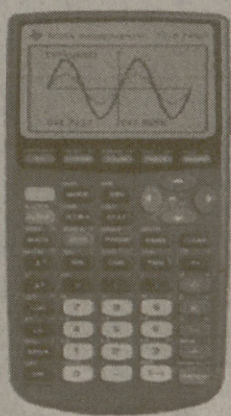


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Page 4

THE BATTALION

Tuesday, September 25, 2001

Open your mouth and say ahhhhhhhhhhhh

Word is spreading that Cowboy Mouth
is an energy-packed band

By JOHN SALERNO
THE BATTALION

"We are all there for the same thing, and that's 90 minutes of pure enjoyment."

So said John Thomas Griffith, the lead guitarist for Cowboy Mouth, about the band's and the audience's relationship during its live shows. Cowboy Mouth is a band that puts special emphasis on live concerts, relying on the raw energy of the performance to penetrate its audience.

"When people see us enjoying that 90 minutes, I think it rubs off on the audience, and I think they get it," Griffith said. "They see the pure pleasure and the joy in our faces, so they go, 'Wow, these guys actually like what they do.'"

And what, exactly, is Cowboy Mouth trying to do? One might ask that of any band and get some sort of generic response, but Griffith appeals to a specific monologue from the play "Cowboy Mouth" by Sam Shepard and Patti Smith, where the band takes its name, to describe its goal.

"We're trying to live out that monologue, where the girl tells this wannabe rock-star guy that in order for him to be a rock star, he needs to take the broken pieces and the suffering and the frustrations of people's lives and spit them back in a song or in a way that even the lowest common denominator can relate to," Griffith said. "She says he needs to be a rock 'n' roll Jesus with a cowboy mouth," and I think we epitomize that line with the fact that (drummer) Fred (LeBlanc) comes off almost like a revival-

ist preacher, and at the same time, we're singing songs about just common plagues of everyday life."

Cowboy Mouth began its latest tour Saturday in Louisiana, home to several of the band's members and will continue touring almost exclusively in the South until mid-November.

"That's where our strongest following is," Griffith said. "It's where we started out, and there's always been an affinity for the southeast with Cowboy Mouth and its members. We love the South."

Cowboy Mouth will make a stop in College Station, but it will not be the band's first appearance in town. The band played at Northgate last year.

"We have a really good friend in Bryan Texas," Griffith said. "He's a promoter in town and he's been bringing us to College Station since 1993 or so, where we first used to play Third Floor Cantina. He dug us enough that he said he'd do what he could to get us there. The first couple of times we played in College Station, there probably were 50 people, maybe 100 at the most."

But now the band enjoys a larger audience. Hurricane Harry's offers an ideal setting for the type of show it likes to perform.

"Most of the venues we play are about [Hurricane Harry's] size, and that's perfect for us because we have that intimacy with the front row as well as 30 rows back. We do enjoy playing large arenas, but there's something about that 2,000-3,000-seat capacity that is really special."



PHOTO BY KATE STEVENS

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