

Aggielife Sponge

Band soaks up small-show energy on college tour

By Michael Landauer
THE BATTALION

Don't tell them they've had a quick start. "I think the last word I would use is 'quickly,'" Mike Cross, Sponge guitarist said. "As far as history, we've been together a long time. We're no spring chickens."

Sponge released *Rotting Pinata* last year and has been gaining momentum as an up-and-coming alternative band ever since. It toured with Live, and before jumping on the Candlebox tour that will take it into the holiday season, Sponge is stopping at Wolf Pen Creek Amphitheater Saturday as part of a college tour.

The band members grew up in working-class neighborhoods in Detroit, Mich., where they trounced around the local club scene in several variations of what eventually became Sponge.

Besides impressive sales of the band's debut single / MTV Buzz Clip "Plowed," Sponge landed gigs on *The Late Show with David Letterman* — which Cross calls, "a definite milestone" — and *The Jon Stewart Show*. *Rotting Pinata* reached gold-record status five months ago and is soaring toward platinum.

But Cross sees the band reaching success through its stable road presence.

"We're happy with [the album], but at the same time, we've toured the United States six times already," he said.

Although Cross said the band has stayed focused on finding success, he said the music business has thrown several obstacles in its way.

"We've always done things in order to be successful," he said, "but unfortunately, we've had people around us who've based their decisions on failure. Right now, we're surrounded by a great group of people."

No matter who surrounds the band, Cross said the driving force behind its sound is the creative energy that comes from Vinnie, Sponge's lead singer and primary songwriter. With Vinnie and Sponge's other guitarist, Joey Mazzola in the creative mix, Cross said the group has been able to grow as a band.

"I just think the chemistry between the three of us in writing songs happens kinda naturally," he said. "You're going to see some growth with our next record."

But Cross said the band members' minds are on their current college tour, which he says gives the band a nice break from touring with bigger shows.

"We were able to do some smaller clubs on this college tour, which I think is important," he said.

Since the band originated from the small club scene in Detroit, Cross said that having the crowd close to the stage helps raise the performances' energy.

There has been talk of covering the moat that separates the crowd from the stage at Wolf Pen Creek Amphitheater. Cross said covering the moat would make the show seem more like a club concert.

"One of the things that we miss is that the fans can't get close to the stage," he said. "It's creating the energy together instead of us playing for you."

Given the amount of touring Sponge has done, fans might expect a Sponge concert to be routine. But Cross said the band mixes things up to keep it interesting for themselves and the audience.

"We don't subscribe to the style of just showing up and playing," he said. "We know you're there to be entertained."

Cross said the shows are what make the struggles in the music industry worth it.

"If we didn't have that 75 minutes up on stage, it would probably suck," he said.



A family man England performs at D&D as part of concert series

By Jan Higginbotham
THE BATTALION

Life in the spotlight can be difficult for performers, but country singer Ty England has adjusted to the good life that has come with his recent success.

"I was always one of those guys that loved to dream," England said. "I never really believed that my dreams of making it in the music industry would come true. Now, I feel like I'm spoiled rotten."

England is performing at Denim & Diamonds tonight as part of the club's Friday Night Concert Series.

Although England only recently started his solo career, country music listeners have been familiar with his work for several years. England's career started in 1988 when he joined the band of his college roommate, Garth Brooks.

Brooks and England met at Oklahoma State University, and together, they dreamt of making it big in the music industry.

When Brooks signed a record deal, he immediately called England and asked him to join his band. England sang harmonies and played acoustic guitar for Brooks as he rose to the top of the country charts, but England said he never lost sight of his dream to launch a solo career.

"It was decided before I ever went to Nashville to be Garth's sideman that I would eventually launch my own career," England said. "It was just a matter of waiting for the right time to do it."

England said he learned a lot from Brooks and his ideas about making music.

"I learned about the shows and how to treat people," he said. "He always made sure that the fans were content, and that's what I try to do."

England's self-titled debut album in-



Ty England will be performing tonight at Denim & Diamonds as part of the club's Friday Night Concert Series.

cludes his first single, "Should've Asked Her Faster," which skyrocketed up the country charts.

"When we picked 'Should've Asked Her Faster,' I knew it was right for me because I am that guy in the song," he said. "I was the guy who would plot whole school years around asking a girl out."

England finally overcame his shyness when he met his wife, Shanna. He said the worst thing about his career is the limit on the amount of time he gets to spend with his family. The couple has a 5-year-old daughter, Aspen, and a 2-year-old son, Tyler.

"I'm on the road all the time — it's what I do," he said. "But that's all they've ever known. It's hard because I miss the everyday things. I'm spoiled that I can actually take them out on the road sometimes."

England said his goals for the future are simple.

"I hope to keep making music and touching people with my music as long as I live," he said. "I don't expect any gold records. I'm just trying to make music that touches me. 'Simple music from the heart — music that I've lived, felt or needed to hear. That's what it's all about.'"

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Publisher calls Stern's humor tasteless

NEW YORK (AP) — Howard Stern has gone too far this time — too far even for one of his biggest promoters.

Stern's editor, Judith Regan, nixed two doctored O.J. Simpson photos from Stern's new book — including one of Simpson supposedly instructing the shock jock on how to slash the throat of Stern's wife — as "beyond tasteless."

Regan let one in: Stern's wife, Alison, her neck slashed, her body being run through a meat grinder by Stern as Simpson gives a thumbs-up.

Regan said in Thursday's Daily News that the meat grinder photo did not offend her because it was a parody of militant, feminist anti-pornography pictures.

Regan runs her own book imprint, Regan Books, for Harper-Collins. She edited Stern's hugely successful first book, *Private Parts*.

Sagan emerges from disorder treatment

ITHACA, N.Y. (AP) — He's thinner, and he has a little less hair, but Carl Sagan's sonorous voice is still unmistakable.

The 60-year-old Cornell University astronomy professor spoke to a group of new Americans at a naturalization ceremony at a courthouse Wednesday. It was one of his first appearances since undergoing treatment for a rare bone disease

over the summer. Doctors said Sagan's recovery has been strong.

During his 20-minute address, he made no mention of his health. He challenged the immigrants to keep their heritage while respecting American ideals.

The astrophysicist and author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Dragons of Eden* has cut down on his teaching schedule and public appearances.

Marshall sues Smith's lawyers for slander

HOUSTON (AP) — Pierce Marshall, whose rich, 90-year-old father married 26-year-old model Anna Nicole Smith, has filed a lawsuit accusing her lawyers of slandering him.

The Aug. 4 death of Howard Marshall set off a court fight by the widow to claim half of the income he earned during their 14-month marriage.

Pierce Marshall is demanding unspecified damages for harm to his reputation he says was inflicted by Ms. Smith's lawyers, Diana Marshall and Suzanne Kornblit. Ms. Kornblit was said to have characterized the younger Marshall in the media as "greedy and miserly" and "a real control freak."

The lawyers denied smearing the younger Marshall.

The lawsuit suggests that Ms. Smith's lawyers were using the news media as a tool to get a quick piece of the Marshall estate, which has been estimated at \$300 million to \$700 million.

U 2

CAN LIVE & WORK ABROAD

Five weeks with a host family and an internship in a field related to your major!

GERMANY! ENGLAND! DOMINICAN REPUBLIC!

Let the MSC L.T. Jordan Institute help you make it happen!

Applications available NOW in the L.T. Jordan Institute, Room 223I MSC, 845-8770

Informational Meeting:
Monday, Oct. 23, at 5:30 p.m. 402 Rudder
Wednesday, Nov. 1, at 8:30 p.m. 402 Rudder

Persons with disabilities please call 845-8770 for special assistance

The Memorial Student Center
Presents

SATANIC ACTIVITY ON CAMPUS
Are You At Risk?

A discussion of different cults and their activities on college campuses featuring Ronald Loomis, co-author of *Cults on Campus* and former guest on NBC's Today Show

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1995
7 P.M. RUDDER 601

sponsored by: **MSC GREAT ISSUES**

Persons with disabilities please call 845-1515 to inform us of your special needs. We request notification three (3) working days prior to the event to enable us to assist you to the best of our abilities.

Take Kaplan and get a higher score...

...or your money back!*

We have the great teachers and powerful test-taking strategies you need.

get a higher score
1-800-KAP-TEST
KAPLAN

E-mail: info@kaplan.com America Online: keyword "Kaplan"
Internet home page: http://www.kaplan.com

*Offer limited to selected locations and test dates. Restrictions apply. Call for details.