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Wednesday, Sep 14, 2011

At Space House, musicians subsist on good vibes

San Diego rockers come and go at this Golden Hill party pad

By Sammi Skolmoski

 In a gray, one-story house on a quiet street in Golden Hill, the inhabitants reside in a self-reliant ecosystem composed almost entirely of music and love. They play in some of San

Diego's best rock 'n' roll bands. They party hard and jam often. They call their home Space House.

San Diego features plenty of houses with pet names, and Golden Hill, a popular neighborhood for musicians and artists, is home to some of the most well-known abodes. Not far from Space House, a beautiful craftsman-style home dubbed Habitat House regularly hosts intimate concerts and art shows. On a secluded stretch of C Street, a forest-like home called The Treehouse acts as a venue for underground touring bands and music-loving revelers.

But Space House occupies a special spot in neighborhood lore: The boarders are hospitable, the weed is bountiful and the occasional house parties seem to draw the entire Mid-City music scene.

One recent Wednesday, Trevor Mast welcomes me over for an interview. The house smells invitingly of dudes and pot. A turntable spins one of Mast's favorite records, *Volume Two* by prog-rockers The Soft Machine, and a massive pizza sits on a table. Mast, who plays bass in the psychrock trio Joy, introduces everyone— roommates Matt Meyers, Tyler Daughn and Christian Trzcinski; couch-crasher Justin "Nasty" Hulson; and neighbors Melissa LaFara and Tommy Pockets.

LaFara and Trzcinski play in The Lumps, a party-hardy garage-punk band. Meyers and Pockets play in Space Nature, a fuzzy-rock band. Pockets also plays with Hulson in a sludge-y duo called Roach Spit. (Guitarist Taylor Charter and drummer Zach Oakley, who both play in Joy and Space Nature, are at work.)

Mast lived on Space House's couch for six months before jumping ship to La- Fara's apartment across the street. Todd Day Wait, a traveling musician who fronts The Golden Hills Blues Band, resides in a hippified airport shuttle bus outside.

"We have a really unique situation," LaFara says. "From the tattoo shop on the corner to [The Locust's Justin Pearson] and Three One G [Records] a few blocks down—there's just so much going on right here."

Meyers moved into Space House more than two years ago and is the only original tenant. Since then, many people have come and gone. "At one point, the house had eight or nine people living here," Mast says. They left behind much of the musical equipment



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that furnishes the jam room in the dank basement, where the four bands all practice.

The neighboring law office doesn't appreciate the racket, but Trzcinski is more concerned with the recent wave of former Space Housers who've reclaimed their gear.

"We're trying to get our hands on amps and keep our hands on them without them breaking or the people that own them taking them back," he says.

That's what happened to a bass amp recently. LaFara says to Mast: "So, you don't have a bass amp, which means I don't have a bass amp, which means Tyler doesn't have a bass amp." They make plans to purchase a new one and split it three ways. La- Fara, a polite astrologist and numerologist who has the onstage ferocity of a female Iggy Pop, notes the significance of that detail: "Three is the number of expression."

As Roach Spit kicks out some jams and Trzcinski works on his scooter, I sit on the porch and listen to endless tales about Mast, most of which revolve around his affinity for mushroom stems ("They taste like Cheetos without the cheese-ness!"). All around, there's evidence of last night's exploits: A ladder is haphazardly wedged between the side of the house and the gate. A tall can, still wrapped in a brown bag, rests in the highest reaches of a tree. Mast's feet are still itchy from a barefoot jaunt across the rooftop. "Apparently, it's covered in fiberglass," he laughs.

Inside the house, Trzcinski hands me a tattoo gun fashioned out of a fork, a Discman motor, a battery, a guitar string and a button. Everyone here has a self-administered tattoo; Pockets even managed to ink a hamburger with majestic angel wings on his chest.

By the time I conclude my evening with a group sing-a-long to Neil Young's "On the Beach," Space House's many cockroaches have laid claim to the pizza. But here, even vermin are put to good use.

"I've been making them into Roach Spit buttons," LaFara laughs. "If you smash them dead on, they smush the way I was going to smush them anyway."

The Lumps play with Tori Cobras and Homeless Sexuals at Eleven on Friday, Sept. 16. Joy plays with White Hills and Plant Tribe at Soda Bar on Saturday, Sept. 17. thelumpsrawk.com, myspace.com/joymusicds

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09.15.2011 at 06:32

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Cheers fellas! been waiting for something stellar like this since few of you were refered to as the "long haired boys" in high school



cc06

09.15.2011 at 02:39

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If only you could do a write-up on the Space House's predecessor, The Pistachio Manor



Lewis

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