


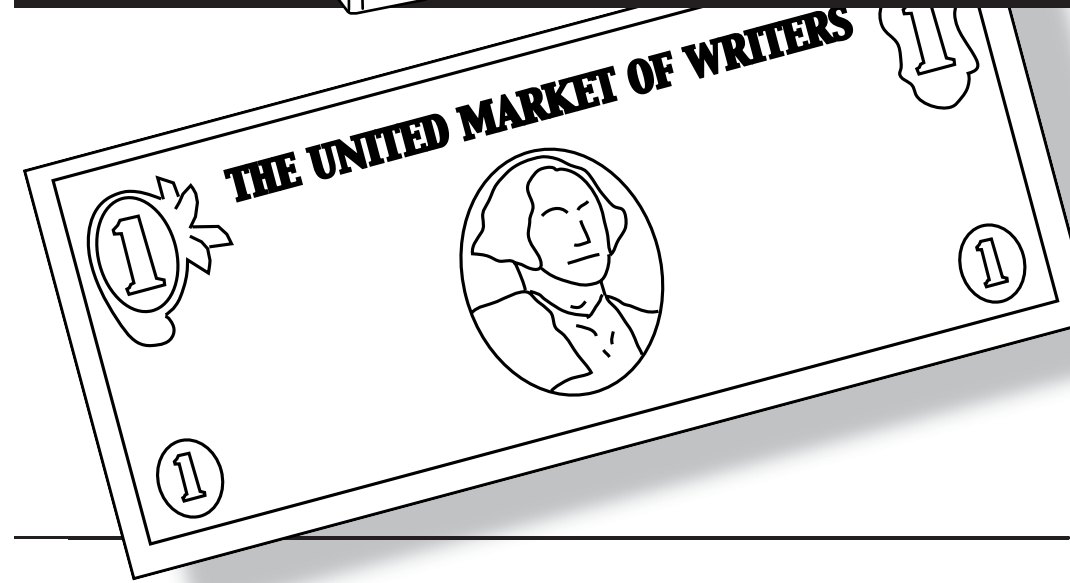
TONER



Your work here.

Fancy yourself a writer? Join the biggest new community of writers online.

Find out more at
www.tonermagazine.com/info



Suburban Generals



all stories and artwork copyright © tonermagazine.com and/or the individual authors and artists. please feel free to print and distribute as many copies of toner magazine in its original, unaltered state as you'd like. in fact, we encourage that sort of thing. please do not feel free to charge money or equivalent for those copies, alter the publication in any way electronically or otherwise, or post any or all copyright material online or elsewhere for profit or not.

BY MATT CAREY

Suburban Generals

BY MATT CAREY

Every so often, back when I was in school, campus activities would invite some fledgling jam-band to play our on-campus pub. It was a stealthy way to corral my college's hippie contingent for a few hours but it worked; bands usually strolled in like local celebrities, credible proof of college-rock's potential professionalism, and students typically showed up en-mass, excited for a break from the doldrums of upstate New York dorm life.

Gradually, a symbiotic relationship developed between the pub's regular bands and the smorgasbord of students frequenting any given Saturday night show. Most of the students fashioned the bar as their primary stage, taking full advantage of the college's liberal drinking laws. Most of the bands were glad to take the students' unbridled energy as a form of pomp-and-circumstance, happily providing a jazzy sound track for an endless number of weekend activities. In return, they got a statistic. "Capacity crowds."

Over the years, a myriad of musicians played through that pub, usually favoring flashy solos over

well-composed charts or, sometimes, songs. But one snowy Saturday night, an altogether different jam-band drifted into town. Few of my friends had any interest in trekking across our college's frigid quad, but I was eager land a gig at my college's daily newspaper, so I decided to check out this no-name band from Massachusetts. Sure, this trio sported the familiar sluggish van and set list full of jams, but buried beneath their granola covered crust, Dispatch played pure, radio-friendly pop. At the time, I knew neither the band's sound nor their new moniker (for years, they'd toured as One Fell Swoop), but I immediately saw their unique spark. Not so much because the bar's dread-locked basement dwellers seemed to dig their music, but because my relatively clean cut roommate left humming the chorus of a hit single-in-waiting: "The General."

Realizing the potential of my Almost Famous fantasy, I made a point of tracking down an exclusive Dispatch interview the next time the trio rolled into town. A few months later, I found myself parked in the