Simmons Allison: Back in music after enduring some rough times

See article page 8
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1100 • 2 • Action Magazine, December 2008

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**1100 • 2 • Action Magazine, December 2008**
Sports hall of fame doesn’t need Cisneros

By Jacques E. Strap
Action sports analyst
Forgive me if I fail to project a little ray of Christmas sunshine here. Peace on earth and goodwill to all men might be apropos for many columns around the Yuletide season, but such is not the case where old Jacques is concerned.

By my way of thinking, there is nothing either peaceful or of a goodwill nature about Henry Cisneros being inducted into the San Antonio Sports Hall of Fame. Horny Henry has no more business in anybody’s sports hall of fame than a snuff-dipping rooster has on a Nutcracker stage full of ballerinas.

The former mayor and secretary of HUD in the Bill Clinton administration, Cisneros will forever be remembered for his indiscretions with the wife of a San Antonio jewelry salesman. But we ain’t here to condemn any yahoo for thinking with his tallywhacker. We are here today, sports fans, to remind one and all how the ex-mayor hoodwinked the voters into approving bonds for construction of our “Great Disgrace,” the money-losing monstrosity referred to as the Alamodome.

Henry C. all but promised voters a National Football League team when tub-thumping for the dome project, something most people with good sense knew was a virtual impossibility. Henry either had some behind-the-scenes axe blades to grind with a dome bond issue approval, or he is a total idiot where sports activities are concerned.

So either way you hook it, Cisneros in the San Antonio Sports Hall of Fame is enough to make Tommy Nobis wince while Dan Cook tries to kick a slat out of his coffin. It cheapens the entire affair. Who in hell put Cisneros into this year’s hall of fame along with Avery Johnson, Jesse James Leija, Cody Carlson, and D.W. Rutledge?

A point guard for the Spurs, Johnson’s 10-year career here saw him hit the game-winning jump shot in 1999 which netted our first NBA championship. Jesse James Leija won the WBC super featherweight title in 1994, was 47-7-2 as a pro fighter, and earned $4.5 million in purses. Cody Carlson led Churchill to a 31-5 record in 1979-83, and was the quarterback in back-to-back state semifinals. Carlson ranks fourth in career passing yardage at Baylor, and he spent seven years with the Houston Oilers. And D.W. Rutledge, “Mr. High School Football” in San Antonio. He guided Judson to a record of 198-31-5, 16 playoff appearances and four state titles in 17 seasons.

All well-deserving of the honor, but here’s the big pisser of this year’s “hall” festivities. Cisneros was cited for “leading the campaign to get the Alamodome approved by voters in 1990, and was chairman of the advisory committee on the dome, which has been the site of dozens of national and international events.” That laughable summation was printed by the Express-News in naming this year’s hall of fame.

The only big event to draw national attention was college basketball’s championship tournaments and “Final Four” competition here in the dome, and we just learned that this event will be moved to Houston and other cities with bigger and more modern facilities. The Spurs left the dome behind for their own arena, and, as I predicted from the outset, about all left for the Alamodome is some high school football and Mexican rodeos.

continued on pg. 14
Sir Winston’s Pub
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As the end of the year is winding down and a
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I want to thank the “man” on high for wine-women and sin!
The doctor says those things are killing me,
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But that was a couple of years ago, And I’m still here - surprise!
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4 Action Magazine, December 2008
Barack Obama's presidential victory may prove to be this country's salvation. He is a vibrant young hope with a steel trap mind and a real and healthy vision for the United States of America.

As the 47-year-old Democrat steps into the economic and foreign policy shambles left by the George W. Bush administration, we can only hope and pray for his success and safety.

All of the Obama hype, jubilation over his victory, and unbridled optimism for our future stokes a spark of fear in my gut. The uneasiness comes as the mind drifts back to another time of happiness and joy which was turned suddenly into shock, incredulity, and national outrage by one nutball with a high-powered rifle.

I was a kid reporter with the San Antonio Express-News on the early afternoon of November 22, 1963, when Express managing editor Ken Kennamer called my home.

**President Kennedy killed**

"President Kennedy has been assassinated in Dallas," Kennamer said. "I need for you to get down to the San Fernando Cathedral for a color sidebar story on Catholics who are crowding the church to pray. Head on down there, and I will fill you in as more details come in over the wire."

I will never forget that day. I was struck dumb and numb by Kennamer's words. Just the day before, I had covered John F. Kennedy's arrival in San Antonio and tour of Kelly Air Force Base, and I still possess a photograph of myself standing only feet from JFK and wife Jackie during the Kelly Field visit. An Air Force photographer had snapped the photograph and later given it to me.

There is still something surreal about that place and time in my life. Kennedy was the handsome liberal prince from Boston who was sure to lead us from the wilderness into the land of milk and honey. And the notion of some freak snuffing out this beacon of hope and promise with a deer rifle was slow to soak in as I drove toward the historic cathedral in downtown San Antonio.

**Talking to God**

San Antonio Catholics were in a state of collective shock when I arrived at San Fernando Cathedral. Many were in the church, praying and crying, and some were even on their knees on the outside steps, some silently talking to God as they made the sign of the cross.

To this day, I can't recall what I put in the article I was assigned to write on that day. And I know there were many other stories I wrote in relation to the Kennedy assassination, but I can't place them in my mind. The chain of events which transpired immediately after Kennedy's death in the Dallas Parkland Hospital were too fast and unbelievable for most of us.

Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested following the presidential motorcade shooting in downtown Dallas which killed Kennedy and seriously wounded Texas Governor John Connally. Then came the national TV horror show which featured Dallas strip joint operator Jack Ruby shooting Oswald in the belly while both federal and state lawmen looked on in stunned disbelief. We watched all of this on television at the time, none of us able to digest the panorama in its gruesome entirety.

It's still hard for me to tie it all together. I have both heard and read all of the conspiracy theories, but I still lean toward the Warren Commission's finding. Oswald acted alone in the Kennedy assassination, and, although Lee Harvey had lived in Russia and taken a Russian wife, there was never any evidence that he was carrying out orders of any foreign power.

**Ugliness still out there**

With the advent of Barack Obama and his Democratic following, I can't help but reflect on the sick ugliness which somehow manages to ooze from the bowels of our nation when a leader steps up for the poor, the weak, and the downtrodden. With the exception of an assassination attempt on President Reagan and a few other scumbag-hatched incidents such as the Oklahoma federal building bombing, the vast majority of American political violence has been aimed at those advocating change for the betterment of the masses.

Abe Lincoln freed the slaves, then fell to a John Wilkes Booth bullet. Ditto for the ultra-liberal Kennedy's, JFK and brother Robert, both champions of the minorities and the have-nots. And the world can never forget Dr. Martin Luther King—his "dream" and the assassination which prevented his seeing the dream reach fruition.

So now we are at the subject at hand, and a very real materialization of Dr. King's "dream." Barack Obama, a handsome young man whose mother was a white woman from Kansas and whose father was a black native of Africa. President of the United States. Wonderfully unbelievable for millions. A harbinger of good things which will forever ring and reverberate through the halls of American justice. And the dawning of a 21st Century which, hopefully, will include the vast majority of the American people.

**Danger with capital 'D'**

Barack Obama represents everything good. And his presidency—his very being on the national political scene—cries danger with a capital "D."

An American of mixed heritage, as with Obama's case, is still labeled "black" when the subject of race is raised. And while Barack Obama's ascension to the Oval Office indicates a nation of voters who are finally beginning to judge a man by his heart rather than his skin color, we must never forget the black thread of evil which is still woven into the fabric of our nation.

Ours is a great nation of newfound change. And ours is still a nation where rednecks use a logging chain to drag a black man to death behind a pickup truck.

To believe that Barack Obama's safety is assured by Secret Service vigilance is foolishness. On that day in 1963 that I was photographed only feet from Jack and Jackie Kennedy, not one Secret Service agent even asked for my ID. Only one of them spoke to me at all, and that was to order me to get my foot off the presidential limo I was leaning against.

Obama needs prayer, luck, and all of the high-tech Secret Service protection available. And I don't say this in a negative context. I say this because I will never forget that afternoon of November, 1963, when I got that call from the newspaper's managing editor.

Columns such as this—as was suggested to me before I sat down to write—will never give ideas of violence to America's idiot fringe. The sickos have already got the ideas, and, as a nation, we must never forget the looming specter of danger.

*Action Magazine, December 2008*
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 2nd</td>
<td>Landis Armstrong and His Guilty Pleasures in the cafe - no cover</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 3rd</td>
<td>Hank Harrison Trio in the cafe - no cover</td>
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<td>Thursday 4th</td>
<td>Michael Francis and Mary Battalista at the church $10 cover</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 5th</td>
<td>First Friday Free Concerts + Los Mescaleros 8pm in the cafe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 6th</td>
<td>Steve James CD release with Cindy Cashdollar and Mark Rubin</td>
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Roller vets ready to complete 3-part reunion

The first two shows of a three-gig Roller reunion were well received last month, and the old band's third and final reunion party is slated for December 6 at Sam's Burger Joint.

Featuring two guitarists who fronted the band at different times, Roller opened the reunion series on November 8 at Sam's, then completed the second part of the nostalgia blast on familiar South Side stomping grounds—Frank Mueller's Trap Lounge on Southcross.

"The South Side and great watering holes like the Trap are where it all got started," said Jimmy Spacek, the original guitarist for the group that got started in the 1980s. "We started rehearsing in a mini-storage just off of Hot Wells."

The second guitarist to work with Roller was David Alcocer, who came over from the popular Heyoka outfit. As in the first two shows, he will play alternately with Spacek in the upcoming concert, a grand finale which will include at least four other bands.

The main sparkplug instrumental in getting Roller back up and rolling was bassist Michael Muñiz. Drummer for the band is Bill Huedepohl. And Gene Ng of Krazy Kat Music has been the sound man from the very beginning, and Ng is counted as a member of the band.

Introducing the band has been Mike Collie, an employee of KEKL Radio back when Roller was really hot.

The closing concert, known as "Roller Aid" on December 6 at Sam's Burger Joint will be for a local charity.

Michael Muñiz said Roller will play one set at the concert, mixing original music with such outstanding covers as Martian Boogie (Brownville Station), Sail On Sail Away (Moxy), Just Got Paid (Z.Z. Top), Train Train (Blackfoot), and Are You Ready (Grand Funk).

So what might be in the future for this smoking-hot outfit which hasn't collected much rust over the years?

Spacek wouldn't make any definite statements, but he didn't rule out the possibility of more Roller shows in the future.

"We were really thrilled with the crowd response," Spacek said. "And I guess anything we might do in the future will depend on how it looks with the people who come to see us."

Three-gig Roller reunion

Roller vets ready to complete 3-part reunion
Simmons Allison Group
back after leader shot
in botched robbery try

After surviving a robber's bullet which left him with a titanium rod in his leg, Simmons Allison is back on the local music scene with a new album and a new attitude to match.

"I've learned a lot about gratitude," Allison said. "I'm damn lucky to be alive, and I'm double-lucky to have the solid pair of musicians who make up our current version of the Simmons Allison Group. These guys are the best in the business."

Allison is also grateful for the loyal hordes who manage to show without fail for his infrequent but word-of-mouth heralded performances. A dynamic guitar player who writes and performs almost all original music, Allison's "day job" consists of a managing partnership in the Sea Island Shrimp House on Amerisuites Drive and the IH10 access road, scene of the botched robbery attempt last March which resulted in the shooting.

Although he managed to flatten one of the would-be robbers with a straight punch to the face, the husky ex-MP and guitar ace would rather talk about his CD "Texas Wind," and an upcoming live version of the recording which will be titled "Texas Wind Live."

"I'm really elated over the reception we have received with the first record. It has sold out completely, and we will soon press a bunch more of the CDs," Allison said. "Now we are working on the live version, a sort of compilation effort which we put together with three live shows at Rolling Oaks Sports Bar."

Allison has fronted his own bands since he started his blues-rock machine in 1991, but none of the combinations have hit the groove like his current Simmons Allison Group, a trio comprised of Allison on guitar and vocals, Bobby Singer on bass and vocals, and Gene Godley on both drums and sound production.

Singer, who also works with the Meyer Live production, is really elated over the reception we have received with the first record. It has sold out completely, and we will soon press a bunch more of the CDs," Allison said. "Now we are working on the live version, a sort of compilation effort which we put together with three live shows at Rolling Oaks Sports Bar."

Cont'd on page 14
EVERYBODY'S SOMEBODY IN ACTION MAGAZINE
Scatter Shots

Yappy Pawlidays
Of all the dog daycare outfits in San Antonio, Pawderosa Ranch on Clydeville Road over by the airport is the leading inkgatherer when it comes to promotional schemes.

Mike and Kim don’t miss a bet with their ever-growing off-leash “play and stay” operation.

They throw Halloween blowouts with live Texas music and doggie costume contests, and there is always a Santa come Christmas time for pictures with the pooches.

This year, though, the pre-Christmas activities have already started.

To celebrate what they billed as ‘Yappy Pawlidays,’ the Pawderosa people sponsored a float in the 32nd annal Alamo Heights Holiday Parade Nov. 22 on Broadway.

Accompanied by their pooches, Pawderosa custoers rode the float and distributed candy along the parade route.

The rumor mill
In last month’s Action, we made note of several anonymous calls from a man (or men) who said that the remains of legendary police character Bunny Echert had been found.

The rumors have stopped as suddenly as they began. Since we ran that report in the Scatter Shots column, there has not been another whisper about the shotgun-packing outlaw who was apparently kidnapped on March 1, 1966, and presumably murdered shortly thereafter.

Bunny’s mom was killed at the family home here on the day that Eckert went missing.

Music venue for sale
Rolling Oaks Sports Bar on the 1604 access road near Rolling Oaks Mall is reportedly for sale.

Rolling Oaks manager Janet Allen says, “John will sell the club and the golf operation, along with about 13 acres of property,” Allen said. “We will still be having some live music, but it will be limited.”

For almost 10 years, Janet Allen

Rolling Oaks ower John Delgado will sell both the nightclub and the golf range and pro shop associated with it.

“John will sell the club and the golf operation, along with about 13 acres of property,” Allen said. “We will still be having some live music, but it will be limited.”

For almost 10 years, Janet Allen

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10% Action Magazine, December 2008
managed Tiffany Billiards for the late Danny Levinson. She knows the live music business, and she had booked some top Texas blues rockers at both Tiffany Billiards and Rolling Oaks Sports Bar.

Allen took up the reins at Rolling Oaks when owner John Delgado’s son Phillip went on to do other things.

So what next for Ms. Allen? “I’ll stick around here and help out all I can until the place is sold,” she said. “Then I guess I will just go hunting another job.”

Balanced TV
KSAT-TV (channel 12) has what might be viewed as the most balanced staff of broadcasters in the city. Sports director Gregg (frog face) Simmons and daytime weather Jerk Mike Osterhage are, without a doubt, the two most nauseous beings on local TV.

But—luckily for KSAT-TV and the viewers they count—Simmons and Osterhage are counter-balanced by the two foxiest women personalities in the city: Ursula Parry and Leslie Mouton.

The homeless
It’s hard to generate a lot of sympathy for some of the homeless of San Antonio who walk through traffic with their little cardboard signs asking for monetary help.

More often than not, their little signs seeking “help” are topped off with a piteous “God bless.” And you know that the “God bless” is intended only for those motorists who cross their palms with coin or green.

Anyone who knows much of anything about alcoholism, drug addiction, people who are homeless by choice, and the hobos—lucky are, with Osterhage are, are, with..

Panhandlers are often strong enough to work construction or any number of minimum-wage jobs that might require some physical exertion.

Who knows the live music business, and she had booked some top Texas blues rockers at both Tiffany Billiards and Rolling Oaks Sports Bar.

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Texas 46
All-female music extravaganza held over through December 28

Simply The Best, another Josephine Theater musical co-produced by Missy Miller and Johnny Halpenney, just completed a successful run which started October 25th and ended November 30. And the highly-acclaimed production will be extended through December 28.

Featuring an all-female cast of light-footed singers in all manner of glitzy dress, the Miller-Halpenney production spotlighted the vocal talents of four San Antonio singing stalwarts and one New York actress/vocalist who has relocated to the Alamo City.

Shavonne Conroy is the former New Yorker, but she has worked on the Josephine stage in the past, playing the part of Evita, for which she won the Globe Award for Best Actress in a Musical.

Shavonne Conroy

Sonya Yamin

Alisa Claridy

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12/06 The Blowing Trees
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12/10 Jazz Quartet
12/11 I Ching Gates
12/12 The Lavens & Darcie Deaville
12/13 Matthew Ballar
12/16 Confusion Only
12/17 Big Band Jazz
12/18 Wine Tasting & Live Music
12/19 The Lavens & Drew Kennedy
12/20 Daniel Katsup
12/23 Monica Wrigh
12/24 Jazz & Beer Tasting
12/25 Closed
12/26 The Lavens & Big Melvis
12/27 Pygmaeus, Rafiki Project,....
12/30 Lewis & Clark
12/31 Close Early- Happy New Year

Outlaw Karaoke
Mondays & Thursdays 9-1

Alternating on Wednesdays
Dean Seltzer
Meyer Anderson

Open 2 p.m. - 2 a.m. Mon.-Sat.
Jacques E. Strap cont'd

And I might add that the dome is all but falling to pieces as it continues to lose money, year after year.

Cisneros in the San Antonio Sports Hall of Fame?

I don't know what to compare this disgrace with.

When goat rustler Johnny Rodriguez played a benefit show for the Texas Rangers, Kinny Friedman said this was tantamount to his playing a tribute show for the Nazi Party.

Such an analogy might not be dead on target for Cisneros, but most can see the incongruity of his induction into anybody's sports hall of fame.

As my mama used to say, "earp-flop-get-the-mop."

That's it for now. Merry Christmas.

Simmons Allison cont'd

Anderson country band, is a versatile bassist and guitarist who started playing at age 15.

"He can play various styles of music, and his energy is something to behold," Allison said. "He started working with me in '95."

Drummer Gene Godley has worked with such blues icons as Jimmy Spacek and Mike Sanders of Toat Lee Bluz, and he is currently the chief sound engineer at Rolling Oaks Sports Bar.

"Gene is our sound man, engineer, and producer," Allison said. "He can do it all and do it all well. Godley and Singer are both as solid as they come."

Long before the major players, which required two major Operations, Simmons Allison was wrestling with personal demons which he managed to put behind him years ago.

"Like others we know, Allison says he was strung out on methamphetamine before getting treatment and spiritual help some eight years ago.

"I've been sober and square clean for eight years now," Allison said. "And I now have a new and wonderful life. My wife's name is Leslie, and I have two sons, Tres and Trevor, who are 2 and 4. I know that substance abuse probably slowed up my musical career, but I believe things have worked out the way they were supposed to. I'm doing really well with the restaurant, and by playing shows only once every month or so, we manage to really get maximum crowd support without playing ourselves too thin and burning out."

San Antonio has always been home of some of the finest guitar smokers in Texas, and Simmons Allison can be counted among that number.

His driving style of blues rock and downhome funk, is all Simmons Allison. But he has been heavily influenced by such guitar stylists as Robin Trower, Eric Johnson, and the late Chris Holzhaus.

"I loved Chris," Allison said. "And I considered it an honor to play at the tribute show for him at Sam's Burger Joint following his death. Chris has influenced a number of guitar players, whether they like to admit it or not."

"I'm proud to say that he gave me some extra attention when I really needed it."

Allison was shot last March 8, when two robbers entered the Sea Island restaurant at closing time.

"They demanded the money, which I handed over to them," he said.

"Then, after both had left the restaurant, one of them came back in and shoved a gun in my face, demanding my car keys. I was just too much. I hit him in the face with all I had. It laid him out cold, but I didn't see his partner coming back in with a gun. The second one shot me in the leg, just above my knee."

Police eventually corralled both of the dirt bags who perpetrated the robbery, but Allison's troubles had only begun.

"I went through two serious surgeries," Allison said. "The bullet shattered my leg, and I'm walking around today with a titanium rod which reaches from my knee to my hip. But I'm doing okay, and, like I said, I'm damn lucky to be alive today."

But Allison comes with a solid set of credentials. He has worked the Texas music scene for more than 20 years, and has opened for such major acts as Pat Travers, Night Ranger, Edgar Winter, and Robin Trower.

While Allison doesn't have a show booked for the month of December, he is planning something for January.

"We will post it on the website," Allison said. "And I urge anyone interested in our group to check out the website. It's simmonshallison.com."

All-female cont'd

Newton-John at Chicago's Soldier Field.

The other four members of the musical's cast are no strangers to San Antonians of the stage show musical persuasion, and the voices of all five members of Simply The Best are both trained and true.

In addition to Conroy, the five-woman singing group included Alisa Clarity, Cassandra Small, Delores Walker, and Sonya Yamin.

Alisa Nise Clarity was in Once On This Island, Ain't Misbehaving, and Music For The Soul where she won an A.T.A.C. award for the best supporting actress.

Clarity has worked all local theater venues, as well as The Apollo. A two-time winner of the Sammy Davis Jr., and she has been praised all around.

She sings in a San Antonio gospel group known as The Message, along with fellow Simply The Best members Delores Walker and Cassandra Small. And Clarity is co-owner of Best of Both Worlds Studios with Sonya Yamin, who also serves as her voice coach.

Cassandra Small has appeared in feature film, TV commercials, and all sorts of local theater productions. Her role as Mama Lena Younger in The Renaissance Guild's Raisin In The Sun earned her an Award for excellence lead actress in a 2006 drama.

Delores Walker has worked in shows and musical productions ranging from Giffted and Black to Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, and she is a former winner of the A.T.A.C. Globe Award for best lead actress in a musical. Delores is a member of the Keller Williams Realty Heritage team.

Sonya Yamin received her formal voice training at the University of Texas in San Antonio under Linda Poetschke, and she has been praised all over since.

She works as a private voice tutor in Reagan High School, Johnson High School, and East Central High School, and as previously mentioned, she co-owns the Best of Both Worlds local training studio along with Alisa Clarity.

Sonya is first soprano for the internationally-acclaimed classical historical musical ensemble SAVAE. This group has been heard on the soundtracks of a major Hollywood Release, The Kingdom of Heaven, and SAVAE has scored on Billboard's World Classical charts.

With SAVAE, Yamin has toured the United Stages, from New York to Seattle.

Those who bought tickets to Simply The Best got more than their money's worth of female vocals.

There were two acts with one intermission. According to the program, Act 1 featured 25 songs, while 23 numbers were listed for Act 2.

Material included a wide selection of popular songs. Cover material came from such original artists as The Supremes, Gladys Knight and The Pips, Gloria Estefan, Etta James, Tina Turner, Cher, Bonnie Raitt, Linda Ronstadt, Madonna, and many more.

The weekend fare includes shows at 8:15 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, and at 2:30 p.m. on Sundays. For ticket information, call the Josephine Theater at (210) 734-4846.
DECEMBER BANDS

Fri. 5th • Fuze
Sat. 6th • 4 Count
Fri. 12th • Texas Radio
Sat. 13th • Iron 60
Fri. 19th • Mad Wagon
Sat. 20th • MTO
Fri. 26th • Prototype
Sat. 27th • Spitfire
Tue. 30th • Toman Bros.

Cindy’s Birthday

Tuesday Dec. 30th Cindy’s Birthday Party
With Toman Brothers 6-10
Come by and say “Happy Birthday” to Cindy
Good Fun, Good Food & Real Good Friends
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for the month of December!

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from

Kirk’s Drum

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