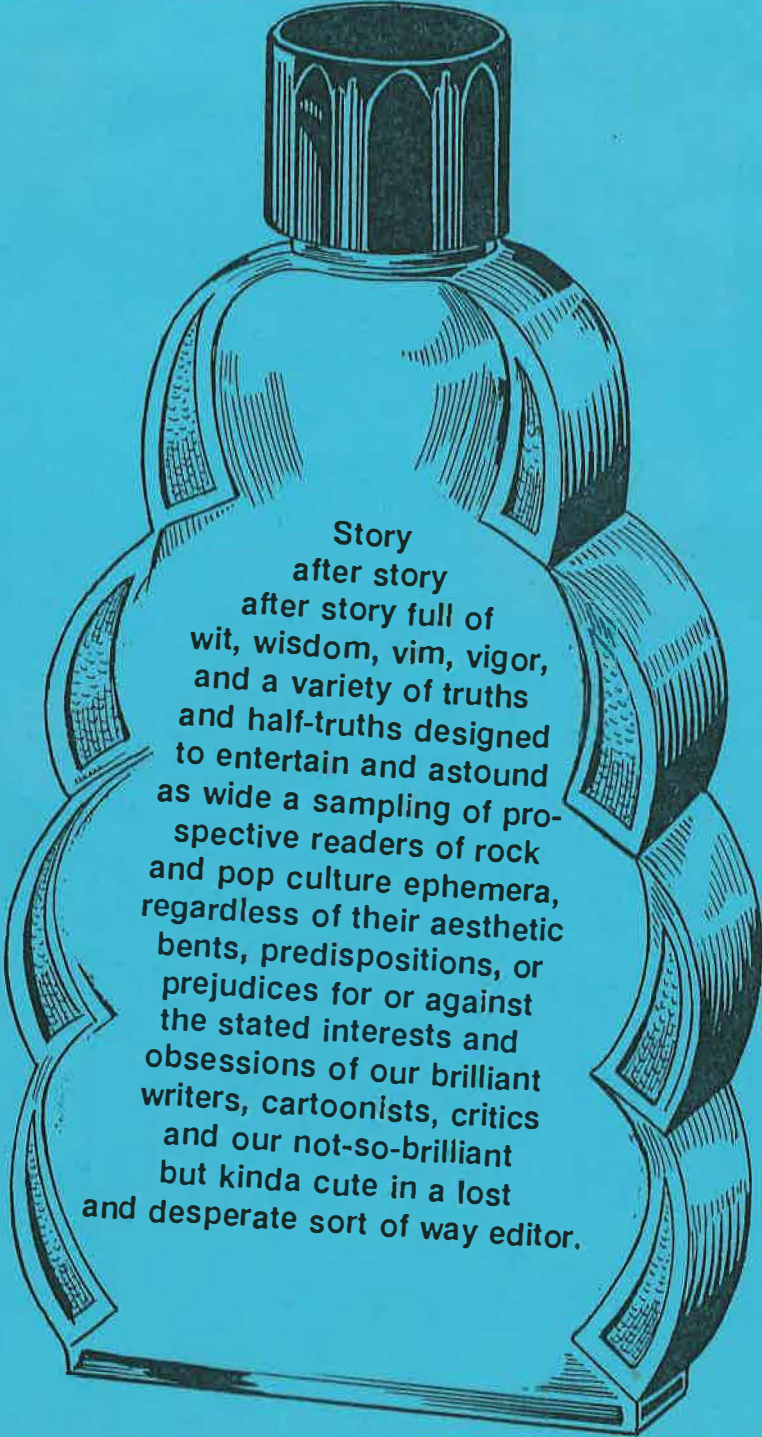


POP STOCK

NUMBER FIVE
OCTOBER 1993
IT'S FREE



Story
after story
after story full of
wit, wisdom, vim, vigor,
and a variety of truths
and half-truths designed
to entertain and astound
as wide a sampling of pro-
spective readers of rock
and pop culture ephemera,
regardless of their aesthetic
bents, predispositions, or
prejudices for or against
the stated interests and
obsessions of our brilliant
writers, cartoonists, critics
and our not-so-brilliant
but kinda cute in a lost
and desperate sort of way editor.

POP STOCK MAKES MY POP STOCK (a dozen affirmations)

1. There's a one-in-a-million chance that you're one-in-a-million.
2. Your form and your content are one.
3. There's nothing to fear but your impending and certain death.
4. Sitting down is the only way to get a lap.
5. No matter how loathsome, repulsive, and utterly undesirable you are, you can always pay someone to sleep with you.
6. Mistakes are God's way of saying "howdy."*
7. Being in love isn't exactly like being in jail.
8. Life is a gift. That's why you can't put a price on it.
9. Fuck you and your fucking Batman.**
10. You're only as far from God as he can get.
11. Minnie Minosa vs. The Seattle Mariners.
12. If you fail at everything you try, try to fail.

* c/o John Przyborowski

** c/o Shane McGowan

New Address:

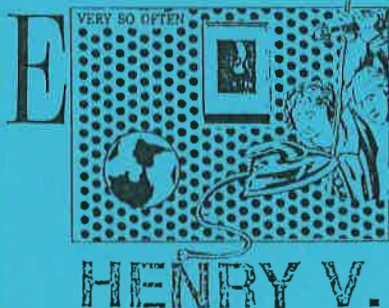
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Chicago, Illinois 60614

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Quimby's, Leo's Lunchroom, Blackout Records,
and probably some other places too.
Pop Stock's deadline for submissions is the
15th of each month.

Call 248-6518 for ad rates.



The following paragraph appeared in the September/October issue of *Option Magazine*, as part of Bill Wyman's article on Liz Phair:

Since the record came out, Guyville has bitten back. As Phair went, in just a few weeks, from local club munchkin to being hailed by the editor of *Billboard* as "(leading) alternative rock's postpunk 90s naturalism to a captivating new pinnacle," she's left a great deal of griping in her wake, from rumors and insults about her personal life to public manifestations of "her mercurial, obfuscating and ploddingly genius-to-be self," in the words of a local fanzine writer who worked with Phair at a benefit. "I hate being hated, and I already am," she acknowledges. "I don't think I've even done much of anything, or gotten that much in a worldly sense, yet I've already had people I care about disapprove of me vehemently."

Y'know...I really had sworn-off anymore Bill-bashing. I had decided, from now on, to let Bill make his mistakes in peace. But now I am the victim. You see, the "local fanzine writer who worked with Phair at a benefit" is me.

To set the record straight, what I wrote was: "her mercurial, obfuscating and plotingly genius-to-be-self," not "ploddingly." Did Bill stop and try to figure out what "ploddingly genius-to-be-self" might mean? It doesn't mean a damn thing. Go figure.

More importantly, though, I object to being used as the voice the "griping in her wake." I've got no fucking gripes. And if Bill had taken the time to read my piece, he would have realized that it was overwhelmingly pro-Liz. I deeply resent Bill's placement of Liz's quote about being hated. It creates the false impression that her statement is a response to me.

Hey Liz,
I don't hate you.
Love & kisses,
Seth.



A Few weeks ago, when *Billboard* dubbed Chicago "cutting edge's new capital," the local pressboys began making overt and covert predictions of impending changes in how we would relate to the industry and to the world and how they would relate to us. The dailies and the alternatives, alike, foretold an influx of bands, anxious to ride our wave, grabbin' their boards and headin' for our beach; and of hungry A'n'R wolves salivating and sharpening their knives against their forks whilst laying in wait for the innocent Lil' Red Riding Bands on their way to Grandma's house.

"What a big wallet you have, Grandma."

But nothing's really changed. Sure, it's probably too soon to be expecting knocks on the door from be-costumed rockers looking for treats, but that's not the change I had in mind. I'm looking for fear, excitement, anxiety. But nobody associated with the scene--not bands, not club owners, not bookers, not fans, not local label people, not fanziners, not distributors, etc.--seems to take the threat seriously. Perhaps we're jaded. Perhaps we just know better. Having lived under the recently-overturned stone for a while, we're aware of the flaws that a *Billboard* writer's one week all-expenses-paid whirlwind tour might not reveal. cont'd p. 4

Folks in Chicago are smart enough and realistic enough to realize that success ain't all wine, roses, and finger sandwiches. Half the word, after all, *is* "suck." And when you're talking about the success of a scene, you're talking about casting pretty big nets. Does Chicago want the kind of success that will pull bands like Big Hat from our midst and elevate them to stardom?

Think about post-boon Athens or Minneapolis: both suffered post-partum downers after their local heroes became national ones. It's hard to imagine that R.E.M. and the B-52's and the Replacements and Husker Du wouldn't have blossomed if their towns hadn't been anointed "Rock Mecca of the Moment." In fact, it wasn't for those bands' success, the towns probably wouldn't have come to prominence at all. Which would lead one to believe that by the time a scene becomes "cutting edge's new capital" it probably already has one of it's feet in the grave.

So, those of us still hanging around are gonna have to get used to our roles as extras at the Urge Overkill and Smashing Pumpkins autopsies.

But, to be honest, Chicago never has been much of a salon-/factory-/pioneer-town for indie rock and frankly, it's unlikely it ever will be. Those who've succeeded have done so *despite* Chicago, while those who have carved out verifiably distinct and valuable aesthetic niches (Shrimpboat, Jesus Lizard, Liz Phair, Seam, The Coctails, Mint Aundry) have done so precisely because of the lack of spotlights and microscopes trained on our lil' ol' patch of the prairie.

Because Chicago is so spread out and there's no one neighborhood where indie-folks live, work, and play (contrary to **Billboard's** belief, everything and everybody is *not* in Wicker Park and, unfortunately for those who would portray Chicago's scene as a neat, little indie-rock bohemia tour package, the

cont'd p. 5



city's best room for live music is miles away in Lincoln Park) there is no palpable sense of community amongst bands, fans, or clubs. As a result there is no such thing as a "Chicago Sound." Bands often seem barely able to tolerate one another, more or less, emulate one another.

Even more debilitating is the lack of places to play. There is really only one great room in town: Lounge Ax. And let me go on record here and now: Lounge Ax is, to my mind, the finest rock room in the western hemisphere. From the waitstaff, to the lovable bouncer, to the soundguys, to Bob--everyone, up to and including the owners, Sue and Julia, are wonderful and open people who treat performers and patrons with dignity and as if they had brains. This, although it sounds simple, is the bar-running equivalent of traveling the speed of light or putting toothpaste back in the tube.

After Lounge Ax, there's a slew of places, all offering major drawbacks for bands and fans. Which brings me to Phyllis' Musical Inn. Why, with a near-perfect location, indie respectability, and a low-key, downscale charm that can't be bought or made, does Phyllis' continue to flounder in mediocrity? For one reason and one reason only. The joint ain't got no P.A.!

An open letter to Phyllis' owner, Clem:

Dear Clem,

We, the bands and music fans of Chicago are writing to request that you please make the relatively small investment required to equip your bar, Phyllis' Musical inn, with a suitable P.A. for live music. We believe that such an undertaking on your part would convert your bar, Phyllis' Musical Inn, from a dumpy, but charming hole with mediocre bands and mediocre draw, to a dumpy, but

cont'd p. 6



charming hole with exceptional bands
and enthusiastic throngs of thirsty
patrons.

And, if you can't afford to do it
yourself, throw a "Buy Phyllis' a
P.A. Benefit Party" and have some of
your better regular bands play. We're
sure the bands would donate their
services in order to turn Phyllis'
into a place where they wouldn't have
to sound like crap. Everybody would
be better off: happy and healthy.

Sincerely,
Your friends with ears.



6

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Phair, Constituents, Present Plan For Change

CHICAGO, Friday Sept. 18--Liz Phair, appearing today with members of her newly-formed coalition, subtly, yet firmly asserted her aspirations to power. In a set that lasted less than an hour, Ms. Phair, whose recent meteoric rise to the rarified upper atmosphere of pop nobility has starkly divided the citizens of the counter culture into warring factions of supporters and detractors, relied heavily on the loyalty of those present. At her side throughout much of the evening were members of an entourage recently assembled to highlight Ms. Phair's talents as an organizer of ideas and melodies and to compensate for her mechanical shortcomings as a technician. They were Leroy Bach (currently splitting his time between Ms. Phair's staff and the aggro-funk thinktank Uptighty); Casey Rice (the Idful Fellow); and Brad Wood (fellow Idful Fellow, Ms. Phair's chief adviser, and former associate of the Shrimpboat collective.)

The crowd assembled slowly over the course of two hours during which The Spinanes (a gender-diverse, two member aggregate based in Portland, Oregon) and Red Red Meat (whose recent affiliation with Seattle's Sub Pop label has garnered much attention) offered their platforms with equally single-minded zeal. The Spinanes' offered a vision of guitar/drums simplicity wherein an egalitarian democracy grants each instrument the right to provide either the hook or the rhythm. Red Red Meat, on the other hand, proposed a complex amalgam of structure and anarchy; noise and quiet; old and new. Their initiatives, which, at first, were so startling as to seem utterly without precedent, eventually became redundant and both their logic and their influences became obvious.

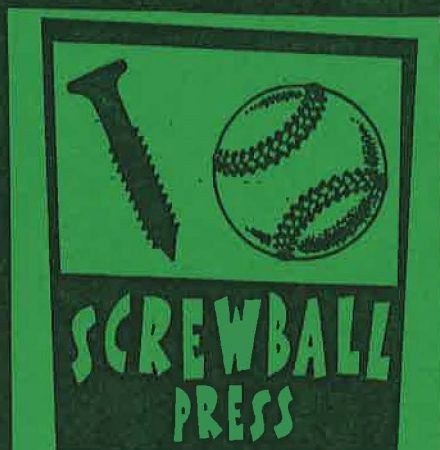
When, prior to her set, Ms. Phair walked on stage to prepare her equipment, the gathered admirers gasped at the first glimpse of her and erupted into spontaneous

cont'd p. 8

applause. Attendance at the all-ages event was roughly split along gender lines with a significant number of women in the 16-20 demographic making their presence known by enthusiastically reacting to Ms. Phair's every note, every word, every gesture.

It was with these women that the groundswell for Ms. Phair's reforms was born and with them it continues to enjoy its most fervent support. These women, whose claims to pop culture have been, until now, predicated on their connections to men, recognize, in Phair, a certifiable leader--a woman who has sought not to borrow from male precedent, but to create the first pieces of a female lineage.

Young women sang along to many of Phair's lyrics as if the words were their own. Women, scattered throughout the room, pogoed and screamed and swayed and embraced each other in an attempt to participate as fully-physically and emotionally as possible. They alone, in this room full of people--mostly older and male than they--were connected to the message and the meaning of the evening. For once, they knew, the room and the music belonged to them and the boys could only borrow it for a while. When it was time to go, the boys would have to give it back. And when the girls got home, each of them would put it away--wherever she kept it--beside the bed, beneath the pillow, in a shoebox under the stairs; wherever.



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I. superchunk-ribbon b/w who needs light
(merge)

i have yet to meet a superchunk song i didn't like. mac writes songs that make me wish that i played guitar and sang. besides two great songs, you get a supercool record sleeve designed by tannis root (see also new unrest 7" box set) whoever that is.

II. smack dab-lucky b/w big planet and blood in my soul
(homestead records)

boy, are these songs sloppy. (low-fi)¹⁰ but, i just can't stop smiling when i listen to them. smack dab are members of uncle wiggly (a personal favorite) and railroad jerk playing these simple little pop messes about lots of nothing. lucky quite possibly could be a song anyone of us made up in grade school.

III. the sugargliders-trumpet play b/w unkind and beloved
(sarah)

somewhere the kemp brothers are crooning to this one. i just know it.

IV. the spinanes-spigfire b/w bad karma
(subpop)

scott plouf is breaking new ground in drumming. i don't think i've ever heard a hi-hat played so lyrically before. his just-perfect drumming is simply beautiful, complementing rebecca gates' truly wonderful voice and super great guitar work. it must be that magical silver sparkle ludwig set. ...'66 i think.

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