texans. Martinis, music, and a "huge" silent auction. *Sat., Jan. 14, 7pm. Fair Market, 1100 E. Fifth, 512/494-9093. \$75, \$125 VIP. www.equalitytexas.org.*

AUSTRA In need of some magical music? Don't miss Austra's next ATX show. *Sat., Feb. 4. Mohawk, 912 Red River, 512/666-0877. \$17.*

Send gay bits to gayplace@austinchronicle.com. See the full array of Gay Place listings at austinchronicle.com/gay.

GAYDAR

CRAFT NIGHT Though everyone under the sun is welcome at this weekly craft night, we can't help but love a queer-owned biz that also hosts crafting sessions. Learn something new each week! *Thursdays. Bead It, 2058 S. Lamar, 512/693-2323. www.beaditaustin.com.*

GEEKS WHO DRINK Call it a pub quiz, call it trivia – either way, show yer smarts while slurpin' beers. *Thursdays. The Iron Bear, 121 W. Eighth, 512/482-8993. Free. www.theironbear.com.*

PATRICE PIKE Rock out with Patrice and her band. *Thursdays, 8pm. Saxon Pub, 1320 S. Lamar, 512/448-2552. \$10. www.patricepike.com.*

NEON RAINBOWS: A VERY COUNTRY CHRISTMAS A festive spin on an old classic. Country jams from the Nineties by DJ GirlFriend. *Thu., Dec. 22, 9pm. Cheer Up Charlies, 900 Red River, 512/431-2133. Free. www.girlfriendatx.co.*

TUCKED HOSTED BY RACHEL MYKELS Six queens, one stage with some extra XXXmas cheer. Get a little tucked action, then release that frustration on the dance floor. This week's event gets Country Hunty to benefit Vegas Van Cartier. *Fridays. Highland Lounge, 404 Colorado, 512/649-1212. Free. www.highlandlounge.com.*

CHRISTMAS EVE BPM It's a holiday soiree, with three levels – including the new and nasty Highland Underground. Turns out, this year, naughty is the new nice. *Sat., Dec. 24, 9pm-3am. Highland Lounge, 404 Colorado, 512/649-1212. www.highlandlounge.com.*

CHRISTMAS EVE SATURDAY DJ Alpha makes the dance floor extra merry. *Sat., Dec. 24, 9pm-2am. The Iron Bear, 121 W. Eighth, 512/482-8993. www.theironbear.com.*

NAUGHTY OR NICE BALL Spend Christmas Eve with friends, fam, and the Go-Go Boys. Austin Pride and OCH unite for a night of tacky sweaters and an underwear contest. Bring a kids' toy to donate to Kelly

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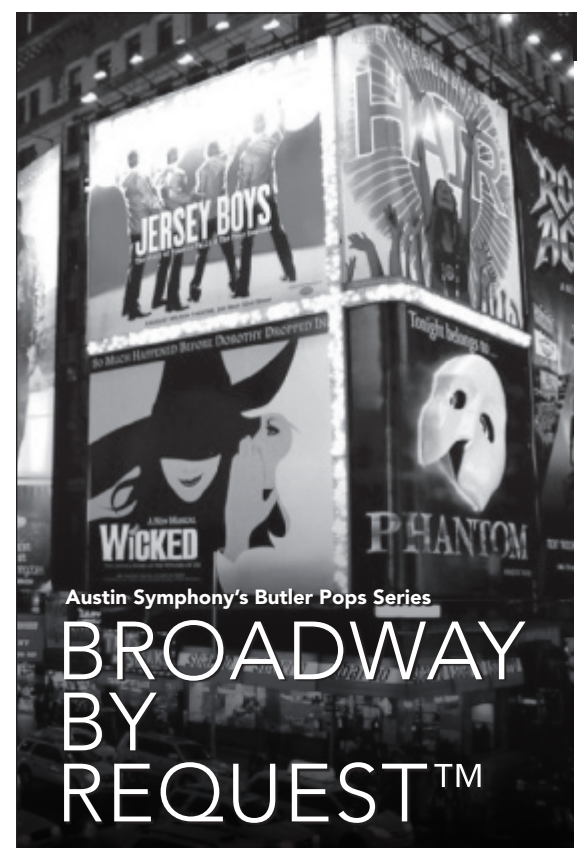
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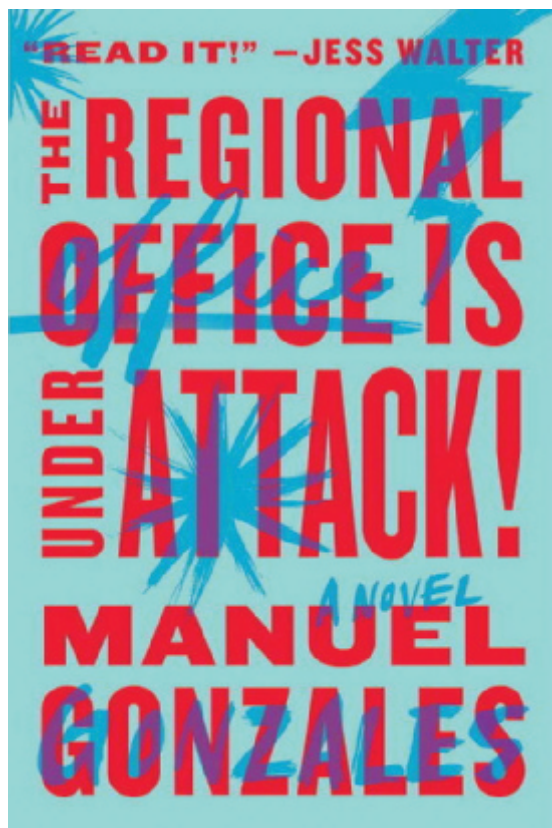
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THE REGIONAL OFFICE IS UNDER ATTACK!

by Manuel Gonzales
Riverhead Books, 416 pp., \$28

Given all of the disparate elements that UT alum/former Austin Bat Cave director Manuel Gonzales pulls from for *The Regional Office Is Under Attack!* and how they seem to be held together solely with spit and good intentions, this story should fly apart as its narrative momentum builds. Instead, it soars. Parts read like the best *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* episode ever. Teenage girls are trained to take on (and take out) the evil that bubbles into our world. There's a *Die Hard*-y element when one of the girls is a lone warrior uniquely positioned to save the titular Regional Office. There's a subplot involving superpowers, prophecies, and oracles that could happily live in the *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* end of the Marvel universe.

As in his collection *The Miniature Wife and Other Stories*, Gonzales' writing chops keep this from becoming merely a pastiche of pop-culture references. He fluidly shifts

among two viewpoint characters, a series of "nonfiction" scholarly treatises about the Regional Office itself, and a second-person chapter that proves that every rule about never, ever writing in the second person has an exception. Moments have a high-toned literary gloss that channels George Saunders or a less vocally intense David Foster Wallace while others could be lifted straight from old-school *Batman* TV episodes, with their "POWs" and "BAMs." And yet, just like with the story itself, while you can pick apart where different bits have come from, the end result is wholly Gonzales'.

With all of this, it would be hard to imagine how Gonzales will stick the landing and tie it all together. He does, however, and adds a flourish that will tick off the Soviet judge while delighting those readers who admire extravagant rule flouting and effective creative expression. — Adrienne Martini

BUT WAIT – THERE'S MORE!

THE YEAR IN REVIEW: COMEDIANS RECAP THE YEAR "More than 40 of the brightest minds from Austin's comedy scene recap the year that was," they say. And this show's hosted by **Aaron Brooks** and **Andrew Murphy** and **Mac Blake**, and features **Lashonda Lester**, **Maggie Maye**, **Chris Cubas**, **JR Brow**, **Brian Gaar**, and the **Shit's Golden** crew among the scheduled performers, so we figure that's exactly right. **Star power, bae: This shindig's got it.** Also, the evening's box-office take goes to the **ACLU** – which, yeah, they're gonna need all the help they can get in the coming year. *Thu., Dec. 29, 8pm. Spider House Ballroom, 2906 Fruth, 512/480-9562. \$8 (\$5, in advance).* www.spiderhouseaustin.com.

AUSTIN VARIETY SHOW: THAT EFFIN' GAME SHOW You, citizen. Wanna pit your skills and knowledge against other audience members for laughs, attention, and prizes? Come on down for stand-up comedy, prizes, or just to have a good ol' time getting ride-share drunk, at this night of classic game show hijinks hosted by that irrepressible **Troy Dillinger**. *Wed., Dec. 28, 8pm. Spider House Ballroom, 2906 Fruth, 512/480-9562. \$10.* www.austinvarietyshow.com.

DANCE

BALLET AUSTIN: THE NUTCRACKER This **Stephen Mills** seasonal classic, based on a version of the 200-year-old story by E.T.A. Hoffmann, is a family favorite, featuring enchanting sets and costumes,

animated choreography, and a cast of hundreds – including **Ballet Austin's** professional dance company and the students of BA's Academy. *Dec. 22-23. Thu.-Fri., 2pm. Long Center for the Performing Arts, 701 W. Riverside, 512/476-9151. \$15 and up.* www.balletaustin.org.

LOOKING FOR DANCE CLASSES? Swing? Ballet? Tango? Pole-dancing? We've got a myriad of classes listed online, with all manner of schools waiting to get your feet firmly on the floor – or soaring through the air – to joyful moves.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

AUSTIN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: BROADWAY BY REQUEST Here's the ASO concert that lets you choose what you want to hear – duets, male and female solos, and so on – from among 20 Broadway hits from the likes of *Wicked*, *Les Misérables*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Chicago*, and more. *Dec. 29-30. Thu.-Fri., 8pm. Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Rd., 512/476-6064. \$12-75.* www.austinsymphony.org.

LOLA AT 4TH TAP It's a night of holiday favorites and more from **Local Opera Local Artists**, with featured performers mezzo **Claudia Chapa**, guitarist **Arnold Yzaguirre**, pianist **Kyle Naig**, sopranos **Julia Tayer**, **Emily Breedlove**, **Lauren White Arthur**, and mezzo **Liz Cass**. *Thu., Dec. 29, 8pm. 4th Tap Brewing Cooperative, 10615 Metric. \$10.* www.lolaustin.org.



VISUAL ARTS

CLOSING

BLUE GENIE ART BAZAAR Because local. Because giftworthy. Because **these guys really know how to run a bazaar**. *Through Dec. 24. Daily, 10am-10pm. 6100 Airport. Free admission.* www.bluegenieartbazaar.com.

CAMIBA ART: SPOKEN Here's an exhibition of black-and-white photographs by **Tahila Xicahuamazati Mintz**, featuring portraits ranging in scale from 5-by-4-foot images to 8-by-10-inch images. Portraits of a forest, to be precise. *Through Dec. 29. 2832 E. MLK, 512/937-5921.* www.camibaart.com.

WALLY WORKMAN GALLERY: CAREFUL/UNCAREFUL Mississippi native **Elizabeth Chapin's** portraits are infused with a sense of nostalgia as well as pop culture, at once playful, serious, and amorous. You know: like some of your favorite people. *Through Dec. 23. 1202 W. Sixth, 512/472-7428.* www.wallyworkmangallery.com.

ONGOING

02 GALLERY: MAYHEM, METHOD, AND MEDIUM **Mike O'Brien's** two-dimensional works are a unification of sculpture, painting, and photography, in which manipulated paper and canvas pieces are arranged into compelling scenes that are photographed and printed. *Through Dec. 31. 2832 E. MLK, 512/284-8289.* www.flatbedpress.com.

UMLAUF PRIZE AND RETROSPECTIVE **Elizabeth McClellan's** performance-based installation "EnchidaLabs" features **science and the art of genetic modification**, exploring the possibilities of using viral biomes to decorate the skin through a series of videos, brochures, photographs, and human interaction. [Note: *We like the sound of this.*] *Through Jan. 29. 605 Robert E. Lee, 512/445-5582. Free.* www.umlaufsculpture.org.

78704 GALLERY: BEILI LIU If a gallery's going to have a grand opening, we reckon there can't be any better artist than **Beili Liu** to kick-start the joint with her creative explorations. For instance, **incense drawings on paper, mounted on birch panels**. In a word: *sublime*. 1400 S. Congress. www.78704.gallery.

AARC: CONTEMPORARY PAINTINGS FROM VIETNAM The **Asian American Resource Center** presents "Vivid Strokes," paintings from Houston's International Modern Art Gallery, including work by acclaimed Vietnamese artists **Pham An Hai**, **Thanh Chuong**, **Ha Tri Hieu**, **Hong Viet Dung**, **Doan Xuan Tang**, and **Doan Hoang Lam**. Also, the **Austin History Center's** "Vietnam to Austin: Restoring Community" exhibition. 8401 Cameron, 512/974-1700. www.austintexas.gov/aarc.

AUSTIN ARTSPACE: 12 BUY 12 Here's AVAA's annual show of newly completed 2-D and 3-D works of 12 inches by 12 inches each, as created by a plethora of local artists. *Through Jan. 14. 7739-Q Northcross.* www.austinartspace.com.

AVAA: FALL SHOW Group show from the **Austin Visual Arts Association**. *Austin Art Space, 7739-Q Northcross.* www.avaaonline.org.

DAVIS GALLERY: HOLIDAY SHOW This 17th annual holiday showcase features life-enriching art by **Chun Hui Pak**, **Randall Reed**, **Faustinus Deraet**, **Lauren Hana Chai**, and more. *Through Jan. 7. 837 W. 12th, 512/477-4929.* www.davisgalleryaustin.com.

DOUGHERTY ARTS CENTER: NATURE AND OTHER STORIES This solo exhibition by **Valerie Fowler** is sure to excite your optic nerves with its **relentlessly beautiful realism and frequently psychedelic conglomerations of color**. You could lose yourself among the artist's trees and streams, whether painted in oils on canvas or rendered graphite-wise on great swaths of paper, then find yourself again, transfixed by an avalanche of jewellike shapes and shades. *Recommended. Through Jan. 7. 1110 Barton Springs Rd., 512/974-4000.* www.austintexas.gov/dac.

FLATBED PRESS: COMMON LANGUAGE Here's a show from West Texas artists **Suzi Davidoff** and **Rachelle Thiewes**, collaborating as **Razi Projects**, presenting site-specific land-based installations documented by large-scale photographs printed on aluminum, a twin-screen video projection, and a hand-bound artist book. 2832 E. MLK, 512/477-9328. www.flatbedpress.com.

GALLERY 701: NAISSANCE The Long Center's inaugurating this new gallery of theirs with a show curated by **Philip Rogers**, featuring art by **Felice House**, **Stella Alesi**, **Regina Allen**, **Valerie Chaussonnet**, **Thomas Cook**, and more. *Through Feb. 20. 701 W. Riverside, 512/474-5664.* www.gallery701austin.com.

GRAYDUCK GALLERY: LUMENS & CURRENTS This exhibition by **Elizabeth Chiles** and **John Swanger** comes out of several years of dialogue between the artists regarding their work and inquires into life, their paintings and collages, and more, addressing questions of luminosity, surface, materials, color, and practices of close attention. *Through Jan. 15. 2213 E. Cesar Chavez, 512/826-5334.* www.grayduckgallery.com.

GUZU GALLERY: STRANGE BEASTS IV This show celebrates kaiju (giant monsters) and **Japanese pop culture**. You want to see some of the most vivid, eye-popping takes on **Gojira** and **King Ghidorah** and other mega-beasties from cinema and manga and anime? *This is the place, citizen!* *Through Jan. 2. 5000 N. Lamar, 512/454-4898.* www.guzugallery.com.

KATHRYN GOODNITE GALLERY Contemporary work by **James Verbicky**, **Paul Rousso**, **Joseph Adolphe**, **Chris Hayman**, **Cecil Touchon**, and **Katherine Houston**. 1207 W. Sixth, 281/799-9367. www.kathryngoodnite.com.

LINK & PIN GALLERY: MERRY PRINTMAS Shop among a diversity of beautiful print pieces – from woodblock prints to ink illustrations, and more – from six different artists. *Through Jan. 5. 2235 E. Sixth #102, 512/900-8952.* www.linkpinart.com.

OLD BAKERY GALLERY: REAL, IMAGINED, SPIRITUAL, AND STEAMPUNK'D Featuring works by **Sherry Fields**, **Janita Lo**, and **Robb McKenzie**. *Through Jan. 5. 1006 Congress, 512/974-1300.* www.austintexas.gov/obemporium.

LORA REYNOLDS GALLERY: THE SEXUAL BRONZE SHOW This is an exhibition of sculptures, photographs, and collages by **Bettina Hubby**, wherein objects suggest body parts, kinky fantasies, adventurous sex, and gentle lovemaking. *Through Jan. 21. 360 Nueces #50, 512/215-4965.* www.lorareynolds.com.



"I SAW THE WORLD"

Pump Project, 702 Shady
www.pumpproject.org
Through Jan. 28



Intervention II (Prince Alemayehu of Abyssinia)

Betlehem Makonnen's latest exhibition, "I saw the world," explores the visual representation of dichotomy through the lens of colonialism. Hosted by Pump Project and curated by gallery director Rebecca Marino, the solo show tells only a small fraction of Ethiopia's history in the crux of British control at the turn of the 19th century, narrowly focusing in on Prince Alemayehu Tewodros.

In history's telling of the prince's story, Alemayehu was rescued by the British after his father committed suicide on the battlefield at the Battle of Magdala. He was brought to England and educated with the British elite before dying of pleurisy at a young age. In another version of the same story, the 7-year-old Alemayehu was kidnapped as a prize after the British ran his father's army into the ground. His mother died en route to what would become an isolated prison, leaving him an orphan. His new caretaker, Captain Tristram Speedy, shooed away his entourage, so Alemayehu remained completely alone as a child in a foreign country without anyone from his native Ethiopia to navigate this new world alongside him. He was stripped of his cultural identity and would never return home, dying at the age of 18. Notably, Queen Victoria wrote in her diary after Alemayehu's death, "It is too sad! All alone in a strange country, without a

single person or relative belonging to him His was no happy life."

Makonnen's multimedia work exposes both sides of this narrative. Images of Alemayehu as he was received in British court show a despondent child being banded about as a mysteriously foreign entity against the upper echelon of English society. Makonnen manipulates some of these photos against mirrors in a series of four, titled *cut I-V (Prince Alemayehu of Abyssinia)*, creating distorted portraits of both the young prince and his steward Speedy. These are juxtaposed against archival ink prints that read "encounter, subject" and "adopt, steal" (encounter | subject and adopt | steal, 2016) in black and white print. At the flanking wall, a meticulously detailed sitting room installation mourns Alemayehu.

At every turn, Makonnen chooses mediums that translate sophistication through simplicity. The grandiose need be expressed only in the easily accessible: dismantled mirrors, books, and charcoal, to name a few. And for Makonnen, each piece resonates a portion of the history of Ethiopia, by extension, her own history. "I saw the world" eulogizes the life that Alemayehu should have lived and the life that Western history invented for him, in thoughtful, concise detail – and, in that, provides a new depth to the legacy of Makonnen's work. – Caitlin Greenwood

MODERN ROCKS GALLERY: ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

Exclusive showcase of new work from that highly skilled **Sarah Frankie Linder**, featuring images of **Flaming Lips, Depeche Mode, Savages, Smashing Pumpkins, Rush, Black Angels, Patti Smith**, and more. 916 Springdale, 512/524-1488. www.modernrocksgallery.com.

PRIZER GALLERY: WORK SCARS Texas native **Carl Smith** uses abstractions of landscapes to explore larger themes in art. "It's always done fast," says the artist, "with no plan, and should communicate something about my personal objectives to make the best image I can." Through Dec. 31. 2023 E. Cesar Chavez.

STEPHEN L. CLARK GALLERY: INTO THE MYSTIC Beauty in light, beauty in shadow, sublime examples of the camera's capabilities by **Kate Breakey** – as seen in these new examples of her gold-leaf photographic art. Through Dec. 31. 1101 W. Sixth, 512/477-0828. www.stephenlclarkgallery.com.

TEXAS STATE HISTORY MUSEUM

American Flags Check out this rich display of flags, original artwork, and related memorabilia from one of the most preeminent collections in the world. Also, **The Power of Nazi Propaganda** Remember back when that Hitler dipshit was going to, ah, make Germany great again? Remind yourself of the perils of fascism by scoping these rare artifacts. Through Jan. 8. 1800 Congress, 512/936-8746. \$9-13. www.thestoryoftexas.com.

THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN: HABITAT

The recently remodeled Jones Center venue of The Contemporary Austin debuts its fine new self with an exhibition by **Monika Sosnowska**, for which the Warsaw-based artist has created an immersive, two-floor installation of dystopic domesticism. Through Feb. 26. 700 Congress, 512/453-5312. www.thecontemporaryaustin.org.

WOMEN & THEIR WORK: STUDIES FOR FUTURE OBJECTS **Ana Esteve Llorens** examines space and form through sculpture by creating a 20-foot-long structure made of interlocking wooden panels that commands the gallery and decking the surrounding walls with naturally dyed backstrap-loom weavings. Through Jan. 12. 1710 Lavaca, 512/477-1064. www.womenandtheirwork.org.

YARD DOG: MODERN SAMPLERS New work by Chicago stitchery artist **Deborah Baker** in this SoCo stronghold of folk art. Through Dec. 31. 1510 S. Congress, 512/912-1613. www.yarddog.com.



LITERA

READINGS, SIGNINGS, AND PERFORMANCES

VANESSA JIMENEZ GABB BOOK LAUNCH

The author presents her debut poetry collection, **Images for Radical Politics**. Bonus: Readings from **Emily Bludworth de Barrios, Ryan Bender-Murphy, and Kimberly Lambricht**. Thu., Dec. 22, 7pm. Malvern Books, 613 W. 29th. www.malvernbooks.com.

HOLIDAY BAZAARS

ARMADILLO CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Nothing says holidays in Austin like scouring aisles and aisles of local art, crafts, and – thank God – beer. All while surrounded by tunes from one of many musical acts performing this year. Dec. 14-24, 10am-10pm. Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Rd. \$8, free for children 12 and under. www.armadillobazaar.com.

BLUE GENIE ART BAZAAR Need something Austiny (art, jewelry, prints, clothing, etc., whatnot, and then some) for a loved one this year?

Thousands of original works from more than 200 artists and artisans will help you with your gifting conundrums. Daily through Dec. 24, 10am-10pm. Blue Genie Art Bazaar, 6100 Airport. www.bluegenieartbazaar.com.

VSA TEXAS HOLIDAY ART AND GIFT SHOW

Start crossing things off your holiday shopping list and support artists with disabilities at the same time with this collection of pop-up art cards, jewelry, prints, ornaments, knitted items, T-shirts, and more. Through Dec. 23, Mon.-Sat., 10am-4pm. VSA arts of Texas, 3710 Cedar, 512/454-9912. Free. www.vsatx.org.

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COMMUNITY

✦ TRAIL OF LIGHTS Did you know that the 155-foot-tall freestanding man-made Christmas tree is the nation's tallest? Did you know that this year marks the 50th anniversary lighting of the iconic tree? Now you do. *Through Fri., Dec. 23, 7-10pm. Zilker Park, 2100 Barton Springs Rd., 512/974-6700. www.austrailoflights.org.*

12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS AT HOTEL VAN ZANDT Fun, free family events every night with a hot toddy bar to boot. Live music, movies, holiday records, cookie decorating, and more. *Through Dec. 23. Hotel Van Zandt. www.hotelvanzandt.com.*

SEARSUCKER KICKS OFF THE HOLIDAYS WITH GIVING DRIVE Bring a new, unwrapped toy for the Travis County Brown Santa and then treat yourself to some tasty dinner, brunch, or happy hour delights. *Thu., Dec. 22. Searsucker, 415 Colorado, 512/394-8000. Free. www.searsucker.com/austin.*

A BEATLES CHRISTMAS HAPPENING The Mellow Submarines will perform 10 Beatles songs "related to a key theme in readings from the Gospels." A fun new way to get in the Christmas spirit. Donations benefit the Central Texas Food Bank and the ELCA Disaster Response in Haiti. *Fri., Dec. 23, 6:30pm. Spider House Ballroom, 2906 Fruth, 512/480-9562. \$10 suggested donation. www.spiderhouse.com.*

MOTOWN CHRISTMAS AND WINTER WONDERLAND Hotel Van Zandt and Geraldine's 12 Days of Christmas come to an end this Friday with a Motown Christmas performance by the Argyles and a Winter Wonderland on the pool deck. *Fri., Dec. 23, 9:30pm. Geraldine's, 605 Davis, 214/693-7088. www.geraldinesaustin.com.*

SONGS FOR SAFEPLACE This series of concerts to benefit SP kicks off with Stefanie Fix, Heather Miller, and Lisa Ketytle. *Thu., Dec. 29, 7:30-11pm. Lemon Lounge, inside Wright Bros. Brew & Brew, 500 San Marcos St. \$5 suggested donation, free with a donation from the SafePlace wish list. www.lemonaustin.com.*

SACRED FIRE CEREMONY FOR PEACE Bring something to sit on and gather 'round the fire to send prayers and intentions for world peace. *Sat., Dec. 31, 5:45-7pm. Behind GSD&M at 828 W. Sixth. Free. www.pujasforpeace.org.*

SPORTS

THE MAIN EVENT

HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS WORLD TOUR Expect the usual audience participation along with all the high-flying dunks and zany hijinks you've come to expect from the Globetrotters. Or maybe you're a Washington Generals fan. If so, we're sorry. *Wed., Dec. 28, 2 and 7pm. Frank Erwin Center, 1701 Red River, 512/471-7744. \$22.50 and up. www.uterwincenter.com.*

THE HOME TEAMS

✦ AUSTIN SPURS Vs. Rio Grande Valley: *Fri., Dec. 23, 7:30pm.* Vs. Texas: *Wed., Dec. 28, 7:30pm.* **H-E-B Center at Cedar Park, 2100 Avenue of the Stars, Cedar Park, 512/236-8333. \$5 and up. www.austin.dleague.nba.com.**

SOCCER WATCH BY NICK BARBARO

If you have enough interest in soccer that you're reading this column, then you've probably seen a pitch to "participate in a **survey** about bringing **Major League Soccer** to Austin." It's being promoted by various local business groups, and it's for real: As the survey introduction states, "Major League Soccer has retained Barrett Sports Group LLC, a nationally recognized sports management consulting firm, to evaluate the potential demand and support for an **MLS team in Austin**, Texas. As you may know, MLS is currently evaluating a number of potential MLS markets."

By all means, you should participate; the questions ask about stadium location and amenities in some detail, as well as about your personal likelihood to watch, attend, or purchase season tickets or luxury boxes. But lest you get your hopes too high, you should also be aware that last week, MLS Commissioner **Don Garber** announced some details of its next round of **expansion** – from 24 teams to 28 in the early 2020s – and Austin is not on his **list of 10 cities** currently considered front-runners.

Just four years ago, Austin was on the short list of a half-dozen cities being considered for the expansion from 20 teams to 24, but we've slid off the table since then, as there's been no apparent progress toward a viable stadium plan. (The Barrett survey assumes that "a new state-of-the-art soccer stadium is constructed" and offers four intriguing specific location options: "near **Mueller** development," "near **the Domain**," "near **Circuit of the Americas**," and "near **Travis County Expo Center**.") The buy-in fee is \$150 million, apart from the stadium cost, and the proposal deadline is Jan. 31, 2017 – somebody better get cracking! See the survey at barrettsports.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9vrFRbLKNZbhJJD.

✦ UT MEN'S BASKETBALL Last chance to see the Horns at home in '16. Vs. Kent State: *Tue., Dec. 27, 6pm. Frank Erwin Center, 1701 Red River, 512/471-7744. www.texasports.com.*

✦ TEXAS STARS We're experiencing some real hockey weather in Texas. Perfect time to catch a Stars game as they face the San Diego Gulls. *Thu., Dec. 29, 7:30pm. H-E-B Center at Cedar Park, 2100 Avenue of the Stars, Cedar Park, 512/600-5000. www.texasstarshockey.com.*

ROUND ROCK EXPRESS BASEBALL CAMPS Learn the fundamentals and how to take your baseball and softball skills to the next level from knowledgeable and experienced coaches. Register online. *Wed.-Fri., Dec. 28-30. Dell Diamond, 3400 E. Palm Valley Blvd., Round Rock, 512/255-2255. \$150. www.rrexpress.com.*

TEXAS STATE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL Vs. Coastal Carolina: *Thu., Dec. 29, 7pm. Strahan Coliseum, San Marcos, 512/245-2180. www.txstatebobcats.com.*

DAY TRIPS BY GERALD E. MCLEOD

The **Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern** in Houston is like walking into the ancient ruin of an empty spaceship that has become a theatre. The unique man-made cavern on the edge of downtown is strangely inviting and embracing.

Built in 1926 as a 15-million-gallon underground drinking-water reservoir, the concrete tank is roughly the size of 1.5 football fields. The 8-inch-thick ceiling is held up with rows of 221 concrete columns that reflect off the shallow pool of water covering the floor. The vast chamber sprung a leak in 2004 and its use was discontinued in 2007. The city was considering demolishing it when the Buffalo Bayou Partnership offered an alternative – turn it into a one-of-a-kind destination and performance space.

Opened to the public in May 2016, BBP added an entrance, a walkway around the inside perimeter, and subtle lighting to make the Cistern accessible. The project is part of BBP's revitalization of Houston's central water corridor. The nonprofit has turned a 10-mile stretch of the waterway into an attraction instead of an eyesore.

For its first art installation in the Cistern, BBP partnered with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston to present *Rain: Magdalena Fernández at the Houston Cistern*. A Venezuelan artist, Fernández repurposed a one-minute, 56-second surrealist video that evokes an evening rain shower enhanced by the columns, the reflection off the floor, and the 17-second echo in the chamber. The show continues through June 4, 2017.

Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern is open for tours Wednesday through Sunday (Thursdays are free), but tickets must be secured in advance at www.buffalobayou.org/visit/destination/the-cistern.



GERALD E. MCLEOD

1,326th in a series. Collect them all. *Day Trips, Vol. 2*, a book of "Day Trips," is available for **\$8.95, plus \$3.05 for shipping, handling, and tax.** Mail to: **Day Trips, PO Box 40312, South Austin, TX 78704.**

Follow "Day Trips & Beyond," a weekly travel blog, at austinchronicle.com/daily/travel.

KIDS

WORKSHOPS AT THINKERY The kids' museum has a whole bevy of Christmas workshops to take part in. See website for details. *Sat., Dec. 24. 512/469-6200. www.thinkeryaustin.org.*

FIRST TEE WINTER BREAK CAMP The First Tee of Greater Austin hosts this three-day golf camp for kids ages 7-17. All skill levels welcome. Register now! *Wed.-Fri., Dec. 28-30, 9am-3pm. Harvey Penick Golf Campus, 5501 Ed Bluestein Blvd., 512/732-0380 x204. www.thefirstteeaustin.org.*

✦ PINBALLZ NOON YEAR'S EVE This one is for the kids with a make-and-take crafting experience, snacks, \$5 in tokens, and prize-filled balloon drop at noon! Space is limited so sign up today. *Sat., Dec. 31, 10:30am. All three Pinballz locations. www.pinballzarcade.com.*

OUT OF TOWN

RAFTING THE COLORADO See the Lower Colorado from the water on a guided tour with the park naturalist. Advance reservations required. *Sat., Dec. 31, 9am-noon. Matagorda Bay Nature Park, Matagorda, 979/863-2603. \$25. www.lcra.org/parks/outdoor-programs/matagorda-bay-nature-park/Pages/default.aspx.*

REFORESTATION IN BASTROP COUNTY Volunteers are needed to plant trees in areas affected by the 2011 Bastrop County Complex Fire. Registration required. *Sat., Jan. 14, 1-4pm; Fri., Jan. 29, 10am-1pm. Bastrop, 512/443-5323. Free. www.treefolks.org.*

ULTIMATE EAGLE TOUR Take a 4-hour tour of Lake Buchanan with a lunch option and a good chance to see an American bald eagle. Reservations recommended. *Sat., Dec. 24, 3pm. Vanishing River Cruises, Burnet, 800/474-8374. www.vtrc.com.*

MUSIC ON THE VERANDA Enjoy an evening of Irish Celtic music with the Foxes for Boxing Day on the winery's outdoor patio. *Mon., Dec. 26, 1-4pm. Becker Vineyards, Stonewall, 830/644-2681. Free. www.beckervineyards.com.*

ZWEITE WEIHNACHTEN Join the German tradition of a second Christmas with traditional foods, drink, music, and carols in German and English. *Mon., Dec. 26, 2-5pm. Gillespie County Historical Society, Fredericksburg, 830/990-8441. Free. www.pioneermuseum.net.*

FOOD



Freda's

JOHN ANDERSON

World Party

Austin chefs share their holiday traditions

BY VERONICA MEEWES

Christmas and Chanukah are right around the corner, and once we've crossed that tinsel-frosted New Year's Eve finish line, we'll have survived yet another holiday season. By now, you've likely been regaled with familiar carols, showered with sugar-laden treats, and faced with a couple of stressful retail situations. But it's not the only way to celebrate the season. If you are feeling burnt out on all the commercialized cheer, read on to see how seven Austin chefs and restaurateurs are sharing their culture and family traditions with our city. You may just feel inspired to try something completely different this year.

SONYA COTÉ, EDEN EAST

This past weekend, Sonya Coté threw a winter solstice party at Springdale Farm – the Eastside property where she operates her restaurant Eden East – creating dishes using the seasonal harvest plus vegetables and botanicals foraged on-site.

“I like to celebrate the Earth and not necessarily a creator or a commercial holiday,” says Coté, who comes from generations of Italian Catholics but grew up with a mother who started studying transcendental meditation in the Seventies. “Instead of the traditional Christmas, we would celebrate many holidays on campus at the Maharishi International University We would hang cookies from the trees as gifts to the woodland creatures, light bonfires, and dance around as little wild children under the stars.”

Though those celebrations were strictly vegetarian (grilled veggies and tofu on a stick were the bread and butter of the meal), Coté's recent dinner combined her love of Texas cuisine with the celebration of the rebirth of the sun. A roasted pig was the centerpiece of the meal, which also featured grilled veggies, quail on a stick, and caramel apples – plus Argus cider and hot cocoa spiked with Fernet BrancaMenta.

“Celebration is important,” says Coté. “It brings people together to pay homage to our days' work and play. We share traditions and good food. We get stronger together.”

JACOB HILBERT, THE HOLLOW

Shortly after the election, Jacob Hilbert arrived at his Georgetown kitchen to find a swastika etched into the back door. In an eloquently penned open letter to the perpetrator, Hilbert wrote, “I thought of my great-grandmother's hands breaking challah, rolling egg noodles with a broomstick, engaged in the traditions of life and breath All of the tattooed arms of relatives were reaching out of the Earth knocking at the back door of my kitchen. And it was not hate that was knocking. It was not pain or resentment. It was love.”

Hilbert reacted in the best way he could – by cooking. He began re-creating the Yiddish foods he'd grown up eating: mandelbrodt, kreplach, gefilte fish, spaetzle, hamantaschen, and b'sirra. “It was, in a quiet way, our answer to the question posed by the symbol on our door,” he says.

He promptly added these dishes to the Hollow's menu and, as Chanukah approaches, he has been realizing new variations informed by his own memories as well as the global tradition of Jewish cuisine. “We are Sephardic, Ashkenazi, Spanish, Germanic, African, and all brethren culturally and at the dinner table,” says Hilbert.

One such example is an aromatic lamb tagine simmered with butterkin squash and matzo balls made from couscous. The clay tagine and couscous represent Morocco, a largely Arabic country which has historically been home to a large Sephardic Jew population.

“Where the world has failed politically, the dinner table has unified two cultures that have seemed to be at odds in perpetuity,” says Hilbert.

Other current offerings available this holiday season include coq au champagne with caramelized onion latkes, almond crusted pork basteeya with mother sauce, and falafel with tartar, lardo, smoked mushrooms, and watercress.

FREDA CHENG, FREDA'S

Restaurateur Freda Cheng grew up in Taipei before moving to Austin, where she ran a Chinese restaurant in Georgetown. During this time, travels to New Orleans with her late husband introduced her to Cajun culture and cuisine, and she fell in love with the bold flavors and traditions.

“There's a lot of great memories there,” says Cheng, who decided to close Orient Square 14 years ago and open a Cajun restaurant called Freda's Seafood Grille in North Austin. Cheng traveled all over the country, researching Creole- and Cajun-influenced restaurants. “I was afraid that people would find out that I'm Chinese and wouldn't take me seriously,” says Cheng. “You get to a certain age though, and you stop caring what people think. You just want to work hard and create experiences that make you happy There's a white guy doing some of the best sushi in Austin, so why can't a middle-aged Chinese lady do Cajun?”

Cheng recently partnered with Tim Lane, who worked at WD-50 under Wylie Dufresne and at Michelin-starred Glass Hostaria in Rome before accepting the position of executive chef at Burn Pizza + Bar. However, Lane's first love was Cajun cuisine – and he's acting as Freda's guest chef before his own hot sauce company launches next year.

On Dec. 24, Freda's will celebrate with a prix fixe Cajun Réveillon (French for “awakening”) dinner. In New Orleans, it is tradition to fast on Christmas Eve, then begin a feast after midnight mass that is to last until dawn.

“Leave it to New Orleans to jazz up Christmas Eve into something even more festive and decadent,” says Lane. “It's a city filled with so much vitality, exuberance, and a knack for throwing a hell of a party. That's probably why turducken was created in Louisiana and served on Christmas with various stuffings. What could be more ridiculous?”

In addition to Cajun turducken, guests will enjoy cornbread and oyster sausage stuffing, sweet and sour cranberry jam, holiday gumbo, bread pudding, and more – plus wine pairings and live jazz.

JULIO-CESAR FLÓREZ, ISLA

After recently joining the team at Isla and consulting on the new Peruvian menu, chef de cuisine Julio-Cesar Flórez has been running holiday specials inspired by his childhood in Peru, where Christmas Eve is the main event, filled with fireworks, carols, and plenty of food.

“The whole family – mom, dad, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandma, and grandpa – gathers at someone's house and we have a large feast,” says Flórez. “We do a countdown New Year's Eve style and when the clock hits 12am, we yell ‘Feliz Navidad!’ and everyone hugs and kisses each other.”

CONTINUED ON P.38

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WORLD PARTY CONTINUED FROM P.36

The kids open the mountain of presents that surround the Christmas tree. It is so much fun.”

In Peru, typical Christmas dishes include turkey and pork roasted with garlic and spices, tamales, humitas (savory steamed corn cakes), causa limeña (a cold layered potato dish), arroz árabe (a sweet rice dish prepared with Coca-Cola, raisins, and fideo) and mashed sweet potatoes with pecans, accompanied by plenty of pisco. For dessert, slices of panettone loaves are enjoyed with chicha morada (a sweet purple corn drink) and hot chocolate from Cuzco.

On Christmas morning, leftover turkey is used to make a stock with ají amarillo (a yellow pepper) and cilantro purée. The meat is cut into cubes and added, along with potatoes, carrots, peas, and cooked rice. “We call that dish aguadito, which literally means ‘runny,’ because the dish looks like soupy rice,” describes Flórez. “But it is so good and so comforting.”

FIORE TEDESCO, L’OCA D’ORO

For the past six years, Fiore Tedesco has hosted Feast of the Seven Fishes celebrations with friends and family here in Austin – and this year he will share the epic Christmas Eve dinner for the first time with guests at Loca d’oro, the restaurant where he is executive chef and co-owner. For Tedesco, the meals are the continuation of the traditions Tedesco grew up experiencing with his large Italian family in upstate New York. “My brothers and I knew that we would all get to open one present at midnight, which was exciting, but we also knew that we would be eating my grandmother’s spaghetti and clams until heart’s content, which was even more special,” he says.

His immediate family gathered with aunts, uncles, and cousins – 20-30 family members total – at his grandmother’s house each year, where she would single-handedly

cook all seven seafood dishes. “My grandmother would occasionally allow a few of her daughters-in-law to clean shrimp, but that was about it,” remembers Tedesco. “Otherwise, she did everything – I don’t know how she did it. She was magical.”

The chef will be re-creating her famous spaghetti and clams, embellished with garlic breadcrumbs and parsley, and six other seafood dishes, including eel caponata, fried bay shrimp with colatura aioli and his favorite, brandade of baccalà with pickled onions and garlic toast. Except, instead of using the traditional cod, Tedesco will use eastern Gulf mullet, which is a much more sustainable option.

ILIANA DE LA VEGA, EL NARANJO

Though tamales are commonly associated with celebrating Christmas in Mexico, that tradition comes from the north part of the country. In Oaxaca, where chef Iliana de la Vega is from, families traditionally dine on turkey, salt cod, and pork shoulder or loin cooked with adobo or achiote. But de la Vega says she and her husband and daughters also create their own traditions here in Austin.

“Every year, we choose a type of food that we find fun and delicious from anywhere in the world and we cook, and enjoy the company of each other,” she says.

“Where the world has failed politically, the dinner table has unified two cultures that have seemed to be at odds in perpetuity.”

JACOB HILBERT, *THE HOLLOW*

Growing up in Oaxaca, de la Vega was witness to a number of unique Mexican celebrations, such as Noche de Rábanos (Night of the Radishes), where large hand-carved radishes are displayed in the public square, or zócalo. Dec. 24 is the last Posada, whereby processions gather around Nativity scenes. Festivities carry on through Epiphany on Jan. 6, when the chef’s family celebrated with a sweet ring-shaped bread called rosca de reyes and romeritos, a dish made with a wild green called seepweed, then served in mole with dried shrimp, dried shrimp patties, potatoes, and nopales.

“There is a traditional drink that brings all the memories of the season, called

ponche,” says de la Vega, who makes hers with hibiscus, canela (Mexican cinnamon), guavas, sugar cane, prunes, raisins, tejocotes, apples, and cognac. Both the ponche and the rosca de reyes bread will be featured at de la Vega’s restaurant El Naranjo throughout the holiday season.

As for the romeritos? You’ll need to go to Mexico to enjoy that dish, since the essential seepweed isn’t available in the U.S.

VLADIMIR GRIBKOV & VARDA SALKEY, RUSSIAN HOUSE

When they opened Russian House four years ago, husband-and-wife team Vladimir Gribkov and Varda Salkey decided they wanted to give each guest a true taste of Russia. They do that not only with a menu of classics, but with constant events, classes, and parties in the lofty Downtown space ... and there’s plenty going on during the holiday season.

“Christmas and New Year traditions mixed during the Soviet times when religion and religious holidays were not popular,” explains general manager Roman Butvin. “Russians love New Year. It’s probably the biggest celebration of the year and the whole country is off for the first week of the year.”

On Dec. 31, Russian House will celebrate the new year with visits from Ded Moroz (Father Frost) and Snegurochka, his snow maiden daughter. They’ll serve traditional winter salads like Olivier (Russian potato salad) and Herring Under Fur Coat (which is made with salted

herring covered by boiled vegetables and mayonnaise), plus caviar, champagne, and chilled vodka. For Orthodox Christmas on Jan. 7, the restaurant will feature a buffet filled with dishes like pork stroganoff, fresh blinis, shashlik (skewered meat), borsch, and more. There will be live gusli music (played on a traditional Russian string instrument), Slavic Christmas carols, and fortune-telling.

Since it is the only Russian restaurant in town, Butvin says these events tend to attract plenty of people from Russia and Eastern Europe plus those who are just interested in the culture and food.

“Russian House is proud to represent Russian culture here in Austin,” he says. ■

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**MEAL TIMES****Holiday Dining**

Yes, 2016 sucked and 2017 doesn’t look much better, but it’s OK to take a break from protesting. Gather up your friends and family for a new holiday tradition, then ring in the new year in style. Find Austin’s best feasts at austinchronicle.com/food.



DEAR GLUTTON BY EMILY BEYDA

Dear Glutton,

Any ideas about the least sad ways to spend Christmas alone? I don't get enough time off this year to go home, all my friends are leaving town, and, oh yeah, my girlfriend broke up with me right before Thanksgiving. Is there any way this isn't going to be the worst holiday ever?

— Blue Christmas

Oh Blue, I'm sorry to hear you've had such a tough few months. 2016 pretty much kicked all of us in the teeth, and 2017, unfortunately, promises more of the same. Rather than being bummed out about your solo Christmas, see this as a unique opportunity to spend a season which, unfortunately, can be a period of thoughtless, exteriorly focused consumption as a time for personal reflection and self-care, looking forward to the changes you want to make, both in your own life and practice, and on a larger cultural level, in the new year.

In the next few weeks, devote your time and energy to giving back to your community. You may not have your friends and family around you this year, but you are still part of our city, a city full of people looking for understanding and comfort, people who may not be as lucky as you are, to have work, people who love you (even if they're far away), and a place to live. A great place to start helping is the Central Texas Food Bank, which always needs help and donations this time of year. I'm also a big fan of the amazing work done by the folks out at Casa Marianella, who serve recently arrived immigrants and asylum seekers, two populations that we should be especially striving to keep in our thoughts and help with our actions as 2017 unfolds.

What I want you to do next is go out and get yourself some presents. Assemble an expensive, impractical, perfect little feast for yourself, based entirely around your own idiosyncratic tastes, haphazardly mixing genres and types of food, creating the kind of messy little picnic you'd never dream of serving your guests. Something totally selfish. Something that's just for you.

Take yourself to Antonelli's and get a chunk of something expensive and smelly and French, goat cheese with lavender honey, some really nice smoked almonds. Phoenicia has the best fresh olives in town; go there, and get the green kala-



THINKSTOCK

Dining alone on Christmas can be a good thing.

matas with garlic and lemon, a few packages of their fresh-baked pita bread, a little gold-lidded jar of taramosalata. Go to your closest farmers' market, and get yourself some tender little fresh-caught squid; a slab of smoked salmon; some fine, sharp, bitter winter greens; a little paper bag of wild mushrooms. Buy quail eggs and a bouquet of bright orange and pink flowers from your favorite fancy grocery store. Quack's makes the most darling little cupcakes; I like the chocolate with chocolate cream cheese frosting, but you, of course, should follow your heart. And the fine people at the Austin Wine Merchant can recommend a demi-bouteille of some nice Champagne, or, heck, a full bottle of anything you like, whatever will go best with your odd little picnic.

Buy a jar of really nice kimchi, some really good truffles (chocolate or otherwise), a golden tangle of fresh pasta, a box of gas-station kolaches, a soft roll of really nice white bread, torn off in great chunks, slathered with salted butter and chocolate sprinkles. Whatever it is that makes your heart slow down, just a little, that makes you step back and take notice of what's going on around you. If you're feeling generous, you can even pick up a few extra items for your faraway friends who are also spending Christmas alone.

At home, turn your phone off. Properly plate your bounty; don't just eat things out of their respective containers, get out your nice dishes, your cloth napkins, a proper wineglass. Put on some nice music; light some candles. Read a book. Enjoy having the rare, selfish chance to spend some time making choices that are entirely based on your own needs and wants, to check in with yourself and see how you're really doing. Being alone doesn't have to be a bad thing, even on Christmas.

12 DAYS OF PARLOR Fill up your calendar with drink stickers for a chance to win a ticket to Parlor's NYE bash. Through Dec. 23. Parlor & Yard, 601 W. Sixth, 512/765-4820.

12 DAYS OF HOLIDAYS 12 days of holiday events. Through Dec. 23. The Living Room at Hotel Van Zandt, 605 Davis. www.hotelvanzandt.com/happy-holidays.

HOLIDAY MARKET Pastry chef Abby Love serves up every baked good you need for the holiday weekend. Fri., Dec. 23, 10am. Dai Due Butcher Shop & Supper Club, 2406 Manor Rd., 512/524-0688.

HOLIDAY BREWERY TOUR Fri., Dec. 23, 4-5:30pm. Blue Owl Brewing, 2400 E. Cesar Chavez, 512/593-1262. \$20.
CHRISTMAS CAROL DINNER Enjoy the sounds of the season. Fri., Dec. 23, 7-9pm. Chez Zee, 5406 Balcones, 512/454-2666. \$19.95-450.

AFTERNOON TEA Sip your weekend away. Saturdays & Sundays, 3-5pm. Goodall's Kitchen, 1900 Rio Grande St., at the Hotel Ella, 512/628-4200. \$25, adult; \$15, 12 and under.

FEAST OF THE SEVEN FISHES Seven seafood dishes celebrate the season. Sat., Dec. 24, 5:30 & 8pm. L'oca d'oro, 1900 Simond, 737/212-1876. \$65, adults (\$30 extra with wine pairing); \$25 under 10.

SIP & SHOP Raise your glass to 20% off everything in the Mercantile. Through Dec. 27, Tuesdays, 5-9pm. Jacoby's Restaurant & Mercantile, 3235 E. Cesar Chavez, 512/366-5808.

BREWER'S TABLE POP-UP Get an early taste of the upcoming beer-centric restaurant. Wed., Dec. 28-Fri., Dec. 30, 5-10pm. Olamaie, 1610 San Antonio St., 512/474-2796. www.caskandcoal.com.

BAR AND RESTAURANT EMPLOYEE NYE Just because you work on Dec. 31 doesn't mean you have to miss the new year celebration. Wed., Dec. 28, 8pm. Speakeasy, 412 Congress, 512/476-8017.

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SCREENS



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TV in Trumpland

Quality struggles to take one step forward while culture takes 10 steps back

BY KAHRON SPEARMAN

Donald Trump's election has violently thrust forward all of America's time-worn divisions – racism, ongoing deconstruction of class structure, sexism, LGBTQ discrimination, lack of human decency – to the fore, and into our regularly scheduled programming. Similar to the elections of Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and current president Barack Obama, we've been smacked into new orders. This is occurring not only politically, but in how we culturally perceive our present and future, through our preferred mediums/two-way mirrors: our televisions and digital devices.

Trump is showing us the future by communicating with the public instantaneously, in ways never before seen from the Oval Office. Already muddling delicate existential issues (recently China and Taiwan), Trump has made time to boost *Saturday Night Live's* terrible ratings. "Just tried watching *Saturday Night Live* – unwatchable!" Trump tweeted, after watching Alec Baldwin once again reprise his parodying of a forever-insecure president-elect, mocking his constant tweeting. "Totally biased, not funny and the Baldwin impersonation just can't get any worse. Sad." A president ready-made for reality TV has not disappointed in his ever-predictable agitation over his public perception.

"Presidents in general have always been a source for comedy, a source for critique, a source for parody," explains Craig Watkins, University of Texas professor in the Radio-Television-Film department. "Because [Trump] is already sort of larger than life, it only makes it more likely – and easier – that he will fall victim to that kind of treatment. I don't see any indication that that's going to subside over the next three years. If anything, it's just going to be more animated, more visible, especially on social media."

Flying in the face of Trump, and who he represents – or at least his constituents' wishes – television and film programming diversity has been making America great, increasing opportunities for traditionally disadvantaged groups to tell more authentic stories and stripping away stereotypes. Shows like – but by no means limited to – *Luke Cage*, *Orange Is the New Black*, *The Get Down*, *Black-ish*, Aziz Ansari's *Master of None*, and *Modern Family* illuminate real-life demographic shifts resented by many, including a significant percentage of Trump voters. However, the oft-forgotten relationship between the increasingly liberal programming and political expression is inextricably tied together.

"There's two things. On the one hand, we know that popular culture creators tend to be pretty liberal or progressive, right?" Phillip L. Cunningham, media studies professor at Quinnipiac University in Connecticut, asks rhetorically. "But the organizations that distribute them tend to be conservative. It'll be really interesting, for example, to see what Fox does."

To Cunningham, Fox's communications hydra – which features Fox News as well as Donald Glover's critical smash *Atlanta* – "has always been weird, because you have to discern the difference between something like Fox News, which of course is really conservative, and Fox Network,

which is actually progressive." In fact, aside from its profitable and influential news group, the rest of parent 20th Century Fox leans progressive, which could lead one to wonder if Fox News itself is unspoken satire.

"One of the things I teach my students is that in attempts to be counter-hegemonic, you're actually feeding the beast," says Cunningham. "So you watch *The Simpsons*, you watch them lampoon conservatives and the like, but you don't think about how watching *The Simpsons* keeps Fox News on the air – because those two things aren't unrelated. The one feeds the other. The viewer's support of *The Simpsons* – and other shows, like *South Park*, *Saturday Night Live*, or *The Daily Show* – is keeping the conservative mill going, even in your attempts to be counter-hegemonic."

One show, Nixon/Ford era cultural touchstone *All in the Family*, now feels prescient, to the extent that actor/director Rob Reiner – who starred as satirical icon Mike "Meathead" Stivic, paterfamilias Archie Bunker's liberal son-in-law – claimed it so in a pre-election podcast with *New York Times* writer Jonathan Capehart. "We are doing it!" exclaimed Reiner. "We're doing it every day with Donald Trump running for president. He's Archie Bunker. They're both from Queens. They both have these misogynistic, racist points of view. And they spout them." Capehart asked if it meant Trump's supporters are racist. "They're not all racist," said Reiner. "But that doesn't mean there isn't a big strain of racism [in his] constituency, and he knows it."

There's something tangible to the Trump/Bunker analogy (slightly imperfect – at least Carroll O'Connor imbued his character with humanity. With Trump, that is unclear). Trump as Bunker was actually speaking to millions of Archie Bunkers in all classes (and all races, to be clear) and not just the media-targeted white working class, ironically tired of identity politics. We could be previewing a shifting in cultural attitudes in exploring what whiteness is and is not, given recent intersectional demographic isolation of certain whites coming to the fore (i.e., Rust Belt voters).

"You see, for example, particularly with *Family Guy*, there's a notion that they're an equal opportunity offender," says Cunningham. "But that's not actually true. For example, everybody can get it theoretically, in that there's a joke made about them, except for whiteness. Ethnic whiteness gets made fun of. 'Irishness' gets made fun of, right? But whiteness, in general, never really gets attacked."

Cunningham continues: "There's a real growing awareness of whiteness and white people as sort of 'raced.' That's not to suggest that [awareness hasn't been there]. Everything that features a white family is inherently raced, but we don't necessarily think about the whiteness of those characters, outside of academic and critical circles. It'll be interesting, in a Trump administration, where he's preyed

upon the notion of the aggrieved white person, how people will react to seeing that for the first time."

Further connecting us to the rest of the world, America-branded entertainment's future is almost assuredly not singularly "American," entrenching itself into diverse international markets. The casting of Chinese-Malaysian actress Michelle Yeoh as one of the leads (along with

"We're doing it every day with Donald Trump running for president. He's Archie Bunker. They're both from Queens. They both have these misogynistic, racist points of view. And they spout them."

ROB REINER

The Walking Dead's Sonequa Martin-Green) in the upcoming *Star Trek: Discovery* series lifted few eyebrows, but actually signals "a clear nod to China," according to Cunningham. "I think in terms of diversity, we're probably going to see a lot more Chinese and Indian actors and actresses get roles. What that means for African-Americans and Latinos is hard to say. But the move right now in media is not about the national audience here, it's about the audience abroad." ■

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FILM LISTINGS

Agents Provocateurs

Isabelle Huppert and Paul Verhoeven team up in subversive thriller *Elle*

BY MARJORIE BAUMGARTEN

One of the best films of the year, *Elle* is a gripping psychological thriller, something of a Hitchcockian whodunit but with a feminist protagonist. Riveting yet perplexing, the film is guaranteed to provoke reactions – and not all of them sympathetic. The brutal rape sequence whose sounds open the movie accompanied by total blackness serves as more than a trigger warning; it's an opening volley delivered with the force of an air-raid siren, made all the more provocative by its sole witness (and the film's initial image): a watchful cat (who is, perhaps, our surrogate). Once the masked attacker departs, the victim, Michèle Leblanc (Huppert), picks herself up, matter-of-factly sweeps up the broken glass, and takes a bath while curiously observing the red blood that colors the water. Clearly disavowing victimhood, Michèle also evinces a perverse sense of stimulation – if not by the act than



ELLE

D: Paul Verhoeven; with Isabelle Huppert, Laurent Lafitte, Anne Consigny, Charles Berling, Judith Magre, Virginie Efira, Christian Berkel, Jonas Bloquet, Alice Isaaz, Vimala Pons. (R, 130 min., subtitled)

★★★★★

by the potential to change the scenario, at least in her imagination. Michèle is a daring, complicated character – one that Isabelle Huppert brilliantly creates in concert with the director, Paul Verhoeven.

After nearly two decades of toiling in Hollywood, achieving contentious and/or dubious successes with such films as *RoboCop*, *Total Recall*, *Basic Instinct*, *Showgirls*, and *Starship Troopers*, the Dutch director returns to Europe for *Elle*, along with the continent's comparatively complex approaches to characters and sex. The salaciousness of Verhoeven's Hollywood work is absent in this new effort, although perhaps not the prurience. Nevertheless, no matter how advanced you consider the

moral framework of *Elle*, there is no getting past the knowledge that this is made by the same director who set tongues (and other protuberances) wagging with Sharon Stone's crossed-leg display in *Basic Instinct* and Elizabeth Berkley and Gina Gershon's teasing



lesbian scenes in *Showgirls*. There is no doubt that Huppert's intelligence and acting skills inform *Elle*'s narrative.

Michèle is gradually revealed through her contacts with the other people in her life. She runs a gaming software company with her friend Anna (Consigny), where she is seen arguing for a greater orgasmic penetration of a female character by a tentacled monster with her male programmers, some of whom clearly resent working for a woman. There's her ex-husband Richard (Berling), who has begun a relationship with a young woman (Pons) who's hardly his intellectual equal, as well as her ineffectual son (Bloquet), who is being taken advantage of by his pregnant girlfriend (Isaaz). She's also having a dispassionate affair with Anna's husband Robert (Berkel), and

her mother (Magre) has tawdry affairs with gigolos. Then there's the issue of her father's heinous crime committed decades earlier, which hangs over the movie like a mysterious shroud or potential explanation for Michèle's sex-positive but strangely pent-up emotions.

The film is not exactly a whodunit since we learn the identity of the rapist halfway through *Elle*. It's what the film grapples with that is its real subject: Michèle's relationships with the ridiculous and threatening men in her life, the residual fallout from her childhood trauma, the quality of her female friendships, and her bemused lobs at social mores. Michèle defies easy explanation, however, you will most definitely leave the theatre with *Elle* on your lips.

ALAMO S. LAMAR, ARBOR

NEW REVIEWS

ASSASSIN'S CREED

D: Justin Kurzel; with Michael Fassbender, Marion Cotillard, Jeremy Irons, Brendan Gleeson, Charlotte Rampling. (PG-13, 116 min.)

Oh, *Assassin's Creed*, how I wanted to love you. As a fan of the video game series (except for that shitty Colonial America one), I wanted your leap (of faith) to the big screen to be a fun, galloping romp, full of shrouded killers dropping from inordinate heights to sink their bladed hands into the throats of their Templar oppressors. Is that too much to ask? The answer is apparently yes, as director Justin Kurzel (teaming up with his *Macbeth* stars Fassbender and Cotillard) suck the ever-loving life out of the film again and again. For a movie positioned as a family holiday excursion (with the engine-revving sound of a franchise start), *Assassin's Creed* is a dour, lifeless film that leaves those familiar with the material perplexed, and those ignorant of it downright clueless.

But let's try to parse it out, if possible. Fassbender plays Cal Lynch, a death row convict spirited away during his execution by Abstergo, a corporation embodied by Sofia (Cotillard, sporting some killer locks, but unfortunately burdened with most of the film's exposition) and her father Rikkin (Irons, on autopilot, but his hair looks good, too). They have engineered a device, the Animus, that can tap into genetic memories, sending modern-day progeny back in time to alter the

course of human affairs via their ancestors (or something). All you need to know is that the Templars are the bad guys and the Assassins are the good guys, but that rivalry gets beaten into you pretty quickly. You see, it is all about obtaining the Apple of Eden, an apparent cure for violence and a way to control humanity. The Assassins have been keeping it from the Templars for centuries, and you know what? None of it matters. The story is Dan Brown-lite (and buddy, that is saying something), and the scenes cribbed from the video game of Lynch and his fellow assassins traipsing around the architecture of 15th century Spain would be pleasurable if they weren't perpetually clouded in a smoky fog reminiscent of Eighties music videos and Adrian Lyne films. And the dialogue is a supreme treat (sample: Sofia: "This is my life's work!" Cal: "This is my life!"). Brendan Gleeson and Charlotte Rampling inexplicably show up, and don't get me started on that stupid eagle. The curse of the video-game adaptation lives on in *Assassin's Creed*. Perhaps Hollywood and game companies will learn to avoid attempting this particular crossover, but not anytime soon it seems, as a trilogy based on the popular *Tetris* was announced this week. Game over, man.

★

– Josh Kupecki

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FENCES

D: Denzel Washington; with Washington, Viola Davis, Stephen McKinley Henderson, Mykelti Williamson, Jovan Adepo, Russell Hornsby. (PG-13, 138 min.)

This is Denzel Washington's third at bat behind the camera while directing himself and, holy smokes, does he knock it out of the park with a vicious, visceral performance that fairly sets the screen ablaze. Adapted from the canonical Pittsburgh-set play by August Wilson, *Fences* crackles with spitfire dialogue, blazing emotions, and worn-down, gut-punched humanity. Washington is Troy Maxson, once a Negro Leagues all-star baseballer, then an ex-con, and now an embittered garbageman, stuck in a self-made cage of steely regret and an inability to move forward in life. Viola Davis is his wife Rose, patient with her husband's gin-fueled tirades but also trapped in a marriage that has incrementally gone rancid. Caught between the two is their teenage son Cory (Adepo), who dreams of breaking through his family's metaphorical fences via a college football scholarship. And then there's elder brother Lyons (Hornsby), an aspiring jazz musician who mostly drops by the family home to touch Pops for some cash now and then. For Troy, every day is the same: up at dawn on the back of the garbage truck and home by five, emptying a pint of gin on the backyard stoop with fellow ex-con and friend Bono (Henderson), who

OPENINGS

Assassin's Creed (PG-13)

Elle (R)

Fences (PG-13)

Jackie (R)

Lion (PG-13)

Passengers (PG-13)

Sing (PG)

Why Him? (R)

RATINGS

★★★★★ As perfect as a movie can be

★★★★ Slightly flawed, but excellent nonetheless

★★★ Has its good points, and its bad points

★★ Mediocre, but with one or two bright spots

★ Poor, without any saving graces

🍌 La bomba

🍌 🌟 Recommended

mostly sits and listens as Troy rails against the plight of the black working man in a white man's world while never once facing up to the fact that the mess he's found himself in is wholly his own creation. In between his lengthy harangues about the unfairness of

life, he belittles the dreams and ambitions of his sons and seethes, a manic man aflame with a stoic sort of self-loathing.

Washington's performance here is something to behold. It's his best yet, and although the character of Troy is a woeful, ugly beast of a man, the actor imbues him with a rough-and-tumble charm. When he's not scowling, he's flashing those pearly whites in a sharklike smile that's more grimace than grin. Davis, too, turns in a slowly simmering performance that's mostly revealed through body language and the momentary, intimate flashes of emotion that wash over her face in the wake of her husband's tidal waves of sermonizing invective.

Fences garnered author Wilson both a Tony Award for Best Play and a Pulitzer Prize for drama in 1987, and this film adaptation will likely pick up an Academy Award or two come Oscars season. It's an American tragedy through and through, a portrait of black life in the mid-20th century, and hands down Denzel Washington's finest hour yet.

(Opens Sunday, Dec. 25.)

★★★★ — Marc Savlov
ALAMO S. LAMAR, ARBOR, CM CEDAR PARK, CM HILL COUNTRY GALLERIA,
CM ROUND ROCK, CM SOUTHPARK MEADOWS, CM STONE HILL TOWN
CENTER, HIGHLAND, METROPOLITAN, MOVIEHOUSE, TINSELTOWN NORTH,
WESTGATE

★ JACKIE

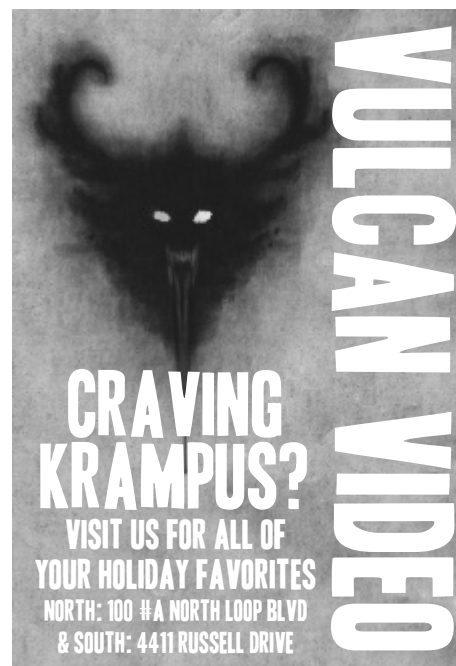
D: Pablo Larraín; with Natalie Portman, Peter Sarsgaard, Greta Gerwig, Billy Crudup, Richard E. Grant, John Carrol Lynch, Beth Grant. (R, 100 min.)

Intimacy can be a terrifying thing, and Chilean director Pablo Larraín (*Tony Manero*) and screenwriter Noah Oppenheim have made the most intimate portrait yet of Jacqueline Kennedy's horrifying ordeal following the assassination of her husband, president John Fitzgerald Kennedy. *Jackie* has a nightmare vibe to it that's palpable and unsettling, and Portman's performance as the widowed first lady is a tour de force of conflicting emotions brought on by the impossibly ghastly reality bookending that sunny day in Dallas. It's unthinkable that anyone else will ever portray Jackie in such a remarkably nuanced and empathetic way. Portman inhabits the role in all possible ways: physically (Mrs. Kennedy was notably reed-thin), mentally (the condition PTSD wasn't even a thing in 1963 but it's all over Portman's face), and of course vocally. Her mimicking of Jackie's girlishly breathy voice is eerily faithful to the source. In short, Portman's surely on the Oscar shortlist.

We think we know everything there is to know about the assassination — even punk band the Misfits recorded a song about it, aptly titled "Bullet" — while we simultaneously pile one conspiracy theory atop another. Even as you read this, somebody, somewhere is watching Abraham Zapruder's grainy 8mm presidential snuff film. *Jackie* gives us the one thing we've been missing: what it all felt like from the first lady's point of view. The film is relentless in its authenticity, showing actual television clips of Jackie's famous tour of the White House, intercutting those with a spot-on reenactment. All the details are here: the swearing-in aboard Air Force One of Kennedy's vice president, LBJ (Lynch), standing along Lady Bird (*The Mindy Project's* Beth Grant, a dead ringer), Robert

Kennedy's (Sarsgaard) desperate dedication to his position as both Jackie's brother-in-law and the nation's attorney general, and the gorily spattered pink Chanel that Jackie famously refused to take off so that she could "let them see what they've done."

The broken heart and the bloodied but fiercely unbowed soul of the film rests squarely on the titular Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy. Even in her shock and grief she fights to secure her husband's historical legacy, most pointedly by demanding that JFK's coffin would rest upon a horse-drawn caisson funeral procession down Pennsylvania Avenue to Arlington National Cemetery. Director Larraín captures this and other, less historically obvious — but no less powerful — moments with an obvious determination to make this film as queasily realistic as possible. Portman manages to show the full and conflicting range of emotions swirling within Jackie Kennedy, from her haughtiness with a journalist (Crudup)



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Force Majeure

D: Ruben Östlund; with Johannes Kuhnke, Lisa Loven Kongsli, Clara Wettergren, Vincent Wettergren, Kristofer Hivju, Fanni Metellus, Brady Corbet. (2014, R, 118 min., subtitled) **Weeknight Cinema: Suspense on the Slopes.** Blackly funny, yet lightly brutalizing, this Swedish film observes a married couple for whom a passing threat turns into an existential crisis. (*) @North Village Library, Tuesday, 6:30pm.



to her confusion and distress at having to tell the Kennedy children that their father is dead. It's heartbreaking and heady stuff, but *Jackie* never feels exploitative of its subject. Instead, it offers the audience a mesmerizingly realistic window into the worst days of Jacqueline Kennedy's life. It is, in its own way, a eulogy not just to Camelot but to the American dream itself. It is grace in the midst of madness.

★★★ — Marc Savlov
ALAMO S. LAMAR, ARBOR, VIOLET CROWN

LION

D: Garth Davis; with Dev Patel, Nicole Kidman, Rooney Mara, Sunny Pawar, David Wenham, Tannishtha Chatterjee, Khushi Solanki, Deepti Naval, Menik Gooneratne, Divian Ladwa. (PG-13, 118 min.)

Based on actual (relatively recent) events, *Lion* tells the story of 5-year-old Saroo (instantly likable newcomer Sunny Pawar), a boy from an impoverished part of India who, through a simple mistake, boards the wrong train and ends up a thousand miles from home, in the teeming, wild streets of Calcutta. After a series of events, he lands in a dodgy orphanage – is there any other kind? – from which he is ultimately adopted by an Australian couple (Kidman and Wenham) and grows up into Dev Patel, a young man haunted by the fact that, even 25 years later, he still doesn't have a clue where his real home was. Enter the newly released Google Earth. Surreptitious at first, Saroo embarks on a years-long campaign to discover the exact coordinates of the tiny village where his mother, brother, and sister presumably still live. Like so many other cinematic foundlings, he is bedeviled by the knowledge that his original family has surely been wondering whatever became of little Saroo, just as he persists in remembering them in dreams and sudden flashes of memory.

There's never a doubt regarding how Saroo's familial melodrama will play out, and so while *Lion* has a magical, thrilling first act set amidst the chaotic hurly-burly of Calcutta (the 5-year-old is, after all, on a genuine if unwanted and occasionally scary adventure) and a "bring your handkerchiefs" final act, the lengthy midsection stops the story in its tracks. Kidman does her best to evoke a sort of all-encompassing maternal love that's spiderwebbed by her adoption of Saroo's

"brother" Mantosh (Ladwa), who is plagued by mental illness and self-harm. But still, it's little Saroo's fanciful yet perilous journey through the labyrinthine, colorful avenues and alleyways of Calcutta that really roars. A melodrama with a terrific, jarring score by Volker Bertelmann and Dustin O'Halloran, older Saroo's fixation on finding his biological mother and siblings is rooted in the actual, adult world, meaning more logical reality – he's driving his girlfriend (Mara) to distraction with his marathon Googling – and less magical realism via little Saroo's kid's-eye view of the world. It's a tonally imperfect film that's nonetheless ideal for holiday viewing, a respite from *Rogue One* perhaps, or simply an exciting, old-school explorer's tale well told (for the most part).

(Opens, Sunday, Dec. 25.)
★★★ — Marc Savlov
ALAMO S. LAMAR, ARBOR

✪ PASSENGERS

D: Morten Tyldum; with Jennifer Lawrence, Chris Pratt, Michael Sheen, Laurence Fishburne, Andy Garcia. (PG-13, 116 min.)

Would *Passengers* lay an egg or shit the bed? Following some clumsy trailers and then early reviews that pushed back at the film's gender politics (let's put a pin in that), advance buzz suggested it was going to be either option a) egg, b) bed, or circle c) for both. *Passengers* does land wide of cinema's space-odyssey brass rings – it's nowhere near as soulful or queuing as *2001* or *Moon* – but as popcorn entertainment, it's surprisingly provocative. Benefit of the doubt here, I think that was by design, even if the filmmakers flub the follow-through.

A space vessel named *Avalon* crosses the galaxy on autopilot from overpopulated Earth to the roomy frontier planet Homestead II, as 5,000 passengers and another 250 crew blissfully hibernate in their pods. They'll awaken 120 years after launch but still a luxurious four months out from their destination, leaving plenty of time to enjoy the amenities of this galactic cruise ship, including a sushi bar, basketball court, and next-level infinity pool with a bird's-eye view of the cosmos.

Only a systems malfunction wakes up one passenger early – like, whoopsy daisy, 90 years too early. A mechanical engineer and economy-class traveler, Jim (Pratt) tries to figure out how to get back to sleep. When that doesn't work, he tries drowning in drink with a robot barkeep named Arthur (Sheen), programmed to dispense short pours and dry quips. When that doesn't work, Jim grows a grief beard and considers suicide.

A year into Jim's accidental solitary confinement, another passenger (Lawrence) is rudely jolted from space sleep. First seen slumbering behind glass, her name is Aurora, and Chris Pratt's jawline was perfectly cast to play *Sleeping Beauty's* prince. (Subtlety is not *Passengers'* strength.) Newly awakened, Aurora, a writer from New York, cycles through the same stages Jim once did, contemplating a robbed life, but the sting is somewhat lessened: She has the balm at least of knowing she'll have someone to grow old with.

Director Morten Tyldum (*The Imitation Game*, *Headhunters*) corrals some stunning

visuals (that kick-ass pool kicks ass back when gravity revolts) and doesn't completely whiff at sequentially serving multiple masters, from romance to psychological drama to catastrophe-action as more systems start to fail. But truly, the most interesting thing about *Passengers* is the conversation happening around it. Back to the gender politics! (Stop reading now if you don't want a plot point, which happens about 30 minutes in, danced around, if not explicitly revealed.) The script, by Jon Spaihts – no stranger to pissing people off, his CV includes *Prometheus* and *Doctor Strange* – first landed in 2007 on the Black List, the annual compendium of the best unproduced screenplays. Presumably the script has undergone revision since, but the ethical quandary baked into its premise – as one character explains it, if you were drowning, would you pull someone else down with you? – demands follow-up questions in 2016. Consent wasn't invented post-2007, yet the degree of quickness and seriousness of mainstream media to consider it *has* radically changed. We're not quite in the age of wokeness – more like the age of *talking about wokeness* – but that's still an exciting time to be thinking critically about popular entertainment.

Characters making morally questionable decisions is the foundation of drama, and *Passengers'* narrative arc – coursing the acknowledgment of guilt, the seeking of atonement – is a classically tested model. *Passengers* doesn't pretend like it hasn't dropped a hand grenade, and it reinforces the violation behind that fateful decision by framing a no doubt sincere apologia with surveillance cams and an intercom assault. If only it didn't try to reverse course back toward romance, a ship already sailed. Were *Passengers* a modest little art film, that morally murky path might be applauded as subversive. To continue the thought experiment, the same film with gender-reversed roles is a tantalizing what-if. Instead, we're left to ponder what is: a kinda corny, kinda cool, big-budgeted Hollywood to-do with the nerviness to ask a million-dollar question but baffled by how best to answer it. Still, not a bad conversation starter.

★★★★ — Kimberley Jones
ALAMO LAKELINE, ALAMO SLAUGHTER LANE, BARTON CREEK SQUARE, CM CEDAR PARK, CM HILL COUNTRY GALLERIA, CM ROUND ROCK, CM SOUTH PARK MEADOWS, CM STONE HILL TOWN CENTER, FLIX BREWHOUSE, HIGHLAND, GATEWAY, IPIC, METROPOLITAN, MOVIEHOUSE, TINSELTOWN NORTH, WESTGATE

SING

D: Garth Jennings, Christophe Lourdelet; with the voices of Matthew McConaughey, Reese Witherspoon, Seth MacFarlane, Scarlett Johansson, John C. Reilly. (PG, 108 min.)

Whether in karaoke bars, television singing competitions, or uploaded YouTube videos, it seems that no one these days can refrain from bursting into song. And what's good for human beings turns out to be good, too, for the bipedal, talking (and trilling) animals that populate the world of *Sing*, the latest animated movie from Illumination Entertainment, the company that's also responsible for *Despicable Me* and *The Secret Life of Pets*, although the movie it most resembles may be *Zootopia*, this year's other animated movie about animals who live and work in an urban city, just like their human counterparts.

Purple Rain

D: Albert Magnoli; with Prince, Apollonia Kotero, Morris Day. (1984, R, 111 min.) Cry along with the doves. @Alamo Ritz, Monday, 7pm.



The movie is cute but predictable, and destined to be a blockbuster. It had better rake in the bucks, given the vast sums of money that must have been doled out for star salaries and music rights to scores of popular songs. Not only does *Sing* wisely tap some A-list talent with known singing abilities (i.e., Reese Witherspoon, Seth MacFarlane, Scarlett Johansson, and Tori Kelly), but the large supporting cast is made up of top names in entertainment such as Jennifer Hudson, John C. Reilly, Nick Kroll, Leslie Jones, and Rhea Perlman, to name just a few.

Matthew McConaughey stars in a mostly non-singing role as a koala named Buster Moon, who stages a vocal contest as a last-ditch attempt to save his old theatre from foreclosure. Throngs of animals line up to audition. The final contestants are Rosita (Witherspoon), a stay-at-home pig mother stressed by 25 piglets; Mike (MacFarlane), a rat(pack) crooner and gambler with Frank Sinatra stylings; Ash (Johansson), a punk porcupine sporting a Mohawk; Johnny (Taron Egerton), a gorilla soul singer who needs to break away from the family robbery business (amusingly, the gorillas all don bunny masks to hide their identities while on the job); and Meena (Kelly), an elephant whose powerful voice belies her lack of confidence. The plot is pretty bare-bones, moving from one song-and-dance interlude to the next. Some cute visual gags, such as a snail singing its heart out while balanced atop a microphone or the koala and lamb throwing their bodies into their car wash jobs, bring smiles. Directors Garth Jennings (*Son of Rambow*) and Christophe Lourdelet have fashioned a pretty sweet movie, despite dousing it with overkill. The effect is "a little pitchy, dawg."

★★★ — Marjorie Baumgarten
ALAMO LAKELINE, ALAMO SLAUGHTER LANE, ALAMO VILLAGE, BARTON CREEK SQUARE, CM CEDAR PARK, CM HILL COUNTRY GALLERIA, CM ROUND ROCK, CM SOUTH PARK MEADOWS, CM STONE HILL TOWN CENTER, FLIX BREWHOUSE, HIGHLAND, GATEWAY, IPIC, METROPOLITAN, MOVIEHOUSE, TINSELTOWN NORTH, WESTGATE

WHY HIM?

D: John Hamburg; with Bryan Cranston, James Franco, Zoey Deutch, Megan Mullally, Keegan-Michael Key, Griffin Gluck, Cedric the Entertainer, Zack Pearlman, Adam Devine, Casey Wilson, Andrew Rannells. (R, 111 min.)

Have we reached the James Franco tipping point, the moment when the mere mention of the ubiquitous multi-hyphenate's name induces a collective grinding of the teeth? Not yet, but we may be getting close. In the

naughty-but-nice holiday comedy *Why Him?*, Franco's well-meaning but maladroit Silicon Valley tech mogul Laird Mayhew blunders through the film with the grace of a DOS operating system. Tatted up like a sk8er boi and frequently shirtless, this profanity-spouting bro is doomed to make the wrong impression (despite good intentions) on the straight-laced parents (Cranston and Mullally) of his more grounded girlfriend (Deutch), a far younger college junior he wishes to marry, much to her overprotective father's horror. Franco has made a career out of playing characters similar to this genial Gen-X vulgarian (*Pineapple Express*, *Spring Breakers*, *The Interview*), but the gig is wearing thinner with each progressively cartoonish performance. When he's in this mode, he's like a big puppy dog, all too eager to please, even when the character is a dangerous dude. No doubt, these paychecks allow this fearless jack-of-all-trades to engage in a seemingly endless variety of other and arguably more worthy projects (does the guy ever sleep?), but he needs to ask himself at some point: at what price?

Luckily for Franco, Cranston makes for the perfect comic foil in *Why Him?*. That craggy, lived-in face can launch a thousand laughs with a simple squint of the eye, cock of the brow, or clinch of the jaw. (He has the gift of Spencer Tracy – the ability to do so much by doing so little.) Watching this film, you're reminded of Cranston's befuddled dad on *Malcolm in the Middle*, before he morphed into the murderous Walter White. In their scenes together, Cranston inspires Franco to take it up a notch, and the results are enjoyable. The raunch factor in *Why Him?* is relatively low compared to other R-rated comedies these days, with the emphasis focused more on family dynamics and, yes, romantic love. A scene involving Cranston attempting to negotiate the mechanics of a high-tech automated Japanese toilet, however, provides some requisite crude humor, with Mullally similarly following suit later. And for all the potty mouths, there are plenty of nasty internet porn-site expressions played for laughs, words like "double dicking," "bukake," and "motorboating." Needless to say, you won't find those in your Funk & Wagnalls. Try Urban Dictionary instead.

★★★ – Steve Davis
ALAMO SLAUGHTER LANE, ALAMO VILLAGE, BARTON CREEK SQUARE, CM CEDAR PARK, CM HILL COUNTRY GALLERIA, CM ROUND ROCK, CM SOUTHPARK MEADOWS, CM STONE HILL TOWN CENTER, FLIX BREWHOUSE, HIGHLAND, GATEWAY, IPIC, METROPOLITAN, MOVIEHOUSE, TINSELTOWN NORTH, WESTGATE

FIRST RUNS

*Full-length reviews available online at austinchronicle.com. Dates at end of reviews indicate original publication date.

ALLIED

D: Robert Zemeckis; with Brad Pitt, Marion Cotillard. (R, 124 min.)

The World War II espionage romance *Allied* is a big movie: big actors, big emotions, big gestures, big explosions, and a big ol' mess. It's a by-the-numbers prestige picture that strives mightily to capture the magic of *Casablanca*. Allied undercover agents Max Vatan (Pitt) and Marianne Beausejour (Cotillard), pose as husband and wife to execute a bold mission that ultimately brings them together as actual spouses. Director Zemeckis proves to be all wrong for this movie. At heart, the narrative is an intimate one with Hitchcockian overtones, but he blows it up (both literally and figuratively) to magnify every imperfection in Steven Knight's undisciplined script. While Cotillard evokes a modicum of movie-star glamour as the film's woman of mystery, the stony-faced Pitt looks miserable from the start. This may be his most depressing performance yet. *Allied* is so full of itself it forgets to entertain most of the time. Here's to not looking at you, kid. (11/23/2016)

★★★ – Steve Davis
METROPOLITAN

ALMOST CHRISTMAS

D: David E. Talbot; with Kimberly Elise. (PG-13, 112 min.)

Everything is just a little better than it needs to be in this ambling comedy about a spirited family holiday gathering. Writer/director David E. Talbot (*Baggage Claim*) and the on-point cast make these family squabbles and sentiments go down with the same smooth, tasty ease of the sweet potato pie that becomes one of the film's central plot points. Patriarch Walter Meyers (Glover) is facing his first Christmas by himself after the death of his beloved wife of many decades. Alone in the big house where they raised their four children, he summons his now-grown offspring to return home for the holidays. Each comes with his or her own baggage in tow, as well as spouses, grandchildren, old resentments, and new gripes. All of it plays out at a leisurely pace that allows us to get to know the characters and feel for their individual issues. (11/18/2016)

★★★ – Marjorie Baumgarten
MOVIES 8, LAKE CREEK 7, TINSELTOWN NORTH

ARRIVAL

D: Denis Villeneuve; with Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner. (PG-13, 116 min.)

In Denis Villeneuve's new film, a depressed linguist Louise Banks, (Adams) whose daughter has died young from an illness, and Ian Donnelly (Renner), a cosmologist with a healthy dose of brainiac optimism, must race against the worst natures of their own species and learn to converse with mysterious aliens, who have appeared in twelve stony, ovum-shaped UFOs hovering just yards over the earth at various far-flung locales, before global catastrophe. The antagonists, as per usual, are not necessarily the recent intergalactic arrivals but instead the militaries of the world. *Arrival* is a thoughtfully realistic depiction of how such an event might play out. Like almost all great sci-fi films it's less about the alien unknown than it is about the human condition. The script, adapted by Eric Heisserer from Ted Chiang's fine short story, is a model of nuance and restraint most of the time but it's the striking imagery and ominous sound design that really stick with you. (11/11/2016)

★★★ – Marc Savlov
ALAMO LAKELINE, ALAMO S. LAMAR, CM HILL COUNTRY GALLERIA, GATEWAY, METROPOLITAN, WESTGATE

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A Simple Plan (1998)

DIRECTOR'S WALL - RAIMI (NORTH)
SCI-FI - RAIMI (SOUTH)

Set in a perpetually snowing small town in Minnesota, this Sam Raimi noir explores how greed can turn an honest everyman into a cold-blooded killer. Two brothers, Hank (Bill Paxton) and Jacob (Billy Bob Thornton) discover a crashed airplane with over \$4 million inside. The money serves to drive a wedge into what is already a uneasy sibling rivalry, and the body count starts to pile up. Raimi masterfully ratchets up the tension, and this is one of Billy Bob Thornton's best performances.

– Josh Kupecki

The Claim (2000)

GREAT BRITAIN - WINTERBOTTOM (SOUTH)
WESTERN (NORTH)

Director Michael Winterbottom has three times now mined the miserabilist-catsnip novels of Thomas Hardy, including 1996's *Jude* and 2011's *Trishna*. In between, Winterbottom made this underrated film, which moved The Mayor of Casterbridge to Gold-Rush-era America and peopled it with consumptives, sad hookers, and broken men. The cast is terrific, and Michael Nyman's gorgeous score might as well be called "Music to Curl Up in a Snowdrift and Die to."

– Kimberley Jones

The Thing (1982)

DIRECTOR'S WALL - CARPENTER (NORTH)
HORROR - CARPENTER (SOUTH)

The Northwest passage may be nearly free of pack ice, but it will forever be 40-below with a chance of paranoiac, metastasizing terror at U.S. Antarctica Research Station No. 31. John Carpenter's nihilistic shocker is a veritable master class in icebound suspense. Even before the graphic, extraterrestrial horror arrives (cooly masquerading as man's best friend), the testosterone-and-J&B-fueled tension is piano-wire tight, the wintry scenario unnervingly alien, and Ennio Morricone's sublime score pure sonic anxiety.

– Marc Savlov

The Fast Runner (2001)

CANADA

This film is more refreshing than a dip in our chilly, holy waters of Barton Springs. For this is a movie that refreshes the mind and spirit along with the body, so original is its content, look, and style. The story is based on an ancient legend passed down through millennia of Inuit oral tradition. *Atanarjuat*, a nearly three-hour epic, is totally Inuit and looks like no movie you've ever seen before.

– Marjorie Baumgarten

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OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARTY

D: Josh Gordon, Will Speck; with Jason Bateman, Olivia Munn, T.J. Miller, Jennifer Aniston, Kate McKinnon, Courtney B. Vance, Jillian Bell, Rob Corddry, Vanessa Bayer, Randall Park, Sam Richardson, Karan Soni, Jamie Chung, Abbey Lee, Da'Vine Joy Randolph, Fortune Feimster, Ben Falcone. (R, 105 min.)

Do not count on *Office Christmas Party* to deliver a contact high. Well before a bag of cocaine is dropped into the office party's snow machine, it's clear that this comedy is not up to snuff. The directing duo of Josh Gordon and Will Speck here reteam Jason Bateman and Jennifer Aniston, the stars of their last comedy feature, *The Switch*. Aniston plays a different kind of horrible boss in this film as Carol, the Scrooge of *Office Christmas Party*, who puts the kibosh on the event in advance of firing 40% of the staff, including her brother (Bateman); in a last-ditch move to save the branch, he decides to throw a rager of a party in order to attract a buyer (Vance). Yes, there are laughs to be had, but not the off-the-charts merriment promised by the title and the film's expert cast of comic actors. (12/09/2016)

★ ★ - Marjorie Baumgarten
ALAMO RITZ, ALAMO LAKELINE, ALAMO SLAUGHTER LANE, BARTON CREEK SQUARE, CM CEDAR PARK, CM HILL COUNTRY GALLERIA, CM ROUND ROCK, CM SOUTHPARK MEADOWS, CM STONE HILL TOWN CENTER, FLIX BREWHOUSE, HIGHLAND, GATEWAY, IPIC, METROPOLITAN, MOVIEHOUSE, TINSELTON NORTH, WESTGATE

⊛ **ROGUE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY**

D: Gareth Edwards; with Felicity Jones, Diego Luna, Alan Tudyk, Ben Mendelsohn, Forest Whitaker, Donnie Yen, Riz Ahmed, Jimmy Smits, Ben Daniels, Mads Mikkelsen. (PG-13, 133 min.)

The first stand-alone spinoff of George Lucas' revered *Star Wars* saga, *Rogue One* kicks ass in all the right ways. Like an Imperial Star Destroyer, it starts off slow and somewhat clunky, but by the time the mind-blowing third act arrives, it's all a fan can do not to stand up and cheer. The premise here - the canny script is credited to Chris Weitz and Tony Gilroy - takes a single sentence from the original 1977 *Star Wars* screen crawl and fleshes it out into a 133-minute meditation on (a new) hope, loyalty, and freedom from tyranny that's now more contemporary than ever. Jones is Jyn Erso, recruited to lead the swash-buckling Cassian Andor (Luna) and a breakaway band of renegade rebels on a mission to discover the whereabouts of the Death Star's schematics. At its heart a World War II suicide-mission movie, *Rogue One* also has a tearjerking abundance of heart. (12/16/2016)

★ ★ ★ - Marc Savlov
ALAMO LAKELINE, ALAMO SLAUGHTER LANE, ALAMO S. LAMAR, ALAMO VILLAGE, BARTON CREEK SQUARE, BULLOCK TEXAS STATE HISTORY MUSEUM, CM CEDAR PARK, CM HILL COUNTRY GALLERIA, CM ROUND ROCK, CM SOUTHPARK MEADOWS, CM STONE HILL TOWN CENTER, FLIX BREWHOUSE, HIGHLAND, GATEWAY, IPIC, METROPOLITAN, MOVIEHOUSE, TINSELTON NORTH, WESTGATE

ALSO PLAYING

Full-length reviews available online at austinchronicle.com.

THE ACCOUNTANT ★ ★ ★ MOVIES 8, LAKE CREEK 7

INFERNO ★ ★ ★ MOVIES 8, LAKE CREEK 7

JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK ★ ★ LAKE CREEK 7

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN ★ ★ LAKE CREEK 7

⊛ **MIDDLE SCHOOL: THE WORST YEARS OF MY LIFE** ★ ★ ★ LAKE CREEK 7

MISS PEREGRINE'S HOME FOR PECULIAR CHILDREN ★ ★ MOVIES 8, LAKE CREEK 7

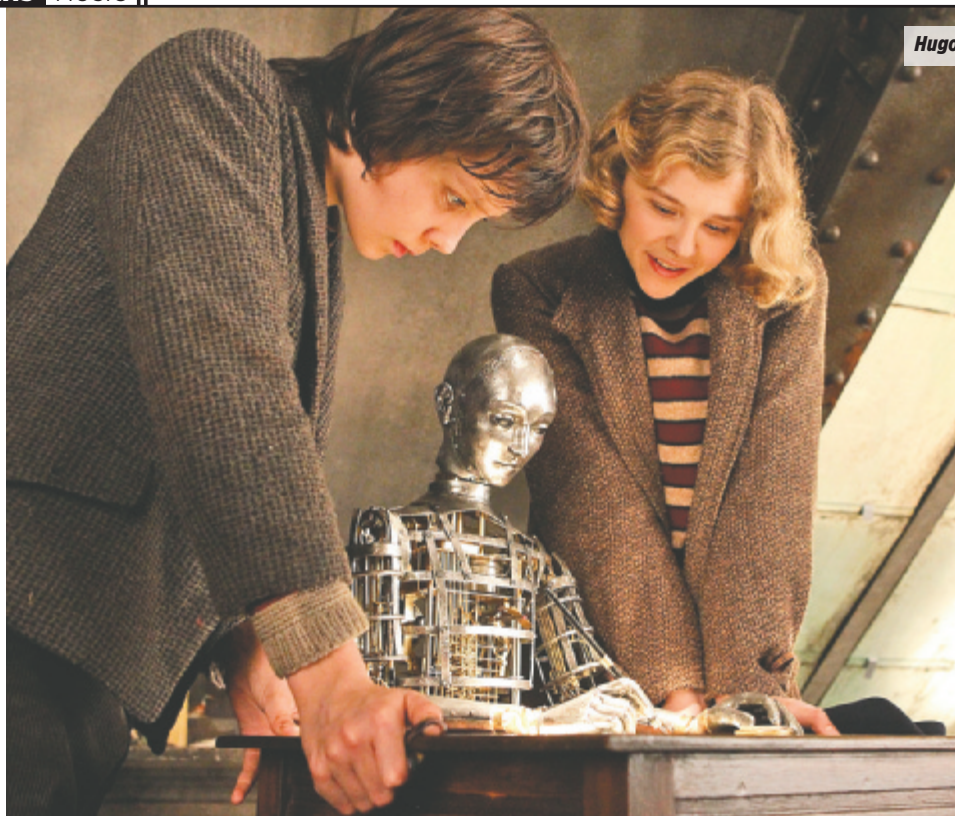
⊛ **QUEEN OF KATWE** ★ ★ ★ MOVIES 8

STORKS ★ ★ ★ MOVIES 8, LAKE CREEK 7

⊛ **SULLY** ★ ★ ★ LAKE CREEK 7

TROLLS ★ ★ MOVIES 8, LAKE CREEK 7

TYLER PERRY'S BOO! A MADEA HALLOWEEN ★ MOVIES 8



Hugo

TUESDAY 12/27

Doctor Who: "The Return of Doctor Mysterio" (2016) D: Edward Bazalgette; with Peter Capaldi, Matt Lucas, Justin Chatwin. (NR, 90 min.) Fathom Presents. This year's Christmas episode airs. @Alamo Village, CM Cedar Park, Tinseltown North, CM Hill Country Galleria, Metropolitan, CM Southpark Meadows, 7pm.

Happy Feet (2006) Kids' Camp. @Alamo Lakeline, 9:45am. (See Saturday.)

⊛ **Hugo (2011) Kids' Camp.** @Alamo Slaughter Lane, 9:45am. (See Saturday.)

Shin Godzilla (2016) D: Hideaki Anno and Shinji Higuchi; with Jun Kunimura, Satomi Ishihara, Shin'ya Tsukamoto. (NR, 118 min.) Where's Gadzooki? @Alamo Ritz, 4pm.

SPACES

⊛ **Force Majeure (2014)** See p.44.

WEDNESDAY 12/28

Happy Feet (2006) Kids' Camp. @Alamo Lakeline, 9:45am. (See Saturday.)

⊛ **Hugo (2011) Kids' Camp.** @Alamo Slaughter Lane, 9:45am. (See Saturday.)

⊛ **Mad Max: Fury Road (2015) Black & Chrome.** @Alamo Ritz, 7pm. (See Monday.)

Shin Godzilla (2016) @Alamo Ritz, 4pm. (See Tuesday.)

SPACES

⊛ **Persepolis (2007)** See p.46.

THURSDAY 12/29

Doctor Who: "The Return of Doctor Mysterio" (2016) Fathom Presents. @Alamo Village, CM Cedar Park, Tinseltown North, CM Hill Country Galleria, Metropolitan, CM Southpark Meadows, 7pm. (See Tuesday.)

⊛ **Hugo (2011) Kids' Camp.** @Alamo Slaughter Lane, 9:45am. (See Saturday.)

Idiocracy (2006) D: Mike Judge; with Luke Wilson, Maya Rudolph, Dax Shepard. (R, 84 min.) Where is your god now? (*) @Alamo Ritz, 10pm.

⊛ **Mad Max: Fury Road (2015) Black & Chrome.** @Alamo Ritz, 3:45pm. (See Monday.)

Shin Godzilla (2016) @Alamo Ritz, 7pm. (See Tuesday.)

IMAX

"A Beautiful Planet" (2016) D: Toni Myers; narrated by Jennifer Lawrence. (G, 40 min.) Mon.-Wed. (12/28), 10am.

"Jerusalem" (2014) D: Daniel Ferguson; narrated by Benedict Cumberbatch. (NR, 45 min.) Thu. (12/22)-Fri., noon; Mon.-Thu. (12/29), noon.

"National Parks Adventure" (2016) D: Greg MacGillivray; narrated by Robert Redford. (NR, 38 min.) Thu. (12/22)-Fri., 11am; Mon.-Thu. (12/29), 11am.

"Voyage of Time: The IMAX Experience" (2016) D: Terrence Malick; narrated by Brad Pitt. (G, 45 min.) Terrence Malick's first foray into documentary filmmaking is this decades-in-the-making history of the universe, and it's a visually magnificent achievement that's educational, as well. Thu. (12/22)-Fri., 10am; Thu. (12/29), 10am.

OFFSCREEN

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SPECIAL SCREENINGS

BY JOSH KUPECKI

THURSDAY 12/22

⊛ **Christmas Pops Sing-Along** Props and caroling books for everyone! @Alamo Ritz, 10:30pm.

Love Actually (2003) D: Richard Curtis; with Hugh Grant, Emma Thompson. (R, 135 min.) **Girlie Night.** A merry skein of loves lost and found in holiday-season London. (*) @Alamo Ritz, 7pm.

FRIDAY 12/23

⊛ **Christmas Show Master Pancake.** This seasonal show features the Master Pancake regulars and clips from favorite holiday TV specials and other weird holiday programs. @Alamo Ritz, 7, 10.

SPACES

Elf and Gremlins Holiday Films. Double feature. @Blue Starlite Drive-In, 7:30pm.

SATURDAY 12/24

Elf Movie Party (2003) D: Jon Favreau; with Will Ferrell, James Caan, Zoey Deschanel. (PG, 107 min.) Props, a contest, and a snowball fight in the theatre are just some of the party perks. @Alamo Ritz, 1, 4, 7.

Happy Feet (2006) D: George Miller; with the voices of Elijah Wood, Robin Williams, Brittany Murphy, Hugh Jackman, Nicole Kidman, Hugo Weaving, Anthony LaPaglia. (PG, 108 min.) **Kids' Camp.** Ticket sales go toward schools and nonprofits. (*) @Alamo Lakeline, 9:20am.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION:

The *Austin Chronicle* is published every Thursday. Info is due the Monday of the week prior to the issue date. **The deadline for the Jan. 6 issue is Monday, Dec. 26.** Include name of event, date, time, location, price, phone number(s), a description, and any available photos or artwork. Send submissions to the *Chronicle*, PO Box 4189, Austin, TX 78765; fax, 512/458-6910; or email. Contact Josh Kupecki (Special Screenings): specialscreenings@austinchronicle.com; Wayne Alan Brenner (Offscreen): calendar@austinchronicle.com.

⊛ **Hugo (2011)** D: Martin Scorsese; with Asa Butterfield, Ben Kingsley, Sacha Baron Cohen, Chloë Grace Moretz. (PG, 126 min.) **Kids' Camp.** Scorsese steps outside his comfort zone to create an effects-heavy children's film set in France - and winds up creating one of his most splendid and personal films. (*) @Alamo Slaughter Lane, 10:25am.

It's a Wonderful Life (1946) D: Frank Capra; with James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore. (NR, 129 min.) This sentimental perennial is a holiday chestnut. A man learns that he's made a difference in the lives of others, and an angel gets its wings. (*) @Alamo Slaughter Lane, 4:10pm; Arbor, Gateway, Metropolitan, Westgate, 7pm.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975) D: Jim Sharman. (R, 95 min.) For more info, see www.austinrocky.org. @Alamo Village, 12mid.

SUNDAY 12/25

Elf Movie Party (2003) @Alamo Ritz, 3:30, 10. (See Saturday.)

Happy Feet (2006) Kids' Camp. @Alamo Lakeline, 9:45am. (See Saturday.)

⊛ **Hugo (2011) Kids' Camp.** @Alamo Slaughter Lane, 11:25am. (See Saturday.)

Love Actually (2003) Girlie Night. @Alamo Ritz, noon, 6:30. (See Thursday, 12/22.)

MONDAY 12/26

Happy Feet (2006) Kids' Camp. @Alamo Lakeline, 9:45am. (See Saturday.)

⊛ **Hugo (2011) Kids' Camp.** @Alamo Slaughter Lane, 9:45am. (See Saturday.)

⊛ **Mad Max: Fury Road (2015) Black & Chrome.** D: George Miller; with Tom Hardy, Charlize Theron, Nicholas Hoult. (R, 120 min.) Glorious action cinema abounds, now in a black & white version of the popular film. (*) @Alamo Ritz, 10pm.

⊛ **Purple Rain (1984)** See p.44.

THE SYMBOL (*) INDICATES FULL-LENGTH REVIEWS AVAILABLE ONLINE: AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM/FILM

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MUSIC

PLAYBACK

BY
KEVIN
CURTIN

IN MEMORIAM

Biggest Austin Music Stories of 2016



Death of Fun Fun Fun, Birth of Margin Walker

Fun Fun Fun Fest is now owned by real estate billionaires ... Welcome to Austin 2016! **Transmission Events**, Austin's most trusted independent concert promoters, fractured when owners **Graham Williams** and **James Moody** surrendered the company to investors **Stratus Properties**, who wanted to shift focus away from live music. In the divorce, Stratus got Transmission and ownership of FFF. Williams and other Transmission principals immediately launched a new booking concern called **Margin Walker**, which debuted November's FFF replacement **Sound On Sound Fest**. Stratus, meanwhile, initially planned to operate Transmission as an event production and sponsorship business, then gave up and terminated the remaining staff. Since then, they've been seeking a production partner to hold Fun Fun Fun Fest on Halloween weekend 2017.

Survive's Strange Ascent

No Austin band had a bigger year than **Survive**. The analog synth quartet, a cult favorite since 2008, was catapulted into living rooms worldwide via **Netflix's** retro sci-fi smash **Stranger Things**, scored by members **Kyle Dixon** and **Michael Stein**. The duo's eerie thematics resulted in *Billboard*-topping soundtracks and a pair of **Grammy** nominations. Survive also dished

a fourth LP, *RR7349*, with esteemed metal messengers **Relapse Records**. The band's newfound popularity fueled Austin's burgeoning synth scene, centralized around **Radiohead**-approved retailers **Switched On Electronics** and local cassette specialists **Holodeck Records**.

Mayor's Omnibus

Steve Adler wants to be Austin's "Music Mayor," acknowledging in February the city's increasingly unaffordable environment: "We will not long be the live music capital of the world if we lose musicians – if we lose music venues." He ordered staff to develop a plan to stabilize our creative ecosystem and in June the 68-page "Omnibus" report arrived. Initiatives included streamlining ATX's complex entertainment license process, protecting venues from new developments, and examining ways to give venues in good standing rebates on energy bills and mixed beverage taxes. Some decried a lack of urgency – *Chronicle* Arts Editor **Robert Faires** equated changing city policy with "turning an ocean liner" – and, as of yet, no Omnibus programs have come to fruition.

Obamas Play SXSW

South by Southwest hasn't been able to lock in **Bob Dylan** for a keynote, but they booked the next best thing in March with **Barack** and **Michelle Obama**. POTUS sat

for an Interactive Q&A, discussing technology's potential for civic engagement and earning a big laugh when he patted himself on the back for reducing the nation's unemployment rate, "Thanks Obama!" No festival got a bigger headliner in 2016. For her part, the first lady sat with female music figures, including **Queen Latifah** and **Missy Elliott**, talking international female empowerment and promoting the unfortunately awful all-star charity single "This Is for My Girls." In October, SXSW continued their executive branch collaboration with **South by South Lawn**, "a festival of ideas, art, and action" held on the **White House** lawn.

Antone's Immaculate Resurrection

Austin's "Home of the Blues" had been homeless for two years after short-order owner **Frank Hendrix** sold it to a business partnership that soon crumbled. Reforming around the nucleus of **Lamberts** and **Arlyn Studios** co-owner **Will Bridges** and biologist/explorer **Spencer Wells**, with **Gary Clark Jr.** and matriarch **Susan Antone** as key partners, the Home of the Blues reopened Downtown on New Year's Eve and has since tapped into the business' original spirit in remarkable fashion. Regular appearances from Clark Jr. and a surprise show by **Buddy Guy** made this the best of all imaginable scenarios.

Levitation's Bad Trip

Strongest lineup of any Austin festival this year, no one could have predicted **Levitation 2016** would become a landmark clusterfuck. The musical campout was canceled less than 24 hours before gates opened due to adverse weather predictions, **Travis County Emergency Services** claiming responsibility. Save for a brief storm wreaking havoc on the grounds overnight Saturday, no rain fell during waking hours all weekend. Over a dozen bands, not including headliners **Brian Wilson** and **Ween**, played makeup shows, but a website glitch sold them out before many wristband holders could get tickets. Adding to the customer service nightmare, refunds took until midsummer to arrive. Worse still, the impending Transmission/Margin Walker split led to Stratus Properties suing Levitation owners for over \$296,500 for unpaid organizational payments. This fall, Levitation was working to partner with local **Live Nation** affiliates **C3 Presents** to co-produce the fest, a deal that's still in the works even though they've pre-emptively canceled the 2017 iteration. ■

AUSTIN MUSIC HALL was demolished in September, ending the 20-plus year history of one of Austin's biggest concert venues. Opened in the mid-Nineties by then-king of Austin concert promotions **Tim O'Connor**, the rugged room was redesigned in 2007, resulting in disastrous acoustics. In 2012, O'Connor's **Direct Events** lost the AMH in foreclosure, but it continued to host big-name concerts, mostly through **C3**.

BADLANDS, a 12th and Chicon venue/hot dog joint catering almost exclusively to local bands, lost its lease this fall after two years in business. Shuttering brought about a public dispute, owners **Shane** and **Shannon Howard** claiming their lease renewal was usurped by **Rio Rita's** owners offering the landlord a larger sum for the property.

THE BRASS HOUSE, a Downtown jazz and blues venue, closed in October after nearly three years in business. Owners blamed "the rising tide of the Downtown Austin rental market."

HENRY GONZALEZ, a poster artist, muralist, and jack-of-all-concert-trades since the Seventies, died in February following a two-year battle with cancer. In recent years, Gonzalez had conserved local music history at the **South Austin Museum of Popular Culture**.

LOUIS JAY MEYERS, veteran musician, booker, co-founder of **SXSW**, and general local music industry powerhouse, succumbed to a heart attack at age 60 on the first day of **SXSW 2016**.

PETE MITCHELL, primo country guitarist who spent decades playing lead for **Ernest Tubbs**, died in July at 74. He relocated locally in 1999 and played with **James Hand** and **Alvin Crow**, who called him "the **Jimi Hendrix** of country music."

JOHN MORTHLAND, the first American music journalist to interview the **Rolling Stones**, died in March at 68. The longtime Austinite, who'd written for *Rolling Stone*, *Creem*, and *Texas Monthly*, was also executor of buddy **Lester Bangs'** estate.

PAUL RAY, Austin's all-time greatest deejay – a sage of R&B whose *Twine Time* soundtracked Saturday nights since 1979 – died in January at 73. The charismatic Ray also fronted Seventies favorites the **Cobras** and spent decades hosting the **Austin Music Awards**.

LUCKY TOMBLIN, 72, a self-made lawyer who could only keep music as a side project (producing albums, owning a studio, writing songs), retired from law in 2001 and fronted an A-list country band until his death in May.

MITCHELL VANDENBURG, 30, and **Chris Porter**, 36, died on tour this fall when their shuttle bus was struck from behind by an inattentive trucker. Vandenburg, aka eclectic songman **Chester Bumblecrumb**, contributed bass and stage charisma to a plethora of local acts, including **Starlings, TN**. Porter, formerly of **Back Row Baptists**, had a burgeoning solo career.

JOHN WINSOR, the extraordinary multi-instrumentalist who played in **Sounds del Mar**, **What Made Milwaukee Famous**, **Carry Illinois**, and worked behind the board at the **Mohawk**, left Earth by his own hand in March at age 33.

X GAMES? More like ex-games! The extreme sports fest left Austin due to **ESPN's** need to hold the event in July, clashing with Austin's triple-digit summer weather. Gone with it are the big shows it brought since coming to town in 2014, including **Kanye West** and **Metallica**.

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Final ATX album reviews for a turning-point year

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STREET SECTS

End Position (The Flenser)

Welcome to the nihilist's ball! On full-length debut *End Position*, Austin's new extremists dive further into existential shadows than even their unrelenting trio of singles from 2014, putting Eighties industrial into conflict with itself. Composer/sonic reducer Shaun Ringsmuth sets his devil machines on eviscerate with complex, stop-start techno rarely heard since early Test Department (1981-97) out of London. Leo Ashline's vox swirl between a Manson-esque purr and John Lydon's snarl – with Chris Connelly crescendos. When the brakes finally squeal on multi-layered ripsaw "Our Lesions" and he begs, "Who's there? Who's there?" it's pure metaphysical horror. Cancer, addiction, revenge are their tools and burdens, told through despairing chronicles like sibling saga "Featherweight Hate" and failed suicide note "Black Din." *End Position's* message that sometimes living well isn't the best revenge, it's just living, is the closest their roaring, engulfing, entrancing misery comes to optimism.

★★★★

– Richard Whittaker



FOR THE SAKE OF THE SONG by Jim Caligiuri

SILAS LOWE *Wandering Father, Forgotten Son*

The story behind Silas Lowe's second effort makes the listening even more interesting. Roy Michaels, Lowe's father, co-founded almost forgotten Sixties New York rock act Cat Mother & the All Night Newsboys, whose debut was produced by Jimi Hendrix. Lowe takes on a half-dozen of his parent's songs and six of his own as a form of spiritual healing. The results come across as a jovial back porch jam, with Danny Barnes, members of the Carper Family, and Wood & Wire dropping by. Austin-centric Americana at its purest. ★★★★★



SHAWN PANDER *Black & White* (Stale)

He played the most recent ACL Fest and counts television's Dr. Phil and vodka king Tito Beveridge as fans, yet Shawn Pander still flies under the radar among the flood of local singer-songwriters. Third album *Black & White* finds him relying too heavily on heart songs without saying anything fresh, especially compositions titled "Just to Be With You" and "Let Me Love You." A slow funk reimagining of Bob Dylan's "It Ain't Me Babe" falls completely flat. Nothing offensive, yet screaming for fresh breath. ★★



JONATHAN FOX BAND *Loverlust*

Although he calls it a band, Jonathan Fox performed most of the music on his second disc himself. That he does so without flash or over-indulgence demonstrates a rare talent, one that's able to work a variety of styles in a manner that's self-assured and charismatic. Most of *Loverlust* projects power pop, with spiky guitars and swelling harmonies ("Romance Is Dead"), but "Stranger" broods and haunts, and the near-folk of "Stay" pleads with all its might. ★★★



GIRLIE ACTION by Abby Johnston

KATIE SHORE *Fall Away*

Katie Shore belts like a big band chanteuse and fiddles finer than a phenom. Her first solo album, *Fall Away* highlights the finer points of both of those skill sets. The Ft. Worth native took time away from her strings and vocal duties with Asleep at the Wheel to cut a collection of ragtime-tinged tunes, exemplified by the warbly "Sweet Jack" and the clarinet whoops of "Chances." The further she leans into Americana-touched pop, the more Shore lets her virtuosic fiddling rip. "Red Balloon" sounds like an adult contemporary hit, if not for the winding fiddle breaks where a soft guitar solo might have been. ★★★



TINNAROSE *My Pleasure Has Returned* (Nine Mile)

From the vintage rose in the clouds on the cover to the chugging, jangling guitar riffs guiding the album, Austin threepiece Tinnarose throws back to the finer points of the Seventies on *My Pleasure Has Returned*. The follow-up to 2014's full-length debut swings psychedelic on "Hello My Son," vocalist and songwriter Devon McDermott wavering between Grace Slick and Joni Mitchell. "Aesthetic Anarchy," a pared back guitar ballad, allows her sweet soprano to shine with little more than climbing guitar riffs to battle for attention. Still, she fares equally well belting through the glossy, nostalgia-packed sound of "Love Is for All," a single recalling Seventies enthusiast Ariel Pink. ★★★



TRIPTRIO *Twenty*

Twenty tells you right in the title what you're getting into: Twenty minutes of fresh, no-frills Americana. Veteran Greezy Wheels chanteuse Lissa Hattersley synced up with TripTrio in a follow-up to 2009's *How I Spent My Summer Vacation*. The five-song EP evades easy classification within the gentle percussion and unassuming guitar breaks in "I Got Happy" and "Life in the Modern World," winding out like a soundtrack to a Copacabana escape with Hattersley as your no-nonsense tour guide. "Moonchild Blues" lets her steady alto cut loose, swinging amidst jazz-lit guitar and filling in the gaps of low-key compositions. ★★★

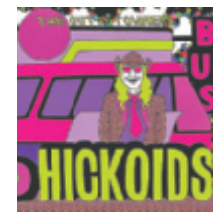


HICKOIDS *The Out of Towners* (Saustex)

Recorded in 2014, this bittersweet EP represents the last musical testament of local punk rock and sartorial legend Davy Jones. The longtime Hickoids guitarist, who died of lung cancer in 2015, was already struggling with the illness when these tracks were cut. While it's impossible to hear Jones and company reimagine this eclectic six-pack of quintessential Texas songs without recalling the poignant setting of their creation, *The Out of Towners* also makes at least as much stylistic sense as the Hickoids' 2011 Brit-rock cover romp, *Kicking It With the Twits*. Their take on Roky Erickson's "I Have Always Been Here Before" would've fit right in on the 1990 Erickson tribute, *Where the Pyramid Meets the Eye*. The EP's strongest suit lies in reconciling Willie Nelson's "Night Life" and Terry Allen's "I Just Left Myself Today" with a rage bomb like the Dicks' "Dead in a Motel Room." A six-minute immolation of Doug Sahm's "At the Crossroads" makes an appropriate fin de siècle for one of Austin's most irreplaceable musical characters.

★★★★

– Greg Beets



UVH *Last Fruit* (GTZ)

Debut release from Twin Bitches singer/songwriter Larry Llodra's new outfit UVH, *Last Fruit* blasts off with "PS," bashing Seventies proto-punk. Clanging chords and a



pulse-pounding 4/4 throb achieve the perfect balance of ear-bending melody and garage rock clamor. That scruffy CBGB appearance may be deceiving, however. The rest of the EP skips forward a couple decades to plunge deep into the depths of alternative nation indie rock. Warmly dissonant jangle-fuzz and nervous propulsion drive "Innervisions," belying the introspection in the title, and "Flood" swims through a river of grunge and young adult angst. Llodra's bleary-eyed rasp sounds genetically engineered for this latter styling, and his songwriting and stout conviction sell the songs without any hint of the irony that drowned the era originally. Soaked in distorted melody by way of self-expression rather than nostalgia, *Last Fruit* drips heart.

★★★

– Michael Toland

INSECTS VS. ROBOTS *TheyllKillYaa* (Hen House Studios)

Led by Willie Nelson's son Micah, this Venice Beach, Calif., quintet's second 2016 release spools forth in multiple stream-of-consciousness tendrils held together by eclectic instrumentation and musical acumen. Nelson's nimble charango picking and Nikita Sorokin's effects-sodden strings remain key sonic delineations. While *TheyllKillYaa* sometimes stretches tangents too far afield, frenetic evolution keeps this seven-song string-band/prog-rock hybrid from collapsing. Oddly enough, the lead-off title track – recorded during a police shooting outside the studio – resonates least, meandering. A bit more form and the potency to the song's unconventional



WATERLOO RECORDS

BEST SELLING ALBUMS OF 2016

01. **KGSR Broadcasts** Volume 24
02. **David Bowie** Black Star
03. **Leon Bridges** Coming Home
04. **Radiohead** A Moon Shaped Pool
05. **Sturgill Simpson** A Sailor's Guide To The Earth
06. **Hayes Carll** Lovers and Leavers
07. **Lucinda Williams** Ghosts of Highway 20
08. **Chris Stapleton** Traveller
09. **Tame Impala** Currents
10. **Alabama Shakes** Sound and Color
11. **Adele** 25
12. **James McMurtry** Complicated Game
13. **Lumineers** Cleopatra
14. **Various Artists** All ATX Vol. 4
15. **Bon Iver** 22, A Million
16. **Leonard Cohen** You Want It Darker
17. **Twenty One Pilots** Blurryface
18. **Explosions In The Sky** Wilderness
19. **Willie Nelson** Sings Gershwin
20. **Gary Clark Jr.** Story of Sonny Boy Slim
21. **Various Artists** All ATX Vol. 3 All Along The Moontower
22. **Alejandro Escovedo** Burn Something Beautiful
23. **Sarah Jarosz** Undercurrent
24. **White Denim** Stiff
25. **Courtney Barnett** Sometimes I Sit and Think...
26. **Cage The Elephant** Tell Me I'm Pretty
27. **Willie Nelson & Merle Haggard** Django and Jimmie
28. **Prince** Purple Rain
29. **Wilco** Schmilco
30. **BØRNS** Dopamine
31. **Carrie Rodriguez** Lola
32. **Margo Price** Midwest Farmer's Daughter
33. **Kendrick Lamar** To Pimp A Butterfly
34. **Doyle Bramhall II** Rich Man
35. **Sweet Spirit** Cokomo
36. **Twenty One Pilots** Vessel
37. **Jason Isbell** Something More Than Free
38. **Bonnie Raitt** Dig In Deep
39. **Charles Bradley** Changes
40. **Robert Earl Keen** Live Dinner Reunion
41. **Grupo Fantasma** Problemas
42. **The Rolling Stones** Blue and Lonesome
43. **Norah Jones** Day Breaks
44. **Iggy Pop** Post Pop Depression
45. **Beyonce** Lemonade
46. **Grimes** Art Angels
47. **Jack White** Acoustic
48. **Terry Allen** Juarez (reissue)
49. **Hamilton** Original Cast Recording
50. **Carseat Head Rest** Teens Of Denial



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VALLEJO Unified (VMG)
VALLEJO Unificados (VMG)

Did Vallejo just pull a *Use Your Illusion*? Simultaneous releases, sí, but *Unified* and *Unificados* divide by language, not compositions. Which itself clusters Austin's Latin rock siblings with the likes of superstar acts such as ABBA and the Beatles, who released some singles in different languages, or perhaps Greek oracle Nana Mouskouri, known for vocalizing in more languages than the U.N.

Sting's 1987 double album ...*Nothing Like the Sun* spun off the *Nada Como el Sol* EP in Spanish and Portuguese.

In English, Vallejo's ninth studio LP *Unified* untangles immaculate riffing in the service of a radio playlist that no longer exists: KLBJ local programming. If you think modern rock radio's been slicked to death over the past 20 years, Hispanic frequencies double that polish and timeline. Genetically engineered for FM, explosive opener "Hello to Goodbye" grinds like a demo from Alice in Chains' *Dirt*, including the choral hook: "So long/ I don't know what went so wrong/ I can't go on, it's all gone/ Won't you tell me, how we got from hello to goodbye." A synth

eddy under the verses becomes an electro flare after the second one and grounds the tune in this century rather than the last one. A guitar matrix energizes the adjoining "Just Fine," but this time the chorus rises into a gleaming vocal yearn positively anathema to leather wearers. "Best I Can" loosens its electric axe play with added gusto, the weave between frontman AJ Vallejo and Heath Clark still Seventies Santana strong, but ballad "One Day" swings back the other way.

And so it goes: saccharine anthems ("Floods") and saccharine ballads ("Let It Go"). "Letter to Me" closes the LP more genuine, brooding just right in AJ's wounded vocal ("devastated, that's what I feel").

Conversely, en Español, "Just Fine" triumphs, because that same slickness is how it's supposed to sound on Mexican frequencies. Unlike Carrie Rodriguez's Spanish-language crossover earlier this year, AJ Vallejo nails the switchover without a hiccup, "Let It Go" receiving twice the energy in its second language, a veritable eruption. Midtempo moody, "I Run Away"/"Tengo Que Correr" falters in both languages. Despite the misstep, *Unificados* meshes beautifully. Those of us relegated to south of the great wall will pack said *Illusion II*.

(*Unified*) ★★★
 (*Unificados*) ★★★★★

Mark Patterson and Bryan Duckworth join for a slapping "Ding Dong Daddy From Dumas," and Bruce Robison saves his best steps for "No Kinda Dancer." Disc two offers Reckless Kelly's Cody Braun whipping "Wild Wind" and Cody Canada ripping guitar on "Lonesome Wind," but Joe Ely both steals the show and closes it on "The Road Goes on Forever." Ultimately, Robert Earl Keen's sheer enthusiasm showcases a Texas legend in the thrall of putting together his own personally perfect show.

★★★★

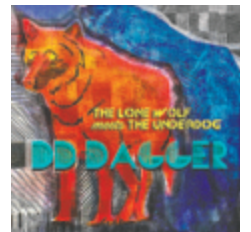
— Doug Freeman

DD DAGGER
The Lone Wolf Meets the Underdog

Pirouetting around the headspace between despair and jubilation, Dagger's fourth release unfolds like a spirited black box cabaret production. Multimodal artist Allyson Lipkin's alter ego spins ragtime and blues-inflected yarns teeming with snark and sentimentality. The Deep Sombreros/Minor Mishap Marching Band saxophonist employs clever wordplay and twisted arrangements to refine her uniquely compelling persona. Luminous guests like Swans drummer Thor Harris and Golden Dawn Arkestra multi-instrumentalist Laura Scarborough heighten the execution. True to its title, "Dead on the Vine" bristles with dark-alley emotions at a warbling tempo indicative of low-battery life. The elegiac "True Story" utilizes highly specific metaphors to put a personal spin on universal loss, while a cover of "Heartattack and Vine" drives home the Tom Waits influence with spirited panache. The album's most distinctive track, "Day Bowie Died," confounds the critical path in the best of ways, dropping an overcast, synth-laden contemplation on identity and mortality right between the reeds.

★★★★

— Greg Beets



LATIN BEAT
 BY
RAOUL HERNANDEZ

time signature might have grown fivefold. The band's ability to reconcile disparate styles becomes evident when hokum trips the lights in Brecht's Berlin on "Become a Crow," while the cinematic "Fukushima" opens with a forlorn piano before exploding in epic psychedelic doom. Ten-minute closer "Ole Lukøje" borrows a page from Hans Christian Andersen, skittering across the astral plane on the draft of Nelson and Sorokin's lilting interplay before guitarist Milo Gonzalez brings it home with a big rock candy climax.

★★★★

— Greg Beets

ROBERT EARL KEEN

Live Dinner Reunion (Dualtone)

Robert Earl Keen's live albums capture the iconic Texas songwriter at his most real, 1996's No. 2 *Live Dinner* still his bestseller. In celebration of its 20th anniversary, Keen returned to Floore's Country Store



in Helotes to remake the magic. Aided by an all-star guest cast and 5,000 fans, *Live Dinner Reunion* surpasses the original. The double platter cruises through REK's career, covering classics like "Gringo Honeymoon," "Amarillo Highway," and "Corpus Christi Bay," but it's the slew of duets that makes the album sing. Lyle Lovett rejuvenates the two songmen's salad days for perhaps the seminal recording of "This Old Porch," and Cory Morrow's roughened twang perfectly matches Keen's own distinct vocals on "I'll Go on Downtown." Original band members

CHRISTMAS COUNTRY MILE by Jim Caligiuri

ALVIN CROW
Texas Christmas for You and Me

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL
Lone Star Christmas Night (Bismieux)

The gold standard of Texas country Christmas albums remains Dale Watson's 2001 disc *Christmas Time in Texas*. Two new efforts from similarly revered C&W Austinites vie for the same relevancy beyond songs worn threadbare by repeat spins and uninspired arrangements. Alvin Crow fiddles about in his trad style and the occasional sax solo on newer material like the wholly original "Texas Christmas Rhumba" and bittersweet waltz "Merry Texas Christmas Blue." Both mix with a passel of standards — "Silent Night," "Pretty Paper," "White Christmas," and others — but a second disc cuts personal for Crow. A solemn reading of yuletide poem "The Cremation of Sam McGee" revives a holiday tradition of his father at family gatherings. For their second Christmas effort, Ray Benson's Western swing juggernaut of the past half-century veers even further off the beaten path, thoroughly in the spirit of the season nonetheless and whipping rhythm like mad. There are slightly goofy takes on "Feliz Navidad" and "Blue Christmas," but twin fiddles burn bright on "Merry Texas Christmas Y'all" and instrumental "Deck the Halls Boogie!" spotlights newer members of the band including pianist Connor Forsyth. Infectious holiday hootenannies.

(Alvin Crow) ★★★

(Asleep at the Wheel) ★★★★★

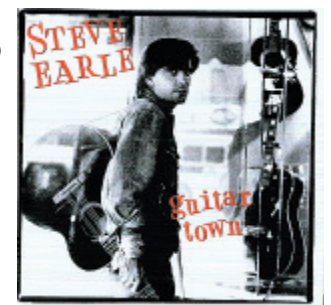


STEVE EARLE
Guitar Town 30th Anniversary (MCA)

Before *Guitar Town* in 1986, few outside of the fertile songwriters' circle led by Townes Van Zandt and Guy Clark had heard of Steve Earle. Sixteen albums later, the Schertz-reared troubadour's debut remains packed with songs illuminating the path to a lengthy and rewarding career. It's the kind of country tough enough to attract bikers, angry enough to rile punks, and literate enough with swaggering wordplay to distance itself from anything coming out of Nashville at the time while still remaining true to tradition. *Guitar Town* rises out of the working man's life epitomized by the songs of Bruce Springsteen. Earle adds a tangy Southern accent and Texas rockabilly sensibility that rides the back roads out of town on "Hillbilly Highway" with a stopover at the gas station attendant searching for something more in "Somebody." Remastered, this *Anniversary* edition doubles up a second disc, a 19-song 1986 concert that reflects the album's attitude but also includes songs from the then-unrecorded but equally outstanding follow-up *Exit O* and Earle's now famous rendition of Springsteen's "State Trooper."

★★★★★

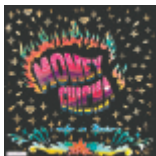
— Jim Caligiuri



MONEY CHICHA
Echo en Mexico
(Vampisoul)

A passion project from a pared-down lineup of Brownout and Grupo Fantasma vets, Money Chicha has dished out gritty, effects-laden cumbia since 2012. With their proper debut, and as host of an annual chicha summit, the homegrown six-pack honors a formerly derided brand of Peruvian Sixties psychedelia sharing its name with the region's saliva-fermented corn booze. The organ-wafting instrumentals offer a quick buzz and, as the title track suggests, reverb by the pound. "Quieren Efectos" slyly reimagines a Nineties Das EFX hip-hop hit, while "Animalitos" swirls and twirls like a South American circus. And just in case you thought you'd mastered the web of Grupo-derived bands and side projects, "Yo No Soy Turku" references yet another, the elusive Turku, bridging the gap between Anatolia and the Andes with a stone-milled mash-up of chicha and bizarro Turkish funk. *Echo en Mexico* is a strange brew, indeed. Bottoms up!

★★★ — Thomas Fawcett



UPPER REALITY
Silver

Frisco-raised alt-R&B vocalist/producer (and UT student) Jessica Bathea's latest output as Upper Reality captures a polymath deep in discovery mode. "An exploration into inadequacy," *Silver* offers courage by aurally illuminating her fears. Topically and tonally similar to like-minded artists Solange, Georgia Anne Muldrow, and SZA, she tackles the existential duality of blackness and womanhood, direct and clear-eyed on "Your Way (Black Woman)," floating a dignified spoken word: "They want us as symbols, but don't want our truth." On "Second Place," Bathea's rich contralto swims in warm, low-lying synths and 808 bass decay. The excellent "Why I Still Make Music" addresses her fears best, as she raps in double time, "I'm in a hurry, to speak my mind, and go home early." The disc's true revelation is Bathea as a producer, respectfully possessing the spirit of her brave, self-facing influences.

★★★★ — Kahron Spearman



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Legends & Legacies: Savannah Welch Benefit

CONTINENTAL CLUB, FRIDAY 23

One of the universal aspects of the holidays revolves around family. For the past three years, William Harries Graham has organized concerts where different generations of local musicians get together and share their songs in a manner that's unique and utterly heartwarming. This year, Legends & Legacies debuts at the home of his Wednesday night residency, Continental Club, and doubles as a benefit for Savannah Welch of ATX Americana quartet the Trishas.

Welch fell victim to a freak accident early last month in Wimberley that resulted in the loss of her right leg. This show, long on the books, features members descended from the clans of Kevin Welch, Jon Dee Graham, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, James McMurtry, Champ Hood, and Terry Allen, as well as the recently added Charlie Sexton. They perform together in ways one can't experience in any other manner.

"It just feels good," says Kevin Welch, Savannah's father. "All the families supporting

each other and, the best part, it's absolutely not competitive."

There's been a simply amazing outpouring of support for Savannah. Last week, Emmylou Harris and Kevin Welch's old band the Dead Reckoners played together in Nashville to show their support. It was the first time the Reckoners had performed together in 15 years (they think). A video stream of the performance is available on Welch's Facebook page.

"Some people have sent their merch money," he reports. "And Todd Wolfson did something at his Monday night gig at the Monkey Nest. There's also a GoFundMe page that's up and running, if people are interested in doing that. Savannah's been remarkable throughout the whole thing.

"For us, it's like, 'How would we react to something like this?' But I'm leaning on her. I'm leaning on a one-legged woman. She's that strong."

— Jim Caligiuri

www.gofundme.com/love-for-savannah-welch

ARMADILLO CHRISTMAS BAZAAR: ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL, JIMMY LAFAVE, SHELLEY KING Palmer Events Center, Friday 23

Swing town? Darn tootin'. When Asleep at the Wheel crams onto the

modest ACB stage for the 7pm headlining slot, the house will be a-rockin' to the Western rhythms of Austin's half-century C&W legacy, fresh off new disc *Lone Star Christmas Night* (see review, p.54). Day-long prep soundtracks courtesy of male siren and Woody Guthrie acolyte Jimmy LaFave, 3pm, and Hill Country Earth mother Shelley King at 11am. Last-minute shoppers, here's your multi-tasking sweet spot. — Raoul Hernandez

THE JOE JACKSONS ABGB, Friday 23

Those excited for an evening of "Is She Really Going Out With Him" and "Steppin' Out" will be severely disappointed. No, this isn't the bargain bin Elvis Costello who had far more hits and less credibility than Mr. McManus. Rather, 'tis the local bar band-ish supergroup led by soul shouter Black

Joe Lewis and outlaw country ringleader Mario Matteoli of the Weary Boys. YouTube evidence suggests they offer a sturdy, Stonesy chug. Free, 10pm. — Tim Stegall

CARSON MCHONE'S SONG SWAP

White Horse, Saturday 24

Why wait around for Santa when the White Horse delivers the goods with their fourth annual Christmas Eve songwriter night? Austin's rising country queen Carson Mchone plays host for the song swap and stuffs the stocking with local talent trading tales and tunes. Among the over 20 balladeers slated for the free potluck are Jaimee Harris, Suzanna Choffel, Graham Weber, Tate Mayeux, Leo Rondeau, and Ali Holder. All tips benefit the SIMS Foundation.

— Doug Freeman

ALVIN CROW Little Longhorn Saloon, Saturday 24

Recent release of his well-honed *Texas Christmas For You and Me* (see "Last Texas Platters," p.54) means Alvin Crow pretty much has to play this Christmas Eve. Spirits are sure to be riding high at the pint-sized Burnet Road honky-tonk as the veteran Austin fiddler's finely stylized traditional favorites zing alongside newer treats like the only-in-the-Lone-Star-State "Texas Christmas Rhumba." Crow's country never goes out of style. — Jim Caligiuri

ARMADILLO CHRISTMAS BAZAAR: BILL KIRCHEN, DURAWA, ALBERT & GAGE Palmer Events Center, Saturday 24

When the Texana Dames ceded their annual Christmas Eve slot at the ACB, Telecaster titan Bill Kirchen stepped in and on the gas with Commander Cody's still vintage "Hot Rod Lincoln." The local guitarist's 2016 standout *Transatlantica* makes a great stocking stuffer. So will Texas Tornados drummer Ernie Durawa's Los Jazz Vatos' disc *El Jefe*, percussive delight for Latin jazz lovers (3pm). First up, longtime local folk mates Albert & Gage at 11am. — Raoul Hernandez

DALE WATSON'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SHOW Continental Club, Sunday 25

Dancing to Dale Watson on Christmas night is an Austin holiday tradition right up there with spinning under the Zilker Tree. Latest salvo "Christmas to Me" enlivens Red House Records' holiday comp *Christmas On the Lam* with its invocations of pies baking, children squealing, and menfolk chortling over football games. Expect a bounty of jukebox country classics alongside Watson's originals.

Perfect for out-of-town relatives or locals needing to escape them. — Greg Beets

FIRST ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DAY DANCE: BIG BAND TEJANO, CONJUNTO LOS PINKYS

Antone's, Sunday 25

Coalescing tropical Caribbean fervor with the Latin zeal of cumbias, rancheras, and boleros, Big Band Tejano celebrates the holidays like a rowdy quinceañera. Fronted by Latin Grammy winner Felipe Borrero, the 14-piece group boasts enough instrumentation to recreate the footloose rhythms of Mexico and South America. Starting the night are trailblazing local quartet Conjunto Los Pinkys, who serve up a platter befitting their moniker, uniting two-stepping cowboys and Tex-Mex vets. — Alejandra Ramirez

ALEX COKE QUARTET, RICH HARNEY

Elephant Room, Sunday 25

Pianist Rich Harney and saxophonist/flautist Alex Coke have enjoyed a tight musical relationship for well over 30 years. Along with his various jazz gigs, Harney's also been Redd Volkaert's sparring partner on Saturday afternoons at the Continental Club for the past decade. Coke is now based in Amsterdam, jamming with the best players in Europe, but winters in Austin for the next few months. Together, the two musical compadres create adventurous sounds sure to cure your holiday blues. — Jay Trachtenberg

AUGIE MEYERS Strange Brew, Monday 26

At 76, Bulverde native Augie Meyers keeps the Tex-Mex spirit alive with a vast musical palate that connects the rancheras of Northern Mexico to the polkas of 19th century European immigrants to perfectly timed triplets redolent of the old U.S. 90 highway connecting San Antonio to New Orleans. Still best known for emblematic Vox Continental organ bleats on Sir Douglas Quintet classics like "Mendocino," new release *When You Used to Be Mine* plies a steel and fiddle-infused classic country vibe. — Greg Beets

BODEANS Townsend, Tuesday 27

The Townsend's back room and its stage are tiny, but the sound system packs a wallop that Kurt Neumann, an Austinite for years now, and friends are likely to push into overdrive in every manner possible. Plus the BoDeans now include a pair of locals: bassist Eric Holden and keyboardist Bukka Allen. They finish the year celebrating the 30th anniversary of their debut *Love & Hope & Sex & Dreams*. — Jim Caligiuri

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JUNGLE SHOW II 3ten ACL Live, Wednesday 28 & Thursday 29

Last year's Jungle Show stacked a powerhouse lineup: ZZ Top's Billy F. Gibbons, local Hammond B-3 wizard Mike Flanigin, Stevie Ray Vaughan's Double Trouble drumming powerhouse Chris "Whipper" Layton, and formerly local Strat queen Sue Foley. This year's lineup takes over the Moody's small room for two nights, providing twice the blues once one factors in special guest Jimmie Vaughan's juicy, economical licks, which helped make the original Fabulous Thunderbirds such a galvanizing proposition. Drool buckets provided with tickets.

— Tim Stegall

WILLIS ALAN RAMSEY

Townsend, Wednesday 28

In 1972, Willis Alan Ramsey released his acclaimed eponymous debut LP, which became a cornerstone of Austin's rising cosmic country movement. Fans have been waiting over 40 years for the follow-up. Early and late shows offer two rare chances to catch the songwriter showcasing those oft-covered staples ("Muskrat Candlelight," "Satin Sheets," "Ballad of Spider John"), tunes from the still-promised second release, and recent songwriting efforts with everyone from Lyle Lovett to Eric Clapton. — Doug Freeman

WILLIE NELSON, RYAN BINGHAM

ACL Live at the Moody Theater, Thursday 29

Cataclysmic as this year turned out, its true playlist — country music — proved a balm. From his annual Fourth of July picnic at the Circuit of the Americas to his October double-up of ACL Fest and an *Austin City Limits* Hall of Fame taping, Willie Nelson assuaged our town's true blue political anxieties with burnished country classics. February caress *Summertime: Willie Nelson Sings Gershwin* sipped like 12-year-old scotch. Honky-tonk Oscar-winner Ryan Bingham opens this first show of a three-night stand.

— Raoul Hernandez

MOTHER FALCON FAREWELL

Mohawk, Thursday 29

Though members insist the band will continue in diminished form, this is the last stand for hardworking and homegrown orchestral pop conglomerate Mother Falcon. As some of its key players scatter in the winds of personal and professional growth, expect as many tears as great songs while the band celebrates eight years of shows, tours, critical acclaim, and *Chronicle* cover stories. Joining the poignant fun will be longtime friends Marmalakes and Hikes, whose spiky indie pop contrasts with and complements the headliner's.

— Michael Toland

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WHITNEY ROSE HH 6:30PM



12AM **CHILI COLD BLOOD**
HONKY 10PM

•FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23•
THE BLUES SPECIALISTS HH 6:30PM
LEGENDS & LEGACIES
 Holiday Show + Savannah Welch Benefit + Silent Auction 9PM

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•SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24•
CLOSED TODAY
 Merry Christmas & Happy Hanukkah!
 SEE YOU TOMORROW.

•SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25•
 DOORS OPEN AT 9PM
DALE WATSON AND HIS LONE STARS
 Annual Christmas Show + Dance!

•MONDAY, DECEMBER 26•
THE PETERSON BROTHERS H.H. 6:30PM
DALE WATSON AND HIS LONE STARS 10:15PM

•TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27•
TONI PRICE H.H. 7PM
UNCLE LUCIUS 10:30PM

•WEDNESDAY, DEC. 28•
HOT CLUB OF COWTOWN HH 6:30PM
 12AM **JAMES McMURTRY**
 10:30PM **JOHN DEE GRAHAM**
THE PAINTED REDSTARTS 9:45PM

•THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29•
WHITNEY ROSE HH 6:30PM
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 10PM **GRAHAM WILKINSON**

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BARFIELD THE TYRANT OF TEXAS FUNK 12AM
 10PM **BOOZE WEASELS**

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•THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22•
 10:30PM **REY ARTEAGA**
 8:30PM **MONTE WARDEN & THE DANGEROUS FEW**

•FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23•
 10:30PM **THE LOST COUNTS**
 9:30PM **ROBERT KRAFT TRIO**

•SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24•
CLOSED TODAY SEE YOU TOMORROW.
 Merry Christmas & Happy Hanukkah!

•SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25•
 DOORS OPEN AT 9PM
 10:30PM **DAVE BILLER TRIO**

•MONDAY, DECEMBER 26•
 10:30PM **MONEY CHICHA**
 8:30PM **CHURCH ON MONDAY** WITH EPHRAIM OWENS FEAT. DR. JAMES POLK

•TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27•
 10:30PM **EPHRAIM OWENS EXPERIENCE**
 8:30PM **JAMES McMURTRY**

•WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28•
 10:30PM **BONNIE WHITMORE**
 8:30PM **SARAH SHARP**



HAPPY HOUR EVERY FRI-SUN 'TIL 9PM ★ MON-THU ALL NIGHT LONG

THURSDAY 12/22
 CLUB 9PM **CLAY CAMPANIA**
 DJ KOMA ON THE ROOFTOP

FRIDAY 12/23
 CLUB 9PM **PUBLIC DISTURBANCE**
 DJ KENN ON THE ROOFTOP

SUNDAY 12/25

Merry CHRISTMAS

MONDAY 12/26
 MONDAY NIGHT BLUES JAM HOSTED BY **MICHAEL MILLIGAN & TEXIANA BLUEZ**

TUESDAY 12/27
JOHN CHAVEZ

WEDNESDAY 12/28
BIRDLEGG & THE TEXAS TIGHTFIT BLUES BAND

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 PRE-SALE TICKETS AVAILABLE AT MAGGIE MAE'S. AVOID THE LINES!

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 \$100 COVER INCLUDES: COMPLIMENTARY PREMIUM COCKTAILS 10PM-2AM
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 BLK KNG PRESENTS: **DRE PRINCE**
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MICHAEL ARMSTEAD & DYLAN FRESINA

MONDAY 12/26 AT 630PM
MELODY DANCE FIT: "MOVE IT MONDAY"

WEDNESDAY 12/28 AT 8PM
"SAD VACATION" THE LAST DAYS OF
SID & NANCY

FRIDAY 12/30 AT 730PM
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MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING
LOUNGE DOORS OPEN AT 6PM

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BOLLYWOOD DANCE PARTY

MONDAY 1/2 AT 630PM
MELODY DANCE FIT: "MOVE IT MONDAY"

TUESDAY 1/3 AT 7PM
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New Year's Eve Party!
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THE ABGB, 1305 W. Oltorf, 512/298-2242
ACL LIVE, 310 W. Willie Nelson Blvd., 512/225-7999
ANDERSON MILL PUB, 10401 Anderson Mill Rd. #121
ANTONE'S, 305 E. Fifth, 512/814-0361
BARRACUDA, 611 E. Seventh
BARTON CREEK FARMERS MARKET, 2901 Capital of TX Hwy. S., 512/280-1976
BAT BAR, 218 E. Sixth, 512/474-6363
BB ROVERS, 12636 Research Ste. 101-B, 512/335-9504
B.D. RILEY'S, 204 E. Sixth, 512/494-1335
BEERLAND, 711 Red River, 512/479-7625
THE BLACKHEART, 86 Rainey, 512/391-1566
BLIND PIG PUB, 317 E. Sixth, 512/472-0809
BROKEN SPOKE, 3201 S. Lamar, 512/442-6189
BUNGALOW, 92 Rainey, 512/363-5475
C-BY'S HEART & SOUL, 2008 S. Congress, 512/215-0023
CACTUS CAFE, 2247 Guadalupe, 512/475-6515
CAROUSEL LOUNGE, 1110 E. 52nd, 512/452-6790
CEDAR STREET, 208 W. Fourth, 512/495-9669
CENTRAL MARKET NORTH, 4001 N. Lamar, 512/206-1000
CENTRAL MARKET SOUTH, 4477 S. Lamar, 512/899-4300
CHEATHAM ST., 119 Cheatham St., San Marcos, 512/353-3777
CHEER UP CHARLIES, 900 Red River, 512/431-2133
CHERRY CREEK, 5712 Manchaca Rd., 512/440-8810
CHEZ ZEE, 5406 Balcones, 512/454-2666
CONTINENTAL CLUB GALLERY, 1313-A S. Congress, 512/441-2444
CONTINENTAL CLUB, 1315 S. Congress, 512/441-2444
CU-29, 720 Brazos, 512/474-0029
CYPRESS CREEK CAFE, 320 Wimberley Square, Wimberley, 512/847-0030
DARWIN'S PUB, 223 E. Sixth, 512/474-7399
DONN'S DEPOT, 1600 W. Fifth, 512/478-0336
DOZEN STREET, 1808 E. 12th
DRISKILL BAR, 604 Brazos, 512/474-5911
EDDIE V'S, 301 E. Fifth, 512/472-1860
EL MERCADO, 1302 S. First, 512/447-7445
ELEPHANT ROOM, 315 Congress, 512/473-2279
ELYSIUM, 705 Red River, 512/478-8385
EMPIRE CONTROL ROOM, 606 E. Seventh, 512/651-4690
EVANGELINE CAFE, 8106 Brodie, 512/282-2586
FIREHOUSE LOUNGE, 605 Brazos, 512/201-2522
FLAMINGO CANTINA, 515 E. Sixth, 512/494-9336
FOUR SEASONS HOTEL, 98 San Jacinto, 512/478-4500
FRIENDS, 208 E. Sixth, 512/320-8193
G&S LOUNGE, 2420 S. First, 512/707-8702
GERALDINE'S, 605 Davis, 512/476-4755
GIBSON GUITAR SHOWROOM, 3601 S. Congress Ste. G-400, Penn Field
GIDDY UPS, 12010 Manchaca Rd., 512/280-4732
GRUENE HALL, 1281 Gruene Rd., New Braunfels, 830/606-1281
GÜERO'S, 1412 S. Congress, 512/447-7688
HANDLEBAR, 121 E. Fifth, 512/344-9571
HANOVERS, 108 E. Main St., Pflugerville, 512/670-9617
HIGHBALL, 1120 S. Lamar, 512/383-8309
HOLE IN THE WALL, 2538 Guadalupe, 512/302-1470
HOTEL VEGAS, 1502 E. Sixth, 512/524-1584
HYATT REGENCY AUSTIN, 208 Barton Springs Rd., 512/477-1234
KICK BUTT COFFEE, 5775 Airport, 512/454-5425
KING BEE, 1906 E. 12th
- KINGDOM**, 103 E. Fifth, 512/522-0116
LA PALAPA, 6640 Hwy. 290 E., 512/459-8729
LAMBERTS, 401 W. Second, 512/494-1500
LITTLE LONGHORN, 5434 Burnet Rd., 512/524-1291
LONE STAR COURT, 10901 Domain, 512/836-3030
THE LOST WELL, 2421 Webberville Rd.
LUCKY LOUNGE, 209-A W. Fifth, 512/479-7700
MAGGIE MAE'S, 323 E. Sixth, 512/478-8541
MARIA'S TACO XPRESS, 2529 S. Lamar, 512/444-0261
THE MOCKINGBIRD CAFE, 4606-E Burleson, 512/698-4237
MOHAWK, 912 Red River, 512/666-0877
MOONTOWER SALOON, 10212 Manchaca Rd., 512/712-5661
MUSEUM OF HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT, Springdale & Lyons, 262/880-6982
NASTY'S, 606 Maiden, 512/453-4349
NEWORLDEL, 4101 Guadalupe, 512/451-7170
THE NORTH DOOR, 502 Brushy, 512/710-9765
ONE-2-ONE BAR, 1509 S. Lamar, 512/473-0121
PALMER EVENTS CENTER, 900 Barton Springs Rd.
PARLOR ROOM, 88 Rainey, 737/484-1553
PATSY'S CAFE, 5001 E. Ben White, 512/444-2020
POODIES, 22308 Hwy. 71 W., Spicewood, 512/264-0318
RADIO COFFEE & BEER, 4204 Manchaca Rd., 512/394-7844
RAY BENSON'S RATTLE INN, 610 Nueces, 512/373-8306
REALE'S, 13450 Hwy. 183 N., 512/335-5115
RILEY'S TAVERN, 8894 FM 1102, Hunter, 512/392-3132
ROCCO'S GRILL, 12432 Bee Caves Rd., 512/263-8204
ROLLINS THEATRE, 701 W. Riverside, 512/474-5664
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TELLERS, 607 Trinity, 512/580-1610
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WHISLER'S, 1816 E. Sixth, 512/480-0781
THE WHITE HORSE, 500 Comal, 512/553-6756
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DECEMBER 31

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12/22 **TERRA MIA**
world/singer-songwriter

12/23 **FERMATA PLAYA**
funk

12/29 **LONGORIA JAZZ PROJECT**
jazz + more

12/30 **THE GRITONES**
cajun/zydeco

12/31 **REY ARTEAGA** 12-3PM
latin

WESTGATE

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12/23 **AL DRESSEN**
western swing

12/30 **FLYING BALALAIKA BROS.**
russian/texas gypsy

12/31 **LUIS ANGEL IBANEZ** 12-3PM
latin

6:30 - 9 PM (EXCEPT WHERE NOTED)

ESTABLISHED 1994



IN AUSTIN, TEXAS

CLUB LISTINGS

Ⓐ ALL AGES VENUE Ⓡ ROADSHOW ★ RECOMMENDED

THURSDAY 12/22

THE ABGB Deadeye (9:00)
ANTONE'S Ally Venable Band (10:00) Ⓡ, Red Young & His Hot Horns (6:30)
BARRACUDA Communion, Dream Machine, Heavy Chills, DJs Nitewolf & Dustbones (9:00) Ⓡ
B.D. RILEY'S Kristen Gibbs (8:00)
BEERLAND When Forever Ends, Athanatos, Welcome the Coroner, Light Unseen (9:00) Ⓡ
THE BLACKHEART Interobang Brass, Mrs. Glass (10:00)
BROKEN SPOKE Weldon Henson (9:00), Tracie Lynn (6:00)
C-BOY'S HEART & SOUL Los Coast (11:30), the Soul Supporters (10:00), Paul Oscher (6:30)
CAROUSEL LOUNGE Ugly Side Up, the Footnotes (7:00)
CEDAR STREET The Motts, Myles & the Longshots (6:00)

CENTRAL MARKET NORTH Terra Mia (6:30) Ⓐ
CHEATHAM ST. Logan Ryan Band (9:00)
CHEER UP CHARLIES Neon Rainbows' a Very Country Christmas w/ DJ Girlfriend (9:00) Ⓡ
CONTINENTAL CLUB Chili Cold Blood (12mid) Ⓡ, Honky (10:00), Whitney Rose (6:30)
CONTINENTAL CLUB GALLERY Rey Arteaga (10:30), Monte Warden & the Dangerous Few
CU-29 Jonny Gray (9:00)
CYPRESS CREEK CAFE Michael James (8:00)
DONN'S DEPOT Murphy's Inlaws
DOZEN STREET Jenny Parrott Show (6:00)
DRISKILL BAR Outlier (8:00) Ⓡ, Massimo Gerosa (6:00)
EL MERCADO Will Taylor & Strings Attached (7:00) Ⓐ
ELEPHANT ROOM Karen Tennison (9:30), Sarah Arenella (6:00)

ELYSIUM Black Christmas: An Emo Christmas Party w/ Forever Starts Today (10:00)
FIREHOUSE LOUNGE Joseph James Trio (9:00)
FLAMINGO CANTINA More Fire feat. DJs Selecta Q45 & Orion (9:00)
FRIENDS Conquistadors (11:00), Travis Green (7:30), the Kings of the Hill (4:00)
GIDDY UPS Open mic benefiting Blue Santa (8:30)
GRUENE HALL Reed Brothers (6:00) Ⓐ, Adam Johnson (1:00) Ⓐ
GÜERO'S Jean-Pierre & the Zydeco Angels (6:30)
HANDLEBAR Cowboy Diplomacy Band (8:00)
HIGHBALL Dale Watson & His Lone Stars (8:00)
HOLE IN THE WALL Brother Nothing, Chubby Knuckle Choir (9:30)
HOTEL VEGAS Tinnarose, Shivery Shakes, Roses, Tres Oui (9:00) Ⓡ

ROAD SHOWS

THU 12/22
Ally Venable Band, Antone's
Dream Machine, Barracuda
When Forever Ends, Beerland
Neon Rainbows, Cheer Up Charlies
Outlier, Driskill Bar
Adam Johnson, Gruene Hall
Roses, Hotel Vegas
Mt. Eden, Kingdom
Sometimes a Legend, Sahara Lounge
Noise Quota, Stubb's
Mountebank, Swan Dive
Moxy, Tellers

FRI 12/23
Killer Hearts, Beerland
Casa Magnetica, C-Boy's Heart & Soul
Judivan Roots, Flamingo Cantina
Angry Beige, Hotel Vegas
Wiccans, Kombat, Klout, Mohawk

Dre Prince, Doeman, Cody Brandell, the North Door
Charlie Mars, Saxon Pub
Ruby & the Reckless, Strange Brew

SUN 12/25
Alex Coke Quartet, Elephant Room

MON 12/26
Mannheim Steamroller, ACL Live
Adam Johnson, Gruene Hall
I See Land, the May Runners, Mohawk
Augie Meyers, Strange Brew

TUE 12/27
Corey Keller, Antone's
Stone Wheels, Hole in the Wall
The BoDeans, the Townsend
Jesse Lege, the White Horse

WED 12/28

Billy Gibbons, 3ten ACL Live
Dallas Moore, Little Longhorn
Kites & Boomerangs, Mohawk
Xomac, Sidewinder
Willis Alan Ramsey, the Townsend

THU 12/29

Billy Gibbons, 3ten ACL Live
Ryan Bingham, ACL Live
Jim Suhler & Monkey Beat, Antone's
Officer Problem, Beerland
The Flying Buttresses, Diagonal
Lions, Dozen Street
Fixed Idea, Flamingo Cantina
Candi & the Muthaload, Geraldine's
HXV, Kingdom
Charalambides, Friendship
Cemetery, Museum of Human Achievement

speakeasy
New Year's Eve
2016

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 8PM • NO COVER • COMP DRINKS

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LISTINGS ARE FREE AND PRINTED ON A SPACE AVAILABLE BASIS. ACTS ARE LISTED HEADLINER TO OPENER. SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE, SO PLEASE CALL CLUBS TO CONFIRM LINEUPS. START TIMES ARE PROVIDED WHERE KNOWN AND ARE PM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS: MUSIC LISTINGS DEADLINE IS MONDAY, 9AM, FOR THAT WEEK'S ISSUE, PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY. PLEASE INDICATE ROADSHOWS AND RESIDENCIES. SEND VENUE NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, ACTS, AND START TIMES TO CLUBS@AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM.

HOTEL VEGAS
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THURSDAY 12/22
7pm: Fierce Mild Comedy Open Mic
10pm: Tinnarose, Shivery Shakes, Roses, Tres Oui

FRIDAY 12/23
Hotel Vegas Holiday Party! with PALE DIAN, Aquatic(A), Angry Beige, & DJ Tweedy

SATURDAY 12/24
LEMMY KILMISTER'S BIRTHDAY
I'm So Bad A Very Lemmy
Food & Clothing Drive Christmas

SUNDAY 12/25
Closed for the Holidays

MONDAY 12/26
Closed for the Holidays

TUESDAY 12/27
NEVER ENDING 90S!
9pm: Screening of - "Pulp Fiction" - followed by 90s Karaoke! +FOOD DRIVE+

WEDNESDAY 12/28
Motel Ball Band, Ginny Lane & Evan Joyce

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MON: 5PM-2AM * TUE-FRI: 5-7PM

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22
11:30 PM **LOS COAST**
10PM **THE SOUL SUPPORTERS**
6:30PM **PAUL OSCHER**

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23
12:30AM **MAMA K & THE SHADES**
10:30PM **CASA MAGNETICA**
9PM **JOHN BRANCH**
6:30PM **JITTERBUG VIPERS**

SAT, DEC. 24 And SUN, DEC. 25
Merry Christmas And Happy Hanukkah!
CLOSED - See You Tomorrow!

MONDAY, DEC. 26
10PM **JONESIN'**
6:30PM **PRESTO CHANGO**

TUESDAY, DEC. 27
10PM **DYLAN BISHOP**
7PM **THE ORIGINAL 8 1/2 SOUVENIRS!**

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28
10PM *A Tribute To* **FREDDIE KING**
6:30PM **NAKIA AND THE BLUES GRIFTERS**

THURSDAY, DEC. 29
11:30 PM **JAI MALANO**
10PM **THE SOUL SUPPORTERS**
6:30PM **PAUL OSCHER**

TWO NIGHTS
FRIDAY, DEC. 30 And SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31
10PM **MIKE FLANIGIN TRIO**
With **JIMMIE VAUGHAN**
And Special Guests!
Friday: **JITTERBUG VIPERS** 6:30PM
ADVANCE TIX FOR 12/30 & 12/31 AVAILABLE @ WWW.CBOYS.COM

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 2017
Happy New Year!
CLOSED - See You Tomorrow!

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THURSDAY DECEMBER 29TH
THE USUAL D
KITTY AND THE LUCKY BREAK

January 4th 2017
THE ORDER OF ELIJAH
Broken Throne
SAUSAGE FINGERS

JANUARY 7TH 2017
NSP w/ *Those Damn Eyes*
NANCY SILVA PROJECT & *Trashy old the kid*

JANUARY 21ST 2017
DRIFTER
IRON MAIDEN Tribute
LOST SOULS
AND **TESTAMENT**
SLATERICK

FRIDAY JANUARY 20
JAMES STEVENS
★ OF MOONLIGHT TOWERS ★
And **WILL COURTNEY**

TUESDAY FEB. 14
JOHN DOE


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* 2/4 CARRIE RODRIGUEZ * 2/9 DAVID DONDERO * 2/25 ADAM TORRES

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22 • 7PM
TBA


FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23 • 10PM
REDD VOLKAERT

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24
CLOSED - Christmas Eve

MONDAY, DECEMBER 26 • 6:30PM
THE AUSTIN CAJUN ACES

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27 • 7PM
THE DIME STORE POETS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28
HILARY YORK 7PM
THE PEACEMAKERS 10PM

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THE

New Year's Eve 2016

8PM AT THE MANSION
2312 SAN GABRIEL ST

8-8:45PM **SWING DANCE LESSON**

9-10PM **DJ MUSIC** MAIN BALLROOM

10PM-12MID
FLOYD DOMINO & HIS ALLSTARS!

MIDNIGHT **CHAMPAGNE TOAST!**

1-2AM **SOUL PARTY** GEORGIAN ROOM

TIX: Syndicateball2016.eventbrite.com
\$10 DISCOUNT CODE: "CHRONICLE"

FROM THURSDAY

KICK BUTT COFFEE Moonray, First Time in Color, Blacktop Syndicate (10:00) **A**

KINGDOM Mt. Eden (10:00) **A**

LA PALAPA Jess Lopez (7:00)

LITTLE LONGHORN Alvin Crow (9:00), Them Duquaines (6:00)

LONE STAR COURT The Shady Rest (7:00)

MAGGIE MAE'S Clay Campania (9:00), DJ Koma

MOHAWK Strangetowne, Harvest Thieves (8:00) **A**

MOONTOWER SALOON Eastside Kings (6:00)

MUSEUM OF HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT Holiday Spectacular w/ Ralph White, Little Marzan, the Flood Bros, Amy Annelle (6:00) **A**

ONE-2-ONE BAR 3 Penny Opera (reunion) (10:00), John Inmon & Jaimee Harris w/ Daniel Whittington (6:00)

PALMER EVENTS CENTER Armadillo Christmas Bazaar w/ Quiet Company (7:00), Gina Chavez (3:00), Jackie Venson (11:00am) **A**

PARLOR ROOM Clint Manning Trio (8:00)

PATSY'S CAFE The Cornell Hurd Band (6:30)

POODIES George Devore (8:00), April Hall (6:00)

RADIO COFFEE & BEER The Wheelwrights, Jacob Metcalf (8:00)

RAY BENSON'S RATTLE INN Little Red & the Riffs (10:30)

RILEY'S TAVERN Kayla Ray (8:00)

ROLLINS THEATRE A Swingin' Christmas (7:30)

ROSS' OLD AUSTIN Eddie Trevino (6:30)

SAHARA LOUNGE Sometimes a Legend, Brother Bear, AMA, the Referrals (7:30) **A**

SAXON PUB Julie Nolen (10:00), Patrice Pike (8:00), Love & Chaos (6:00)

THE SKYLARK Austin Blues Society Blues Jam (9:00), Margaret Wright (6:00)

SPEAKEASY NYOB (9:30)

STAY GOLD St. Cinder (10:00), Brian Kremer (7:00)

STRANGE BREW C.Mac & Mo'Debly (6:00) **A**

STUBB'S Sacresc, Noise Quota, Moon Grooves, Flourish (8:00) **A**

SWAN DIVE The Coattails, Mountebank, Tusk, Her (8:00) **A**

TELLERS Moxxy (8:00) **A**

TEXAS MIST Pussy Factory feat. Kari Gallo & Ember, Wild Tinderbox, Oro Cassini (9:00)

THE WHITE HORSE Leo Rondeau (12mid), Texas Tycoons (10:00), Candler Wilkinson (8:00)

WILLIE'S JOINT Copper Chief (8:00)

FRIDAY 12/23

THE ABGB Joe Jacksons, Chief White Lightning (9:00) **A**

ANTONE'S Soul Man Sam & the Brothers Band (10:00), Eddie & the Evereadys (6:30)

BAT BAR Josh Ross (4:00)

B.D. RILEY'S Texiana Bluez (10:00), Irish Davey (7:00)

BEERLAND Sorted Scoundrels, the Hormones, Killer Hearts, Rebel Flesh (9:00) **A**

THE BLACKHEART Strahan & the Good Neighbors (12mid), Wilkinson Quartet (10:30)

BROKEN SPOKE Gary P. Nunn (9:00), Ben Rodgers (6:00)

C-BOY'S HEART & SOUL Mama K & the Shades (12mid), Casa Magnetica (10:30) **A**, John Branch (9:00), Jitterbug Vipers (6:30)

CAROUSEL LOUNGE Brass Buckle (7:00)

CENTRAL MARKET NORTH Fermata Playa (6:30) **A**

CENTRAL MARKET SOUTH Al Dressen & the Super Swing Revue (6:30) **A**

CHEER UP CHARLIES The Stacks, Grace Park, Hartley Hall

CHERRY CREEK Made in the Shade (6:00)

CONTINENTAL CLUB Legends & Legacies Holiday Show & Savannah Welch Benefit & Silent Auction w/ the Welch family, the McMurry family, the Graham family, the Gilmore family, the Hood family, the Allen family, the Sexton family, & more (9:00) **A**, the Blues Specialists (6:30)

CONTINENTAL CLUB GALLERY The Lost Counts (10:30), Robert Kraft Trio (8:30)

CYPRESS CREEK CAFE Denim (8:30)

DARWIN'S PUB Holly Nuela (7:30)

DONN'S DEPOT Donn & the Station Masters (9:00)

DRISKILL BAR Lissa Hattersley's Trip Trio (9:00), Dave Insley (6:00)

ELEPHANT ROOM Red Young Quintet (9:30)

EMPIRE CONTROL ROOM Stonerz Xmas w/ LMG, Bad Influence, the Family Tree (9:00)

EVANGELINE CAFE Redd Volkaert (10:00) **A**

FLAMINGO CANTINA PiR8, Smoke Sesh Crew, Judivan Roots (9:00) **A**

FRIENDS Chris Castaneda (11:00), Conquistadors (7:30), Brad Stivers (4:00)

GERALDINE'S The Argyles (9:30)

GRUENE HALL Ray Wylie Hubbard, Buffalo Ruckus (8:00) **A**, Billy Bacon & the Forbidden Pigs (1:00) **A**

GÜERO'S The Bob Fuentes Show (6:30)

HIGHBALL A Very Copa Christmas: Holiday Swing Dancing (8:00)

HOLE IN THE WALL Attic Ted, the Bassturd, Off the Cuff, Amanda Lepre

HOTEL VEGAS Hotel Vegas Holiday Party w/ DJ Tweedy, Pale Dian, Aquatic(a), Angry Beige (9:00) **A**

HYATT REGENCY AUSTIN Acoustic Jungle (5:00)

LITTLE LONGHORN Carl Hutchens (9:00), Ruby Dee & the Snakehandlers (6:00)

LONE STAR COURT Erin Jaimes & Alan Hayes (9:00)

MAGGIE MAE'S Public Disturbance (9:00), DJ Kenn

MOHAWK Wiccans, Kombat, Klout, the Real Cost (9:00) **A**

MOONTOWER SALOON Trent Turner (8:00)

NEWORLDELI Steve Brooks & Dave Hooper (7:00)

THE NORTH DOOR Dre Prince, Doeman, Cody Brandell, Michael Armstead, Dylan Fresina (8:00) **A**

ONE-2-ONE BAR AJ & Alex Vallejo Birthday Jam w/ Bang ATX, Black Heart Saints (7:30)

PALMER EVENTS CENTER Armadillo Christmas Bazaar w/ Asleep at the Wheel (7:00), Jimmy LaFave (3:00), Shelley King (11:00am) **A**

POODIES Dale Watson (10:30), Teddy Long (8:30), Ru Coleman (6:00)

RADIO COFFEE & BEER Marshall Hood, Brian Hudson (9:00)

RAY BENSON'S RATTLE INN Lynette & Lefty (10:30)

RILEY'S TAVERN Pepper's Blues (7:00)

SAHARA LOUNGE Electro Bounce Dance Party (9:00)

SAXON PUB Much Love (11:00), Charlie Mars (9:00) **A**, Denny Freeman (6:00)

SHOOTERS NORTH LC Rocks (9:30)

THE SKYLARK Margaret Wright (6:00)

SLAKE CAFE Marshall Hood (7:00)

SPEAKEASY Suede (9:45)

SPIDER HOUSE BALLROOM A Beatles Christmas Happening w/ the Mellow Submarines (6:30)

STAY GOLD Cure for Paranoia (10:00), Alesia Lani (7:00)



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THU, DEC. 22 6-8PM TRACIE LYNN 8PM DANCE LESSONS
9PM **WELDON HENSON**

FRI, DEC. 23 6-8PM BEN RODGERS 8PM DANCE LESSONS
9PM **GARY P. NUNN**

SAT, DEC. 24 CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

SUN, DEC. 25 MERRY CHRISTMAS Y'ALL!

TUE, DEC. 27 6-8PM DEBRA PETER'S ACCORDION ROUNDUP
9PM **WELDON HENSON**

WED, DEC. 28 6-8PM TJ BONTA 8PM DANCE LESSONS
9PM **MIKE STINSON**

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THU DEC 29 DOORS 8PM
JOHN BAUMANN

SAT DEC 31 DOORS 9PM
THE NIGHTOWLS
N.Y.E. SHOW W/ DERRICK DAVIS BAND

THU JAN 5 DOORS 8PM
— *Free Week!* —
BOURGEOIS MYSTICS
W/ KIDDOO AND THE DUDE + TROUBLE IN THE STREETS
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FRI JAN 6 DOORS 9PM
— *Free Week!* —
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SAT JAN 7 DOORS 8PM
— *Free Week!* —
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+ THE CLOUDS ARE GHOSTS + YOUNG TONGUE

SUN JAN 8 DOORS 8PM
— *Free Week!* —
SOUR BRIDGES
W/ EL CAMPO + OONI

TUE JAN 10 DOORS 8PM
— *Free Week!* —
BEN MILLBURN
W/ CHAKRA KHAN + MAJOR GRIZZ

FRI JAN 13 DOORS 8PM
— *Free Week!* —
TRANSCONTINENTAL TRIP
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THU JAN 19 DOORS 8PM
STILL CORNERS
W/ DOUGIE POOLE

FRI JAN 20 DOORS 9PM
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SAT JAN 21 DOORS 9PM
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W/ BALLYHOO! AND PKEW PKEW PKEW

FEBRUARY 2 **RICK ASTLEY**

FEBRUARY 3 **DEAN WEEN GROUP**
W/ Amanda

FEBRUARY 10 **DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL**
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FEBRUARY 14 THE BLOOD TOUR:
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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22
Early **Red Young & His Hot Horns**
Late **Ally Venable Band**

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23
Early **Eddie & The Evereadys**
Late **Soul Man Sam & The S.M.S. Band**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25
ANTONE'S PRESENTS:
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WITH **Big Band Tejano**
AND **Conjunto Los Pinkys**
Late **Jackie Venson**

BLUE MONDAY • DEC. 26
Early **Derek O'Brien & The Blue Monday Band**
Late **Nate Boff**

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27
Customer Appreciation Day
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Early **Antone's Big Trio**
FEATURING **Denny Freeman**

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28
Late **Jabo & The Old Dogs**

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29
Early **Tommy Shannon Blues Band**

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30
Late **Mike Buck & Friends**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31
★ *New Year's Eve 2017* ★
WITH **Dirty Dozen Brass Band**
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JAN. 13 **Hard Proof**

JAN. 14 **Maseo (De La Soul) & Ike Stubblefield**

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FROM FRIDAY

STINSON'S ROSEDALE

The Michael Cross Peace, Love & Blues Band (8:00)

STRANGE BREW Ruby & the Reckless (8:00) **A**

SWAN DIVE Spaces, Ocean of Stars, DJ Smoak (10:00)

TAVERN ON MAIN Carson McHone (8:00)

THE TOWNSEND The Naked Maja, Warplane (9:00)

VOODOO ROOM Treble Soul (7:30)

THE WHITE HORSE Lindsay Beaver & the Hot Damns (12mid), Roger Wallace (10:00), Missy Beth (8:00), Cajun dance lessons w/ Dancin' Austin (7:00)

SATURDAY 12/24

BARTON CREEK FARMERS MARKET

The Better Halves, Jan Seides, Kids Hour w/ Mr. Bus Driver Man Sir & Her (9:00am) **A**

B.D. RILEY'S Trent Turner (10:00)

CHERRY CREEK Made in the Shade (6:00)

DRISKILL BAR The Better Halves (9:00)

ELEPHANT ROOM Jon Blondell Quintet (9:30)

FRIENDS Conquistadors (11:00)

GERALDINE'S Brian Wolff Duo (9:30)

HOLE IN THE WALL Pocket FishRmen, Cock in My Pocket, Mike McCoy

HOTEL VEGAS I'm So Bad: A Very Lemmy Christmas Food & Clothing Drive (9:00)

LITTLE LONGHORN Alvin Crow (9:00) **C**, the Octanes (6:00)

LONE STAR COURT Texas KGB (9:00)

MAGGIE MAE'S DJ Kenn

MARIA'S TACO XPRESS Music4Music showcase (6:30) **A**

MOONTOWER SALOON

Amber Lucille (8:00)

PALMER EVENTS CENTER

Christmas Bazaar w/ Bill Kirchen (7:00), Durawa (3:00), Albert & Gage (11:00am) **A**

THE SKYLARK Austin Heat (10:00), the Javelinas (7:30)

STAY GOLD The Sidemen (10:00), Classic Country w/ DJ After School Special (noon)

STRANGE BREW Big Don (10:00am) **A**

VOODOO ROOM Nate Grant (7:30)

WHISLER'S St. Cinder (6:30)

THE WHITE HORSE Carson McHone's Song Swap (10:00) **C**, Dave Insley's Careless Smokers (8:00)

SUNDAY 12/25

ANTONE'S Jackie Venson (9:30), First Annual Christmas Day Dance w/ Big Band Tejano & Conjunto Los Pinkys (6:30) **C**

BB ROVERS Open mic (7:00) **A**

B.D. RILEY'S Kristen Solo (6:30)

CONTINENTAL CLUB Dale Watson's Annual Christmas Show & Dance (10:00) **C**

ELEPHANT ROOM Rich Harney, Alex Coke Quartet (9:30) **C**

FRIENDS Blues jam (9:30), Clay Campana (5:00)

GERALDINE'S Jazz brunch (11:00am)

HANDLEBAR Copper Chief (5:00)

LAMBERTS Kevin Lovejoy Trio (7:00)

LITTLE LONGHORN Chicken Shit Bingo w/ Peewee Moore (4:00)

MARIA'S TACO XPRESS Gospel brunch w/ Jesse Vain (12:30) **A**

RILEY'S TAVERN NPD's Songwriter Sundays (4:00)

ROCCO'S GRILL Eddy Maine (11:00am)

SAXON PUB The Resentments (7:30), John Gaar (5:30)

SHERLOCK'S BAKER ST. PUB Blues jam (7:00)

THE SKYLARK Soul Sunday w/ Soul Man Sam (8:00)

STAY GOLD Candler Wilkinson (10:00), DJ After School Special (noon)

STRANGE BREW Open mic w/ Kacy Crowley (10:00) **A**, Jimmy LaFave (9:00) **A**, Gospel brunch w/ Purgatory Players (11:00am) **A**

MONDAY 12/26

ACL LIVE Mannheim Steamroller (8:00) **B**

ANTONE'S Nate Boff (10:00), Blue Monday w/ Mel Davis & the Blues Specialists (6:30)

BAT BAR The Dr. San Duo (7:00)

B.D. RILEY'S Open mic (8:00)

BEERLAND Brick Top Blues Band (9:00)

THE BLACKHEART The Sidemen (9:00)

BUNGALOW Chelsea Barbo (8:00)

C-BOY'S HEART & SOUL Jonesin' (10:00), Presto Chango (6:30)

CHEZ ZEE Rich Demarco (6:30) **A**

CONTINENTAL CLUB Dale Watson & His Lone Stars (10:00), the Peterson Brothers (6:30)

CONTINENTAL CLUB GALLERY Money Chicha (10:30), Church on Monday w/ Elias Haslanger feat. Dr. James Polk (8:30)

DONN'S DEPOT Chris Gage

DRISKILL BAR Vance Hurd (6:00)

EL MERCADO Christine Albert's Mystery Monday w/ Bill Kirchen (5:30) **A**

ELEPHANT ROOM Michael Mordecai's Jazz Jam (9:30)

A ALL AGES VENUE **R** ROADSHOW **★** RECOMMENDED

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CLOBBED	SATURDAY 12.24	CLOSED WE WISH YOU A VERY IRIE CHRISTMAS!
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FRI 23
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SAT 24 & SUN 25
CLOSED SATURDAY & SUNDAY

MON 26
KWANZAA CELEBRATION W/ CRUCIAL PROPHET,
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WED 28
LENNY LEVI AND THE NORTH 7:30PM
FUTON BLONDE 9PM THE FLEDGLINGS 10:30PM

THU 29
EMME 9:30PM BATTY JR. 10:30PM
KING WARBLE 11:30PM
RUBY AND THE RECKLESS 12:30AM

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FRI 12/23 **SUEDE**

MON 12/26 **OPEN MIC WITH RONNIE HALL**

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WED 12/28 **THE VINYL REVIVAL**

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- In the Ballroom - DOORS AT 6:30 PM, \$10 DONATION, ALL-AGES
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MONDAY DECEMBER 26
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TUESDAY DECEMBER 27
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- In the Ballroom - DOORS AT 8:00 PM, \$10, 18+
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▶ FRIDAY DEC. 23
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BIRTHDAY JAM
WITH **BLACK HEART SAINTS & FRIENDS**

▶ SAT. DEC. 24 & SUN. DEC. 25
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▶ TUESDAY DEC. 27
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Fri 12/23 **RUBY & THE RECKLESS** 8P

Sat 12/24 **BIG DON (FREE KIDS SHOW)** 10A

Sun 12/25 **THE PURGATORY PLAYERS** 11A
JIMMY LAFAVE 9P
OPEN MIC WITH KACY CROWLEY 10P

Mon 12/26 **AUGIE MEYERS** 8P

Tue 12/27 **DURAWA W/**
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APOSTLES OF
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CLUB STACCATO 10P

Wed 12/28 **CHRIS GAGE & FRIENDS** 6P
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FROM MONDAY

EVANGELINE CAFE Austin Cajun Aces (6:30) **A**
FRIENDS Eric Tessmer Band, Dave Scher Trio (7:00)
GERALDINE'S Lex Land (9:30) **★**
GIBSON GUITAR SHOWROOM MusiCares Sober Jam (7:00)
GIDDY UPS David Touchton (7:00)
GRUENE HALL Bret Graham (6:00) **A**, Adam Johnson (1:00) **R A**
KING BEE Little Elmore Reed Blues Band
MAGGIE MAE'S Blues jam w/ Michael Milligan & Texiana Bluez (8:00)
MOHAWK I See Land, Hitting Subset, Almost Famous Friends, the May Runners (8:00) **R A**
NASTY'S DJ Mel
ONE-2-ONE BAR The 80H Project (10:00), Chris Duarte Group (8:00)
POODIES Songwriters showcase (6:30)
RADIO COFFEE & BEER Bluegrass night (8:00)
ROSS' OLD AUSTIN Bluegrass jam (6:30)
SAHARA LOUNGE Kwanzaa Celebration w/ Crucial Prophet, DJ Yard Core, Muchoma Asante (7:30)
SAXON PUB Justif (10:30), Lonelyland (8:30), Shad Blair (6:30)
SPEAKEASY Open mic w/ Ronnie Hall (10:00)
STAY GOLD Johnny Holden (10:00)
STRANGE BREW Augie Meyers (8:00) **★ R A**
VOLSTEAD LOUNGE Me Mer Mo Monday w/ Chris Herbeck & Matt Turner, Sick Van, Ralph White & Steve Marsh, Dark Pulse, Polytrue & Matt Seidel, Steve Parker, Louise Jensen, Tom Blancarte (6:00)
THE WHITE HORSE Jai Malano (12mid), Paul Nipper (10:00), Rail House Band (8:00)

TUESDAY 12/27

ANTONE'S Jabo & the Old Dogs (10:00), Denny Freeman, Sarah Brown, Corey Keller, Mike Keller, Eve Monsees (6:30) **R**
B.D. RILEY'S The Splits (7:00)
THE BLACKHEART The Adventures of Wolfdog & Dirtboy, Smith & Webster (9:00)
BLIND PIG PUB Clint Manning (9:30)
BROKEN SPOKE Weldon Henson (8:15), Debra Peters' Accordion Roundup (6:00)
C-BOY'S HEART & SOUL Dylan Bishop (10:00), 8½ Souvenirs (6:30)
CAROUSEL LOUNGE Oak Valley Boys (7:00)
CEDAR STREET The Chris Castaneda Project (8:00)
CHEATHAM ST. The Railhouse Band (9:00)
CONTINENTAL CLUB Uncle Lucius (10:00), Toni Price (7:00)
CONTINENTAL CLUB GALLERY Ephraim Owens Experience (10:30), James McMurtry (8:30)
DONN'S DEPOT Donn & the Station Masters (9:00)
DOZEN STREET Bluesdays (10:00)
DRISKILL BAR Jenny Parrott (8:00), Anthony Farrell (6:00)
EDDIE V'S Tony Taboada Trio (7:00) **A**
ELEPHANT ROOM Jacob Dupre Quartet (9:30), Stanley Smith, Lauren Gurgiolo (6:00)
EVANGELINE CAFE The Dime Store Poets (7:00) **A**
FIREHOUSE LOUNGE Doug Strahan & the Good Neighbors (9:00)
FRIENDS Clay Compania (10:30), Erin Jaimes (7:30)
GERALDINE'S Tje Austin (9:30)
GRUENE HALL Two Ton Tuesday Holiday Show (8:30) **A**, Bo Porter (1:00) **A**
HANOVERS Open mic jam (8:00)
HOLE IN THE WALL Stone Wheels, Billy Broome (9:00) **R**
KICK BUTT COFFEE Bonnet (5:30) **A**
LITTLE LONGHORN Fingerpistol (7:00)
MAGGIE MAE'S John Chavez
THE MOCKINGBIRD CAFE Song Doctor sessions (7:00)
ONE-2-ONE BAR The Drakes, George Devore (7:30), Top Shelf (6:00)
PATSY'S CAFE Lynette & Lefty (6:30)
POODIES Louis Long (5:00)
RILEY'S TAVERN Songwriters open mic w/ Al Barlow (8:00)
SAXON PUB Robert Cline Jr., George Devore (10:00), Matt the Electrician (8:00), David Grissom (6:00)
THE SKYLARK Dickie Lee Erwin (8:00)
SLAKE CAFE Tommy Elskes (7:00)
SPEAKEASY Kenny McCardle (9:30)
STAY GOLD Tony Bray (11:30), Little Red & the Riffs (10:00)
STRANGE BREW Club Staccato (10:00) **A**, Apostles of Manchaca (8:00) **A**, Durawa w/ Magician Nick Lewin (6:00) **A**
THE TOWNSEND Marshall Hood (11:00), BoDeans w/ Kurt Neumann, Stefano Intellisano, David Siera, & friends (8:00) **★ R**

TROPHY CLUB JD Casper (9:00)
THE WHITE HORSE Chaparral (12mid), Devin Jake (10:00), Jesse Lege (8:00) **R**

WEDNESDAY 12/28

290 WEST Open mic (8:45)
3TEN ACL LIVE The Jungle Show II w/ Billy Gibbons, Mike Flanigin, Chris Layton, Sue Foley, & Jimmie Vaughan (7:30) **★ R**
THE ABGB Warren Hood (6:30)
ANDERSON MILL PUB Open mic jam (8:00)
ANTONE'S Mike Buck (10:00), Tommy Shannon Blues Band, Bill Carter (6:30)
B.D. RILEY'S C.K. Bailey (9:30)
THE BLACKHEART Elsa Cross, Beth Lee & the Breakups (10:30)
BROKEN SPOKE Mike Stinson (9:00), TJ Bonta (6:00)
C-BOY'S HEART & SOUL Freddie King tribute (10:00), Nakia & the Blues Grifters (6:30)
CEDAR STREET The Spazmatics (9:45)
CHEATHAM ST. Kent Finlay's Songwriter's Circle (8:00)
CONTINENTAL CLUB James McMurtry (12mid), Jon Dee Graham (10:30), William Harries Graham & the Painted Redstarts (9:45)
CONTINENTAL CLUB GALLERY Blue Moon Quartet w/ Rosie Flores (10:30), Sarah Sharp (8:30)
CU-29 Open mic (8:00)
DONN'S DEPOT Frank & the Honky-Tonk Doctors
DOZEN STREET Oscar Ornelas & the Hustle, Butter & Jam
DRISKILL BAR Bruce Smith (8:00), Anthony Farrell (6:00)
ELEPHANT ROOM Gabriel Santiago (9:30), Wilson Marks Trio (6:00)
EMPIRE CONTROL ROOM Love & Light at the Chop Shop (9:00)
EVANGELINE CAFE The Peacemakers (10:00) **A**, Hilary York (7:00) **A**
FLAMINGO CANTINA Mau Mau Chaplains (9:00)
FOUR SEASONS HOTEL Jeff Lofton (8:00)
FRIENDS Brad Stivers (10:30), Calloways (8:00), the Southsiders (5:00)
G&S LOUNGE D.C. Bloom's open mic (7:30)
GERALDINE'S Kelly Mickwee (9:30)
GIDDY UPS The Koolerators (7:30)
GRUENE HALL The Georges (6:00) **A**, the Tailgators (1:00) **A**
GUERO'S KDRP Radio Show (6:00)



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FROM WEDNESDAY

HOLE IN THE WALL Wes Haynes, Hogan Sullivan
HOTEL VEGAS Motel Ball Band, Ginny Lane & Evan Joyce (9:00)
LITTLE LONGHORN Dallas Moore (7:00) **R**
THE LOST WELL Lemmy Memorial Party w/ Mean Machine (4:00)
MAGGIE MAE'S Birdlegg & the Tight Fit Blues Band
MOHAWK Moniker, Strange Mother, Kites & Boomerangs (9:00) **R** **A**
ONE-2-ONE BAR Glenn Rexach Group (9:30), the Brannen & Red Show (7:30), Jordan Cody (6:30)
PATSY'S CAFE David Touchton (6:30)
POODIES No Bad WednesDays open mic (8:00)
REALE'S "Frankly" Singing w/ Ken Kruse (6:30)
ROSS' OLD AUSTIN John Driver & Friends (6:30)
SAHARA LOUNGE The Fledglings, Futon Blonde, Lenny Levi & the North (7:30)
SAM'S TOWN POINT Open blues jam w/ Breck English (8:40)
SAXON PUB Teddy Long (11:00), Robynn Shayne, Shannon Lee Nelson (9:00), Johnny Nicholas (6:00)
SHERLOCK'S BAKER ST. PUB Live band karaoke w/ Encore (9:45)
SIDEWINDER Xomac, First Names, Two Kind (9:00) **R** **A**
SLAKE CAFE Danny Britt (7:00)
SPIDER HOUSE BALLROOM AMX & the Beat Connection (8:00)
STAY GOLD Bob Hoffnar's Mood Illusion (9:00)
STRANGE BREW Wrenfro (8:00) **A**, Chris Gage (6:00) **A**
TANTRA COFFEEHOUSE Bluegrass night (9:30)
TELLERS Pueblo (8:00)
THREADGILL'S NORTH Sittin' & Singin' & Supper w/ Noel McKay (7:00) **A**
THE TOWNSEND Willis Alan Ramsey (7:00, 9:30) **R** **A**
TROPHY CLUB JD Casper (9:00)
THE WHITE HORSE Sophia Johnson (10:00), Casa Loma Playboys (8:00), swing dance lessons (7:00)

THURSDAY 12/29

3TEN ACL LIVE The Jungle Show II w/ Billy Gibbons, Mike Flanigin, Chris Layton, Sue Foley, & Jimmie Vaughan (7:30) **R** **A**
ACL LIVE Willie Nelson & Family New Year w/ Ryan Bingham (8:00) **R**

ANTONE'S Mike Zito, Jim Suhler & Monkey Beat (9:30) **R**, Red Young & His Hot Horns (6:30)
B.D. RILEY'S Kristen Gibbs (8:00)
BEERLAND Officer Problem, Breakdancing Ronald Reagan, Cum Ocean, Night Loner, Body Tape, Sweepstakes (9:00) **R**
THE BLACKHEART Interrobang Brass, Mrs. Glass (10:00)
BROKEN SPOKE The Derailers (9:00), Roy Heinrich (6:00)
C-BOY'S HEART & SOUL Jai Malano (11:30), the Soul Supporters (10:00), Paul Oscher (6:30)
CAROUSEL LOUNGE South Austin Pop Collective (7:00)
CENTRAL MARKET NORTH Longoria Jazz Project (6:30) **A**
CONTINENTAL CLUB John Evans (12mid), Graham Wilkinson (10:00), Whitney Rose (6:30)
CONTINENTAL CLUB GALLERY Rey Arteaga (10:30), Monte Warden & the Dangerous Few
CU-29 Jonny Gray (9:00)
DONN'S DEPOT Murphy's Inlaws
DOZEN STREET The Flying Buttresses, Attic Ted, Prom Threat, Diagonal Lions (9:00) **R**, Jenny Parrott Show (6:00)
DRISKILL BAR Sam Pace (8:00), Anthony Farrell (6:00)
EL MERCADO Will Taylor & Strings Attached (7:00) **A**
ELEPHANT ROOM Gil Del Bosque Quartet (9:30), the Trio: Langham, Watkins & Marsh (6:00)
EVANGELINE CAFE Lissa Hattersley's Trip Trio (7:00) **A**
FIREHOUSE LOUNGE 35MM (9:00)
FLAMINGO CANTINA The Inverters, Fixed Idea, River City Allstars (9:00) **R**
FRIENDS The Kings of the Hill (4:00)
GERALDINE'S Candi & the Muthaload (9:30) **R**
GIDDY UPS Open mic benefiting Blue Santa (8:30)
GRUENE HALL Cody Jinks, Sunny Sweeney (8:00) **A**, Billy Bacon & the Forbidden Pigs (1:00) **A**
GÜERO'S Tex Thomas & the Danglin' Wranglers
HANDLEBAR Cowboy Diplomacy Band (8:00)
HIGHBALL Dale Watson & His Lone Stars (8:00)
HOLE IN THE WALL Opposite Day, Girling
HOTEL VEGAS Do512 Holiday Luau & Pig Roast w/ the Rotten Mangos, Blood Pumps, Slomo Drag (8:00)

KINGDOM HVX (10:00) **R**
LA PALAPA Jess Lopez (7:00)
LITTLE LONGHORN Alvin Crow (9:00), Emily Herring & the FM Band (6:00)
LONE STAR COURT The Shady Rest (7:00)
MAGGIE MAE'S Clay Campana (9:00), DJ Koma
MOHAWK The Selfless Lovers, Oscar Ornelas, Muuva Erf, Scott Collins (8:00) **A**, Mother Falcon (farewell show), Marmalakes, Hikes (7:00) **R** **A**
MUSEUM OF HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT Charalambides, Friendship Cemetery, Joe Wozny (8:00) **R**
ONE-2-ONE BAR Bottlecap Mountain (CD release) (10:30), John Inmon & Jaimee Harris w/ Sam Ehrnstein (6:00)
PARLOR ROOM Clint Manning Trio (8:00)
PATSY'S CAFE The Cornell Hurd Band (6:30)
POODIES George Devore (8:00)
RADIO COFFEE & BEER Datri Bean, Cats & the Canary (9:00)
RAY BENSON'S RATTLE INN CF Allan Band (10:30)
ROSS' OLD AUSTIN Eddie Trevino (6:30)
SAHARA LOUNGE Ruby & the Reckless, King Warbler, Batty Jr., Emme (9:00) **R**
SAXON PUB Heather Morgan, Brett Taylor (10:00), Patrice Pike (8:00), Love & Chaos (6:00)
SIDEWINDER Kodiak Arrest (9:00) **A**
THE SKYLARK Margaret Wright (6:00), Austin Blues Society open jam
SPEAKEASY Vinyl Revival
STAY GOLD Amanda Kitchens (10:00), Brian Kremer (7:00)
STRANGE BREW Fairbanks & the Lonesome Light (8:00) **A**
STUBB'S John Baumann (8:00)
SWAN DIVE Magic Rockers of Texas, Blood Pumps, Hardcore Sex (10:30)
TAVERN ON MAIN Stephen Doster w/ Brian Standefer, Chris Searles
TELLERS Bethany Becker (7:30)
TEXAS MIST The Usual D, Kitty & the Lucky Break, Cesar Osorio (The Shake Wells) (7:00)
THE TOWNSEND Beth Lee (11:00), Chris Duarte (8:00)
THE WHITE HORSE Leo Rondeau (12mid), Harvest Thieves (10:00), Wilkinson Quartet (8:00)
WILLIE'S JOINT Copper Chief (8:00)



The LUV DOC

"Secret Santa!"

nasty and make your breath smell bad. So my question is, do I try to figure out who this person is so I can secretly hate them, or should I let go and let God and pray for better luck next year?

Dear Luv Doc,

We did the Secret Santa drawing for my office on Friday and whoever my Secret Santa was got me a huge carton of Cheez-Its. I don't even like Cheez-Its. They are

- Feeding Pigeons

First of all, I think it's an EPA violation to feed pigeons Cheez-Its. If it's not, it probably should be. As crafty as those little bastards can be, I am pretty sure they haven't committed any atrocities worthy of death by Cheez-Its. That would have to be some really heavy shit - like getting on an entrance ramp at 20 mph or letting your toddler enter produce codes into the scales at Central Market while everyone else is waiting.

I know some of those enraged people might be contemplating infanticide, but not me. I am contemplating beating the parent to death with the toddler. It would send a message to all the other asshole parents, and besides, toddlers have a lot of cartilage, don't they?

OK, I think we can both agree that I might have crossed a line there, but that line was an imaginary line ... as opposed to the very real line that grows behind the numerologically inept toddler. There is a difference.

To paraphrase our greatest living president, James Earl "Jimmy" Carter Jr., I've committed infanticide in my heart many times. In fact, there have been certain poignant moments - a toddler birthday at Chuck E. Cheese's for instance - where my heart wanted to re-enact the theatre scene from *Inglourious Basterds* in the plastic ball pit. Fortunately my head prevailed and I redirected my murderous rage toward a much more deserving group: the parents.

While I was burning down the entire Chuck E. Cheese's - toddlers, parents, innocent pimply faced minimum wage teenagers included - it occurred to me that the parents must have had parents and grandparents, and therefore the chain of culpability stretched back until the beginning of creation. At that point the entire universe is to blame and goddamn it, I refuse to spend the limited time I have in this life burning down the entire goddamned universe.

I mean, I will admit to being a bit of a pyro, but that is just ridiculous. So I decided to leave the kids in the ball pit and run down the street to the liquor store for a boot flask bottle of whiskey. I am not recommending that for you, however, because combining whiskey with Cheez-Its is an abomination as nearly as heinous as putting pineapple on pizza or spooling toilet paper from the bottom of the roll. You're probably better off killing ... excuse me ... feeding pigeons.

NEED SOME ADVICE FROM THE LUV DOC?
SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO luvdoc@austinchronicle.com



MISPLACED A FRIEND - DO YOU KNOW HER? My friend is Teresa aka "T". She use to be a bartender at This Is It, Barbwire, Mickey's and soon. I would like to locate her. Please email me if you know her or know where she is working. Thanks for your help! Leggsstressbegone@netzero.com

YOU LIKED MY MARLEY SHIRT Hi. You initiated conversation about my Bob Marley shirt at Auto Zone on Thursday, Dec. 1. I was a fool to let you go without getting your number. (409) 782-7798 Adubiuousone@yahoo.com

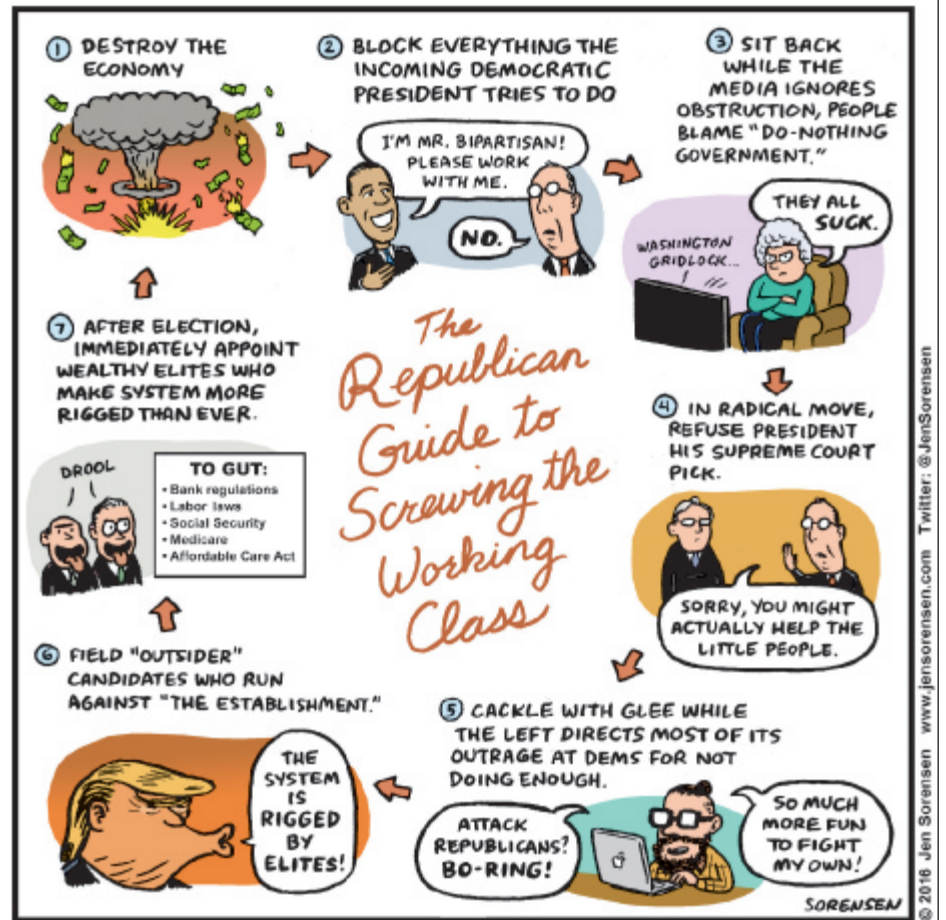
THE BRAIN THAT CHANGES ITSELF Kate, I met you at Halcyon, and we talked about the election and about brains and miracles. I was a fool not to ask for your number! May we continue the conversation please?

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COMICS



JEN SORENSEN



MR. SMARTY PANTS KNOWS

For about 40 years, *David* by Michelangelo wore a prim brass wire girdle supporting 28 copper leaves. Leonardo da Vinci liked it.

In the Oscar-nominated 1962 movie *Knife in the Water*, directed by Roman Polanski, Polish actor Leon Niemczyk's character Andrzej smokes a pipe. His tobacco brand is Prince Albert (in a can).

In 2001, the Federal Reserve estimated that 90% of the \$100 bills it ordered were paid out to foreign banks "to satisfy foreign demand."

Scientists now believe that woolly mammoths survived well past the end of the last Ice Age until about 5,500 years ago on St. Paul Island in the Bering Sea. No humans lived there at the time, so the mammoths' final demise must have been due to climate change and rising sea levels.

Frank Zappa was an early fan of Steely Dan.

Above is information that Mr. Smarty Pants read in a book, a magazine, or the newspaper; heard on the radio; saw on television; or overheard at a party. Got facts? Write to Mr. Smarty Pants at the *Chronicle*, or email mrpants@austinchronicle.com.



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