

Nil8 and The Pimps - smack dab in Lincoln Land

By Holly Henschen
ASSOCIATE VERGE EDITOR

Illinois punk veterans Nil8, joined by The Goodyear Pimps, will converge on Charleston Friday night at Friends & Co.

Nil8, from Springfield, currently consists of founders Bruce and Jeff Williams, both on vocals, bass and guitar respectively, Gary Brammer on guitar and Wes Selinger on drums.

Nil8 played its first show nearly 20 years ago, "but we couldn't get into bars, so the only event we could play was the Rock Against Reagan show," Jeff Williams said.

The Williams brothers have kept the band alive through four releases, a live album and a slew of drummers and guitarists.

"We have had probably 46 lineup changes because of: death, turning traitor for a piece of tail, moving, girlfriends, monkeys beating the holy heck out of members until they are forced to jump ship," said guitarist and vocalist Jeff Williams.

Brammer, from fellow Springfield band MAG, has been playing guitar with Nil8 for one and a half years, Jeff Williams said. When Brammer moved to Portland in April, Damon Sopper, also from MAG, will take the guitarist's slot. Selinger is another band transplant from The Timmys.

Some members of the group, though inanimate, have been around longer than others. The homemade toys sockmonkeys have become mascots for Nil8. They have been part of the band longer than most of the 46 revolving



PHOTO BY JOHN HICKS

Nil8 vocalist/guitarist Bruce Williams performs with a sockmonkey-hobbyhorse hybrid. Nil8 will play Friends Friday.

ing members. The origin of the band's connection with the stuffed footwear is simple and slightly disturbing.

"Someone threw a (sock)monkey on stage once," Jeff Williams said. "But it looked like it had been soaked with dear old grandma's very urine."

Cleaner sockmonkeys soon began to accompany the band to

shows. "The monkeys will come out sometime," he said. "But most are currently not going on the road with us. A few stay on the bus year-round."

Jeff Williams said the band is putting the finishing touches "May the Force Be With You, Blubberpuss," set to include at least 18 tracks. It may also feature songs from previous out-of-print

releases. Nil8 is currently undecided on a record label for the new album.

The band has played with Rockford's The Goodyear Pimps on many occasions.

"We have been friends with The Pimps for longer than any other band I can think of that are still playing shows," Jeff Williams said. "We love those gardeners," he

said. "When we get together, we eat rhubarb pie."

Nil8's brotherly affection for their gigging buddies is reciprocated by The Goodyear Pimps.

"I'd take a bullet for each one of the guys in that band," said Tony Crisman, The Pimps bassist. The groups have known each other for 10 years, he said.

Though the Pimps are no strangers to touring, this will be the group's debut performance in Charleston. The band biography said its members have played more than 150 shows yearly since 2000.

"We're really excited to get in there (Charleston)," Crisman said. "Plus, we're playing with our best friends."

The band has encountered difficulties with the an essential group element— a name. When The Goodyear Pimps applied for a copyright on the title, protest arose from the tire company that owns the blimp by the same name.

Goodyear claimed the group "diluted and tarnished the Goodyear name," Crisman said.

"We're kind of like little kids that got in trouble by their parents," Crisman said. The band has slowly started using the Goodyear name as time progressed and Goodyear was paying less attention, he said.

Both Nil8 and The Pimps are well-known for their performance antics.

"We try to melt that stage away from the audience," and make them part of the show, Crisman said.

Set to begin at 10 p.m., the show will have a \$3 cover charge. Friends is located at 509 Van Buren Street, near The Square.

Chili Jam benefit to be reheated Sunday at Roc's

By April McLaren
STAFF WRITER

You can grab the biggest spoon possible, dive into the spicy bowl of warmth your chilled body is craving and put your money to charitable use while doing so.

The first Chili Jam to benefit more affordable health care will take place Sunday at Roc's Blackfront.

The Jam was originally planned for Jan. 25 before unwanted snow and ice bombarded the Charleston area.

The event's coordinator, Becky Spoon, said it was not easy spending that snow-filled day running around on the phone. She said she

even wrote a blues song about the cancellation.

Spoon said the goal of the event is to raise money to "try to pass the Advocated Health Care Justice Act in Illinois, which would guarantee affordable, accessible care for everyone in state."

She explained the act was previously defeated in the state Senate by one vote.

"No one even knows about it," she said. "We want to get the word out and convince the Senate to pass it."

"The bill said they will study the problem and implement the solution by 2007," Spoon said.

If the bill is passed, Spoon said

her real concern is the aftermath.

"The biggest issue is to make sure the new act is followed through correctly," she said.

Spoon said most people say they cannot afford universal health care, and she wants to switch the system and get something "affordable and accessible" for everyone.

"Everyone is paying too much for too little," she said.

Spoon explained 20 percent of the people in Coles County are currently uninsured.

"That means one out of five people who have pneumonia won't go to the hospital for it," she said.

Spoon said she first became interested in health care when

she spent time searching for efficient and affordable health care for herself.

While researching the health care system, she "found out a lot of incredible things and how broken the system really is."

The Jam will be featuring local bands Miscellaneous Jubilee Jam Band, Rural Kings, Mother Load, Rumble Shack Orchestra, Rockford Barns, Ryan Groff and Reverend Robert.

"He's the best acoustic guitar player in the area," Spoon said about Robert.

Prizes will be given away at the Jam, such as an overnight trip to Eagle Creek State Park in Shelbyville, three \$50 saving

bonds, free catering from "What's Cookin," a 4-foot mermaid sculpture and jewelry.

Spoon also will be making vegetarian vegetable soup as a nutritious and meatless alternative for vegetarians in attendance.

For those with a sweet tooth, there will be a bake sale during the event.

The donations from Roc's owner, Mike Knoop, made the event possible, Spoon said.

Knoop is dedicating his time to make the chili, paying his staff and donated the building for the benefit.

The event will take place 3 p.m. Sunday and admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

GUIDE TO BETTER LIVING

Spring break on a broken budget

Spring Break is less than three weeks away. If you haven't decided on plans for your seven days of freedom, there is no better time than now. One common factor in spring break choice tends to be funding. I present you with these money-saving vacation destinations, in hopes that all Eastern folks, no matter how filthy rich or dirt poor, can enjoy spring break like the head of a government.

◆ Camping

Low on funds? Camping is a cheap alternative to pricey hotel stays. It can be even more thrifty to brave the great outdoors in someone else's backyard. Most students (and possibly some professors) will be out of town for break. They won't mind if you inhabit their lawn because they won't be able to tell you were there until you're already gone (or hopefully leaving). You can utilize their patio furniture for outdoor comfort (hammocks rock). Try to scope out a home with a fire pit for instant party fun and the magic of hot food. Bring your own hose and curtain for simulated showers, or patchouli for that psuedo-hippie feel.

◆ Hitching

Make like Kerouac and give your thumb some exercise "On the Road" style. Hitchhiking is less common and acceptable now than it was in the 1950s, no thanks to psychotic murderers who used the glorious form of transportation to satisfy their bloodlust. This will add a



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thrilling degree of anxious excitement to your spring break adventure. Don't forget a crazy Neal Cassidy-like sidekick to share your youthful exploits. Also, bring a can of mase for safety and a peace offering to share with the obliging drivers who you hope will pick you up. But leave the trenchcoat and ski-mask at home.

◆ Take a walk

Here's a spiritual journey for you, just what every student wants on spring break. Pull on your strongest shoes and pick your favorite direction. Now walk that way for three and a half days. Then turn around, and walk back. On your adventure of epic proportions, you will be free from the stresses of academia, as well as those of comfort and shelter. This leaves ample time to ponder the mysteries of life, like "Why are we here?" and "Why does Charleston water taste like moldy dirt and fish?" To achieve added surrealism, forgo food for the week. Without the responsibility of digestion, your brain will encounter sensations never before imagined. Note: No matter how they insist, do not, repeat, do not lick any toads on your 7-day stroll.

◆ Get Rich Quick Scheme

You're stuck with no cash to fritter away on a week of blissful partying. But your globetrotting friends will be jealous when they return if you are fanning yourself with a wad of bills, while they are exhausted and penniless.

You could sell your soul to the highest bidder on eBay. But that wouldn't fill the entire week, and I hear Satan only trades in euros these days. You could also sell your plasma for \$25. But you can only do that twice a month.

A clever little moneygrubber will scan the "Lost and found" section of the local classifieds. Take up the responsibility of sleuthing out the items that advertise a reward. When you find that lost puppy or wallet or child, call and inquire about your loot. Should the compensation be less than fitting for your hard work, tell the loser to increase the reward, or it's curtains for Fluffy. Happily collect your cash, or follow through on the diabolical threat. There. Hopefully, you've done a good deed, kept busy during break and made some moolah.

I hope I've been a good travel agent to the broke with this handy-dandy guide. I'll be flying away for break, not hitching or walking, but don't get any funny ideas about camping in my backyard— my roommate will be home. May God have mercy on your soul if you are stuck in Chuck counting tumbleweeds for a week.

CONCERT CALENDAR

Fri. Feb. 27
◆ Nil8 w/ The Goodyear Pimps Friends & Co. 10 p.m.

◆ Pennywise House of Blues Chicago 6:15 p.m.

◆ Split Lip Rayfield Cowboy Monkey, Champaign 8 p.m.

Sat. Feb. 28
◆ The Riptones The Tripdaddys Friends & Co. 10 p.m.

Sun. Feb. 29
◆ Chili Jam Top of the Roc 3 p.m.

◆ Brent Byrd All Acoustic Sunday The Uptowner 9-11 p.m.

◆ Cannibal Corpse House of Blues Chicago 6:15 p.m.

◆ 40 Below Summer Pop's Nightclub, Sauget 7:30 p.m.

