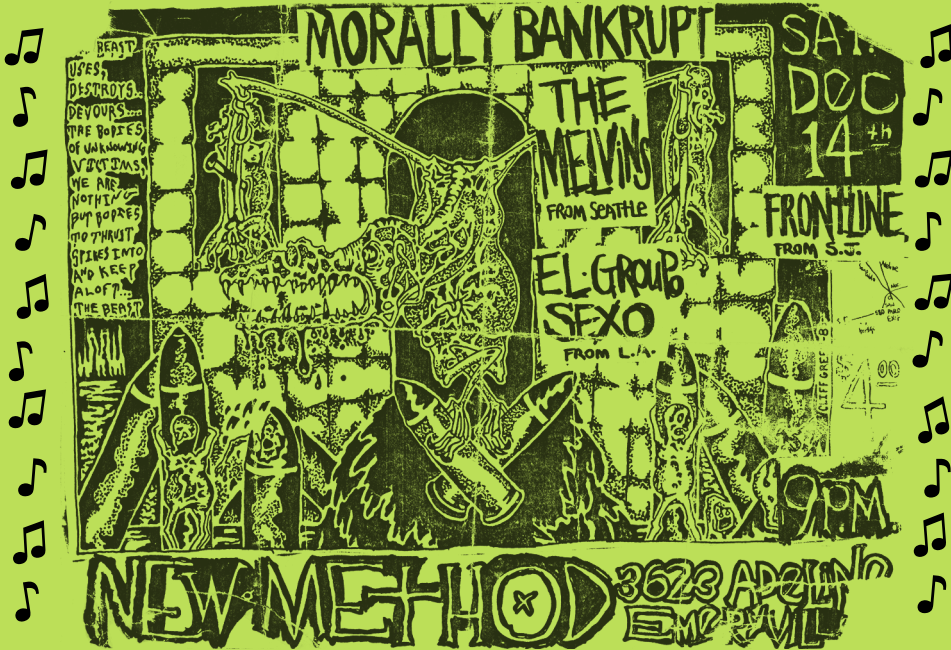


# Emeryville COOL Fun Facts

ISSUE 4

MAY 12, 2020



Long before I became an Emeryville resident, a good friend worked at the unofficial punk epicenter of Emeryville, Alternative Tentacles. For the uninitiated, Alternative Tentacles is a record label started by former Dead Kennedys singer Jello Biafra. In 2002 Alternative Tentacles moved its headquarters to Emeryville.

My friend regaled me with stories of life commuting on the Emery-Go-Round. The existence of this free, privately-funded public bus line always fascinated me: how does this small town have a free bus??? PS: rumor has it that Jello's preferred digital communication is fax, thus embodying the classic AxCx lyric: "LET ME FAX YOU MY EMAIL ADDRESS."

What a remarkable town we inhabit! Such a frothy herstory of canneries, bygone industry, abandoned railways, thriving private-public art partnerships, and to add to all of this: one of punk's most notable record labels! So, I thought I'd

take the opportunity to explore (IN A TOTALLY NON-COMPREHENSIVE WAY! DON'T @ ME!!!) the punk side of Emeryville. PLEASE TAKE A LOOK.

You might be surprised to learn we have not one but TWO punk hotspots in town. That's right, I'm talking about the corporate headquarters of Grocery Outlet. While I have never been inside the premises, I can only imagine what free employee giveaways abound there: snickerdoodle hummus, gallon-size cans of "Wis-Co" brand nacho cheese, watermelon and iced tea-flavored beer. While Gross Out on Broadway in Oakland is definitely a great place to spot local punks and make new friends in the "organic foods" aisle, I'm not sure whether the punk Bargain Market™ vibe extends to the Emeryville office. But certainly it's the thought that counts.

Since I already have deep knowledge about the two aforementioned venerable institutions, I decided to push myself to do a little research outside my own lived experience. Thankfully, Cornell University has a punk librarian to help me with this. I peeped the extensive flyer collection of a notable Bay Area punk, where I discovered the New Method warehouse.

Despite an ongoing interest in alternative spaces and extensive experience as a participant in DIY culture, I hadn't heard about New Method (SHAME). Located at 3623 Adeline Street, one could attend shows featuring all the heavy hitters of 80s punk and metal: MDC, The Melvins, Econochrist, Crucifix, 7 Seconds, DRI, Youth of Today, along with warehouse residents Neurosis & Christ on Parade.

In 2010 Jason Roeder of Neurosis and Sleep fame wrote a detailed blog post about his experience there as a teenager in the mid-80s (would recommend this blog post 10/10). He describes New Method as "a block-wide two story run down building next to the freeway on the border of Emeryville and Oakland. At one point it had been some type of factory

laundry facility, only apparent by the aging steel sign on the roof."

According to Mike Sperry's report on a message board in 2005 (THANKS for this opportunity to revisit the good old days of the internet: MESSAGE BOARDS!), the New Method warehouse was a "pre-gilman thing that died after a COC [Corrosion of Conformity] show went wrong and the space was flooded. I remember the story was that some kids were hanging on pipes and they broke. great venue." Ah, a disastrous show plagued by plumbing troubles and attendee raucousness, what a CLASSIC end to a show space!!! (I'm sadly familiar with many such tales myself.)

For another take on the 80s Emeryville punk experience, you could check out zinester "Wild Bill Blackolive's" book *Emeryville War*. Bill chronicles his fringe lifestyle living in a friend's backyard and contains all the essential elements: drug usage, run-ins with the police, rants to the editors of weekly alt-newspapers. (Side note: Bill used to feed his dog fish scraps from a nearby cannery, so it looks like the cannery lifestyle was still going strong then!) I considered attempting to order a copy but wasn't sure the advertised price of a \$5 on a website from 2011 would really hold up.

I would be the first person to say that knowing your herstory is important. However, there's one more key facet of contemporary punk Emeryville that we need to address: TARGET. Many years ago when the Target on the West Oakland/Emeryville border opened, not only was I excited because at some unknowable future date I'd discover that the mysterious gated tunnel was a former Key System subway, but because of the Great Fun I'd get to experience watching punk couples buy sheets. (P.S. let the workers unionize!)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* WHATEVER HAPPENED TO \*  
 \* DANINY PARTRIDGE? \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 HE IS  
 GOING TO THE  
 NEW METHOD WAREHOUSE  
 TO SEE:  
 7SECONDS  
 BEEFEATER  
 DA\$ DAMEN  
 AND  
 NEUROSI\$  
 SATURDAY JULY 19  
 2 PM  
 ONLY \$2.50!!  
 NEW METHOD IS ON ADELINE, ONE BLOCK  
 WEST OF SAN PABLO. TAKE THE F BUS FROM BERKELEY OR SF  
 IN EMERYVILLE!

Do you have any stories about bygone eras in Emeryville punk history? Hot tips to share? Ideas or stories for future issues?

Leave a message at (510) 519-7283