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On the Road to Indio  
Dave Alvin *remembers* Chris Gaffney

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APRIL 24-30, 2008 ★ VOL. 1

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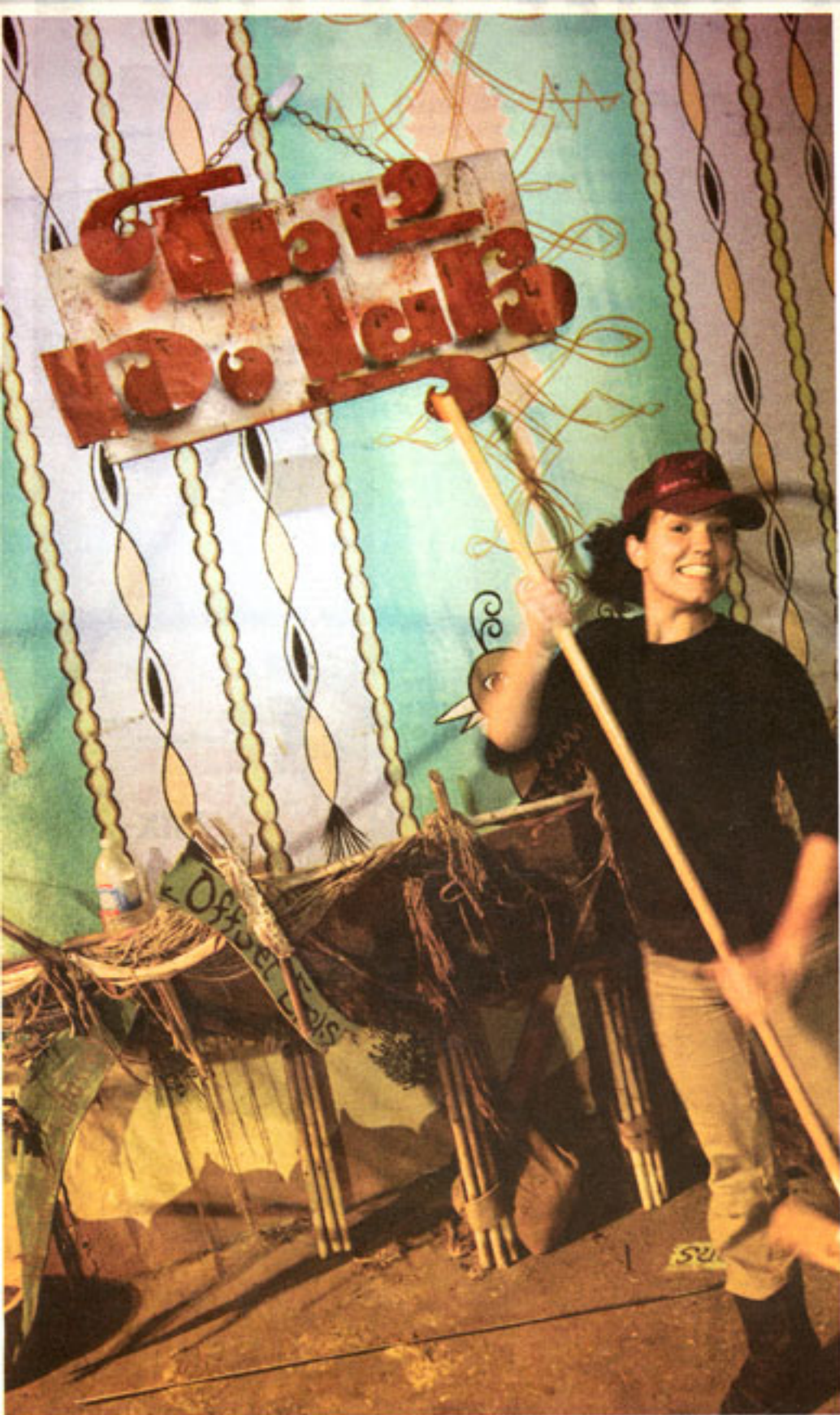
generator." Klinge's eyes begin to glitter: "You can't use it for anything else, and that's big enough to power the mainstage. I've had it running well in excess of 100,000 watts continuously. They're 16 feet tall, spaced 50 feet apart, and that fence is there for a reason. Jumping it would be a very bad idea. There's no chance of it hitting anyone outside the fence. The whole area around the coil is literally in excess of a thousand volts.

"I regard this as performance," Klinge beams, moved to lyricism by the beauty of what he controls. "It's in the kinetic art category. It's sculptural, and the only thing visibly moving is something ethereal like arc plasma reaching to the sky, like fingers that divide and divide again."

Across town in a Silver Lake garage, the experimental architectural team of Ball+Nogus is loading out for the Polo Grounds. Their Coachella-bound masterpiece is *Copper Droopscrape*, a 100-foot-long hanging net roof knitted from a helix of "metallic-coated plastic reinforced with yarn for strength," as Benjamin Ball describes it. "It also reflects like copper-tinted mirrored sunglasses. It's a brand new material, used as reflectors in satellites that will filter sunlight and change the color of the sun, projecting it onto the grass. It will also engage the wind so the whole thing will move."

"It'll be like instant suntan for pasty indie rockers," adds partner Gaston Nogus, eyeing me sardonically. "We're taking the earth color of copper and putting it into the sky."

"At night," Ball adds, "we'll have a spe-



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cial lighting ring and the whole thing'll be a social condenser."

★  
This year, radical art collective the Do Lab is getting an entire acre to put on their fourth year of interactive water-vaudeville. Operating out of a 90-year old warehouse on Bay Street downtown, the troupe is as famous at Burning Man for its gigantic mobile flower sculptures as it is locally notorious for the underground's cleverest, most-ornate themed parties. The latter include a still-infamous soiree crashed by the LAPD, who were initially thought to be simply victims of uncool taste in costumes.

The Lab's customary irreality is a bit more solemn as I approach the building, with Radiohead's *Kid A* keening from speakers and huge scriptures of stems and petals bulging into

the street. The Lab's array of sexbomb dancers go though their dainty, sweaty paces in a performance space inside, but the interview takes place in an office deep in the upstairs labyrinth. The whole place looks like an old-timey B-movie studio presided over by cheery gremlins instead of dyspeptic suits, with the chief pranksters being brothers Jesse and Josh Flemming and impish blonde Dream Rockwell.

"Our goal is to make sure that everybody in our area is wet 12 hours a day," grins Jesse. "We've gone to eight or nine Coachellas and it's very hot, unbearable even, unless you can get wet."

"When we started performing there four years ago, we couldn't fill misters fast enough," adds Josh, "so we started to use hoses from kiddie pools. Now we'll use six thousand gallons a day."

"This is between the watershow and all the

huge contraptions we're going to have throwing water around," Dream injects, "plus water-slides, a pool performers will be performing in and high-pressure water-sprayers people can play with."

The idea is to create an outrageously wet oasis in the middle of the Indio Inferno: a mock-rainforest ringed by the Lab's traditionally outsized flowers and leaves. "Lots of artists do straight lines, but we're into curves, sexiness," notes Jesse. "No one's satisfied with being part of a crowd and standing around staring anymore. We're trying to create the show around people. The ideal is three-dimensional entertainment with the audience supplying the fourth dimension. Our village is designed to put people in the center of it. Make them dance, get them wet, give them props." ★