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Picture of the Week:
Blue Nude (IV) by Henri Matisse

Letter from the Editor

Luckily, I didn't watch as Monday Night Football left my Fantasy Football team impotent and whimpering. Unluckily, of course, I got pummeled mercilessly.

My purpose in telling you this is to relay some sage advice that a certain graduate student passed along to me while I was in college: "Everyone should get the shit beaten out of him sometime." If you'll excuse his profanity—and perhaps take the advice in a less literal sense than the originator intended—allow me to share this good-natured message for your benefit. Cheers!

Dan

R.E.M. Crowd Lacks L.I.F.E.

By Dan Fritz

Last Friday was my virgin run of the big concert experience. Up until then I had been to a few small concerts of small bands. The largest concert I had been to was actually the symphony, while the loudest noise I had ever heard was my own voice on Hey Day 2000 (at 5pm, three hours after my yelling had stopped). After going to see R.E.M. at NextStage in Grand Prairie, TX, I'm still not sure I can say I've experienced the quintessential elements of a rock concert.

After the no-name British band finished their act (heralded by multiple audience members yelling "who are you?!"), Michael Stipe and his crew slid out onto the stage with the style and grace of rockers who know what they're doing, singing good music. According to certain sources, this should have been the queue for the audience to jump to their feet and start "wilin'" (see "View" p. 5) like madmen. Unfortunately, the only time the audience around me rose to their feet was to go get a bottle of Budweiser.

...continued on p.5...

We May Be From Seattle But We Are Not Grunge

by James Schneider

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Ex-XX Extreme Psychosis

By S. Meek

Wanting to catapult myself back in time, I flew to NYC last weekend to see my college roommate. He has written for *Babble-ON* before, looks better than he did in college, works long hours at an exciting career, and maintains a quarterly flow of girls through his bedroom. He is by many definitions, a man of the world and a man with a deep understanding of women.

Yet, one inescapable fact haunts him (and by implication all men): women are crazy. In fact the only

...continued on p. 4...

“Screw Off” of the Week

"I think the war will be seen by history to be justified because we removed a regime that did have these weapons and gave us no reason to believe that they had eliminated them...If you want to believe the claims of Saddam Hussein, be my guest."

—Colin Powell, *www.nytimes.com*

Babble-ON Interactive Poll!

Which of the following restaurants is best in the following aspects:

Restaurant

Arby's
Burger King
Chick-Fil-A
Hardy's
Jack-in-the-Box
KFC
McDonald's
Wendy's
White Castle
Subway
Other

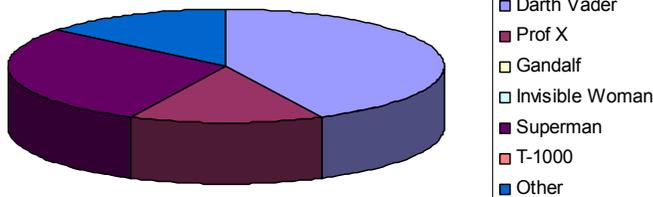
Food/Aspect

Chicken Sandwich
Greasiness
Value
Mascots/Logo

Issue 5 Follow-Up!

(Other=ability to control time)

Which superhero's powers would you most like to wield?



Q&A

with Swinton Chumblebrook

Ask Darby O'Gill



Swinton Chumblebrook, our tireless field correspondent, hopped on a plane to Ireland this past week for an exclusive interview with Darby O'Gill (of such fame as *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*). With merely a bottle of whiskey and a Palm Pilot, Swinton was able to unlock the mysteries of the Little People and discover why it is that he has recently been obsessed with their midgetry.

S: Darby, how were you able to win over the hearts of such secretive folk?

D: Fiddlin' and fornicatin'.

S: Well, if that isn't in bad taste, I don't know what is.

D: You'll know bad when you taste it.

S: [Shiver] I'll trade you a sip of my whiskey for a sip of yours.

D: Now you're talkin'!

S: Sick. Just sick. [Pause] The Irish really are as sketchy as they seem in *Angela's Ashes*.

D: Oh no, it's the Ban-shee!

Suddenly the banshee appeared and turned Darby into a pile of ashes. Swinton scooped them up with a wry grin. ☒

Dictator of the Month: Pinochet



He made September 11 notorious...in 1973, when he took the seat of power! With kidnappings, torture, and plain vanilla human rights violations, this notorious Chilean commander-in-chief made a name for himself. Our big bad dictator—currently Senator-for-Life—squeaked free of his human rights charges, because he was old and decrepit. Lesson learned: be as bad as you want as long as you're not a fit young rebel.

the house of the setting sun
by alan fishman

Monday's nerdnight was the bomb. my character, the gong, got slaughtered last week. and my friends are toting around my corpse in their recently acquired bag of holding. i think someone cast a spell to make my corpse stop stinking, but i'm not sure.

in a bold precedent for nerdnight's to come, garrick served as our guest dungeonmaster. and the different perspective was a refreshing change of pace. don't get me wrong, joey has engineered an awesome campaign in his dragon-mech world. it's just nice hearing another voice every now and then, especially since role-play is garrick's chosen mode of artistic expression.

the party had set off to find the house of the setting sun, a monastery connected somehow to pelor the sun god, and get someone to resurrect me for cheap. joey and i played monk npc's who encounter the party on their way to the same monastery. we explore a mountain's crevice and step through a glowing blue portal that we think will lead us to the monastery. upon stepping through the portal and blindly walking a couple steps into a bright blue glow, we find ourselves without clothes or equipment (or the bag of holding with the gong's corpse!) in a sparse wooden room of far eastern style. upon pegs are orange monk robes, with which we adorn ourselves. a glance out the back window reveals a bright orange-red sunset and ocean as far as the eye can see. out the front doorway, we see a dock that reaches the beach of an island...and a bright orange-red sunset stretching across the horizon. supernaturally, we look straight into a bright sunset no matter which direction we face.

we must approach the beach and explore the gardens that lie beyond them and defend ourselves from a tribe of lizard-y creatures. we see a large pagoda-like building in the distance, which we set as our destination. it was great fun, and we shall continue this new adventure next monday. stephen and i returned to the plupad and found rob playing the newly downloaded lord of the rings video game. ooh! ooh! ooh! that game is some serious eye candy and really fun to play. so we stayed up pretty late. my mind was a bit occupied though. just before i went to bed i sent off a chagrined email to a friend and received a reassuring reply the next morning. next thing i know, the doorbell is ringing, and julie is giving away her toaster oven. i tell her i am about to go running. when she leaves, i go back to sleep. then get up and eat a couple danish before heading to the bakery.

despite my short night of rest, i felt great today. but the work gradually wore me down. or maybe i was just overly susceptible to fatigue from lack of sleep. then i went home, made a sandwich, changed into my shorts and sneakers, took my mom on a couple errands, met my brother at the grocery store, left him to go running, picked up my mom and her friend, drove back to the grocery store to pick up my brother, went inside and bought my mom a sandwich, drove my mom's friend home, got in a stressed out, sleep and food deprived argument with my mother that accomplished nothing, drove her and my bro home, and returned to my house. with a sigh or relief, i sat on the couch and ate my damn sandwich. salsalito turkey breast, monterey jack, mixed field greens, tomato, avocado, mustard and mayo on a whole wheat subroll. damn... that's good eatin'. watched super troopers. then watched Yojimbo, a kurosawa-directed mifune-starred classic, while stephen wrote code or something. now it's late again, and i need sleep. until next time.... ☒

...Ex-XX Extreme Psychosis, from p.1...

reason that there is a quarterly changing of the guard is that three months seems to be the timeline for a normal girl to undergo a metamorphosis into an irrational, crazy girl. I realize that “crazy girl” is a bit broad and that “women are crazy” is a fact known around the world but also quite vague, so to be a little less broad here are some examples. A crazy girl is a girl that thinks you are cheating on her when you are with her every night, calls your cell phone repeatedly and doesn’t leave messages, meets your friends and believes that they are all in a giant scheme against her, or believes that she can dictate terms.

For three days we bonded over eating, drinking, smoking and philosophizing about girls. And from this summit the spectrum, in fact the very landscape and language that men use to talk about women, was redefined. It was decreed that women are not inescapably crazy, but that categorically, a type of woman is attracted to a type of man, and if you encounter, either an incompatible or compatible type (there is still some debate), craziness is bound to ensue.

When I returned home that Sunday evening, I received this email.

```
>>From: "X-girlfriend of six years ago"
> >To: yourauthor@hotmail.com
> >Subject: Missed Opportunity
> >Date: Sun, 24 Aug 2003 23:29:09 -0500      (--- notice the hour)
> >
> >Author,
> >
> >I have called you a couple of times with hopes of catching up with
> >an old friend. I have not heard from you, and I must admit that I
> >am a little disappointed. It is hard coming back to a place that
> >was "home" so many years previous - it appears that much has
> >changed. I hope at least that you will accept an apology for
> >whatever things that I did in the past that would make friendship
> >between us not possible. I hope that you are a success in life and
> >enjoy it to the fullest. Good luck in your . . . if that is the path you choose.
> >
> >X-girlfriend
```

And of course I was forced to respond. . . because her number was on the caller ID four times.

On Monday, August 25, 2003 11:32 AM, Your Author

<yourauthor@hotmail.com> wrote:

```
>
>
>X-girlfriend,
>Thanks for the Email. I haven't responded till now because I
>was in NYC Thursday and Friday on business and then spent the
>weekend with my college roommate. Next weekend I will be
>in San Francisco and the weekend after that I will be in Chicago
>to help my girlfriend move into her new apartment.
>Slow down. . . take it easy . . .
>Your Author
```

To complete the story this X had called out of the blue the weekend before and was wondering if I would like to hang out. I said not this weekend but that “maybe sometime we could get together and reminisce about old times.” Ironically it did not take an entire three months for this girl to go crazy—it in fact took only two days of unreturned phone calls for her craziness to appear.

Now some may say that this X is an anomaly and that she is crazier than other women. But I submit and I await a letter to the editor to dispute the point that this instance confirms that girls are indeed crazy and that my roommate and I did strike the marrow of the irrational woman. ☒

...R.E.M. Crowd Lacks L.I.F.E, from p.1...

To be fair, I was seated in the balcony along with Susan Myhr (author of “Political Corner,” *Babble-ON: Volume 1, Issue 3*), and I understood that the balcony in a big concert hall could very well be a place where sitting is practiced by the more laid back concert-goers, such as the *pregnant woman* in the row ahead of us. This reality, combined with that fact that we didn’t have a telescope to see the band very well, prompted us to move down the lower floor where (though still very well behaved) concert-goers were standing.

Susan and I found a couple of empty seats next a lovely couple of perhaps 30 years—that is, they had been married for 30 years. As it turns out we didn’t really have much interaction with them, and being much closer to the stage, we could get into the concert atmosphere a bit better.

The concert went smoothly, and we got to hear plenty of older R.E.M. tunes (like “Losing My Religion,” “Driver 8,” and “It’s the End of the World as We Know It”) in addition to a brand new song they sang that night. But during some mildly lesser known songs, even the crowd in the middle front decided to take a load off. Yes, that’s right, there were seats throughout the lower floor all the way up to the stage.

As the band left the stage in preparation for their encore performances, Susan and I made our way down to the front of the stage in the dead center where the aisle was, finally thinking we had made it to Mecca. Well, we did get to see the blue eye shadow Michael Stipe was wearing, but it wasn’t exactly a raucous atmosphere. I could have had a conversation with Susan if I were so inclined. It made me wonder what the band thought of Dallas.

In any case, I had a good time and enjoyed ditching our previous seats. I waved to the family whose eight-year-olds were sleeping as Susan and I left the building. ☒

View from a South Bronx Middle School

By Amanda Hall, M.S.W.

As a newly graduated social worker, I find myself in the most unlikely of situations: in an educational setting in J Lo’s stomping grounds (how many of you can say that?). I am now working as a therapist in a middle school for emotionally disturbed youth in poverty. But, don’t be fooled by the rocks that I got, this ain’t no glamour job. It is, however, surprisingly touching and often funny. These kids are tenacious and clever. Most of the time, they keep me in stitches. Since I cannot reveal anything said in session (and, I promise you, this is your misfortune), I would love to share some of the things I see in the hall, at lunch, etc. I have learned great new vocabulary (mostly to share with Susan Myhr, Esq.), and I have been privy to some of the great comic genius of this nascent century. Here’s a taste:

New Vocabulary:

Wilin’ – to be going crazy.

“Man, did you see John today? He be wilin’ about bookbag being stolen.”

Beast – Something undesirable.

“That Prince guy is beast.”

Also, can be used with –ing.

“Why are you beasting’? I hate it when you do that!”

Crispy – Something old.

“Man, that song is crispy. You gotta get the new CD.”

It’s a wrap – Over

“Man, it’s a wrap between me and Janeane. She’s beast.”

Joint – This word has so many derivations, you may use it in excess in any form, much like the smurfs use the word, “Smurf.”

“Hey, B. Let me finish writing this joint and we’ll listen to my joint as we drive to your jointy joint.”

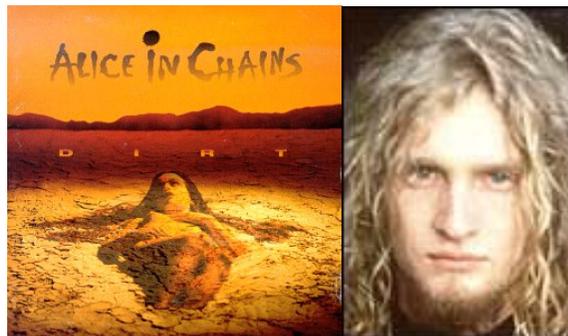
Stories next issue.....☒

WE MAY BE FROM SEATTLE BUT WE ARE NOT GRUNGE

Alice in Chains' *Dirt* is nothing of the sort

By James Schneider

In 2002 Layne Staley died tragically at the age of 34, but his legacy lives on through this monster opus. The gloomy charisma breathed from Layne's lips chillingly caressing Jerry Cantrell's guitar wizardry on *Dirt* vaults it above nearly all other grunge-era masterpieces. Alice in Chains possessed a more enigmatic spirit than mere grunge acts. Certainly, AIC's lyrical evocation and droning-on-death's-door presence feel at home among the likes of Soundgarden and the Pixies. However, the band's thunderous, skull-thrashing elements are more genuinely comparable to metal bands. Likewise, Alice in Chains' meandering epics which hover in the five to six minute range are hardly the typical radio-friendly unit shifters that pervaded early 90s rock. If anything, the range displayed on this band's sophomore effort should dispel comparisons to fellow Seattleites.



Plain and simple: heroin controlled Layne Staley. The depression, the addiction, and an ominous fixation on death serve as the platform from which he pours out his ever-troubled soul. His affection towards drugs became an affliction, and the truth of that statement shines vibrantly on this album. The format, driving percussion dipped in chiseled metallic splendor, creates an unstoppable formula. No song slacks. Every note stands on its own, gelling seamlessly with the next. Even "Untitled Track" – which rips off Sabbath's Iron Man – seems to fit, nestled in between "God Smack" and "Hate to Feel." The biting sarcasm and pun "Iron Gland" bears witness to a defiance of even the metal gods who inspired their existence.

Dirt's first seconds give the listener an eerie glimpse at the future in the form of the mournful, bellowing roar of a titan's birth. Ironically, the birth of this particular titan comes on a track called, "Them Bones." It is one of many dark, foreboding classics that have touched the lives of countless devotees. AIC overwhelms the audience with the sonic onslaught of a grisly torture chamber, dexterously melded with the buzz-saw din of a sheet metal factory. As the flames wisp up and lick your face, you wipe the sweat off your brow and appreciate Staley's struggle just to survive.

Allowing you scarcely a drum beat to catch your breath, "Dam That River" smacks you down with a drum stampede and a Sabbath-esque guitar barrage. "Rain When I Die," watches Cantrell's guitar skip around, weeping bitterly like Layne did on so many dark days. And then comes "Down in a Hole," yet another one of many songs obsessed with death or dying. Poor Layne predicted his own end. The Chains' frontman feared that one day he would die at heroin's grim hand and recognized that he had been "kicking himself in the teeth." When Staley brandishes a second's worth of optimism to deliver half of the line, "I'd like to fly," he swiftly ceases the fruitless effort with, "but my wings have been so denied." Layne transcends his pain, infusing every ounce of energy into his lines.

One of the songs which eventually garnered radio rotation, "Rooster," proves that they can slow tempo and perform masterfully even without the big guns. Simplistic chords carry the song far, but the heartfelt lyrics are not overshadowed or lost in the flurry. Layne paints the picture of an army man – specifically his father who survived Vietnam – with a troubled family life. The character watches his friends die around him, while acknowledging that his own countrymen would spit on him. Though recognizing the futility of his actions, he cries out, "Oh God please would you help me make it through?" Powerful imagery to be sure.

The penultimate track, "Angry Chair" – which features the unmistakable start-stop guitar hook – sets up *Dirt* for "Would?" Probably the track for which this disc is known best, "Would?" features the unforgettable chorus, "Into the flood again/same old trip it was back then/so I made a big mistake/try to see it once my way." That track sums up the entire sentiment of Alice in Chains. What better way to go out than with the embittered outlook that, "I've messed up my life and though I'll do my best to better myself, it's never going to get any better."

Dirt finds Staley and company plunging further into the hole dug during *Facelift*. Alice in Chains hasn't been fully consumed by the dirt – that comes later with their self-titled release and more fame than they could ever imagine. *Dirt* arrived in 1992 amidst a Seattle rock scene riddled with Pearl Jam-wannabes. Yet, this band tirelessly strove to be unique. Their flawless instrumentation kept them distinct from grunge; Staley's lyrics put them in a league of their own.

☒

Quote of the Week

By Ryan Meyer

*I would rather be ashes than dust!
I would rather that spark should burn out in a brilliant blaze
than it should be stilled by dry rot.
I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in a magnificent glow,
than a sleepy, permanent planet.*

*The proper function of Man is to live, not to exist.
I shall not waste my days trying to prolong them...
I shall use my time.*

-Jack London

Suggestions for Submissions

Your contribution can be anything you can fit onto a sheet of paper. Here are a few ideas:

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Editorials | Reports | Philosophy |
| Reviews | Ramblings | Rants |
| Comics | Puzzles | Jokes |
| Quotes | Polls | Trivia |
| Drawings | Poetry | Recipes |
| Photographs | Short stories | News |
| Predictions | Advice | Graphs |

Take some time to think about it. Publications go out every other Friday. Please send all of your submissions two days in advance to dan@fritzcomics.com.

Name that Quote

By Frank Waterhouse

(see the answer below)

“My motto, f*** lotto, I'll get the 7 digits from your mother for a dollar tomorrow.”

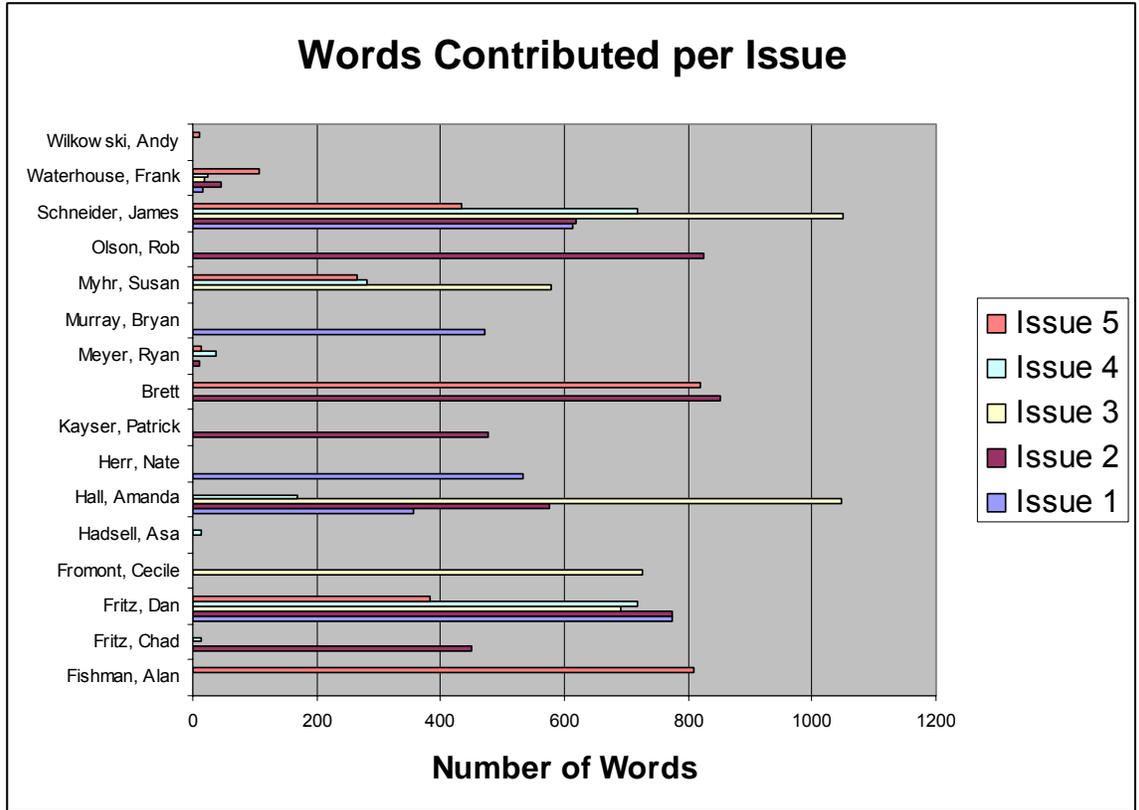
Babble-ON Stats

These are close approximations. This does not include image/picture contributions.

Contributor	Total
Wilkowski, Andy	11
Waterhouse, Frank	213
Schneider, James	3433
Olson, Rob	825
Myhr, Susan	1125
Murray, Bryan	472
Meyer, Ryan	63
Brett	1671
Kayser, Patrick	478
Herr, Nate	532
Hall, Amanda	2147
Hadsell, Asa	14
Fromont, Cecile	725
Fritz, Dan	3338
Fritz, Chad	464
Fishman, Alan	808



Total	16319
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Asa Say...

By Asa Hadsell

“If you treat a kid like a kid,
then the kid'll always be a kid.”

Name that Quote Answer: from 8 Mile

Contributors:

- Grant Calderwood
- Alan Fishman
- Dan Fritz
- Asa Hadsell
- Amanda Hall
- Ryan Meyer
- Susan Myhr
- James Schneider
- Frank Waterhouse

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