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FREEFORM AMERICAN ROOTS #36

ROOTS BIRTHS & DEATHS

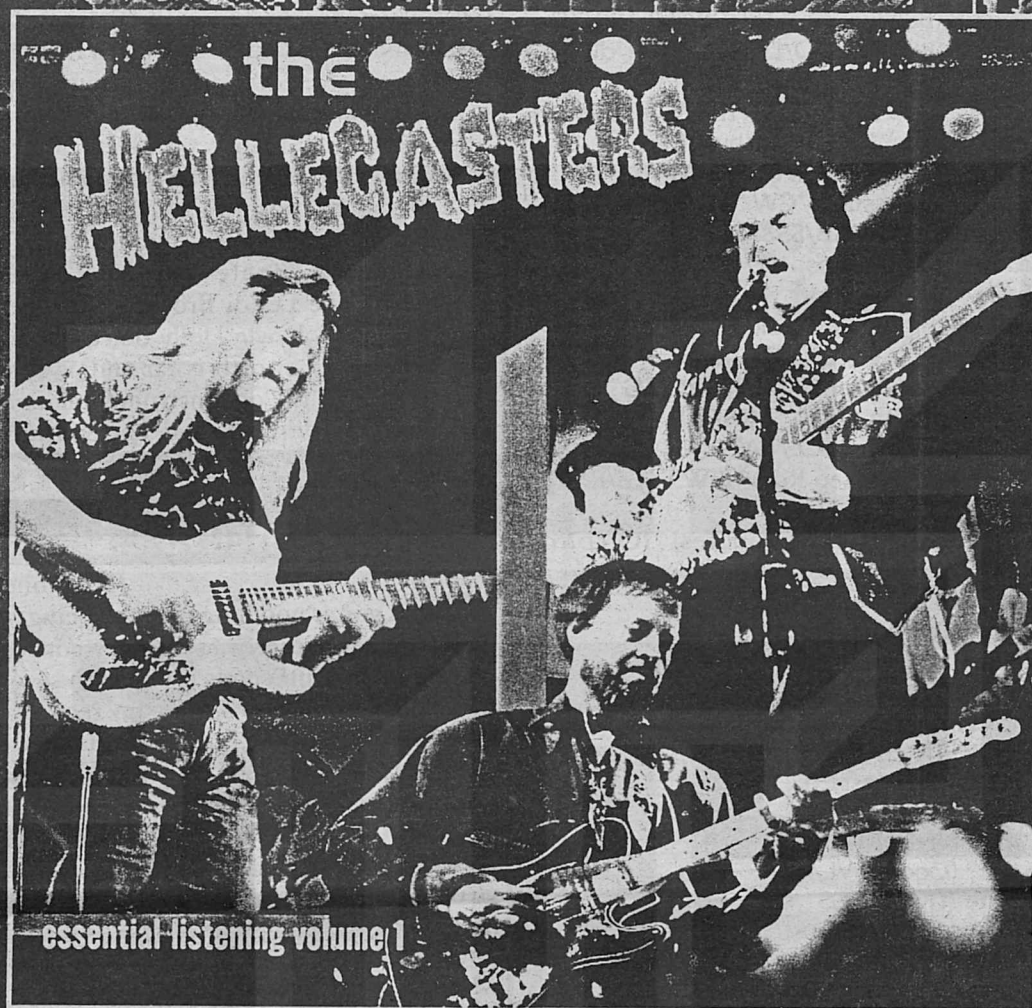
REVIEWS ***** (or not)

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#1 STARLINE RHYTHM BOYS: HONKY TONK LIVIN' (Tin Town)

- *BL/*DC/*H&H/*JZ/*NA/*RS/*RT/GS/ND/PP/PR/TA/TG/htr/kd/lg/ma/sh
- 2 Roger Wallace: **The Lowdown** (Texas Music Group)
*CP/*DWB/*KC/*SJ/*SH/*SS&DD/*TA/RD/RR/br/dwt/jh/sg
 - 3 Heather Myles: **Sweet Talk & Good Lies** (Rounder)
*BR/*EW/*KD/*LG/*RD/DWB/mm/pp/r
 - 4 J-200: **Trip From Grace** (Loose Booty) *BC/*MDT/*TJ/EB/SC/TF
 - 5 Cornell Hurd Band: **Song Of South Austin** (Behemoth) *EGB/*JP/*LB/*RR/KD
 - 6 The Flatlanders: **Now Again** (New West) *RH/BW/DO/LH/NA/ST/TJ/dj
 - 7 Bobby Bare Jr: **Young Criminals Starvation League** (Bloodshot)
*HTR/*SG/*TW/DN
 - 8 Mary Gauthier: **Filth & Fire** (Signature Sounds) *DA/DJ/SJ/bw/ff/rd
 - 9 Hayes Carl: **Flowers And Liquor** (Compadre) *MA/*TA/BR/MM
 - 10 Solomon Burke: **Don't Give Up On Me** (Fat Possum) *CW/*RC/JP
 - Mike Ireland & Holler: **Try Again** (Ashmont) *RJ/AB/SS&DD/rc
 - 11 Nancy McCallion & The Mollys: **Trouble** (Apolkalips) *FF/*PP/CP
 - Ralph Stanley (DMZ) *AR/R&HL/ab/dn/rj
 - 12 Dave Carter & Tracy Grammer: **When I Go** (Signature Sounds) *SMJ/*WT/sm
 - Red Dirt Rangers: **Starin' Down The Sun** (Red Dirt) *GJ/JS/na/pr
 - 13 Kevin Russell's Junker: **Buttermilk & Rifles** (Sugar Hill) *DN/RC/SG
 - 14 Mark Jungers: **Standing In Your Way** (American Rural) *MM/*TF
 - 15 Kelly Kessler: **The Salt Of Your Skin** (Melungeon) *CZ/TW
 - Two Dollar Pistols: **You Ruined Everything** (Yep Roc) *DWT/JZ/RS/tg
 - 16 Jack Ingram: **Electric** (Lucky Dog) *CM/KR
 - Rick Shea & Brantley Kearns: **Trouble and Me** (Tres Pescadores) *TO/cp/mt
 - 17 Todd Snider: **New Connection** (Oh Boy) *JS/CM
 - 18 Dolly Parton: **Halos and Horns** (Sugar Hill) MR/do/st
 - 19 Hank Cochran: **Livin' For A Song** (Gifted Few) *TG/rh
 - Terri Hendrix: **The Ring** (Wilory) EGB/sc/ta
 - Allison Moorer: **Miss Fortune** (Universal South) *AB/dy
 - Nickel Creek: **This Side** (Sugar Hill) *R&HL/smj
 - Porter Hall, TN: **Welcome To Porter Hall, TN** (Slewfoot) *DF/jp
 - 20 Bill Chambers: **Sleeping With The Blues** (Reckless) *DJ
 - Phil Cody: **Mad Dog Sessions** (Tiny Head) *RP
 - Grey De Lisle: **Homewrecker** (Hummin' Bird) *MT
 - High Noon: **What Are You Waiting For?** (Goofin) VL/df
 - Eric Hisaw: **Never Could Walk The Line** (Dusty) *CS
 - Los Lobos: **Good Morning Aztlan** (Mammoth) *WR/nd
 - VA: **The Bottle Let Me Down** (Bloodshot) *ST
 - 21 Terri Allard: **Makes No Sense** (Reckless Abandon) *SM
 - Bellwether: **Home Late** (Rust Belt) *DY
 - Big Daddy Bluegrass Band (Little King) *EB
 - Coal: **Workin' Man** (Echopark/Coal/BMG) *JVB
 - Darlin' & Rose: **Tomorrow, Yesterday** (self) *ND
 - Jerry Douglas: **Lookout for Hope** *KR
 - Mark Eitzel: **Music For Courage And Confidence** (New West) *BW
 - Greyhound Soul: **Down** (808) *AL
 - Holmes Brothers: **Righteous** (Rounder Heritage) *PR
 - Mike McClure: **12 Pieces** (Compadre) *DO
 - Johnny Paycheck: **The Soul & The Edge** (Legacy) *LH
 - Daryle Singletary: **That's Why I Sing This Way** (Audium) *RW
 - Bob Skyles & His Skyrockets (Krazy Kat) *JH
 - Vicky Tafoya & The Big Beat (demo) *VL
 - Two Sides of Dave Van Ronk (Fantasy) *MR
 - West Side Horns: **San Quilmas** (Dialtone) *SC

HAPPY BIRTHDAY BUCK A TEXAS SALUTE TO BUCK OWENS

(Texas Roundup ****.5)

Eleven years ago, guitarist Casper Rawls and drummer Tom Lewis thought it'd be kinda cool to celebrate Buck Owens' birthday, but what was supposed to be a casual one-off became an annual Austin institution, benefiting the Children's Advocacy Center, which Owens himself, born in Sherman, TX, on August 12th, 1929, attended in 1995, getting up to sing the rousing version of *Love's Gonna Live Here Again* with which this album closes. There are some minor problems with the other 22 tracks, Amy Neuenschwander does a nice job with Tommy Collins' *If You Ain't Lovin', You Ain't Livin'*, but the Faron Young classic still seems a little out of place, and one could quibble with including people like Rodney Crowell and Rick Treviño, who've never played at any of the birthday shows, but the real ballcrusher is Libbi Bosworth. Her spinetingling version of *Palm Of Your Hand* is so staggeringly drop dead star quality wonderful that she towers over the album, the other performers swirling like fog around her ankles. Which is not to say that David Ball, The Derailers, Rosie Flores, Toni Price, Jim Lauderdale, Ted Roddy with The Jordanares, Jeff Hughes, Susanna Van Tassel, Buddy Owens & Ray Benson with Flaco Jimenez, Monte Warden, The Geezinslaws, Roy Heinrich & Elizabeth McQueen, The LeRoi Brothers, Tracie Lynn, The Cornell Hurd Band and one-time Buckaroo Doyle Holly don't give more than competent readings of Owens' material, but Bosworth is far and away the stand-out. Her only competition for best of show is the one instrumental, *Buckaroo*, featuring Rawls, Albert Lee, Herb Pedersen, Lloyd Maines and The South Austin Jug Band. **JC**

THE HELLECASTERS ESSENTIAL LISTENING VOLUME 1

(Hightone ****)

Call it guitar noodling if you're being polite, guitar wanking if you're striving for accuracy, either way the very concept of a group fronted by three guitarists playing all-instrumentals is one with severely limited appeal. The Hellecasters, for whom Fender created a company record of seven signature guitars, were, in theory, the ultimate gear-head group, destined to be raved about in guitar player magazines and ignored by everyone else, which is pretty much what happened to Jerry Donahue, John Jorgensen and Will Ray's three albums, **The Return Of The Hellecasters** (Pacific Arts, 1993), **Escape From Hollywood** (Rio, 1995) and **Hell III: New Axes To Grind** (Pharaoh, 1997). However, perhaps because they distill the technical virtuosity and inventiveness of those albums, this retrospective, which includes two previously unreleased tracks and "one rare recording" (*Disintention*), works for me, not quite a guilty pleasure, but far more fun than I would have expected. Donahue, whom Danny Gatton once described as "the string-bending king of the planet," Jorgensen and Ray are all amazing pickers with star-packed resumes, which doesn't guarantee anything, but their teamwork is often inspired and their stylistic range keeps the 13 tracks from getting anywhere close to monotonous. They don't pack the adrenaline rush of Link Wray and I'm pretty sure I can do without a Volume 2, but guitar chops don't get much better than this. **JC**

LINK WRAY & THE WRAYMEN SLINKY! THE EPIC SESSIONS 58-61

(Sundazed ****.5)

Early 90s entities like Nirvana get the credit for ushering in grunge. Not on your life! You want grunge, turn the clock back to around 1958 and a slick-haired cat wielding a Danelectro guitar in a suburban DC basement. Link Wray laid down some of the grungiest and raunchiest, fuzzed-out and ferocious, rockin' guitar music anyone had ever laid ears on to that point. With the release of this retrospective, Sundazed roll out a heapin' helpin' of Wray and his brothers Doug (drums) and Vernon (rhythm guitar), with Shorty Horton on bass. Spreading 46 tracks over two discs, **Slinky!** jolts the listener back to the 'laboratory' days when the Linkster and company concocted their wonderful raunch 'n' roll, unleashing almost the entirety of Wray's output for Epic, 46 tracks culled from original masters and mixing single sides, album cuts and alternate takes, including 16 previously unissued tracks, just about all of which are keepers to these ears. Wray kept his music bare bones, a combination of basic riffs which for all their simplistic demeanor packed a powerful wallop. Classics like *Raw-Hide*, *Rumble* and *Comanche* had all the raw-edged toughness of a switchblade carryin' greaser. Down a lung thanks to the Korean War, singing hardly ever factored into the Wray equation, but shit, when you could muscle the strings like this leather-jacketed maestro, who needed lyrics? Guitar instrumentals, plain, simple and way cool, ruled the Wray roost. **Slinky!** offers up some of the most primo stuff in the Wray catalogue and finds him dabbling in everything from the mambo to military-styled cadence to the bone-rattling rawk of any of a couple of dozen of the mighty 46. Simply put, the art of the guitar rock & roll instrumental begins and ends with Link Wray. **Dan Ferguson**



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*XX = DJ's Album of the Month, XX = #2, xx = #3

FREEFORM AMERICAN ROOTS is compiled from reports provided by 105 freeform DJs in the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Uruguay and Yugoslavia. A list of the DJs, an archive of FAR charts and links to Internet broadcasts are posted at www.accd.edu/tcmn/far.

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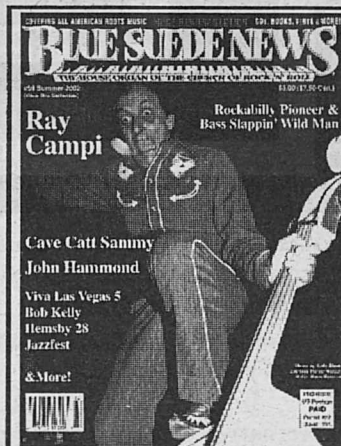


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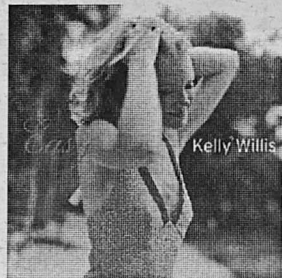
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Bill Chambers 'Sleeping With The Blues'
Includes a duet with daughter Kasey, an acoustic track Dead Ringer Band track and a Bill & Audrey duet.



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Elizabeth Cook 'Hey Y'All'
Lady in waiting the last few years in Nashville, now it's her time. An Opry favorite. Ships August 27



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Neko Case 'Blacklisted'
One of the year's best. Ships August 20

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For Hillbillies, Rockabillies, Hepsters, Honky-Tonkers, Hounds, and Kittens!

Issue: 22.5

Neko Case

(Bloodshot Records)

This is Neko Case's third national release. It is much like the second release a while back called 'Furnace Lullaby,' but it was her first solo recording, 'The Virginian,' that won me over. It was much more in the country ballpark than these other two. 'Black Listed' is a beautiful album, and her talents show on the 13 tracks. Case had a hand at writing in 11 of the 13 tracks. Also being a great musician she played many instruments on this release; she played drums with the Canadian band Maow before going solo. All up and coming artists draw from their heroes and peers, and Case seems to be drawing from people like Kirsten Hersh, Marianne Faithfull, Richard Buckner, and a fine line of cabaret singers. I would only assume that when this CD is released (at the end of August) that we might see a tour from Neko Case and her Boyfriends. If she comes to your town I've heard the show is a good one, Neko Case paces back and forth on the stage as she sings with all her might

(Jason Shields)

Dale Watson

(Audium Records)

As modern country and rock constantly change, one artist holds true to tradition. Dale Watson and his Lonestars continue to plant the seeds of hope that good music is anything but dead. Watson is a rebel with a cause and his mission is to regain the sensitivity and validity country music has lost somewhere along the way. Watson has a true knack for blending 50s and 60s era country with rock from the 50s. Every one of Watson's albums demonstrates his songwriting and performing abilities and this live album is no exception. Recorded at the Borderline in London, England, the opening tune, "A Real Country Song," sets the tone for the rest of the disc, declaring that only authentic country music will be heard. Ultimately, Watson makes an indirect promise and fails to break it. The result is nineteen high-energy vocal songs destined to make any European feel as though they've just walked into a smoke filled honky-tonk somewhere between Texas and California. Watson's Bakersfield influences are especially apparent on "Mama's Hungry Eyes," the classic by Merle Haggard and "Another Day, Another Dollar," a song originally performed by the overlooked Wynn Stewart. Tracks such as "Legends" and "Nashville Rash" suggest that we pay tribute to our country heroes, when all along, we've had one close at hand.

(Eric Brown)

Starline Rhythm Boys

(Tin Town Records)

Yes, I have to admit real country does exist outside of Texas, but usually not very good country. The Starline Rhythm Boys are a true exception! This trio has the sound down like it should be. Danny Coane on guitar & vocal, Al Lemery on lead guitar & vocals, and Billy Bratcher on bass and vocals. With some guests rounding out this sound it pars up to be one of the top country albums of 2002. One of the guests on the record is also the producer, none other than Sean Mencher from Austin's Rockabilly Trio High Noon. Taking lessons from the greats of the honky tonks, the hills filled with bluegrass, and the great pickers of the trainways these three men pile it high with great sounds. All of this was recorded 'live' like it was supposed to be. With 15 of 16 tracks penned by the guys, they also give you three bonus covers written by Wayne Hancock, Leroy Preston, and Sean Mencher. I strongly suggest you pick this release up. It is good on the ears, recorded with suburb quality, and the guys are good songwriters. Look for a possible story on these three in a future issue of *Texas Jamboree*. Also if you're in the Northeast; look for the Starline Rhythm Bar! They actually have a candy bar with their logo on it. I have not tasted the chocolate bar, but if it tastes as good as this CD sounds then I'm hooked.

(Jason Shields)

Black Listed

Slims and Sallys

Yet another month has gone by and you are surviving the heat now. The rains have gone for the time being and I know a lot of people were effected by the flooding of July. As far as the music front goes it is pretty much the same beat. Not too much going on since the big Green Bay Fest. I heard it was the best yet, and I have no doubt that's the truth. How can you go wrong when you have the best names in history playing along with the soon to be best on another stage? Below is some music coming up this month of August you should look forward to. I got all this info off www.pollstar.com, so some could be incorrect. Remember in last month's issue I gave you some good websites to go to for even more music.

6th The Paladins Carousel Lounge
6th Ralph Stanley & The Clinch Mountain Boys Austin City Limits
7th Jesse Dayton Threadgill's World Headquarters
8th Karen Poston & The Crystal Pistols Stubb's
12th Beth Orton La Zona Rosa
13th Eric Hisaw Baby Acapulco
17th The Derailers Broken Spoke
17th Jason Boland & The Stragglers Midnight Rodeo
21st Omar & The Howlers/W.C. Clark Blues On The Green
21st Norah Jones Paramount Theatre
24th Two Tons Of Steel Ego's
25th Willie Nelson Auditorium Shores
30th Dale Watson Momo's
30th Miss Lavelle White Saxon Pub

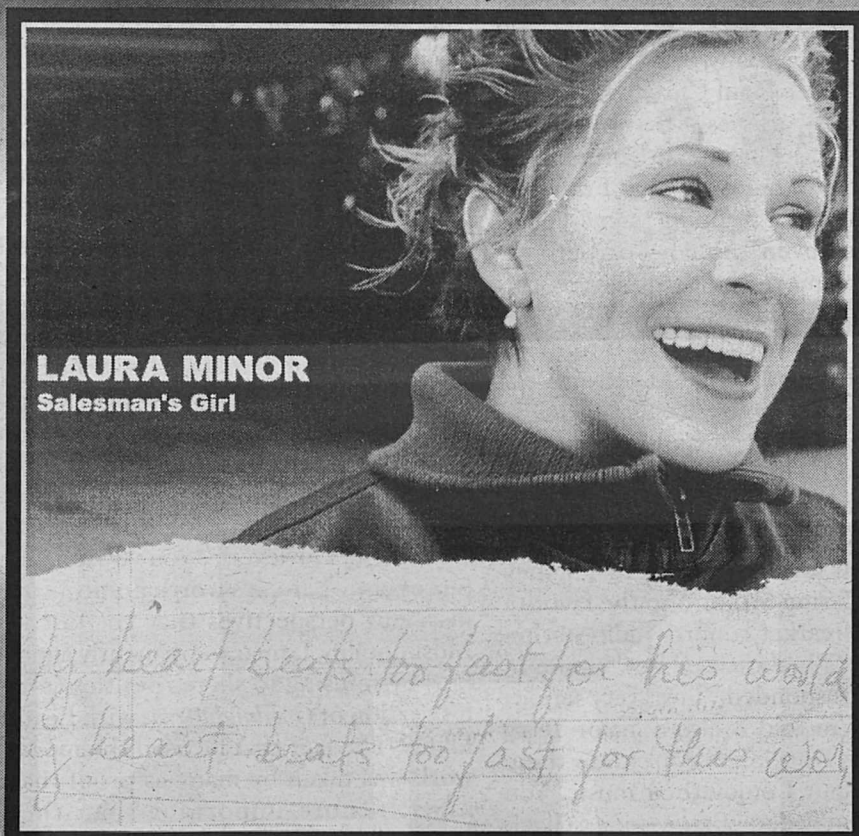
If you live in Austin and have Time Warner for your digital cable they have added to and changed their music channels. 800 to 845 has no commercial, no talking music. They just added a Americana channel that plays things like Wilco, Jayhawks, Lucinda Williams, Steve Earle and more. Its not my favorite, but it beats by far the classic country songs which seem to always feature Reba McEntire, and Garth Brooks. They also added some Rap channels that actually have the swear words unedited, I feel so grown up now! Well, this issue is a small one, alternating issues will be this way. I do not have as much space with this format as I did with the old format of *TJ*, so alternating issues will give me the chance to catch up on some of the CDs I have received. Lately they've not been coming in as frequently, so if you have a CD for review send it to: Texas Jamboree, PO Box 161148, Austin-TX 78716

Well so long readers til next month. Keep cool and stay lucky.

Jason Shields

Honky Tonk Livin'





Laura Minor Salesman's Girl

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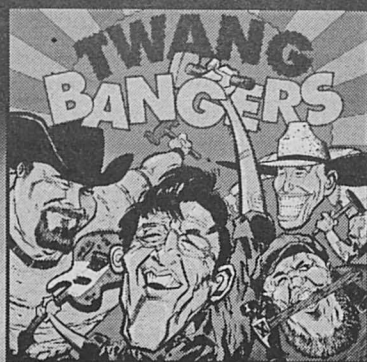
Dave Alvin Out In California

"...captures the dark heart of his city & spirit of his state to find the nation's musical soul."

Hollywood Reporter

Christy McWilson Bed Of Roses
"...another collection of songs that unfurl like joyous, multihued banners."

Washington Post



Twangbangers 26 Days On The Road
Live and in the studio: honkytonkers Bill Kirchen, Redd Volkaert, Dallas Wayne and Joe Goldmark.

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JOHN THE REVEALATOR

Consider this issue a holding action. What with the 4th of July, which always messes up schedules, the flooding in these parts, the day job and some teething problems with the massive media conglomerate merger of **3CM** and *Texas Jamboree*, I wound up printing the last issue a week late. That set me back a bit, but then August, which has been just another month for the last few years, reverted to the way it was in the early 90s, stone cold dead for advertising. I'd like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to **Hightone Records** and **Texas Music Round-Up**, whose consistent support is pretty much what keeps this little bugger afloat.

♦ The **American Roots Hall of Fame** project got off to a good start, at last count I'd signed up somewhere round 600 people who wanted to participate, but I want more, more I tell you. So, once again, please, pretty please, help make this happen by emailing 3rdcoast@sbcglobal.net and signing on as an AMHoF voter. I have sort of a rough timetable that will deliver results in time for the March issue with some kind of (very) informal ceremony during NotSXSW. And if you have any ideas about sponsorship...

♦ "Satellite Radio is not the answer to good radio, much like cable TV is not the answer to good TV. Both just give you more choices of crap. Radio is categorized, and it ought to be. Only a slim number of people would like to hear Ja Rule, Rusted Root, Barry Manilow and Dwight Yoakam on the same radio station. If you are actually looking for a station that will play Norah Jones, B-Tribe, Ned Otter, etc, then look for your closest college radio station. Give them a good listen. I guarantee you that after 30 minutes of pure hell, you will switch back to a Clear Channel Radio station because we play the hits." That's a quote from Steven Smith, Production/Imaging Director of Clear Channel Communications, who seems not to know that his company is a major investor in satellite radio. By the time it reached me, Dave Mosso, former GM at KUCI, had added "chowderhead@victoryiscertain.com" and asked the essential question, "what do you expect from an 'imaging director'?" Dear God, if you have to send us any more corporate scandals, we pray you find it in your heart to make sure that Clear Channel is the next one to crash and burn.

♦ If you're looking for a music-related present, or just want to treat yourself, may I recommend the Bosley Bobbers figurine of **Hank Williams**, which DL bought me and now sits, head bobbing, atop the CD player. To be strictly accurate, it's a figurine of 'Hank Williams Sr,' but some quick work with the X-Acto knife took care of that bullshit. As **3CM** veterans may recall, 'Sr' really pisses me off, but as I haven't sounded off about it in quite a while, I'll give this peeve another airing. The thing is, there was simply no such person as Hank Williams Sr during his lifetime. When he launched his own musical career, long after his father's death, Randall Williams adopted the stage name Hank Williams Jr, for pretty obvious reasons, but this did not retroactively make his father 'Sr.' Unfortunately, the dickheads in Nashville reached some collective decision that people would get confused if there was a Jr without a Sr, but a much better solution was that of legendary Dallas DJ Ranger Rita, who invariably referred to father and son respectively as 'Real Hank Williams' and 'Fake Hank Williams,' a usage I've freely borrowed from her, though come to think, it's maybe a little redundant in these pages. If you see me use the name Hank Williams unadorned, I don't think many of you are going to scratching your heads and wondering which one I'm talking about.

♦ The kids are alright! Well, actually, of course, they're not, but when we went to see Slaid Cleaves the other day, I met a student who works as a bartender at a dancehall not a hundred miles from San Antonio, or Austin, and who gave me new hope for what I thought was a braindead generation. I'm being vague about where he works because even though—or perhaps because—it's one of the more toxic centers of the 'Texas Music' plague, he freely offered up his unfettered contempt for Pat Green, "Cory Moron" (his words) and their like. He also firmly agreed with my theory that baseball caps on stage are always a bad sign, and I found myself getting all fuzzy and sentimental, thinking 'What a good kid. He reminds of me when I was that age. I wonder if I can adopt him?'

♦ Guesting on *Larry King Live* recently, nationally syndicated talk show host **Don Imus** put real money where his mouth is by offering \$10,000 to the favorite charity of the first major market country radio station to put a track from **The Flatlanders'** new album in heavy rotation. Only one responded. "I was very serious about this," Imus, who I'm told is also a major Terry Allen fan, told KZLA, Los Angeles. "I don't know these guys. I never met them, but I enjoy their music. You guys are playing it, and I am Federal Express-ing a check to you for \$10,000." "We heard about the challenge and decided to take on the legendary Don Imus," said KZLA's Peter Tilden. "We know our listeners are very passionate about their music, so we are playing a song by The Flatlanders every hour and having our listeners vote for the song on our website. If they like it, we'll play it, if not, we won't. But we now have \$10,000 for our Tilden's Children's Charities." It was kind of a close run thing though. Even with Internet appeals, complete with links, to stuff the ballot on behalf of the band, 'Yes, play The Flatlanders more. It sounds good!' only raked up 52%, while 48%, who I can't help feeling were probably core KZLA listeners, went out of their way to punch 'No, I don't care for them, please do not play The Flatlanders again!'

♦ In a July *Blue Chip Report*, Bill Miller reports on a real murder on Music Row. In 1989, Kevin Hughes, a 23-year old *Cash Box* researcher, was gunned down on 16th Avenue as he left a recording studio. The killer got away. "There have been rumors the past 13 years. Most centered on payola, the mob, coercion. Since Hughes put the numbers together that decided chart positions for *Cash Box*, the general feeling was that he may have been killed because he wouldn't manipulate the charts." Nashville's Cold Case Unit has been reviewing the murder and police have now arrested Richard D'Antonio, a former employee of *Cash Box* who was working as a record promoter at the time of the shooting, and charged him with first-degree murder. At the time of his arrest, D'Antonio was a pit boss at Fitzgeralds Casino, Las Vegas. "More arrests are possible." Man, those radio promoters.

† ROSCO GORDON

Not many musicians launched whole new genres of music but pianist Rosco Gordon laid down the basic elements of ska and reggae. A member of the informal Beale Streeters, which also included Johnny Ace, BB King and Bobby 'Blue' Bland and was scouted by Ike Turner for Modern Records in 1951, Gordon was recorded as a solo artist by Sam Phillips, who sold the master of *Bootin'* to both Chess and RPM. Between them they took him to #1 in the R&B chart in 1952. However, it was the follow-up, *No More Doggin'*, that featured Gordon's trademark shuffle rhythm, with a strong accent on the off-beat that repeated the guitar

phrasing. Though Gordon recorded the song in the living room of a friend's home, the sound was utterly unique, and when it reached the West Indies, revolutionized Jamaican music. Rosco Gordon died on July 11th, age 74, from a heart attack.

† ALAN LOMAX

Studs Terkel described folklorist, musicologist, author, DJ, singer, photographer, talent scout, filmmaker, concert and record producer, TV host and 'folk song hunter' Alan Lomax as "A key figure in 20th-century culture." Using the very media that threatened it, Lomax rescued an incredible amount of traditional music that would otherwise have been lost for ever. For an official overview of his six decade career, from a teenager in the 30s lugging field recording equipment round the South and West for his father, John A Lomax, to his retirement in 1996, check www.alan-lomax.com, which also has details of Rounder's 100 CD Lomax Collection. However, as you've probably seen adulatory pieces elsewhere, it's worth pointing out that there are dissident perspectives that got lost in the coverage. Most notably, Lomax permanently alienated many blues fans by refusing to share royalties from The Weavers' hit version of *Goodnight Irene* with Leadbelly's destitute family. The fact that he used the money to finance his work was taken by many as proof that he considered himself more important than the musicians he recorded. As Dave Marsh acidly commented, "Nothing in poor people's culture truly happened unless someone like him documented it." Lomax's hatred of folk-rock and rock & roll was legendary. At the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, he got into a fistfight with Albert Grossman, Bob Dylan's manager, over the Paul Butterfield Blues Band's participation, and, when Dylan played his first electric set, instigated the assault against his sound system. In one particularly ludicrous episode, Lomax vehemently denied in a 1993 radio interview there was any proof that Elvis Presley had ever listened to Sister Rosetta Tharpe's radio show. "He said this so persistently and adamantly—with all the stupid 'folklorist' purism that ruined the folk music revival—that WBIA's Peter Bochan went home and intercut his dumb assertions with excerpts from Beavis & Butthead. It aired that way." Perhaps most damaging to the Lomax legend is Robert Gordon's revelation, in his Muddy Waters biography, **Can't Be Satisfied**, that Lomax did not, in fact, 'discover' Son House and Waters but was introduced to them by a Black scholar, John Work III of Fisk University, whom he never acknowledged and later plagiarized. "He also burned Muddy Waters for the \$20 he promised for making the records."

Born in Austin, TX, in 1915, Alan Lomax died on July 19th, age 87.

FAR REJIG & WEDDING

As we come to the end of FAR's third year, I've revamped the mechanics which will, I hope, make FAR somewhat tighter and more focussed. At the same time, I've started crediting everyone's top three picks. Not once has any artist or label ever objected to having their release named Album of the Month by anyone, anywhere, but this additional information is intended to provide something that's often been asked for, a more comprehensive idea of where albums are doing well. This is sort of a nod to making FAR almost industry-friendly. As always, the FAR mailing list is available on request to independent labels and artists.

♦ Congratulations to FAR reporters **Steve & Althea Hathaway**, who were married on June 23rd (and honeymooned at the Green Bay rockabilly festival). Steve has hosted *Cupertino Barndance*, KKUP, Cupertino, CA, for 30 years and Althea hosts *Jumpin' & Jivin' With Vida Lee* on the same station. You can find pics at www.geocities.com/steveandaltheahathaway/

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***** Killer

***** What's not to like?

*** Specialized/somewhat flawed

** Must try harder * Piss on this noise

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Any pretence at objectivity, balance or fact checking is explicitly disavowed. However, every effort will be made to ensure that each issue contains a reference to Faron Young. It's his world. We just live in it.

LAMB DRESSED AS MUTTON

Guess it was a bit eccentric devoting the cover of last month's issue to an album that I wasn't too crazy about, but things like Laura Minor's **Salesman's Girl** fascinate me—a potentially great album trapped in the jewel case of a so-so one. You have to ask yourself, how did this happen? Didn't anybody notice?

♦ Let downs come in several different varieties. In my experience, "long awaited" is most always a signal that one should have low expectations, especially when it's coupled with "collaboration," industry-speak for 'maybe between them they have enough fans who'll buy this turkey.' A classic example is the much ballyhooed, for years in advance, alliance of Emmylou Harris, Linda Ronstadt and Dolly Parton—the Disappointer Sisters.

♦ On the local level, a fairly constant source of frustration is the frequency with which albums fail to capture the full potential of people I know for a fact are well capable of making outstanding records. The trick here is that I've heard them live and someone who hasn't may well see merit where I see only squandered opportunity. A case in point is Don Walser's first commercially released album, **Rolling Stone From Texas**, which got rave reviews everywhere but Austin. By the same token, of course, I've probably been enthusiastic about albums by people I haven't heard perform live, which my colleagues back in the artists' home towns considered below par.

♦ Albums like Minor's are fairly rare. Apart from anything else, there are enough reasonably good albums around that one doesn't normally waste time wondering what went wrong with the others, fuck 'em, but Minor's talent is so manifest that it grabs you despite all her album's shortcomings. The disparity between the one she actually made and the one she could have made is so patent that you almost wonder if she hadn't, as a friend suggested when we discussing her, been deliberately sabotaged.

♦ The temptation, of course, is to blame producers, God knows they do enough damage, but we're talking about people who had some say in selecting the producer and signed off on the finished product. This is where we get into murky territory, unknown, perhaps unknowable. Do artists trust producers more than they trust themselves? Do they figure 'this is as good as it gets, I'm never going to sound any better than this'? Do they not have a clear vision of how the album should sound? The difference between Minor's album and, say, J-200's, also reviewed last issue, isn't just that the latter is better, it's better realized.

♦ The crucial problem with albums that don't deliver is that for the music-going public the rule of thumb, reasonable enough, is that what you hear recorded is pretty much what you expect to get live. If a radio station promotes a local appearance by playing a track off the new album that doesn't do jack shit for you, are you going to pay good money to see the band? I think not. A textbook example of a promising career derailed by iffy albums is that of Loose Diamonds. If you saw them first, the albums were disappointing, if you heard an album track first, it wouldn't move you to go see them, either way their albums were a liability. An even better example would be Will T Massey, but his career was so completely obliterated by his one MCA album that I'd have to explain to most of you who he was.

♦ Most albums inspire varying degrees of enthusiasm or apathy, and one doesn't often have to deal with ambivalence. When something like **Salesman's Girl** comes along, about all one can do is paraphrase Billy Nye on Wagner, "His music is better than it sounds." **JC**

MARY GAUTHIER • FILTH & FIRE

(*****)

Many years ago, MCA (UK) threw an ultra-lavish press reception for Vince Gill and, fairly late in the proceedings, a label flack asked some very well fed and watered hacks if everything was OK. A veteran music writer replied, "Marvellous bash. Pity you haven't got a story."

♦ Back in the 80s, when I was playing in the majors as Country/Folk editor of *Time Out* and getting flown to Nashville regularly to do pre-tour interviews, I could hardly help but notice a marked contrast in the substance of the content provided by different generations of artists. The thing is, while the music press tries its utmost to pretend otherwise, most musicians, especially stars, are not inherently interesting, in fact their lives are pretty damn boring, tour, record, go to awards show, try to stay out of any trouble that'll piss the label off, that's about it, which only leaves their love lives and their hobbies, and who gives a shit?

♦ Older artists, however, tended to have had some kind of life outside music, they'd once held down regular jobs, served in the military, maybe even done time in prison, and they never seemed to take their stardom for granted. All the younger ones had done before they became successful was strive to become successful—if you knew the details of their careers, you pretty much knew everything about them. Their lives were monolithic, one-dimensional. Dwight Yoakam, Steve Earle and Lyle Lovett were always good subjects because they had character and were opinionated and outspoken, and, like the older artists, worked with the interviewer, always trying to come up with something new and interesting, which is why they got so much ink, in case you ever wondered. Most all the others, graduates, summa cum laude, of interview school, were a complete waste of time and tape. I wanted stories and they expected promotional blow jobs, which, in the immortal words of Max Beerbohm, would need a far less brilliant pen than mine, and *TO* wouldn't have printed them anyway.

♦ Since then, of course, things have only gotten worse. Now Nashville is signing teenagers, 'imaging' has entirely replaced character and experience, the publicity department's bio has replaced biography. I don't have to mess with that shit anymore, thanks be, but even on **3CM's** grassroots level, it's unusual to find a musician whose 'career' hasn't been the be all and end all of life since high school, or even earlier. All too often, I look through the paperwork generated on behalf of undeniably talented artists and think, "Marvellous album. Pity you haven't got a story."

♦ Mary Gauthier, pronounced 'Go-shay' (she's a Cajun from Thibodeaux, LA), however, has almost too much story, a life history that few singer-songwriters might want to actually experience, in fact she herself says "I didn't know I'd live through it," though most would kill to be able to put it on their bio sheets. She dropped out of high school at 15, stole the family car and ran away, celebrating her 16th birthday in a Baton Rouge detox clinic, her 18th in a Kansas City jail cell. When her parents brought her home, she stole the car again and was gone for good.

♦ I once read that at any given time in America, there are something like a million teenage runaways living on the margins, and it's a testament to Gauthier's strength of character that the onetime dropout and former burger flipper, is now a graduate of both LSU (philosophy) and the Cambridge School of Culinary Art. She owned and ran an award-winning restaurant, The Dixie Kitchen, in Boston's Back Bay for many years and has now been sober almost as long as she wasn't. She's also found peace with her folks.

♦ Just turned 40, Gauthier's first venture into music was **Dixie Kitchen**, self-released in 1997, which was so well received that she sold the restaurant to become a fulltime musician. In 1999, she followed up with the quite incredible **Drag Queens In Limousines**, also on her own In The Black label, which, though she calls her music 'Country Noir,' really launched her into the acoustic/folk festival and club circuit and made her a cult figure in Europe. At the urging of Ray Wylie Hubbard and Slaid Cleaves, Gauthier came to Texas ("it feels more like home to me than Louisiana") to cut her third with Gurf Morlix, and she's still on a red hot roll. There's certainly no sign that her vein of autobiographical material is going to tap out anytime soon, if ever.

♦ Gauthier has been places and seen things few of us can even imagine, and she's reporting back with profound empathy for and understanding of the damaged misfits who, like her younger self, live precariously on the very fringes of society, and she does it with unflinching honesty. Of songwriting she says, "It's about telling the truth and making it rhyme." If nothing else, she demonstrates that when you set out to write, whether it's songs, novels, stories or poetry, it really helps if you have something to write about. Add her exceptional talents as a singer and songwriter to the substance of her material, throw in Morlix production for good measure and the result is one of the best Americana albums of this, or any other, year. **JC**



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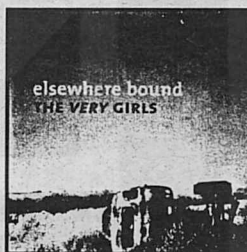
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"...There are a variety of moods [on the album], some sad and wistful, some up and smiling, but they are all good songs, performed skillfully with feeling." -Darrell Harkins, Roots Music Report

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-John Conquest, 3rd Coast Music Magazine



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- 1st -- Piano Slim • 1928 • LaGrange, TX
 ----- Jerry Garcia • 1942 • San Francisco, CA
 ----- Piano Red † 1985
- 2nd -- Big Walter Price • 1917 • Gonzales, TX
 ----- Hank Cochran • 1935 • Isola, MS
 ----- Betty Jack Davis † 1953
 ----- Leo Soileau † 1980
- 3rd -- Mercy Dee Walton • 1915 • Waco, TX
 ----- Shelton Dunaway • 1934 • Monroe, LA
- 4th -- Lee Martin • 1929 • Golden Meadow, LA
 ----- Frankie Ford • 1939 • Gretna, LA
- 5th -- Tuts Washington † 1984
- 6th -- TK Hulin • 1943 • St Martinville, LA
 ----- Pat McDonald • 1952 • Green Bay, WI
 ----- Memphis Minnie † 1973
- 7th -- Felice Bryant • 1925 • Milwaukee, MN
 ----- Rodney Crowell • 1950 • Houston, TX
 ----- Esther Phillips † 1984
- 8th -- Knocky Parker • 1918 • Palmer, TX
 ----- Juan Lopez • 1922 • Jackson Co, TX
 ----- Webb Pierce • 1926 • West Monroe, LA
 ----- Mel Tillis • 1932 • Pahokee, FL
 ----- Joe Tex • 1933 • Rogers, TX
- 9th -- Robert Shaw • 1908 • Stafford, TX
 ----- Merle Kilgore • 1934 • Chickasha, OK
 ----- Aldus Mouton • 1941 • Cankton, LA
 ----- Jesse Ashlock † 1976
 ----- Jerry Garcia † 1995
- 10th -- Louise Massey • 1902 • Hart Co, TX
 ----- Leo Fender • 1907 • Buena Park, CA
 ----- Wanda Coffman • 1911 • Roanoke, TX
 ----- Ronnie Bennett • 1943 • New York City, NY
 ----- Lucille Bogan † 1948
- 11th -- Clint West • 1938 • Vidrine, LA
 ----- Percy Mayfield † 1984
- 12th -- Percy Mayfield • 1920 • Minden, LA
 ----- Buck Owens • 1929 • Sherman, TX
 ----- Porter Wagoner • 1930 • West Plains, MO
 ----- Roy Gaines • 1934 • Houston, TX
 ----- Ronnie Dawson • 1939 • Dallas, TX
 ----- Rod Bernard • 1940 • Opelousas, LA
 ----- Joe Tex † 1982
- 13th -- King Curtis † 1971
- 14th -- Johnny Burnette † 1964
 ----- Roy Buchanan † 1988
- 15th -- Bobby Helms • 1935 • Bloomington, IN
 ----- Don Rich • 1941 • Olympia, WA
 ----- Big Bill Broonzy † 1958
 ----- Lawrence Walker † 1968
- 16th -- Durwood Haddock • 1934 • Lamesco, TX
 ----- Champ Hood • 1952 • Spartanburg, SC
 ----- Cookie • 1936 • Jennings, LA
 ----- Robert Johnson † 1938
 ----- Norman Petty † 1984
- 17th -- Walter Brown • 1917 • Dallas, TX
 ----- Wayne Raney • 1921 • Wolf Bayou, AR
 ----- Jimmy Donley • 1929 • Gulfport, MS
 ----- Guitar Gable • 1937 • Bellevue, LA
 ----- Kevin Welch • 1955 • Long Beach, CA
 ----- Dorsey Burnette † 1979
- 18th -- Curtis Jones • 1906 • Naples, TX
 ----- Hank Penny • 1918 • Birmingham, AL
 ----- Johnny Preston • 1939 • Port Arthur, TX
 ----- Mark Rubin • 1966 • Stillwater, OK
- 19th -- Al Ferrier • 1935 • Montgomery, LA
 ----- Johnny Nash • 1940 • Houston, TX
- 20th -- Jim Reeves • 1924 • Carthage, TX
 ----- Don Leady • 1949 • Alton, IL
 ----- Leon McAuliffe † 1988
- 21st -- James Burton • 1939 • Shreveport, LA
 ----- Jackie DeShannon • 1944 • Hazel, KY
 ----- Joaquin Diaz • 1960 • San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic
- 22nd -- John Lee Hooker • 1917 • Clarksdale, MS
 ----- Marie Falcon • 1920 • Rayne, LA
 ----- Dale Hawkins • 1938 • Goldmine, LA
 ----- Sam Neely • 1948 • Cuero, TX
 ----- Hociel Thomas † 1952
 ----- Marvin Denton • 1956 • Racine, WI
- 23rd -- Tex Williams • 1917 • Ramsey, IL
 ----- Hoyle Nix † 1985
- 24th -- Big Boy Arthur Crudup • 1905 • Forest, MS
 ----- Wynonie Harris • 1915 • Omaha, NB
 ----- Carl Mann • 1942 • Huntingdon, TN
 ----- Nat Stuckey † 1988
- 25th -- Chelo Silva • 1922 • Brownsville, TX
 ----- Elvis Costello • 1955 • London, UK
 ----- Cliff Bruner † 2000
- 26th -- Rockin' Dopsie † 1993
- 27th -- Wade Fruge • 1916 • Eunice, LA
 ----- Carter Stanley • 1925 • McClure, VA
 ----- Elroy Dietzel • 1927 • Seguin, TX
 ----- Charlene Hancock • 1938 • Morton, TX
 ----- Fernest Arceneaux • 1940 • Duralde, LA
- 29th -- Jimmy C Newman • 1927 • Mamou, LA
 ----- Mingo Saldivar • 1936 • Marion, TX
 ----- Jimmy Reed † 1976
- 30th -- Kitty Wells • 1918 • Nashville, TN
 ----- Jewel Brown • 1937 • Houston, TX
 ----- Preston Frank • 1947 • Oberlin, LA
- 31st -- Jerry Allison • 1939 • Hillsboro, TX

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