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ST. PATRICK'S IRISH FESTIVAL
March 14th thru 17th

Friday • march 14th
9pm • Spruce Roots Band
11pm • Rootdown

Saturday • march 15th
3-8pm • Crab Fest with RK Band (Polka) & Opera Oregon & The Irish Tenors
7pm • Piping Hot (Celtic Bag Pipers)
9pm • Jamalia
10:30pm • Johnson Unit

Sunday • march 16th
6pm-12am • All Star Blues Review combining the music of Deb Cleveland, Barbara Healey, JC Rico and more. Followed by a Janis Joplin tribute with Gaye Lee Russell.

Monday • march 17th
6pm • Irish Kitty's
7pm • Mercenaries
8pm • Irish Echo
9pm • Piping Hot
9:30pm • Irish Echo

ADMISSION • \$7.00 PER DAY
CRAB FEST • \$25.00

PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT:
MID-VALLEY ROTARY

The Cooler Restaurant & Bar
(541) 484-4355
20 Centennial Loop
Eugene, OR 97401
thecoolerbar.com
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Detail of mural at Samurai Duck

NO, WE DON'T HAVE SUSHI

Good friends and death metal BY NICK DEMARINO

"No ... no ... no ..."
George Poerg III paces behind the black counter of the Samurai Duck as he talks on the phone. A string of red and white lanterns with Japanese characters hangs above him; a small TV projects static from behind a photo of Dimebag Darrell. Behind Poerg is a shelf of liquor — two rows of five bottles apiece — a handful of beer taps and a refrigerator plastered with vinyl stickers proclaiming "Goathead" and "Fucktheworld," among many others.

"No, we don't have sushi."

Poerg hangs up the phone. "We're not a fucking sushi restaurant!" he yells to no one in particular. "Fawwk."

The Samurai Duck is nearly empty. The Samurai Duck is nearly empty a lot of the time.

Wes Beanblossom, who finished bartending 30 minutes ago, looks up from his game of pool, grinning widely. He stands the cue on its end, black leather jacket squelching as he bends his arm. "I know, man, I know. Fuckin' people." He finishes a beer, his second, and orders another one before returning to the game.

The relentless staccato riffs of Unmerciful twinge out of the stereo. In the corner, the big screen TV that, were this a different kind of bar, would be broadcasting Monday Night Football is blank, reflecting the few scattered lights about the room. When the TV is on, it projects horror movies from the '80s, cartoon monsters accosting schoolgirls with phallic tentacles and occasionally video games.

Amid the requisite neon beer logos hang more lanterns, a golden cat and an illustrated panel depicting a scene from *The Tale of Genji*. Above the barren stage, *ukiyo-e* visages direct their eyes in impossible directions among flowers and a sinuous dragon. They look like tattoo art, which is appropriate considering they were painted by Skullfly Tattoo owner Mike Fulton.

The song "Mass Execution" skips for about 10 seconds before anyone bothers to complain. "Hey, man, that CD is skipping,"

offers Beanblossom. Technical death metal is very, very syncopated.

As the night waxes, small groups of people filter into the club. A lot of them order cheap beer and bar food. A couple of people order the surprisingly tasty yakisoba, pointing to an inconspicuous menu on the side wall.

There are still Halloween decorations up, but no one mentions them. There aren't many college kids here either.

Around 9 pm, bar activity peaks. Almost every night the Samurai Duck hosts bands well-known within the underground scene as well as local punk, crust and doom bands. When bands play, it's nearly impossible to hold a conversation. Luckily, the bartenders apparently read lips. There are earplugs for sale, but people only ask for them at noise shows.

Despite well-intentioned sound checks, guitar tones swell and mix into a cacophony of echoes from whence nary a lead escapes. The acoustics are perfect for colossal, sustained chords. Most bands thank Stephanie Osburn by name, even the ones from out of town. She's the booking agent and one of the sound mixers.

This used to be a tiki bar, the sole extant relics of which are the bamboo shoots covering a window on the right hand side of the stage.

Amidst the boisterous greetings mingled with curses, the owner, Masako Poole, weaves skillfully around patrons, gathering glasses and exchanging brief hellos with regulars. Her hair is about a third of the length of that of most of the men here.

If she's in a good mood, a band will drink a round of shots of habu sake, an expensive treat from her hometown, Okinawa, Japan. It's poured from a jar containing a coiled viper, suspended in rice wine, jaws open wide, fangs bared. Not many people order habu sake — it's usually served as a sign of respect to musicians and close friends.

The Samurai Duck is kind of like a metal *Cheers*. The beer is cheap, the patrons jovial and everyone seems to know each other's names. ■

The Samurai Duck is located at 980 Oak St. 345-6577.