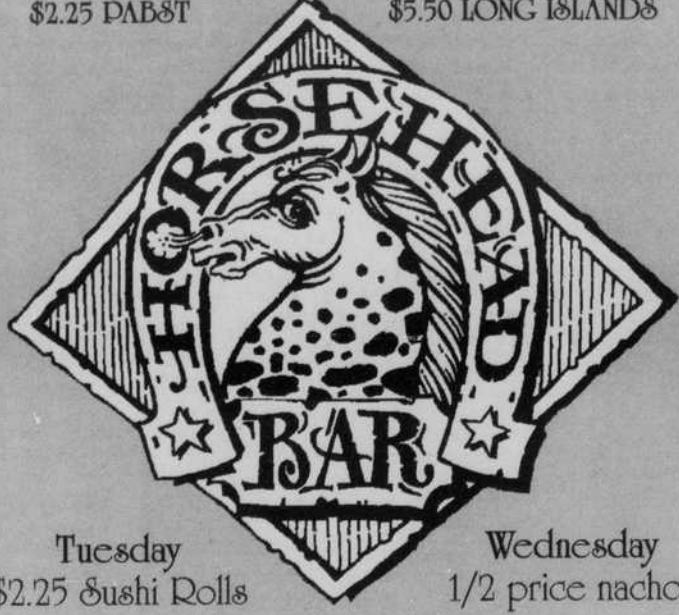


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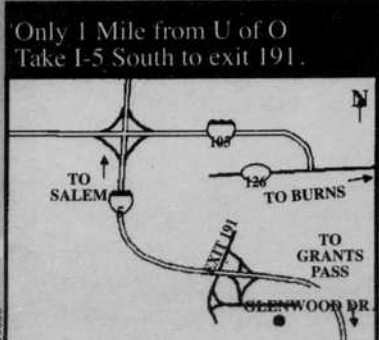
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## Folk: Alexander finds his voice on 'The Middle Way'

Continued from page 7

younger days of musical discovery as one of the greatest contributions to his songwriting.

Becoming obsessed with Kiss, Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath spawned a hard-rocking persona within Alexander and created an excellent guitar-player. He recalls the obsession of electric riffs as a reason why he started his former rock band, Damone.

"I did a lot more on electric guitar then... That's the one thing I miss," Alexander said.

The termination of Damone supported Alexander's "evolution as a writer" and aided his ability to use a high-range voice within his solo music. The turn from band leader to solo artist has been a giant step for Alexander toward finding his place in the musical community.

"I think with 'The Middle Way' I've found my voice, and now I think my voice is my best attribute. Also, song-writing-wise, I think my songs are getting better and better."

The songwriter insists that his goal in music writing is for his songs to be honest, sensitive and pure. Alexander said he will always "try to have a level of commitment to the music."

Alexander began his singer/songwriter debut on the Los Angeles club circuit and quickly became a club favorite among the folk scene in southern California.

"There's a really flourishing singer/songwriter scene in L.A. I mean, there is just a bunch of badass singer/songwriters down there. We all

developed relationships with one another and it's very encouraging, it's not competitive at all."

Los Angeles has allowed this young artist to mature and flower in the folk and singer/songwriter community. As a regular performer at the "nexus of the L.A. folk scene," The Hotel Café, Alexander has become a seasoned live performer. He said that to play a great show, "It has to be a combination of me feeling really good and loose and having my voice and my fingers with my guitar playing work together for me."

Alexander is confident that the beauty of his music and voice will draw in a new audience.

"My music is pretty and has a strong melody; I think that will pull in the audience at first, and then, hopefully, the lyrics will resonate on some level," he said.

Alexander's popularity as an artist in the singer/songwriter community on the West Coast and in Europe has grown. When asked about the pop mainstream fads in the music industry and what the future of folk and singer/songwriters will be, Alexander said, "I think we are in a culture of disposability, all this (pop) stuff is just stuff that comes and goes. I like to think that real singing and real songwriting will always stick around and that all this (pop) shit is just sort of a phase. It's a tough time to be an independent (artist), in a commercial sense, but it's a great time to be an independent for the long run."

Shane Alexander will be playing at Luckey's today at 10 p.m.

## Nyburg: Guilt trips make people rebel

Continued from page 7

with them and not advanced to more difficult works. J.K. Rowling makes another gajillion dollars and the world goes on being the same place it has always been.

Anyway, where were these "magic of reading" people when I was a kid? I had no one to advance my cause when I was yelled at for reading ahead of the class, nobody there to defend me when I got ostracized for spending more time in the library than on the football field, no one taking my side when I thought the school ought to stock up on some Franz Kafka or Virginia Woolf rather than Leon Uris and Stephen King.

It might be that most of the "reading good/TV bad" crowd only really cares about the appearance of literacy. They guilt trip kids into reading books, make the entire activity feel like a forced march through a sun-baked desert and generally suck the sense of personal discovery and mental engagement out of it. This personal and private activity becomes rote, dull and exhausting. The idea that reading for pleasure is something that you MUST do turns people off and they rebel. Which, when you get down to it, is the same reason I haven't picked up the "Harry Potter" books.

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