

Did your families foster music in your lives?

Um, Mom did especially. My mom forced me to play lessons in the second grade. I was going to be a jazz saxophone player and even went to two years of school for it.

What bands were you into as a pre-adolescent?

Well I got into KISS in first grade. I grew up in a cultural vacuum. Mostly whatever was on the radio — I remember Prince on K-Tel records.

To over-generalize, who do you think make up your fan base?

Oh well, I think our fan base is hard to generalize. Pretty much people who like to dance — hippies, for lack of a better term. People into music played with fervor.

It seems that Portland supports the music community. Touring, where else have you felt that?

At this point we had support from small towns like Davis, California; Manhattan, Kansas; Arcadia, California; and Tucson, Arizona.

What bands do you go out of your way to see?

More often than not, we're trying to go out of our way to see Drive by Truckers, Lucero, and Black Diamond Heavies. Locally Bark, Hide and Honk, Power County, Sarsaparilla, and Cicada Omega.

Hillstomp is John Johnson & Henry Kammerer. For more info: myspace.com/hillstomp

BECKY FREDENBERG
beckyfredenberg@yahoo.com

MISFITS


IN THE AUTUMN

The original line-up of the Misfits, complete with **Glenn Danzig** and **Doyle Wolfgang Von Frankenstein** is performing at the **Orpheum** on **November 24!** It will be the first time the complete group has been onstage in over 25 years and, best of all, everything, including the bar, is FREE! Also, for the first hundred people through the door, the Orpheum will give them an opportunity to rub a magical lamp from which will spring a genie to grant three wishes.

Aww, just kidding. Instead, it'll be the last remaining member, Jerry Only, with Dez and Robo from Black Flag. Yes, they lost the Ramone. We can only guess what cruel fate beset itself upon poor Marky, but it's probably pretty bad considering.

Branded the Newfits by the jaded fans of Glenn Danzig, these complaints seem terrifyingly legitimized in the years since the band reformed. From delving into professional wrestling to Christian metal bands, and, just as bad, "Punks for Bush" stage at a Republican National Conference, nothing about it seemed right. There weren't any punks for Bush, but we remember the vile effort nonetheless.

There's also been action figures, appearances in videos put out by fellow low-key religious zealots, the Insane Clown Posse, and over-merchandising of the worst kind. We're talking Metallica levels of product placement here. Keychains, bottle openers, socks, several lines of footwear, sweatbands, bracelets, clocks, trashcans, ashtrays, underwear, baby suits, skate decks, ear plugs, license plate frames, lunchboxes, spinning belly button rings, cufflinks, chain wallets, incense burners, and, yes, even diapers have all been palettes for the Misfits trademark **Crimson Ghost**.

I don't know. I didn't hate the new music, but it just seems so far away from the environment that made all those hits, doesn't it? The doors open at 7, show starts at 8, and tickets at the door will run you \$25 a piece. Getting them early saves you three bucks. 

MIKE WILLIAMS
mike@thenoise.us



I screech up to a red light. Straddling my bike, I fill my lungs with crisp pine air and gaze at the yellow harvest moon rising above Mt. Elden. As I exhale, I blow one snot-rocket, then another. The sensors built into the traffic signals do not see me and I know cops have been pulling over cyclists all over town, so I'm thankful that a car pulls up alongside. The adjacent light turns yellow, a signal for me to leverage my pedal into position; the light turns green, and I'm gone.

I catch up to cars going my direction and, with my gloved hand, I slide my finger tips alongside the sedan as I pass. Careful before I cut back into the road, passing another car. Taking notice of passing interests that blur together, I catch glimpses of people walking on the sidewalk, eating burritos, couples making out, couples fighting in the street, and high school kids in their best black outfits, lined up outside the One-Eleven.

For the past couple of months, I've been obsessed with videos on the Internet of cyclists filming themselves racing through traffic. **Most of these races take place at night, in big cities like San Francisco, Chicago, New York, and Vancouver, where traffic is relatively slow and cyclists bomb downtown areas like a flash flood, darting into urban canyons and rolling through the unpredictable channels of traffic.**

These races, known as Alleycats, typically emphasize participation over competition, and have been traditionally organized by bicycle messengers in large cities. Though the first race, labeled "Alleycat" was held in Vancouver in 1989, recent enthusiasm for cycling alongside a growing resentment toward car-culture has resulted in increased popularity of the races. **Today regular Alleycat races can be found all over the world.**

Traditionally, Alleycats are characterized by checkpoints embedded throughout the race. In this way, the race mimics the assigned deliveries of a messenger during the course of his or her day. There are many different styles of races, which reflect both the individuality of the city and those who organize them.

Information regarding checkpoints or the planned route of the race is not revealed until the start of the race. Sometimes it isn't until the first checkpoint is reached that the next one is known. Occasionally all checkpoints are given at the start of the race. Checkpoints become particularly fun when racers are asked to perform a task or, like a scavenger hunt, gather specific items or bits of information. Another reason why checkpoints commonly denote the Alleycat is because the best routes are left to individual racers and success is therefore determined by the cyclist's knowledge of the city.

Alleycat races have taken place in Flagstaff, on and off, for many years. **Lately, however, the races have been on.** Nostalgic for the Alleycats that used to take place in town, **Eric Pol-lard** from one of Flagstaff's shops, **Absolute Bikes**, has recently taken on the exciting duty of organizing races.

Though Alleycats are characteristically reserved for those riding single or fixed gear bikes, Flagstaff's "open" Alleycats invite

any kind of bike (though riding with these guys will get you questioning how important extra gears are in the first place). The first Alleycat, in September, drew over 40 racers, including the author of this article.

I remember being a little nervous for my first race. I'm used to racing my roommate to **New Frontiers** (or Newfers, Newfies... etc) or friends in cars around town, but I've never raced like this. In fact, my only impressions of Alleycats were those Internet videos. My anxiety was occasionally mellowed out by bouts of self-righteous confidence where I recalled late night rides spent zipping through cars, or those other times, passing up cyclists riding two thousand dollar road bikes, wearing more Spandex than anyone should have to see on a weekend morning.

The race started at 10PM; I showed up a little late, rolling up just as Eric was explaining the route. I figured I'd simply try my best to stay with the people in the front. The race was to begin in the typical "Le Mans start," which is probably the most entertaining part of any of the videos I've seen. Named after **The Grand Prix of Endurance**, a 24-hour sports car endurance race, which — until it was discontinued for safety reasons in 1971 — began the race in a way I like to call "get-away-style." Because everything I know about this start comes from *Speed Racer*, for clarity, I also consulted Wikipedia.

Drivers in this grand prix lined their cars up along the inside of the track in the order they qualified, turned off their engines and, on foot, lined up on the outside of the track. The race started at the drop of the French flag; drivers ran to their cars, started them up and sped off. If you've ever wondered why the ignition switch on most Porsche models is on the left, this race is the inspiration for that design. The idea is that drivers can jump in Dukes-of-Hazard-style and can insert the key and, with the other hand, can put the car into gear.

This style of start was discontinued because it encouraged racers to not wear seatbelts and many people questioned its safety. One of these people was **Jacky Ickx** who protested by casually walking to his car at the start of the race and buckling his seatbelt. He nearly got creamed in the process. During the first lap of the race, one driver died, and Ickx ended up winning the whole thing. Officially changing the style of the start must have been the league's way of saying, "Kudos to you, Jacky. Kudos."

While the Le Mans start is no longer featured in elite European motor sports, it is thriving in modern underground Alleycat bike races. Eric got our attention for the start. "Backs against the wall." Our race would be fast: a short course in a low traffic area, starting on the top of one parking garage and finishing on the top of another. Racers were to pick up one playing card at each of the five designated checkpoints, culminating in one giant poker game at the conclusion of the race.

 **CONTINUED ON 30**

KIND CONNECTION



TATTOOS • PIERCING • SMOKING ACCESSORIES
105 NORTH BEAVER STREET • DOWNTOWN FLAGSTAFF
928-779-2001

**For the Best TV Experience,
 Upgrade from Cable to DIRECTV!**

PACKAGES
 START AT
\$29⁹⁹
 mo.
 Everyday Low Price



Journey to the Center of the Earth (PG)
 Available 10/28 on DIRECTV® Pay Per View

Act now and take advantage of these other great offers!

FREE PROFESSIONAL INSTALLATION
 IN UP TO 4 ROOMS



Lease fee of \$4.99/mo. for second and each additional receiver. Complex/custom installation extra. Handling and delivery fee \$19.95.

FREE DIRECTV® HD DVR RECEIVER UPGRADE



Models may vary.

Skip commercials with a single click!

With activation of CHOICE XTRA™ package or above.* Programming, DVR service and/or HD Access fee commitments required.

FREE FOR 3 MONTHS*



28 Premium movie channels!

With CHOICE XTRA™ package or above.

Offers end 3/3/09 and are based on approved credit; credit card required. New customers only (lease required).

No Equipment to Buy! No Start-up Costs!

Call 1-877-727-0538 today!



Credit card not required in MA and PA. *Eligibility for local channels based on service address. **Only available for recorded programs. *PROGRAMMING OFFERS: IF, AFTER 12 CONSECUTIVE MONTHS (3 MONTHS FOR HBO/STARZ/SHOWTIME), CUSTOMER DOES NOT CONTACT DIRECTV TO CHANGE SERVICE, THEN ALL SERVICES TO WHICH CUSTOMER IS SUBSCRIBING WILL AUTOMATICALLY CONTINUE ON THE 13TH MONTH (4TH MONTH FOR HBO/STARZ/SHOWTIME) AT THE THEN-PREVAILING RATES, INCLUDING THE \$4.99/MO. LEASE FEE FOR THE 2ND AND EACH ADDITIONAL RECEIVER. In certain markets, programming/pricing may vary. Package pricing at directv.com/packages. DIRECTV System has a feature that restricts access to channels. LIMIT ONE BILL CREDIT PER DIRECTV ACCOUNT. **INSTANT REBATE: Advanced equipment instant rebate requires activation of CHOICE XTRA (\$29.99/mo.) package or above, FAMILIAR ULTRA or above, Jadedworld or any qualifying international service bundle, which shall include PREFERRED CHOICE programming package. DVR service commitment (\$5.99/mo.) required for DVR and HD DVR lease; HD Access fee (\$9.99/mo.) required for HD and HD DVR lease. LIMIT ONE ADVANCED EQUIPMENT REBATE PER DIRECTV ACCOUNT. **INSTALLATION: Standard professional installation only. Custom installation extra. SYSTEM LEASE: Purchase of 18 consecutive months (24 consecutive months for advanced receivers) of any DIRECTV base programming package (\$29.99/mo. or above) or qualifying international services bundle required. FAILURE TO ACTIVATE ALL OF THE DIRECTV SYSTEM EQUIPMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EQUIPMENT LEASE ADDENDUM MAY RESULT IN A CHARGE OF \$150 PER RECEIVER NOT ACTIVATED. IF YOU FAIL TO MAINTAIN YOUR PROGRAMMING COMMITMENT, DIRECTV MAY CHARGE A PRORATED FEE OF UP TO \$480. RECEIVERS ARE AT ALL TIMES PROPERTY OF DIRECTV AND MUST BE RETURNED UPON CANCELLATION OF SERVICE, OR ADDITIONAL FEES APPLY. VISIT directv.com OR CALL 1-800-DIRECTV FOR DETAILS. Programming, pricing, terms and conditions subject to change at any time. Pricing residential. Taxes not included. Receipt of DIRECTV programming is subject to the DIRECTV Customer Agreement, copy provided at directv.com/legal and in your first bill. HBO and Cinemax are registered service marks of Home Box Office, Inc. Starz and related channels and service marks are the property of Starz Entertainment Group LLC. Showtime and related marks are trademarks of Showtime Networks Inc., a CBS Company. PHOTO CREDITS: Journey to the Center of the Earth. ©MMIII Newline Productions, Inc. And Walden Media, LLC. All Rights Reserved. ©2008 DIRECTV, Inc. DIRECTV, the Cyclone Design logo, CHOICE XTRA, FAMILIAR and PREMIER are trademarks of DIRECTV, Inc. All other trademarks and service marks are the property of their respective owners.

PRACTICE YOUR SNOT ROCKET FOR THE NEXT ALLEYCAT

CONTINUED FROM 29

I was ready, having placed my bike in a premium location at the front. "On your mark. Get set." A few seconds of silence; the obligatory pause for effect. "Go!" At full speed, we ran to our bikes, whooping, hollering and trash talking along the way. **Winding down the levels of parking garage, the race was officially on.**

There were some pretty bad spills before we even reached the bottom of the parking garage, a particularly bad one right at the bottom. Someone tried to hop a curb and went down hard. **My first reaction would normally be, "dude, are you okay?" But then I remembered I'm in a race. A race! "So long sucker!"**

While writing about Alleycats, I was interested to find out how the mainstream news covers unsanctioned races like this, if they do at all. While I was used to watching videos of cyclists filming their perspective to hip music, I discovered that when the mainstream media ran a story on Alleycat races, the focus was much different. Stories **always** focus on the danger, the perceived recklessness and, in every report I read, the story was prompted by the death of a racer, which is a rarity. Take the following passage from a recent ABC "investigative" I-report:

Alleycat events are outlaw bicycle races, during which riders blow through red lights, ignore other traffic laws and confound motorists. After a rider's death a few days ago, those who defend Alleycats say it is car drivers who need to be more careful

Outlaw? It is my understanding that the word "outlaw" can only be used to describe bad guys from the wild west, or at the very least, someone with a really wicked handlebar mustache. I can only assume the writer wanted to give the impression that racers gather in saloons and ride off into the sunset, firing their six-shooters into the air. Hell, this is Arizona. Maybe bike races should be like this.

While it is true that the races can be dangerous, they certainly don't have to be. Bicycles allow for a very large field of vision and those who race are likely aware of the limitations of their bikes. It is, therefore, very easy to avoid collision; **you just have to pretend you're invisible.**

The truth is, there is an Alleycat race somewhere in the world nearly every day, yet the only time the mainstream media will mention it is when someone gets hurt. **Statistically, it is more dangerous to drive your car than ride, or even race, your bike.** Don't get me wrong, I don't expect the media to ignore the real dangers posed to participants. I personally fear that inexperienced riders might be more inclined to make bad choices while racing, choices they wouldn't have otherwise made. Still, car accidents claim the lives of over

40 thousand people a year, each one involving a bad choice. I'm only suggesting that their "investigative" reporting is pretty lazy.

When I first sat down to write about Alleycats, I assumed they were illegal and wanted to make every effort not to "ruin" it by making it so public. Eric explained to me that they are actually not illegal. "As far as the law goes, I'm simply organizing a group bike ride. If individuals take it upon themselves to break the law, I can't be held responsible." Loopholes. Sweet, beautiful loopholes.

The October Alleycat was much longer than the first, running about seven miles. It was also 20 degrees outside and much of the course consisted of steep inclines. Needless to say, the turn out was much smaller for this race.

The winner of the second race, **Josh Kelley**, competes professionally in single speed races around the country. He finished way ahead of everyone else. I mean way ahead. One racer was pulled over and the others couldn't get through a light because of heavy traffic. Many racers also noted two dumbfounded police officers parked in squad cars, with no idea how to respond, as racers whipped by.

Josh managed to time the green lights perfectly. "The lights couldn't have been better." He also described a moment when he grabbed the back of a van, a trick employed by some cyclists to gain or sustain momentum, but it backfired. "He slammed on his breaks, honked, and flipped me off." When I asked him if he enjoyed Alleycats as much as professional races, Josh said they were just as fun, but he emphasized that Alleycat races are a "different Kung-Fu."

After the first race, a police officer pulled up to talk to us. He gave a speech that appeared to be memorized. "You must wear light. You must stop at stop signs and stop lights," he went on. It was so condescending that it reminded me of a time when, after my dog got out of the yard, a police officer dropped by my house and handed me a pamphlet titled, "is your dog out of control?" He played his role. We nodded in agreement. I think everyone felt pretty good about it.

"You don't own the road," he concluded before getting back in his squad car. This, we understood. **In fact, the realization that automobiles own the road is painfully clear to anyone who peddles around this town.** It only takes one close call to be reminded you of how vulnerable you are on a bike. The race is empowering though. I would never run a red light by myself, but when there are ten of us darting through an intersection, for a moment, it does feel like we own the road. Alleycats function as a good reminder to motorists that we are everywhere, you will never stop us, and there are more of us every day.

Alleycats will be occurring regularly, on the second Saturday evening of every month. Eric is looking forward to planning a race in the snow. For information on the next race, drop in Absolute Bikes and ask around, or refer to the calendar on robohouse.org.

Kyle Boggs is a part-time dreamer, part-time bike enthusiast, part-time teacher from his home in Flagstaff. undertheconcrete.org