

[Home](#)

[Current Issue  
\(Winter/Spring 2008\)](#)

[Autumn 2007](#)

[Summer 2007](#)

[Spring 2007](#)

[Winter 2007](#)

[Autumn 2006](#)

[Summer 2006](#)

[Spring 2006](#)

[Winter 2006](#)

[Fall 2005](#)

[Summer 2005](#)

[Editor's Note](#)

[Guidelines](#)

[SNR's Writers](#)

[Contact](#)



### ***Demolition Derby***

Nine-year-old Emily from Charlton, MA began singing the National Anthem as I said to myself over and over, "Please forget the words," and imagined the crowd breaking into boos and chants of "You suck!" This was the beginning of my experience at the Memorial Day Demolition Derby at Thompson International Speedway in Thompson, CT.

The show began with cunning stunts involving motorcycles: wheelies, riding sidesaddle and "sick burnouts!" as the announcer, some Boston meathead, kept shouting.

"I know you like burnouts!"

"Who wants to see some sick burnouts?"

Hey, you know what? Burnouts stink! Enough with the burnouts! And enough with "the Chainsaw," which looks like a Three Stooges routine. The meathead described the action as "mayhem," and used terms like "in the house" and "shout out" way too frequently, and actually said the following two lines:

"Oh, my God! What are we doin'?"

and

"You guys can't ask for more trouble than this!"

No, we can't. Not if we know what's good for us.

The stars were out at Thompson with "The Maine Maniac," Crash Moreau (I don't know either) driving a school bus over a ramp and catching fire. So that was tragic. Another big attraction was the Falcon Extreme Off-Road Warriors, or adults on tiny bikes.

Paul Sender, labeled, "arguably the fastest man in the world (I guess, if you really like to argue pointlessly.)," cut his big interview short to run and take a crap in a port-a-john. The outhouse exploded and Sender proceeded to drive the "jet-powered outhouse" around the track.

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"I guess he did have a taco," the announcer said. LOL!

Another announcer, or perhaps a "character" done by the previous announcer, was Bucky Thunder, the Wonder from Down Under, who sounded like Rowdy Roddy Piper circa 1986 combined, inexplicably, with a Southern accent. His schtick is to call everything and everyone, "CRAZY!"

Next were the school buses, painted by children from Connecticut and Massachusetts. First was the Wonder Bread bus, built on their dreams of a cracker utopia, the little racist bastards. Conversely, there was the Jungle Bus (oh-e-oh-e-oh) and the Snoopy Bus, or, as I heard it, "The Charlie Brown and Penis Bus." There were three other buses, but who cares, really?

"Kids," an announcer said, "Did you come to see total demolition of a school bus?"

No, jackass, they came to see *partial* demolition of a school bus.

Sure, painting these buses was probably fun for the kids, but it sort of ruins the idea of a school bus being destroyed later. And, really, the little darlings, you almost don't want to see their masterpieces torn apart. Alas, as the Peanuts bus' entire rear was ripped off, and the Wonder Bread bus tipped over, the winner of it all was the Jungle Bus (oh-e-oh-e-oh).

During this portion they also trotted out an old bus from 1946 from a school called the "Orient Consolidated School." My only guess is that it was a school for kids who were in internment camps during WWII.

They then announced, "We're gonna bring the quads out here!"

I thought it was a wheelchair race. I mean, come on, "You can't ask for more trouble than this!" Alas, they were just four-wheelers. There was also a moment of silence for a quad racer who died recently. Why couldn't we be at *that* race? During this moment the quads were driving around the track very slowly, as the crowd shouted, "This race sucks!"

I spent the quad race picturing Mr. Magoo somehow landing on the track and racing with the li'l four-wheelers.

After this, they brought out the bikes again, "Yay! I wanna see a somersault, pussies!"

This was followed by a jet-powered beer delivery truck. I think an ice cream truck or the Oscar Meyer Weiner Mobile would have been more fun, and more appropriate, for the kids.

Finally, came more of every little boy's wet dream, the demolition derby, which is ridiculously fun in a pro-wrestling meets NASCAR kind of way. And, like in NASCAR, you can't help but notice two things at a demolition derby: a lot of mullets and very few, if any, minorities.

We sat next to the hero at the event who screams, "Get the hoses," whenever a car catches fire. I hate him. Interestingly, the car causing the most damage was the police car. I thought he was supposed to protect and serve. I could hear Al Pacino in the crowd, shouting, "You son of a bitch! You're supposed to stand for something! You're supposed to protect people! But instead you rape and murder them!"\*

They cooled us off in between the carnage with fireworks set to songs with "America" or "U.S.A." in the title: "American Woman," "American Girl," "Born in the U.S.A." Ecch.

The final act was the Trailer Trash Race, introduced by Buffy, the Trailer Trash Queen. Trailers were wrecked all over the place, and everyone went home happy, especially those who saw the \$350,000 limo (One of only two in the world...did you just shit yourselves?), and keyed the fucker while walking to the parking lot.

Which brings me to the oodles of fun that comes with hundreds of people who just watched a

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demolition derby going to their cars in the parking lot and having to get the hell out. There is a giant ditch in the middle of the field Thompson calls a parking lot and two Jeeps fell into it, the second one almost on a dare. As we left, my wife and I in one car, our companions for the evening in another, she said to me, "Should I psych him out and go that way?" pointing towards the ditch.

"No," I said. "For all we know there's a force that pulls you in it."

Yes, demolition derbies are rather cool.

\*from the Norman Jewison film ...*And Justice for All*

### ***A Concert Review (Sorta. Okay, Not Really. Not at All)***

This "review" is so-titled because the show in question, Dear Leader at the Paradise in Boston on 11/18/05, was fantastic. These guys rock. I had never seen Dear Leader live, nor did I know any of their songs. I would have never have even heard of them or gone to this show if not for my sister's total devotion to the band.

Before I saw that Dear Leader kicks ass live, I couldn't help but be struck by the mix of appearances. Lead singer Aaron Perrino has, as they say in the business, "some set of pipes." He also looks like Drew Carey and Buddy Holly, with a touch of Starkweather and Gacy. You wouldn't expect someone of that description to also be slightly effeminate, but, there you go. Drummer Paul Buckley (with Perrino, former members of The Sheila Divine) rocks on the drums. Think Jon Faverau with a beard and ten years older. Or Earthquake from the WWF in the early nineties. Bassist Jon Sulchow looks like Tiny Tim or Howard Stern circa 1972. Lead guitarist Will Claflin is clearly the baby of the group, looking like the "Dude" from the Dell commercials.

If you ever get a chance to go to a show by a band you know nothing about, but that has a decent number of loyal fans, go. Run, don't walk. Even if, as in this case, the band is very good, watching the diehard fans can be hilarious.

There was a group of four frat boy-looking guys in front of us. It was this one tall, young, strapping fella that had my attention. Once Dear Leader took the stage, this lad and his friends were psyched. The tall frat guy started by rocking left to right continuously, as if he either had to really take a piss or he was about to leap onto the stage and cut the lead singer's throat. He then began moving his head in a style that can only be compared to a chicken. Finally he performed some kind of movement that could have easily lead to a performance of The Riverdance.

The other gentleman I watched was absolutely adorable. He looked a little like Danny DeVito or Shrek, but mostly like Ian Gomez's character on the television show *Felicity*. He stood clutching his jacket and bottle of water, all smiling and happy. It was like watching a dog seeing his master walking up the driveway. You couldn't help but want to give him a big hug. He may be the drummer's boyfriend for all I know.

I don't know which was more enjoyable: watching the fans air drumming, pumping their fists and raising their beer bottles in "Cheers" or watching the band themselves, especially the part when Claflin did Pete Townsend's windmill strum, making the tall frat guy cum in his pants.

Either way it was an enjoyable show, even when smoke began filling the stage (Usually, I run. You never know when they're going to start pumping tear gas into the place.).

Now I must say, after all I've written here, you should have seen me at any of the Juliana Hatfield shows I've been to, practically drooling at the goddess before me and wanting to scream at fellow attendees, "She's mine!"

Or me the Saturday night before at the very last show of hair band cover group M-80 in Worcester. This was much worse because it's just four guys playing all cover songs, dressed completely in the role as Poison and Motley Crue did back in the day. No record deal; they

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even have day jobs. But when they played Quiet Riot's "Bang Your Head" or Cheap Trick's "Surrender" I, and the rest of the crowd, went nuts.

Anyway, I guess what I'm saying is, we're all tools at concerts. Unless it's a symphony. That's usually somewhat dignified.

### ***Elephant Dancing on the Graves of Squealing Mice\****

John McEnroe is the man. My sister and I went to Champions Cup Boston, which was actually in Sudbury, last weekend, and, though he would later lose the cup to Todd Martin, he's an intimidating motherfucker, and he's the man.

Watching McEnroe live is kind of like being in a high school class with a really mean, strict, Nazi teacher, and you know if you make a sound he or she will scream at you and either send you to the principal's office or knock you unconscious with a globe. You sit there and you don't make a move or a sound. Because when Mac suffers servus interruptus, you're dead. Yet, at the Champions Cup, fans kept their cell phones on. Are you crazy? Mac will stick that phone in your ass! Someone actually brought a baby to the matches. What the fuck! Are you insane? Mac is gonna eat your child!

While most of the attendees, I'm sure, sat fearful of experiencing McEnroe's wrath, we all wanted to see a classic Mac tantrum. Finally, in the second set, and with set point on the line, the umpire ruled in favor of McEnroe's opponent Goran Ivanisevic, and Mac went ballistic, even making a "What country are you from" comment to the ump. Then, after losing the second set, Mac threw his racket to the ground in anger. Price of admission worthed (?). Everyone could leave happy, especially my sister, who walked away with one of Mac's sweaty towels and one of the tennis balls used during the match thanks to her brother's barehanded catching ability.

Next to McEnroe, the highlight of the day might just have been the announcer. From the moment he said, "Hey, Boston!" and everyone sat, staring at him and answering like Butt-head, "Uhhh...Boston's, like, a bunch of miles that way." An event sounds more important when you say it's in a major city. I've been to events in Worcester, the second-major city in Massachusetts, forty miles west of Boston, and they'll say, "Hello, Boston!"

Mr. Announcer would come out before each match holding a racket as everyone wondered what exactly he's going to do with it. Perhaps go into some air/racket guitar? The best announcer moment came when he killed time asking the crowd questions:

How many of you are tennis players? (applause)

How many of you are good? (applause)

How many of you are crummy? (applause)

How many husbands beat their wives?

Uhhh...what? I know what he meant, but, holy shit, what an awful way to put it! He must have realized how it came out because he immediately followed with, "How many wives beat their husbands?"

The other funny thing, to me anyway, was his introduction of Reggie Bush, last year's Heisman Trophy winner and second overall pick in the NFL draft by the New Orleans Saints. Announcer fella pointed to the balcony and said, "See the guy in the white sweater drinking the beer?" I know the answer is something along the lines of "because of political correctness," but why not just say, "See the black gentleman up there?" There weren't very many there after all.

Anyhoo, the big attraction for my sister, and many of the other women in attendance, was Jim Courier. The scruffy-headed ginger is a hit with all the chicks, making him the tennis equivalent of Shaft. One particularly annoying Latina and the cougar\*\* with the bad nose job sitting next to us during the match, battled to get noticed by Courier, the Latina winning with her constant,

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“Come on, Jiiiiim.” The cougar whore, however, was of the most annoyance to us as she literally gasped whenever the toussele-haired Courier lost a point.

Live tennis is quite enjoyable, but I hate that they never let anyone keep the balls when they go into the crowd. Cheap motherfuckers, you end up giving them away anyway. And I know I’m not the first to bring this up, but why do fans have to be hushed in tennis and golf matches? Baseball players hit a ball coming at them at over ninety miles an hour with fifty thousand people screaming.

And if you ever get curious and want to research why the scoring in tennis is the way it is, don’t. The answers are predictably ridiculous. You will move on and wonder why you cared in the first place.

I became fascinated with the “ball kids,” the young boys and girls who chase after the balls, a job described by the son of the cougar sitting beside us as “the worst job.” This fucking kid needs to clean a bathroom just once. Worst job? It’s better than the job I had at that age: paperboy. And that was a fucking cakewalk. Worst thing that happens is you take one in the nuts.

These kids run full speed before and after they snatch the balls, and I couldn’t help imagine them running straight into the wall, then wonder how many cougars would blow a ball boy to meet Jim Courier.

A fucking tennis crowd can be just as hilarious and annoying as a NASCAR crowd. My sister referred to them as “Yuppies,” then hopped into her DeLorean back to 1985 when that term was actually used.

Ooh, another funny happening, an overweight female line judge kept standing in front of a camera with her hands on her knees, ass directly on camera. She would move and then move back. Finally, I think the camera actually started following her.

So I quite enjoyed myself. I was initially bummed that the round-robin tournament was a sausage fest, wishing that I were sitting courtside for Anna Kournikova vs. Maria Sharapova, but seeing McEnroe, Courier, Ivanisevic, and Martin made for a swell time. There was plenty of great music during timeouts, which made me think actually. Why don’t we, as a nation, even a planet, ban that damn Gary Glitter song. The man’s a pedophile and the song sucks. Fuck “Rock & Roll, Pt. 2!” And fuck Gary Glitter! I went to see that fucking Mariah Carey movie thinking it was his biopic. I want my money back!

Also, with the King of Pop’s long recording history, “Rock & Roll, Pt. 2” isn’t nearly even in the top ten among songs by pedophiles. By the way, I wonder if tennis is Michael Jackson or Gary Glitter’s favorite sport, with a bunch of handsome, young boys running around in shorts. It must be.

And the elephants are dancing on the graves of squealing mice.  
Anyone for tennis, wouldn’t that be nice?

\*From “Anyone for Tennis,” by Eric Clapton and Martin Sharp

\*\*Defined as the older woman at the bar, usually in her 40s, who is on the prowl for much younger men.

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**Michael Frissore's** work has appeared or is forthcoming in print in *Monkeybicycle* and *Blacklisted Magazine*, and online at *Yankee Pot Roast*, *rumble*, *decomp*, *Defenestration*, and elsewhere. He also writes for *Flak Magazine*, *The WRIToracle*, and *Undress Me Robot*.