

FEATURES

'Super Size Me:' tales of a McGlutton

BY APRYL BLAKENEY
Staff Reporter

If there's any validity to the statement "you are what you eat," then Morgan Spurlock is an unlucky cow smothered in cheese and sandwiched between stale refined pieces of white bread. He's a bessie with veins pumping sweet sugary Coke straight to his heart and he possesses a stomach lining made entirely of deep fried potatoes and honey mustard.

That is, if you believe the cliché.

Or perhaps he's just a filmmaker with a horrifically wonderful idea for a documentary entitled "Super Size Me."

Spurlock, with a team full of doctors at his slim healthy side, chooses to order a life altering diet of McGriddles, McFlurries and McNuggets three times a day, every day for an entire month. His goal? To disprove a McDonald's statement that fast food is actually good for you.

Spurlock wanted to disprove their statement to all of America, which just happens to be the fattest nation in the world.

Thus, he began a regimented and well-documented "McDiet" with three very simple rules. One, he must eat everything on the menu at least once. Two, he could eat things only from the McDonald's menu, which, much to his dismay, does not include

multi-vitamins or Tylenol. And three, if asked to Super Size, he must accept.

Thirty days later and nearly 25 pounds heavier, Spurlock, a depressive McDonald's addict with a liver more closely resembling liver mush than a functioning organ, has a libido that makes the Pope look like a stallion, according to his vegan girlfriend.

Spurlock's doctors warned him of total liver failure if he continued on the Super Size Me diet, which consists of 5,000 calories a day.

"I always enjoy movies where there is danger in the life of the character and they could possibly die during the filming of the movie. I wouldn't have liked the film that much if he wasn't in danger," said Alex Grettinger, biochemistry major.

Now playing at the Fine Arts Theatre, "Super Size Me" proves to be more than just a shocking film about a guy with a secret and shameful affinity towards Big Macs.

All disgusting imagery aside, "Super Size Me" is an informatively thought-provoking film about public health, social responsibility and the stigma attached to being overweight, which is second only to smoking as the No. 1 cause of preventable death.

"Spurlock is really trying to change the way obesity is perceived, because right now they are seen as people who have created



PHOTO COURTESY OF JUILE SOEFER

Filmmaker Morgan Spurlock displays two McDonald's Big Mac's, the core menu item for his super size me diet.

their own problem," said Seth King, history major. "I think he wants to get the focus off the individuals and on to the idiosyncrasies of our cultural and economic system."

Indeed, social responsibility seems to be the underlying theme and Spurlock does more than just hint at the notion that big corporations are addicting our children. With more than \$1.4 billion invested in advertis-

ing a year, fast food industries hook Americans at a young age. In fact, more first graders recognize pictures of Ronald McDonald before they can identify Jesus.

"I think, by providing a bulk of evidence about advertising and lobbying, Spurlock is implying that while marketing doesn't negate personal responsibility it certainly marginalizes it," said King.

Spurlock's clever wit and enjoyable presence keeps his subjects entertained and even willing to humiliate themselves by singing the Big Mac song...in harmony.

Often compared to Michael Moore because of their shockumentary style of filmmaking, Spurlock is far less confrontational in his approach and thus more successful in attaining his desired information.

"People seem comfortable around Spurlock because he doesn't bulldoze them with questions and so they are more honest and they make more mistakes," said King. "Where as with Moore, his subjects always act as if they are expecting a trap."

Costing less than \$75,000 to make, "Super Size Me" proved to be a brilliant, enjoyable film about the ultimate glutton for punishment.

Sonic Youth proves they're not too old to make noise

BY RACHEL WRIGHT
Staff Reporter

With the rapid flashing of illuminated, X-ray images of guitars as a backdrop, Thurston Moore grinds his body against an amp producing rhythmic feedback, while his wife, Kim Gordon, hikes her leg onto her bass prodding it with a silver heel. Lee Ranaldo falls to his knees as he uses a tape measure, like fingers, on the strings of his guitar. Sonic Youth continues to prove the perfection of turning experimental noise into music, this time at The Orange Peel.

"You're 18, you're going to register to destroy the religious, fascists, right-winged white supremacy," said Moore as he leads the band into "Teenage Riot," from their 1992 *Dirty* album. From the reaction of the crowd it's confusing as to

whether the song created the ecstatic yells and applause, or the obnoxious anti-President George W. Bush message. This is not the first time Sonic Youth lashed out at one of our fine presidents. *Dirty* also contains the pleasant "Youth Against Fascism," protesting opposition to none other than the former President George Bush.

Sonic Youth, formed in New York City in 1981 with Moore and Ranaldo on guitar and vocals and Gordon on bass, guitar and vocals. The group has since been through several drummers and guitarists, yet the core persisted through the decades of new wave, grunge, pop, punk, hardcore, progressive melodic hardcore, etc.

The band remains to create

their erotic noise-art and sell out venues, despite the various sounds of music the band lived through, and a switch to the major record label Geffen in the late 1980s.

"Personally, I didn't like the show because the majority of the time they weren't playing music but were rubbing their guitars against speakers and creating distortion, making noise not music," said Erich Melville, senior political science major. "But I guess this is what makes them Sonic Youth."

Midway through the first set, Gordon pleases crowd members with much loved "Kool Thing."

She dances around, like a cheerleader, in her black velvet-looking, babydoll dress which falls above the normal mother's skirt length.

Dress straps fall away as she shakes her shoulder length, dirty blonde hair around her gaunt features, like those of a heroin addict or that of Edward Munch's "The Scream."

"It sure was cool when Kim started playing the guitar with her rock star, silver high heels on. She truly is a rock goddess," said Ellenor Moore, elementary education major at Warren Wilson College and a "Sonic Youth virgin" before this event.

The show at The Orange Peel on Friday, Aug. 20 was a celebration of the band's nineteenth album, *Sonic Nurse*, released June 2004. Additional members include Steve Shelley on the drums and Jim O'Rourke on guitar and bass. A record which employs melodic-tenderness, crazed, jagged guitar riffs with overtones of experimental instrument sessions.

Sonic Nurse will never be considered an epic like *EVOL* (1986), *Daydream Nation* (1988), *Goo* (1990), *Dirty* (1992), or *Murray Street* (2002).

"It's all awesome," said Jacob Hartman, concerning the band's transition from the '80s to the present.

A bit harder and more crazed in the '80s, yet they're still around looking great and playing kick-ass music. What about the distortion session as a final encore?

Moore agrees that the sound evolved but still remains a fan. "I think their new stuff rocks, but so does their older stuff. So I cannot say which stuff rocks harder. But they have progressed. Their sound has definitely changed, but they will always continue to change and do new and interesting stuff."

Ranaldo performed one of his expected, quiet poetic tunes off of *Sonic Nurse*, "Paper Cup Exit."

"Skimming the tops of tall trees through the clear light of free speech, a sudden memory disease, claims all the air around me," sings Ranaldo as background melody and chaos find a transition into one.

For those readers who still question how to interpret the quality of the band's musical character, Moore fills in the holes.

"Sonic Youth sounds kind of like hash-browns from Waffle House, with cheese, tomatoes, onions, pickles, and topped with ranch dressing."

Regardless, in most cases age calls for respect. Sonic Youth demands this with the band members in their late 40's and early 50's, rocking out for over twenty-years.

The fans at the show reflect the number of years Sonic Youth has spent in the underground, indie-rock scene. Youngsters in typical tight t-shirts, dyed-black hair and Thurston Moore-like shags, mixed with rebel adults seen without their nine-to-five day wear, rumples grey hairs and beers in hand.



AMANDA EDWARDS/FEATURES EDITOR

The Usual Suspects on Merrimon Avenue offers its patrons great food, cheap drinks and fun atmosphere.

The Usual Suspects: North Asheville's newest night spot

BY EMILY SARKISSIAN
Staff Reporter

The Usual Suspects, Merrimon Avenue's very own night spot, serves not only as a fun place to hang out and relax, but offers patrons good food and a great atmosphere. If watching cars roll by while sitting on the outside patio, drinking cheap liquor and eating excellent food doesn't do it for you, their game room could surely keep you entertained.

Looking out from the patio at The Usual Suspects, one would not exactly think they had the ideal view for sipping their evening cocktails and enjoying their dinners al fresco although no one sitting outside seemed to mind.

"It seems real laid back and everyone seemed to be having a good time," said Heidi Bickner, senior math major.

The outside patio, huge and completely covered with a high roof, brings comfort that even during a thunderstorm the evening won't be interrupted by the weather.

To contribute to the open-air feel,

a glass garage door acts as a window to the patio and can be lowered and raised depending on the weather, which makes less of a separation between the inside and outside. If there are not any seats outside, just sit at the inside seats near the raised garage door and it feels like the outside.

"It's really nice to have the open space, inside and outside," said Mayumi Sakamoto, senior math major.

Opened earlier this summer, The Usual Suspects happens to often be mistaken for being simply a bar, but it's also a restaurant.

"I thought it was going to be more of a bar, but it's more a restaurant, and that's kind of nice," said Jo Persons, sophomore Spanish major.

The restaurant was converted from an old paint store and still has an open warehouse-type atmosphere. It isn't a huge place, but seems a lot bigger due to the minimal décor and high ceilings.

One of the walls, in all brick covered with old beer advertisements, while a partition separates the smoking and bar area from the non-smok-

ing area. In the middle of the partition, a screen shows silent clips of old black and white movies on a continuous loop that adds a nice touch to the aura of the room.

The 1940's jazz and blues music and subtle lighting keeps the theme of the warehouse style.

The lamps are simple cylinders that hang high from the ceiling. The restrooms as well have a unique quality. The woman's at least, painted

in bright orange, creates a shift from the lower light of the bar area, so be ready. It's clear every single aspect of creating the atmosphere was carefully planned and well executed.

"I thought it had a nice atmosphere," said Bickner.

"Even the wait staff is dressed to fit in with the scene. They didn't wear anything obnoxious, but they were clothed a bit more creatively than the basic black Asheville server garb."

With old movies and jazz standards, it almost feels like Los Angeles in the days of Bugsy Siegel.

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