Keep ya’ head up and your eyes open ‘cause we’re coming! Ok, ok, ok. This month we have several contributing writers and I expect that number to keep on keeping on. Everything is an art, you just have to look at it through the correct glasses. I am FOKUS...Are you?

~ Prime

HOOKED Movie Screening
With Director Michael Skolnik
Angell Hall Auditorium B
10/20 @ 8:00pm
FREE For All

Chopper city – cooler than cool...ICECOLD
One night, while shopping for some college essentials at Meijer, I ran into the bike section where a flash of goblin green caught my eye and got me curious enough to venture into unfamiliar territory. While my curiosity mounted, I stood beside the two-story bike racks and... THERE SHE WAS! Standing there between pink handlebars, blue ribbons, and woven flower baskets was the epitome of my childhood, and now, adulthood, dreams. Flashbacks of nights watching American Chopper on the Discovery Channel seized me as the hottest low-rider stared me in the face -- the new, part chopper / part cruiser Schwinn Sting-Ray called out my name and asked me to take it for a ride and so I did.

Built with customized parts [like any other chopper], drippin’ in chrome, and bad to the bone – this ICECOLD bike is, by far, the rebirth of cool. My personal favorite, the Schwinn 20” Sting-Ray Street Series, is available at select Target, Toys R Us, and Meijer stores. It has V-Back Drag Bars, a knees-to-the-breeze low-ride saddle, wishbone kickstand and signature Big Boa – 4.25” of burning rubber. You can purchase these bad girls in red, black, silver, blue, or green. Each bike run about $179.00 even and are most definitely worth it. Got any doubts? Well, you can just check me out ridin’ my lil’ red chopper through the streets of A2 and make up your own mind about whether you’re cool enough to be CHOPPED - ICECOLD.

To get more information on these bikes check out www.schwinnstingray.com and www.schwinnstingray.com/pressroom/docs/sting-ray_launch_release.pdf
[ RED LIGHT DISTRICT ]

One in front of the other, your feet touch his canvas as you walk through the streets of Spanish Harlem. There are times when you catch yourself walking towards Lexington Avenue admiring the glass and gum ridden sidewalks of this uptown metropolis. It’s not 5th Avenue where footprints of the world are washed away from its canvas and has nothing to show – clean for the next diamond to walk on. Here, the sun rises against your back and shines on broken glass in the street, setting off a spotlight towards his work. It is at that moment during your journey you read:

“I Don’t Want To Die, But I’m Tired of Living.”

“A Man Torn Between Two Women Will Eventually Lose Both Himself.”

“Become Your Dream.”

“Be Free, My Son, Be Free.”

“During Peaceful Moments Watch For Danger.”

“If You Wish To Gain Much, Be Prepared To Sacrifice Much.”

“Trying Going a Whole Day Without Looking In A Mirror.”

“Keep A Watchful Eye Over Yourself. The Things You Do Your Children See.”

“His Pleasure May Be Her Pain.”

Regardless of his overflowin’ talents, Vega was arrested this past spring, charged with [street art] vandalism and sentenced to 30 days in jail – pretty sad isn’t it? But that’s the reality of freedom in the US – maybe we could ask someone WHY? We knew Jadakiss, MWA, did! – People can be such haters if they don’t appreciate a life foreign to them, how ignorant can people be... Nevertheless, Vega currently owns an art shop on 103rd & Lexington Avenue in addition to running for office in the city. So, if you’re ever poppin’ into the big apple, get on the 6 train [uptown] to E. 103rd street and check out Vega’s art; it’s likely you’ll even get a cameo w/ the Man himself ;)}
[ POETICS ]

UNLESS
~Gabriel Peoples

I calculate galaxies with Bermuda Triangles
Trying to see beyond banners with stars that are spangled
Perceptions are shoestrings of children
they're tangled
Land of the free where they lynched and they hanged you

Your language hard so in English they named you
As strong as lion so like lion they tamed you
Whipped in front of your son is how they would shame you
Four hundred years
And not even
A thank you

BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH
The...

White woman raped and of course they would blame who?
You!

Working in cotton fields for food and new shoes
New shoes for your feet
Cause' your feet they were bruised

Put in a race to make sure that you lose

BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH Beat...

But like Giraffe in game parks
You stood straight and stood tall

United we stand and divided we fall
But divided we stay and united we strive

Too many Black mothers
Too little Black wives

BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH
Don't...

"Land of the free and home of mental slaves"

No need to enslave us
We buy our own chains

Soweto squatter camp kids
Are singing for change

There's only one Earth that is under the sun
Which means there's no third world
There is only one

BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH
Stop...

We Beat BAH Tss Boo Ff Ch Boomf Ch Tss Tss
We Beat BAH Tss Boo Ff Ch Boomf Ch Tss Tss
We Beat BAH Tss Boo Ff Ch Boomf Ch Tss Tss
We Beat Box cause' cities lack trees to make drums

You can take our freedom
But not freedom through music

The beat don't stop
Unless
There's no revolution

Æ ¥ ¥ Ø ± ?

WORDS OF FREEDOM
~Lev Grossman-Spivack

I speak words of freedom; sing songs that fly off the tongue...

...in samson's lung,
I breathe fire that licks the oxygen that breathes the flame of the eternal effigy.
I serenade the symphony with the unifying harmony of this melody.
Twisting through space-time
my rhyme infiltrates the color lines and incubates the putrid minds of mercenaries scared to drop their slave chains,
grow a beard and elegant mane.

the iNsAnE
orders the mortal mercenary to master his memory
and swear to the powers that be never to return to the sedentary.
The reverie, turned into cycles of poverty, clutched by the muscle’s twitch that won’t relax,
instead we go searching through statistics to find the facts
that never learned how to tell us why...

the ceremonial sacrifice
when all eyes run back and forth in sockets searching for a way to stop it,
but the secret speaks so simply if they only knew...

if they could only hear
the windows that whisper translucent stories of see-through sorceries
invented in the image of the clear blue
...you know who...could it be you?

As I await the doors of eternity, I sit and watch the hinges of my identity
creek open and shut until a gust of wind slams the solemn message in front of my nose and reminds me of the throws of passion that contort the faces of existence.
The resistance to the sounds of soft-core conformity
run circles round masculine symbols of control and dominance.
This game of he said she said slap across the sound waves of repression incessant tear ducts run dry because lungs forgot how to
...inflate...and...deflate...
because the oxygen lost its way and instead of finding directions the fist tightens and nerve-endings twitch to attention as the blood splatters across the freshly painted white walls like a Jackson Pollack masterpiece.

Enslavement inside the solid lines of reality shape the metal bars of prison walls so lets invest in new imagery.

The immaculate conception of this lesson that brings the message of repression surrenders to no one but the one who speaks spears of clarity and tears apart the insanity that grips the primal savagery of our reality.

Of This Earth
~WALTER LACY

Of this Earth I have become
Its best and worst in fact
Immersed in love,
As well as sin
I search for peace within

On bended knees I ask my Lord...
Remove my lustful tastes
Restore my child-like innocence
Forgive me for my ignorance

It's evident...
My foolish pride,
Has weakened me severely
But never have I lost the Faith,
So Lord, I know you hear me

At times it seems
I've lost myself,
Despite my noble aims
And though my heart
Is good as gold,
I taste a bitter shame

When in doubt or troubles mount,
We tend to call his name
When life is sweet as honeydew,
Why not we do the same?

I tend to tread on ocean waves,
Forgetting I can't swim
But I could walk across the sea
If I just walked with him

So I'll enjoy this life of mine,
Respect the borrowed time
Praise the name of Jesus Christ,
And surely I'll be fine

Of this Earth I have become,
But I must not remain
Steadily, I'll right the ship,
And bathe in blessed rain.
The man to my right giggles
As he scans the Chinese tabloids
Stuffing tiny dried shrimp into his mouth,
Washing them down with soy milk,
As the man to my left pours
Over classifieds from Senegal
Circling possibilities
With a gold metallic marker,
Thoughtfully scratching his chin.
I read smutty romance.
Thinking about becoming Buddhist
Over a Snapple,
My afternoon tea,
I ask the man across,
Meditating over a pocket-Dharma,
My potential in the religion.
He sighs and asks
If I've the power to abstain
From all the filthy habits
Of the human race.
I say no and consider Existentialism.
Then realize I haven’t a clue of Existentialism,
Opt for English homework
Borrow a pen from big, fat Jamaican lady.
She’s breathing heavily,
Eating a beef patty and
She hands me half with a pen.
I smile as big as my Colombian lips allow,
And hand half of that to the Buddhist
Who gives half of that to the Chinese man
With a prayer
The Chinese man bows,
takes a bite, and finds it sort of spicy.
He eats more, happy we thought of him,
And gives the Canadian a bite.
We converse about holidays,
Of family and bargain markets for good shopping.
We talk of the poor and the hungry,
Of our respective countries,
And smile together.
It’s the train.
You’re on mine and
There’s a lot we don’t know about each other
But really should.
Island spice sizzles on my tongue,
The Chinese man gives me ginger candy.
He coughs and I give him strawberry Ricola
As the Jamaican proofreads my English essay
And the Canadian my French.
The Buddhist prays,
And now I know I’m safe for the day
As the train rolls into City Hall,
And I look back to my subway strangers,
Glad to have tasted
So many things
At this afternoon tea on the R.

[ LET ME KNOW]

Brewing Hope – Bringing Fair Trade Coffee from Chiapas to Ann Arbor:
Brewing Hope is a new organization that focuses on promoting fair trade coffee in and around Ann Arbor. It is a non-profit organization consisting of Ann Arbor community members, University of Michigan students and faculty, and local businesses and organizations. Brewing Hope takes coffee a step beyond fair trade by building a direct relationship between local communities and a specific cooperative in Chiapas, Mexico—the Yachil Cooperative.

In summary, Brewing Hope is building a partnership between the communities encompassing Ann Arbor and Santa Catarina in Chiapas, Mexico, where the Yachil Cooperative is located. The Yachil cooperative represents about 850 coffee producing families who have been outspoken in their goals of obtaining sustainability and peace. The cooperative, which produces gourmet fair trade and organically-grown coffee, has had difficulty selling at fair prices due to the global coffee crisis and instability in the region. Chiapas has been the scene of an on-going low intensity war waged against Mayan peoples striving for indigenous rights and autonomy. While the ongoing threat of further violence remains, the coffee farmers are faced with the worst coffee crisis in history.

This direct relationship with the Yachil cooperative creates transactions similar to a farmers market, where specific coffee shops and consumers familiarize themselves with the farmers from where they buy their coffee. This creates opportunities to educate consumers about the conditions in which coffee is grown and more specifically, the relationship between farmers and the global coffee market. Another aspect of the organization is to facilitate and promote reciprocal delegations. Farmers from the cooperative visit the southeast Michigan area in order to educate consumers about the
benefits of fair trade. Furthermore, community members and businesses from the southeast Michigan area travel to Santa Catarina in Mexico to learn more about the cooperative and coffee production. The first delegation to Chiapas took place in August of 2004. The first farmer from Mexico will be giving a presentation on October 13th, 2004 at the University of Michigan.

Brewing Hope has also partnered with Higher Grounds Trading Co., Michigan's only 100% fair trade gourmet coffee company, because of the company's unique relationship with many fair trade farming co-ops in Chiapas. Higher Grounds has contacted a local roaster, Perk and Brew, to roast, package, and distribute the coffee.

The fair trade certification system, used by Higher Grounds Trading Co. corrects market imbalances by guaranteeing at least US $1.26 per pound for small farmers' harvests, and encouraging organic and sustainable growing methods. With a fair and stable income, coffee growers can invest in their families' health care and education. The new Brewing Hope project in Ann Arbor hopes to go a step beyond fair trade certification by creating a direct relationship between two communities thousands of miles apart. Through activities such as the delegation in August, and future reciprocal visits by Chiapas farmers to Ann Arbor, Brewing Hope and Higher Grounds are putting profit back into coffee-producing communities in Chiapas while building awareness in Ann Arbor. To Learn More about the Yachil coffee in Ann Arbor, or being a part of this project by ordering the coffee, contact chiapas@umich.edu or visit the website at www.javaforjustice.com/brewinghope.asp.

Contact:
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[ SPORTS ]

: A Maize Rage Analysis :
The past couple seasons have been an exciting time for the Michigan men’s basketball team. The arrival of Coach Tommy Amaker is 2001 signaled a new era in Michigan basketball, one that has been marked by the building of a class program both on and off the court. The 2002-2003 season was highlighted by a 13 game winning streak, a streak that included wins over traditional powerhouses such as UCLA, Wisconsin, and Michigan State. The 2003-2004 season was even more exciting and successful as the Maize and Blue totaled 23 wins, capturing the NIT title in what was a thrilling finish to the season. Michigan basketball is primed to climb to greater heights this season after only losing one player, Bernard Robinson, Jr., to graduation.

The non-conference slate is highlighted by the preseason NIT, games against Notre Dame and UCLA, and a trip to Atlanta to face Final Four participant Georgia Tech. Tech is viewed by many as the top team in the nation this season so that game will definitely be a good test for the Wolverines in a hostile environment. This non-conference season will prepare the team for what will be a tough Big 10 conference season. Three teams (Illinois, Michigan State, and Wisconsin) figure to be ranked in the preseason top 15. That said, the experience and depth that Michigan returns make the 2004-2005 squad able to compete with any team in the nation.

In the backcourt, junior point guard Daniel Horton quarterbacks the team. After a stellar freshman year, Horton struggled at times last year as he grew into the role of becoming a true point guard. However, everything began to click for Daniel towards the end of the season, scoring in double figures the last ten games of the year. More importantly, his assist to turnover ratio in the NIT was nearly 2:1 (25:13), a crucial stat for any point guard. Horton improved his assist to turnover ration during the NIT while still averaging 15 points a game, earning him tournament MVP honors. With another summer of honing his game under his belt, expect Mr. Horton to become one of the top point guards in the nation this season. Coming off the bench this season will be junior tri-captain and defensive specialist Sherrod Harrell. Sherrod provides defensive intensity and the intangibles necessary to lift the play of his teammates whenever he steps on the court.
At the other guard position, expect sophomore Dion Harris to make giant strides this season. A former Mr. Basketball in the state of Michigan, Harris showed flashes of brilliance throughout his freshman campaign. Dion also was very impressive in off-season workouts, perhaps improving more so than anyone else on the team. Buoyed by his experienced teammates, expect Harris to be one of the breakout stars of the season.

Junior tri-captain Lester Abram has been Michigan’s most consistent player the past two seasons. The 6'6" lefty from Pontiac displays a feel for the game that elevates the play of his teammates, while still possessing the ability to create his own shot when needed. Abram led the team in scoring last year while averaging 13.1 PPG. He was also the team’s best 3-point shooter at 41%. Expect Lester to see a lot of time at the small forward position this year.

The Wolverines are very deep at the power forward and center positions this year. Courtney Sims, tri-captain Graham Brown, Brent Petway, Chris Hunter, and J.C. Mathis all received significant playing time last season. Each brings something different to the table. Sims provides a consistent low-post scoring threat and a shot blocking presence. Brown is a rugged interior player that rebounds the ball well and plays solid defense. Petway has become a crowd favorite with his out of this world vertical leap, resulting in electrifying dunks and block shots. Hunter has battled injuries but he also provides a low post scoring threat and shot blocking ability. Finally, Mathis brings the intangibles to inside play that only a senior can bring.

Freshman Ronald Coleman, the lone newcomer this season, should also make an impact this season. He has been impressive all summer. At 6'6", the Romulus native averaged 21.0 PPG and 10.7 RPG his senior year of high school. Expect him to see time at both small forward and shooting guard this season.

Put everything together and what you get is very good basketball team. The buzz around campus is definitely there, as students are anticipating a run at the Big 10 title and an appearance in the NCAA tournament for the first time in what has seemed like forever. For those of you that haven’t bought season tickets yet, go to mgoblue.com and buy them! Michigan basketball is on the way back!

Coach Amaker often speaks of the Michigan Basketball family, and he has shown us time and time again that the students of this University are a major part of that family. He showed us this when he used an anonymous donation to the program to give free season tickets to all students sitting in the bleachers last year. He has done this again for the upcoming season. He showed us this the past two seasons when he has personally seen to it that the buses for the annual Maize Rage road trip were paid for without any charge to students. As a result of the tireless efforts of the players, Coach Amaker, his staff, and us students, Crisler Arena is becoming an intimidating venue for opposing teams to play in, and the Maize Rage is gaining more and more recognition as one of the premier student sections in the nation.

So go ahead and get a hold of all your friends and purchase your season tickets. Come to Crisler this winter and scream at the top of your lungs for a couple of hours. Come early to games and heckle the opposing players. Share popcorn with the rest of the Maize Rage. We do make a difference in Crisler Arena, and it is time to make our presence felt. There is something special being built at Crisler Arena. Join the family.

-Ryan Shinska
Superfan V and Kinesiology Senior

[ UNDER THE NEEDLE ]

Baltimore and D.C. have birthed a new kind of soul in the spring of 2002 when the R&B band, Yamama’Nym was brought into the music world. No ordinary band, Yamama’Nym
promises and delivers one of the best live acts you’ll ever experience.

Yamama’Nym combines sultry sounds with a touch of jazz, elements of soul, and a twist of divinity; Yamama’Nym is definitely on its way to a not so distant ‘top’. With two exceptionally vibrant vocalists, a DJ, and perhaps some of the best live musicians in the biz, Yamama’Nym, group alone, have collaborated nu sound with classic talent in order to surpass all competing groups at its level.

With their youthful appearance, Yamama’Nym highly anticipated first album “2A.M.” drew hues from the band’s strengths of soul, R&B, Jazz, and hip hop to help drive their musical vision to a broader audience. Their combined rhythms evoke feelings of nostalgia with seasoned performances, often being compared to acts of old and new the way their act blends together. Since their birth, they have played on many stages and have left their signature "Soulful" style to keep on with unsuspecting audiences leaving them yearning more.

Yamama’Nym has already been endorsed as a viable candidate for international success. Up and down the East Coast, they average consistent amount of shows a year, and continue to sell out each and every home appearance.

FOKUS is currently working on bringing this soulful group (or possibly their lead singer) on campus sometime next semester. This album is definitely a must listen joint, especially if you’ve got a taste for soulful R&B with a hint of jazz. Songwriting on point, the only complaint here is with the records’ mixing, which can easily be improved. My Album favorites are Caramel, You Still Are, Mr. Incredible, and Is This Real? – damn straight, Yamama’Nym is.

Visit www.outtacontrolent.com for more information on the group. You can purchase the album by clicking on this link - www.cdbaby.com/cd/yamamanym.

Review Numbers

0 / 20 – Waste of space, time and whatever it is on
5 / 20 – Tolerate once but anything more may hurt
10 / 20 – Average. Squinting may help somewhat
15 / 20 – Good. Not a solid picture but close
20 / 20 – Solid. Not enough faults to knock its picture

Illiance Records will be performing October 29th at the Michigan League Underground. In the meantime you can listen to their smashing album, “Under The Bridge” and get a taste of what they are all about. This album gives equal shine to each of the members and they all step into the spotlight easily. Check out www.illiancerecords.com and the League Underground on the 29th for more satisfaction!

Ray Charles Ultimate Hits Collection

20 / 20

Ray Charles is the “Genius.” No other name would have fit when it came to describing Ray Charles. This double cd offers up a great selection of tracks going from older songs to new one. When you listen to this album you cannot resist snapping your fingers or moving to the music. While very of his tracks may not grab you at first then give it a couple of more viewings. Also, be on the look out for the documentary about Ray Charles, Jaime Foxxx will be playing soon. If you only know Brother Ray as the guy who used to do those Pepsi commercials, you have a lot of self-educating to do and this could be a good start for you and with probably his 3 best songs on this album it gets the job done but only wets your feet and should grab you instantly. Mr. Charles was innovative in the simple things that are now very commonplace, such as using hymns as a base for your songs. Listen to “This Little Girl of Mine” and you will hear what I speak.
Underground music- one of the worst labels to have people place on your records with because it, while being fitting, prevents your exposure to the listening audience. Back in 1997, Wordsworth and partner Punch dropped Punch and Words during his co-created show, The Lyricist Lounge, and some people started to pick up on him. Enter Mirror Music into you musical rotation and you will not be upset by the choice. Wordsworth is a big name to go by because people expect you to be lyrically gifted but across twenty tracks, you will be pleased. I was looking around the internet and say, “Please note that labels occasionally run out of stock”, and I realized that people are blinded by the diamonds of the industry. Go get this!

Theodore Unit released this joint as a mixtape of old and new material to showcase their talents. You get a chance to see that each of the 7 members has something to prove and will do that in the future with Ghost leading the ranks. My only issue with 718 is that Tony Starks headlines the majority of tracks but you do receive exposure to the rest of the squad, Trife Da God; Solomon Childs’ Kryme Life; Shawn Wiggs; Du-Lilz and x-factor: Cappadonna, and they each bring something different. The beats and rhymes blend great so go and check for this album.

Another version of this album was released a few months ago and boy did that piss off Mr. Kweli. He felt that people were stealing from his pockets- in a sense that is true- but at the same time he failed to realize this was one of the best was to get the buzz started on his album. Talib went back to the grind and kicked out a couple of new tracks for this album. His extra work and rework make this album one of his best and a standout for this year. The lead single, “I Try,” is a great choice. He has several other stand outs, “Around My Way” accompanied by John Legend, is a personal favorite.

Alchemist- a person who practices a power or process of transforming something common into something special. The Alchemist lives up to this definition as a producer. You will notice that the majority of the tracks are previously unheard. All the tracks and interludes help make this a standout album. Nas, The Lox, Dilated Peoples, Soul Assassins and Mobb Deep all grace this album. Only satisfied with half of an artist’s album then go get 1st Infantry- several artists over beats by a sick producer. This album didn’t receive much marketing but sometimes the better things go right by and you never know about them. Get it!
If you’ve spent more than a year in the Midwest, odds are that you’ve heard of Sweetest Day. It’s a “holiday” celebrated primarily in this region that seems little more than a good way for Hallmark to make a quick buck off of some sappy cards. Being that I’m single and from the East Coast, I don’t celebrate Sweetest Day.

However, I do celebrate National Madden Day.

This up and coming holiday celebrates the release of the latest offering in the Madden series. Any male that’s young enough not to need adult diapers can usually be found at your local video game retailer trying to be the first one on the block to pick up a copy. Sometimes it can get ugly. I’ve got a 15 inch scar on my back from Madden Day 2002. Ask my buddy Alan about his eye patch, and he’ll just reply, “National Madden Day, 2004.”

For the uninitiated, the “Madden” series is the bestselling football video game series ever made. The original Madden game was the first 11 on 11 football simulation ever. In its 15th year, the franchise shows no signs of slowing down. One of the most remarkable things about the Madden games is that they come out every year and people still buy them.

The other amazing thing about the Madden series is that virtually every male under the age of 40 has played one of these games. If you don’t believe me, ask your boss/professor/GSI what team they play with in Madden. Unless they’re not from America (not to be jingoistic, but football is a decidedly American sport that has not been able to replicate its success on foreign soil. Take a stroll along the streets of Germany and tell me how many people you see walking around with Berlin Thunder jerseys...) they’ll not only be able to tell you what team they use, but also which uniforms they choose when they’re at home or on the road.

I’m sure, dear readers that you don’t need me to tell you that there are two things that can hold a man’s attention hostage: women and football. However, most females don’t play Madden, and in fact are repulsed by the fact that most guys would rather figure out the best way to attack a Cover 2 defense than go for a long walk with them. They seem to wonder what John Madden has that they don’t.

It’s quite simple, actually.

Here’s the thing about these games that most people (read: most women and non-sports fans) don’t understand: These games have stopped being just about the football.

Now don’t get me wrong, you definitely play the game and revel in the new aspects of it (the Hit Stick and Defensive Playmaker abilities among other things), but the beauty of these games is the off-the-field stuff. For example, in Franchise mode you’re the coach/GM of a team and have to manage virtually every aspect of your team. You even control the price of foam fingers for crying out loud! To top it all off, you can read about your team in the local or national paper (USA Today) and listen to what the fans have to say on EA Sports Talk Radio. Heck, you don’t actually have to ever play the actual game — you could just simulate entire seasons and still have a ton of stuff to do. Guys love to micromanage these aspects of the game, and this is a big reason for its widespread popularity.

Another appealing aspect of Madden is that anybody can pick up a controller and play. You don’t have to be 6’4” and run the 40 yard dash in 4.3 seconds to be able to strap on the pads and play alongside your favorite NFL players. Madden is the great equalizer — allowing all to play and enjoy football even if they’d be the last guy picked if you were choosing sides for a game of two hand touch in the park. Earl, a 38 year old garbage man from Sandusky, Ohio is placed on equal footing with NFL Pro-Bowler Ray Lewis when each of them has a controller in their hand.
That being said, it's still more fun to actually play the game. Although you have control of what you're going to give out during Fan Appreciation Day, it's far more satisfying to pick apart the Detroit Lions defense with Brett Favre than it is to worry about the salary cap. While Franchise mode is a big draw for Madden players everywhere, the whole dynamic of the game changes when you introduce another human player into the mix.

As much fun as it is to yell at your PlayStation 2, it's a lot more fun to talk some trash you your buddy whose muttering things under his breath that small children ought never to hear because you just ran back the opening kickoff for a touchdown. The competition means so much more because you're playing against somebody who will likely brag to the world about beating you. You're not just playing a game that's part of a season anymore.

You're playing for pride.

Madden has become a modern day barometer of manhood. Since virtually every male under the age of 40 plays Madden, it's become this generation's way of determining the alpha male.

In the days of the Wild West, a man was defined by how quickly he could draw his gun. In the 80’s and early 90’s, somebody might not be the best looking, or the smartest guy, but if he could bench more than you, then he was more of a man than you were. The question “How much you bench?” was a common one heard in locker rooms and anywhere men congregated. Today, you might be taller and more suave than me, but if you can’t stop David Boston from catching the ball over the middle, then I’m going to look down my nose at you. In fact, in this day and age, if you can’t play Madden, you’re liable to lose your status as a male and have your girlfriend repossessed. Because of the mass appeal of the game, it has caused me and many others (most notably ESPN.com’s Bill Simmons) to ask, “Why is this not recognized as a national holiday?”

Besides, I'm sure that the Hallmark people could come up with some pretty good cards for National Madden Day.

If I really need to go into depth about this game, we need to talk with your manager. Dust off the NES, blow this game and don’t forget the code! Up, Up, Down, Down, find out the rest.

You play as members of a Special Forces commando squad who must eradicate Aliens in the Amazon who are trying to use Earth as a base as the take over the universe.

This is no cakewalk game- get shot or touch an enemy and you are dead! Yes dead as in no longer doing the do- because there is no health system. This game is highly based on skill of players, not fancy graphics or sounds, just straight game play. So go grab a spray power-up and let's get it crackin!

NBC's new primetime computer-animated series, Father of the Pride, is not for everyone. But after viewing the first couple of episodes, and laughing show after show, I can honestly say, it's definitely for a lot of us.

Set in Las Vegas, “Father of the Pride” centers around the family life of Larry, (voiced by John Goodman, remember Roseanne?), the head lion in Siegfried and Roy’s MGM Grand show. Kate, Larry’s lioness wife (voiced by Cheryl Hines of Curb Your Enthusiasm); Sierra, his
Father of the Pride is an adult comedy, with hilarious adult themes (e.g.: Samorti “If one must have a hoe down... let it be a hooker that has stumbled) and strategically hidden social commentary (think Danny Devito voicing a political refugee lobster). The show also features animated versions of Las Vegas icons Siegfried and Roy, who provide a somewhat funny, though often times corny, human comedic element. The cool and laid-back comedy of Larry and the rest of the animal clan are funnier and better received than the over-the-top comedy of the human duo.

Still, the show is a welcome surprise to primetime television (it airs at 8:30est on NBC) and is the first (and only) prime-time television show with feature film-quality CGI animation (as seen in Shrek). So far, for the first couple of episodes, there has always been a guest star that helps to shake things up. Danny Devito, as a politically outspoken lobster trying to avoid death by the boiling pot; Eddie Murphy, making a “celebrity” appearance as the Shrek donkey, and Barbara Streisand, as herself, have all made appearances.

Overall, Father of the Pride is a great show. Some of the jokes go over your head, but the irony (e.g.: a vegetarian lioness), and blunt comedy (think girl-on-girl gopher action) ensure a lions share of laughs (sorry I couldn’t help myself). If you’d like to feel out the show, NBC is airing a marathon, next Tuesday October 12, 2004 at 8pm. If you don’t laugh in the first 5 minutes than this isn’t the show for you, but if you’re like me and find yourself actually laughing out loud, then Father of the Pride will surely have you coming back for more.

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