

What the heck is "Pants Machine?"

■ MARY WOOD

Contributing Writer

When you hear the phrase "Pants Machine," the first thing that comes to mind is probably not music. This changed, though, those who attended the Battle of the Bands and witnessed Pants Machine's victory.

According to Alan Singley, singer and songwriter, who describes the band's music as "James Brown riding bikes with the Beach Boys," the

name Pants Machine is all about humor. "Everything is so serious when you get over 21. I'm 24, and I'm supposed to be thinking about building [an] equity and what not, but... I just want to be silly and be a kid!"

Singley has been making music since he received a guitar in fifth grade. Soon after, he began recording on his own and released four solo albums. In 2003 he moved to Portland from

Orlando, Fl. Through the city's music scene he met those who would form the rest of Pants Machine: Benjamin Jaspers, drums; Gus Elg, bass; and Leb Borgerson, guitar.

The band has found influence for their music in many places; Jazz and Disney musicals are some of Singley's favorites. Elg enjoys underground hip hop. "In high school I fell in love with Elliott Smith, Belle and Sebastian, and Pavement," Singley said.

This influence led to the creation of what is Singley's favorite Pants Machine song "Highway of Our Minds," which he wrote during a tough time in his life. "I was stuck in a dead-end job, and it was feeling like the magic was gone." In his first hour after quitting the job, he wrote the song, but he

doesn't feel that he, or any artist, should be given all the credit for song writing. "I don't think it's really me who writes my songs, they are gifts from somewhere else."

Pants Machine's eclectic style has gotten them record deals with Slow January Records and Lucky Madison Records, but being musicians isn't always as easy as having a record deal. "The hardest part is having blind faith in 'making it' and being ready to work and do it yourself, rather than waiting around to 'get signed'. You must prove yourself or no one will care."

The band is determined to put itself out there. They were the last band added to the Battle of the Bands after appearing in the Willamette Weekly's Top Bands of 2006. Though Singley felt they had a good chance of winning, he was grateful.

"Winning was surreal. I've never won anything in my life... It's nice to think you might inspire someone, like you might be talking to someone after the show and leave a positive impression on [them]. We feel validated," Singley said.

So what's next for the band? After using their Battle of the Bands winnings to buy a van, the guys are working on some new material. "Right now we are hibernating as we work on a perfect record. It will have orchestrations, and it's going to be a perfect start to finish album. It's [going to] flow," Singley said. "With Myspace giving way to so many endless new bands, you really have to be on the mark to survive." Be on the lookout for a Pants Machine album with strings, flutes and choirs.



Photo courtesy of Haywire Booking

Sudoku puzzles present challenges

■ DAMION GRAY

Contributing Writer

Sudoku puzzles: the one type of logic puzzle that many people around the country, and the school, find to be a challenge. All the puzzle asks for a person to do is to fill every row, column and 3x3 box with the digits 1 to 9. What could be so challenging about it?

Sudoku is also known as Number Place. The name Sudoku literally translates to "single number." When the puzzle was introduced in Japan, its name translated to "the numbers must occur only once." Only outside of Japan is the puzzle called Sudoku. It is commonly called Nanpure inside of the country.

The purpose of a Sudoku puzzle is basically to test your logic skills by seeing how much you can do in a given time. To some people, Sudoku puzzles are fun. To others, it's challenging or too hard.

The degree of challenge and difficulty depends upon if the solver is really interested in solving the puzzle. "When you begin a sudoku, make sure the level is appropriate to your experience level," Rachael Christy, freshman, said. Deductive reasoning is also key to solving the puzzle.

There are many varieties of puzzles for a solver to attempt. Besides the ever popular 9x9 grid (the puzzle boxes), there are 12x12 grids, 16x16 grids, Sudoku in the form of jigsaw puzzles, double puzzles (two 9x9 puzzles that are usually joined by one to four 3x3 boxes), Sudoku X (the usual rules apply, but the main two diagonals must have the digits one through nine once as well), Samurai Sudoku (five puzzles joined by one box each) and many others.

Worried about how long it will take to complete a puzzle? Don't fret. Choose an easier puzzle that won't take as long.

The only 'special' knowledge that might be needed would be deductive reasoning skills. No mathematical knowledge is needed whatsoever. "You also need to know that they are for fun and as soon as you get frustrated, stop," Christy said.

Many different types of strategies can be used to solve a puzzle. For example, a strategy called 'cross-hatching' calls for the solver to look at other numbers in the puzzle and hatch across/up and down to solve for a number in a particular spot. If the solver is looking to place a five in the top right-hand box of a puzzle, they would 'cross hatch' by looking at other fives in the puzzle and eliminate options in the blank squares. From there, whichever squares are left are candidates to place the five into to continue to solve the puzzle. Taking the puzzle in pieces also helps, as it will leave the solver with having to worry about solving only a particular region of the puzzle.

There are many places to find Sudoku puzzles since they are popular worldwide. "Just type in 'Sudoku' in a search engine and you will get thousands of examples," Crystal Weehunt, Algebra II and Integrated Math III teacher, said. "They make you use parts of your brain that you might not use everyday," Christy said.

For those who are just beginning Sudoku, there are three volumes of Sudoku for Dummies. There are also DVD games, card games, travel games, books, the internet and so many more varieties of locations to find a puzzle.

■ MARGARET ADAMS

Staff Reporter

In the first week of sales, Kevin Federline sold an astonishing 6,500 copies of his debut CD "Playing with Fire." Just to put things in perspective, his ex-wife, Britney Spears sold 1.3 million albums in the first week of sales with her second album, "Oops... I Did It Again." "He's a joke, basically" Elliot Wilson, chief editor of "XXL," America's best selling hip-hop magazine said.

His world premiere performance of the single "Lose Control" was at "The Teen Choice Awards" last August. "The Teen Choice Awards" the show that gives surfboards as trophies. Federline didn't even get one of the sought after boards, just a nomination for Male Red Carpet Fashion Icon.

He followed up that memorable, national TV debut by making a guest appearance on an episode of "CSI" last October. He played a hoodrat who tries to talk smack on the crime scene and gets punched in the stomach by Nick (who specializes in hair analysis).

A few days later, Federline made an appearance on World Wrestling Entertainment RAW. After John Cena (World Wrestling Entertainment's Champion) called Federline the world's biggest scumbag, Cena pulled a fakie handshake turned body slam on K-Fed. For some reason, Federline asked for a re-match which took place on New Years

Day. Maybe you missed it, but thanks to Johnny Nitro (known for his corkscrew moonsault) and Umaga (Samoan, 348 lbs.) Federline came out on top.

He actually went on tour to promote "Playing with Fire." At New York's Webster Hall, he was due to play at 7 p.m. but waited three hours because he wasn't satisfied with the fan turn out. Finally, at 10 p.m. he began a half an hour set to just 300 people. The Webster Hall accommodates 1,500.

One spectator said that Federline "seemed really confused about how to act on stage. He would pace from one side of the stage to the other, just saying things like, 'Hey' 30 times in a row or 'New York, thank you for coming — buy my CD.' " After something that bad, you'd think things

couldn't possibly get worse. A few weeks later, the House of Blues in Chicago gave the tickets to his show away.

He'll make a guest appearance at your parties too, but not quite for free. For just 20 grand you and your buddies could chop it up with "America's Most Hated" (his words, not mine).

He's gonna need that extra cash too. With the recent divorce he's lost everything. According to the 60-page pre-nup, Federline has to return any gift from Spears worth more than \$10,000 (the Ferrari, their children). She's also shelling out \$300,000 a year for half the number of years they were married. That means \$300,000 total. That should be enough for a dumpy place in the Hollywood Hills with room for the kids he can't have and his wardrobe (wife beaters, solid white air force 1s).

Maybe if someone bought his CD or tried getting signed with his record label; Federation Records, he could actually buy something with his own money. He did co-write all the lyrics on "Playing With Fire" and I've got to admit, they're next to epic. From Lose Control (Track 05) "My Ferrari cost more than your lil S-class/Look man I'm in a whole 'nother tax bracket." Okay, bottom line, don't play with fire.

