

ENTERTAINMENT

Portland's Poison Idea brings home the hardcore

By Chris Metzler
Emerald Contributor

Poison Idea is a band with a sense of humor, morals and musical integrity. It arrived a couple years after the beginning of the Portland punk rock scene, started by one Mr. Jerry A, a fellow of 24 with a chest of steel and a heart of gold.

"I'd like to wrap up the whole world in a big blanket of love," Jerry said in a recent interview.

Poison Idea, scheduled to play at Condon School on Saturday, arrived on the scene when hardcore first aimed at speed and kids were just learning to

slam in Oregon. The band has consistently changed its lineup, recently firing long-time veteran Chris Tense.

"There's been so many members in Poison Idea I think we are going to have a reunion picnic where we could have enough for softball teams," Jerry said.

Playing small Portland clubs with bigger national acts (the Subhumans, Fear and Black Flag) was Poison Idea's first claim to fame. Currently they have established a large enough following to see Jerry's name in a Batman Comic and on the backs of many suede leather jackets.

Poison Idea has dominated the Portland "hardcore" scene

since 1980. They have attracted large crowds across the U.S. by playing one of the hardest, fastest foot-stomping shows.

Poison Idea has released five compilation recordings and has released its own "Pick Your King" EP. "Record Collectors Are Pretentious Assholes," a 12-inch single, the "Kings Of Punk" LP and the brand new album "War All The Time" are some other recordings that Jerry is very proud of.

Three of the current members, Mondo, Steve the Slayer hippie and Vegetable are formerly of the late metal band "Mayhem." The lineup is "filled" up by Mr. Pig Champion, the governor of the guitar, and Jerry on vocals.

Jerry believes "the new people are like new blood to inspire us."

When it comes to names, Jerry's a walking dictionary. "I got the name by looking through a magazine, and I thought Poison was kinda rad, but that wasn't enough. And then I thought Poison Harvest; but no, that sounds like a (Grateful) Dead song, so Poison Idea was it."

Jerry remembers one of his happier moments when they played Eugene on the same day as another very famous band. "We drove into town and all these hippies had signs that said 'We need tickets' or 'Hi Jerry' but it turned out to be for

the Dead." Oh well.

"The first time we played Eugene was at the Bijou Theater opening for the movie 'Decline Of The Western Civilization,' and the owner didn't want to pay us because people were throwing bottles," he said.

Opening for Poison Idea at Condon School on Saturday is the speed metal band Wehrmacht, once called the fastest band in the world. Wehrmacht, also from Portland, recently released a record that has received mixed reactions from the international punk/metal press.

Poison Idea and Wehrmacht will perform one early show at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$4 at the door.

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