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Birthday Bash

"The Edge" turns 12, Mayfest arrives and the live music scene gets hot with summer coming

BY GARY HIZER

It's hard to believe, but The Edge is turning 12 this year. Yes, it's been a dozen years since Shamrock Communications launched the station under its current format -- and it's the only modern or alternative rock station left standing.

Stop and think about that for a minute: the only one left standing. 101.5FM has turned over multiple times and Rock 102.3 flipped formats and turned into "Spirit" 102.3 about a year ago, and that's just what I can remember from the past five years or so. If you look back to 1995, I'm sure there have been more that were launched, only to fall out of the sky and turn into a country station or something.

Of course there's still KMOD, but does that really count? Sure, if I tune into 97.5 I might hear the latest Nickelback or Hinder single, maybe even some Chili Peppers, but I may also have to sit through "Stairway to Heaven," "Aqualung" or "Roundabout" before I hear anything released in the past year.

Twelve years and running has got to count for something, right? I'd like to think so. And since The Edge is our only remaining modern rock station, I'm even willing to put up with the snotty, pre-teen attitude that occasionally flairs up. (Wait a minute -- I'm starting to confuse home and radio. My apologies...)

So what's our favorite way to celebrate a birthday? Throw a party, of course! And if it's The Edge, there's got to be a good band or two (or three), right? Thus explains "The Edge Birthday Bash" at the Cain's Ballroom this Saturday night, May 19.

The station has invited a couple of old friends to come out and play a birthday gig and even convinced one group to come out of hiding for the special occasion. As such, the Birthday Bash features local favorites Failsafe and RadioRadio, as well as the return of Gravity Kills.

What's that, you say? You haven't heard from Gravity Kills lately? You're not alone. After landing a single on a St. Louis radio station compilation in 1994 and scoring a regional hit, the band signed on with TVT Records and released its debut in March of 1996.

That ended up being a big year for the band, as the tour for the band's self-titled disc eventually landed them an opening slot for the Sex Pistols stateside reunion tour. Probably less significant to the band, but more important to us, Gravity Kills was also tapped to play The Edge's 1st Birthday Bash as the band was starting to break out.

After releasing two more albums and a remix CD, continuing to tour and surviving a label change, the band finally dissolved in 2003.

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Since then the band has only gotten back together twice, and both of those shows were in St. Louis at a self-created Halloween mini-festival called "The Killoween Freakshow." Another anticipated appearance at Killoween '07 is anticipated, but a St. Louis show doesn't benefit the band's Tulsa fan base.

That makes The Edge birthday show the lone reunion show outside of St. Louis and it gives lead singer Jeff Scheel, who now works for Box Talent in Oklahoma City, an almost hometown crowd to play to.

With the Birthday Bash close at hand, I've noticed The Edge playing a lot of songs, especially during the afternoon, that were in heavy rotation as the station established itself as one of the first in Tulsa with an alt-rock format. That makes it even cooler to see Gravity Kills make a special appearance as they were definitely a staple act in The Edge's early playlists.

"The cool thing," said The Edge's Ryan Giles, "is that we got a band back together that had some pretty big success in the '90s. And it's not every day that you can catch a Gravity Kills show."

With any luck, this may be a sneak preview of next year's Birthday Bash as well. Although not many people have heard much from him lately, Jeff Scheel's not out of the music game completely. He's reportedly got a new project, named Star 13, under wraps and working in the studio for a potential late 2007 or early 2008 release. Could we see Scheel on stage with his new band next year? It's too early to tell, but something that I'll be looking forward to, nonetheless.

Of course it wouldn't seem right to have an Edge show without a true hometown band on the bill. After all, The Edge is still the lone commercial bastion for local music on the radio, and with that in mind they've invited Failsafe and RadioRadio to the party as well. Both bands are admittedly staples on The Edge's Homegroan show on Sunday nights and have also landed songs in the regular daily rotation.

Everyone should be well aware of RadioRadio by now. The band has graced the cover of Urban Tulsa, was a headliner on this year's NewVo concert series and appeared at the "Night for Jan" benefit concert a couple of weeks ago. In fact, the band even wrote and performed a new song, "Bed Check (Beaming Love)," for the show and donated all money from the limited-run CD-single sales to Jan's medical fund.

Failsafe has been fairly quiet on the local concert scene as of late, but the band is ready to light up the crowd again on Saturday. Both "Delete the Dream" and "Return to Lust" saw some major airplay on Homegroan and even crossed over into Amber's "Unauthorized Airplay" show on weeknights.

After a busy year of touring in 2006, Failsafe is getting recharged and writing new material in anticipation of heading back to Florida to begin recording again with Jason Seucof at the helm. Before they start the recording process, though, Jake and the boys will make sure that the event is as much a party as a concert.

The Edge Birthday Bash is this Saturday night, May 19, at the Cain's Ballroom. Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$22 at the show and doors open at 7pm. Make sure to stop in and wish the crew a "Happy Birthday" -- presents are optional.

Weekly Festival Update

Summer is growing ever nearer and the fact that Mayfest is finally here, hot on the heels of last weekend's Bixby BBQ & Blues Fest, is a telltale sign that the heat is on!

I know Holly did already covered the festival in her preview (see page 17), but I might as well hit a few of the musical highlights while I'm thinking about it.

This year's headline acts have moved back to the "green" between the Crowne Plaza and PAC, making it a little easier to relax in front of the stage. Thursday night's main act is country artist Andy Griggs at 9pm, with Sand Springs native Brandon Jenkins opening at 7pm and on Friday night, Mississippi's Steve Azar rings a blend of delta blues and country to the festival with Don White and the [Pendleton Family Fiddlers opening](#). Finally, Tulsa's own Wayman Tisdale takes over the stage on the Green at 10pm, Saturday 19, after Walt Johnson, Jeff Shadley and Eldredge Jackson kickoff the evening.

There are also two additional stages for music: the Bartlett Square stage at 5th and Main and the David Cameron Community Stage at 4th and Boston.

Thursday night (May 17) highlights include Brian Parton on the Bartlett square Stage at 8pm, Sam & the Stylees on the Cameron Stage at 8:15pm, and Crooked X at Bartlett Square at 9:30pm.

The Mayfest line up for Friday night, May 18, is strong for both stages with Susan Herndon, My Tea Kind and Larkin at Bartlett Square and Calling Matthew, MWK, Stevedore and RadioRadio at 4th and Boston.

May 19 highlights include Cairde Na Gael in an afternoon slot at Bartlett Square, Travis Kidd and Harmonious Monk playing the Cameron Stage on Saturday evening, and Red Alert and The Effects finishing the night on the Bartlett Square stage.

Finally, Sunday highlights include pop singer Shannon Thomas on the Cameron Stage at 1pm and Gordie and Zoe's drum circle to close out the festival on Bartlett Square at 4pm. A full schedule, including all artists and performance times can be found at <http://www.tulsaamayfest.org/>.

Aside from Mayfest, there are plenty of other shows going on in town this weekend.

Thursday night's biggest show is easily Shooter Jennings at the Cain's Ballroom with Scott H. Biram and A.D.D. opening the evening. Yes, he's the son of Jessi Colter and country legend Waylon Jennings and he's the epitome of modern outlaw country: all whiskey, weed and hell-raising. Papa would definitely be proud. If you're a fan of the classic outlaws (Waylon, Willie, Haggard) or the new breed (Ragweed, Boland, Hank III, Drive By Truckers) you won't want to miss this show. Tickets are \$20 at the door.

It must be a weekend for birthdays, because Kenny Sheets' "Birthday Bash" is Thursday night, May 17, at Mooch and Burn with Amplified Heat, From Austin and 40 Minutes of Hell. Meanwhile, KTSO (94.1FM, The Sound) is sponsoring a free show at the Riverwalk Crossing with Wendy Nichols on Thursday night.

Also on Thursday night, Brian Haas and Reed Mathis are out stirring up trouble again, this time at Vintage 1740. This time, they're mixing it up by changing instruments as Reed lets loose with his guitar skills and Brian takes over bass duties while Josh Raymer lays down the beat. Expect some Nick Drake, David Byrne and Flaming Lips to find their way into the set next to some Duke Ellington and wait to see what comes of the evening's experiment.

Friday is by far the busiest night of the week with a variety of shows around town. Free shows include Edinberg with Tigereye Lily and Waiting on One at the Riverwalk Crossing, Bad Ghost with GHOSTS at Under the Mooch (the record store at 14th and Harvard), and Boys In Charge, Callupsie and Luxury Flats at the Soundpony.

Born in the Bayou

The Cherokee Casino Summer Concert Series starts the season early with Creedence Clearwater Revisited at Will Rogers Down on Friday, May 18. No Fogerty brothers, folks, but you've got the other two founding members: Stu Cook and Doug "Cosmo" Clifford hammering out your favorite CCR tunes. Tickets are \$25, \$30 and \$50 with gates opening at 6pm for the 7pm show.

The "Juggalos" will be rejoicing on Friday night as well, as Insane Clown Posse returns to the Cain's with Twizted opening the show. Tickets are \$34.50 in advance or \$36.75 at the door.

One of the best shows in town on Friday night, however, at least for hard rock fans, will be The Showdown with Showbread and Chasing Victory at The Otherside. Doors open at 6:30 and Luciano Outfit opens the show at 7pm. The Showdown is looking forward to a big summer, including a string of dates on the Ozzfest Tour, and Chasing Victory's new disc, Fiends, just came out a couple of weeks ago, so this is a great time to see the bands at a low price. Tickets are \$12 at the door or in advance at Vintage Stock.

On Saturday night, if you aren't taking in the aforementioned Gravity Kills show or hanging at Mayfest, you can get your music fix with Congress of a Crow and 2AM at Boston's. Billy Joe Winghead will also be at Mercury Lounge, throwing down a psychobilly freak-out on May 19. Of course, cover is \$5 for each.

If you're hanging out downtown, you can get your funk on with Full Flava Kings at The Continental or stop in for the revelry with Larkin at McNellie's, where they've ALWAYS got Guinness on tap.

Break out your white belts and eyeliner, kids! On Monday night, May 21, The Pinkeye has very cool package show for emo fans with Alesana, A Day To Remember, Dance Gavin Dance, Pierce The Veil, The Forward and Donatello's Secret. Doors open at 6pm and the show starts at 6:30pm with an \$8 cover. You never know -- you might even see me in the pit!

Finally, what could potentially be the best show of the week (for those in the know) nearly slipped by without notice.

Next Wednesday night, May 23, ambient/techno/jam/trip-hop/freak-out duo EOTO stops in at Boston's for a show that's worth keeping an eye (and ear) out for. The group is an offshoot from String Cheese Incident, with SCI percussionist Jason Hann taking on live drumming duties and Michael Travis (normally a drummer) takes over on guitar, bass, keyboards and live mixing.

Basically, it's all an exercise in live looping and improvisational mixing, so it all ends up an even bigger dance party than the second set at a String Cheese show. Be sure to check it out if you're into improvisational and/or house music.

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