

When we park across the street from my mother's house, Mike is concerned about waking my mother up. I assure him that she is probably already awake and ready for work by now. My mom asks me if anyone wants some breakfast as she prepares to leave for work, but I tell her that we already ate at Subway. I'm pretty sure Jay doesn't want any more food after he threw up out of the window of the van, in front of Baba's earlier tonight. After I give him some Roloids, everyone finds a place to sleep and shake off the sand from the beach on various couches and blankets on my mother's living room floor.

Mike doesn't bother going to sleep, because he has to take the van to a garage soon and get the steering checked. It only costs him thirty bucks to fix, which is a relief because the band didn't expect to spend a huge chunk of their travel budget on last night's bar tab. It's also a relief that the steering is all right on the van. Now there's less need to worry while driving 120 km/h on the highway to Nova Scotia.

We have to get to Halifax by 6:30 so Slowcoaster can do a soundcheck for a show they are playing in a tent on Halifax Harbour. The show is part of a series of showcases sponsored by a Maritime brewery. It was obviously planned by people unfamiliar with the bands because Slowcoaster and Rock Ranger are supposed to open for some local celtic-rock band. Last night, Halifax's most outrageous metal band, The Heelwalkers, played the showcase and almost scared the sponsors and bar owner into calling the entire series of concerts off after the band played too loudly, and the lead singer humped some guy standing in the audience. When we arrive for the soundcheck, a representative from Music Industry Association of Nova Scotia (MIANS) is waiting and she promptly warns Slowcoaster to behave appropriately for the show because of what the Heelwalkers did.

Slowcoaster are smart and know not to step on the music industry's toes when confronted with a situation like this, but when the MIANS

rep left the van, the morale of both bands went down. The had enough difficulty dealing with the fact that this show was nothing more than a chance for a beer company to slap their logo on a tent full of musicians lending their credibility to the event. But it was a gig that would pay \$500 to each band up front, and it was also associated with a larger battle of the bands which both bands are in the semi-finals for. If either Slowcoaster or Rock Ranger wins this battle of the bands, the House of Rock will benefit from a much-needed shopping spree at a large music store, and studio time. Playing the show according to the rules of the sponsor is a tough pill for either band to swallow, but these high paying gigs are needed to fund their tour.

Slowcoaster play to a relatively unreceptive crowd. Despite the show being sponsored by beer company, the drinks inside the tent are not free for the band, and not cheap either. To the credit of the organizers, there was one feature of the show that Steve particularly appreciated: beer bottle-

holders were installed on the mic stands.

After Slowcoaster played, and before Signal Hill took the stage, I escaped to The Marquee with my brother and some friends to see Guided By Voices. Small beverage holders would prove futile for containing the amount of alcohol consumed by the members of GBV during their set. After the first song, guitar player, Nate Farley, drowned himself in half a bottle of Jack Daniels while lead singer Bob Pollard guzzled a bottle of Bud Light after each song.

Besides the great music, the highlight of a Guided By Voices show is watching the liquor consumption catch up with the band. Nate Farley looked wrecked by the third song when he tried to kiss bass player Tim Tobias on the lips in the middle of the tune. Surprisingly, the band survived over two hours of drinking and playing. Jay from Rock Ranger was impressed and vowed to not be outdone by GBV at Rock Ranger's gig the next night at The Attic.

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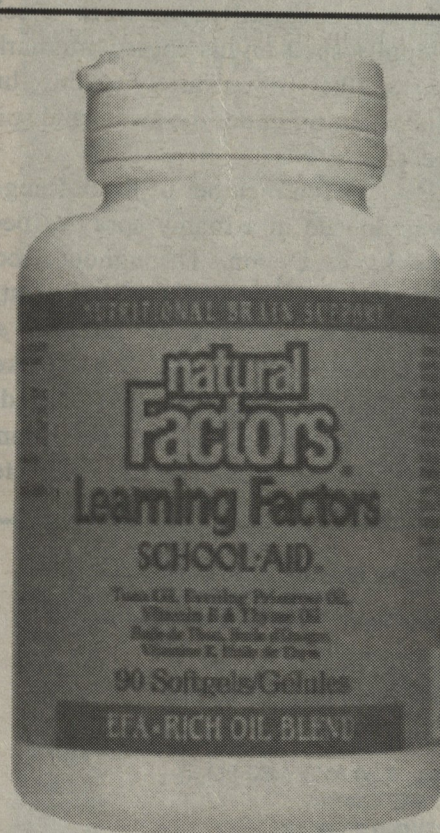
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