



**ICE CREAM MAN TRAVELS THE COUNTRY, EVENTUALLY THE WORLD,  
GIVING AWAY FREE ICE CREAM.**

Our growing team combines the minds, hearts, skills and resources of adventurous individuals who refuse to adhere to the old business paradigm. We build win-win-win relationships, funding this venture through advertising, promotions, branding and merchandise. To date, Ice Cream Man has given away over 135,000 treats.

With the goal of giving away half a million ice creams,  
we've still got a long way to go...



In the summer of 2004, Matt Allen was behind the wheel of a 1969 Chevrolet Step Van, roaming the streets of Ashland, Oregon in search of adventure. Armed with a video camera and an endless supply of frozen treats, he was determined to become not only the most famous ice cream man in Ashland, but the most famous ice cream man in the world. As that summer came to a close, Allen's mission of entertainment evolved into a greater calling. He began giving away his ice cream for free, starting with an ice cream social for the residents of Ashland and quickly moving to his hometown of Long Beach, California to expand the simple idea of free ice cream into the phenomenon it is today.

Three years, two national tours, and over 135,000 free ice creams later, Ice Cream Man has come to represent the power of a dream. "This is about getting people to think about things a bit differently, proving that you can do anything with your life," says Allen, a veteran adventurer whose feats have included hiking from Mexico to Canada and biking across the country to raise money for breast cancer groups. "I want to give away ice cream. It's that simple. I can't be the only one who thinks this is a good idea. Why not bring all of these like-minded people together to do great things?"

Bringing people together has indeed been at the core of Ice Cream Man's organization. In the course of three years, what was once a one-man job has become an international operation, dependent upon the determination and coordination of over 100 volunteers and a constantly growing roster of sponsors, business partners and crew members committed to the idea of free ice cream for all. With each year come new ideas and new opportunities for growth, but the inspiration for Ice Cream Man remains the same: "Why wait to fulfill your dreams?"





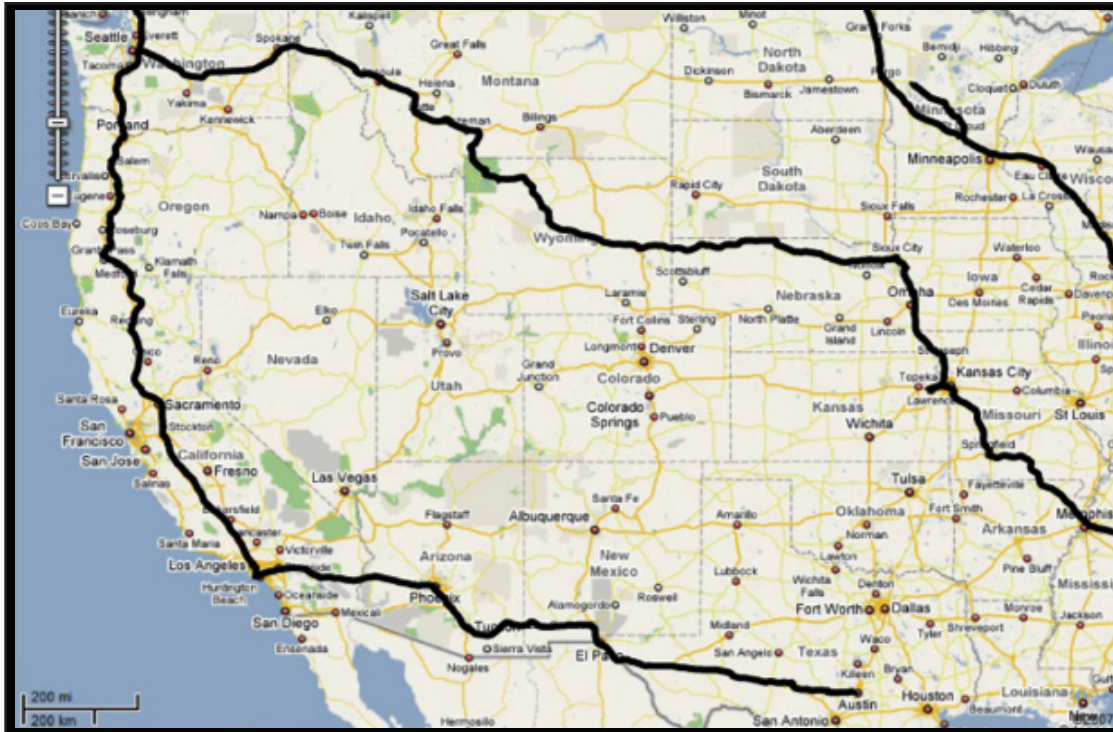
**OUR VISION:** The business world is navigating new waters. Due to the exponential growth of technology and communication, an idea can capture the imagination of the whole world through a few keystrokes. It is no longer necessary to have a big budget to produce compelling entertainment, nor is it possible to follow traditional business models in such a dynamic marketplace. The opportunities available now could be the best in history. Matt Allen and the Ice Cream Crew are proving that we can seize these opportunities and bring happiness to others, all within a reasonable budget.

**HOW IT WORKS:** Funding for Ice Cream Man's operations come from advertising, special events, merchandise sales, and sponsorships. Our business philosophy is rooted in the desire to create win-win-win situations. It is possible to create business opportunities in which five or six groups can reap the benefits of a single transaction; in fact, the range of access Ice Cream Man wields would not be possible with a more conventional approach to marketing.

**THE EXPERIENCE OF FREE ICE CREAM:** Ice Cream Man's greatest asset is its ability to forge a lasting impression across an extremely broad range of consumers. Through extensive grassroots work, we have built a unique foundation of trust and recognition. Since our appeal is based on an experience rather than a product, the service and the access we provide are singular in nature. Our business partners know that sponsorship of Ice Cream Man is sponsorship of imagination and positive action, and this kind of association cannot be produced through any other marketing media we've known.

**THE PRINCIPLE OF POSITIVE THINKING:** At the core of Ice Cream Man is a desire to effect positive change through inspiration. While free ice cream is its own reward, it is also a symbol to all those who wish to make their dreams come true. In everything we do, we seek to help like-minded individuals create new paradigms for success and prove that with dedication any great idea can become a great reality. Businesses like this don't exist. The only way to be part of the future we want to see is to create it ourselves.





**2007 NORTH AMERICAN TOUR**  
**TOTAL DISTANCE TRAVELED—14,741 MILES**

Feb	Noise Pop	San Francisco, CA
March	Langerado	Broward County, FL
March 9-18	South by Southwest	Austin, TX
April 19	National High Five Day	Long Beach, CA
April 27-29	Coachella	Indio, CA
May 11-13	Lightning in a Bottle	Santa Barbara, CA
May 20-21	Virgin Festival	Vancouver, BC, Canada
May 26-27	Sasquatch Festival	The Gorge in George, WA
June 7-10	Wakarusa Festival	Lawrence, KN
June 12	St. Jude Children's Hospital	Memphis, TN
June 14-17	Bonnaroo	Manchester, TN
June 21-22	Icecreamers Convention	Lancaster, PN
June/July	McCarren Park Pool Parties	Brooklyn, NY
July 2	Camp Brooklyn	Brooklyn, NY
July 6-8	Clean Air, Clear Stars	Pioneertown, CA
July 13-15	Pitchfork Music Festival	Chicago, IL
July 18-21	10,000 Lakes Festival	Detroit Lakes, MN
August 4-5	Lollapalooza	Chicago, IL
August 18	4th Annual Ice Cream Social	Ashland, OR
Aug 24 – 25	SCMX	San Diego, CA
August 29	Kaboom! Playground Build	Los Angeles, CA
Sept 1-2	Bumbershoot	Seattle, WA
Sept 8-9	Music Fest NW	Portland, OR
Sept 14-16	Austin City Limits Festival	Austin, Texas
Sept 15-16	Treasure Island Festival	San Francisco, CA
Oct 17-21	CMJ Music Marathon	New York City, NY
Oct 27-28	Vegoose	Las Vegas, NV





## 2008 NORTH AMERICAN TOUR

Jan 2-9	Jam 6 Cruise	The Caribbean
Feb 26 - March 2	Noise Pop Festival	San Francisco, CA
May 9	Children's Hospital of Orange County	Orange, CA
March 10	Dell Children's Center	Austin, TX
March 7-15	<b>South by Southwest</b>	Austin, TX
April 25	<b>Anthem Party @ Coachella</b>	Palm Springs, CA
May 1	<b>Levi's 5/01 Day</b>	Santa Monica, CA
May 24-25	<b>Sasquatch Festival</b>	George, WA
June 9	St. Jude Children's Research Hospital	Memphis, TN
June 12-15	<b>Bonnaroo</b>	Manchester, TN
June 18	Children's Hospital of Philadelphia	Philadelphia, PA
June 19 - June 30	<b>Pool Parties in McCarren Park</b>	New York, NY
July 1-15	New England Tour	New England
July 10-12	Canada Tour	Montreal
July 11-13	<b>Pitchfork Festival</b>	Chicago, IL
July 24-27	Comic-Con	San Diego, CA
Aug 1-3	<b>Lollapalooza</b>	Chicago, IL
Aug 22-24	<b>Outside Lands Festival</b>	San Francisco, CA
Aug 23	5th Annual Ashland Ice Cream Social	Ashland, OR
Aug 30 - Sept 1	Bumbershoot	Seattle, WA
Sept 3	Doernbecher Children's Hospital	Portland, OR
Sept 4-6	Musicfest North West	Los Angeles, CA
Sept 8	Children's Regional Medical Center	Seattle, WA
Sept 19-21	All Tomorrow's Parties	New York, NY
Sept 26-28	<b>Austin City Limits</b>	Austin, TX
Halloween!	<b>Vegoose</b>	Las Vegas, NV
Dec 4-7	Art Basel	Miami, FL

*This is a tentative plan of the major events for 2008. Dates on the tour route are subject to change, and events will be added throughout the year.*





## CURRENT SPONSORS



**BLUE BUNNY:** With almost a century of ice cream experience, Blue Bunny® is responsible for Bomb Pops®, Big Mississippi Mud® ice cream sandwiches, Pink Panthers™, and almost every other treat you used to buy from the local ice cream truck as a kid. They also make a variety of premium ice creams and original concoctions at their headquarters in Le Mars, Iowa, otherwise known as “Ice Cream Capital of the World.” We’re proud to be working with them this year- with Blue Bunny on our side, our goal of 500,000 ice creams has never looked closer!



**JAKPRINTS:** Jakprints has been on board since the moment of Ice Cream Man’s inception. One of the ways we spread the word about Ice Cream Man is by giving away free stickers with every frozen treat. On the back of the sticker is information about Ice Cream Man as well as Jakprints, plus a trackable discount code that has generated almost \$100,000 in revenue over three years of sponsorship. Jakprints also prints our custom ice cream boxes, business cards, vinyl vehicle stickers, and *Off the Wookie* (our magazine).



**BRIAN JEREMY:** Brian Jeremy is the architect of IceCreamMan.com, the virtual center of all things Ice Cream Man. He met Matt while working as Director of Development of Go Farm, a design and development agency in Pasadena, California. When Brian learned that we were in dire need of a more advanced web site, he took the opportunity to become our web sponsor and a vital member of the Ice Cream Crew. Leading a team of international web designers based in Hyper Island, Sweden, then completing the design of the site on his own in California, Brian has done an amazing job and made an invaluable contribution to Ice Cream Man’s continuing expansion.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS



**FREE YR RADIO:** Free Yr Radio, presented by Yaris and Urban Outfitters, liked what we did with Yaris Works in 2007, so they helped us outfit a brand new Bessita to travel out to South by Southwest in 2008. The goal of Free Yr Radio is to raise awareness and funds for non-commercial radio. Through free shows, station-sponsored sweepstakes, and a benefit CD featuring the bands who joined the effort, Free Yr Radio has raised money and generated buzz for some of our country’s most deserving independent stations. This year, Free Yr Radio has even bigger plans to help keep independent radio alive and kicking. Be sure to look for the new Bessita rocking Free Yr Radio events and traveling the country throughout 2008.



**LESPOrtsAC:** A few months before South by Southwest 2008, Paula from LeSportsac called Darin at SXSW because she was interested in the idea of giving out free popsicles from push carts during the festival. Darin, being the nice guy that he is, replied, “Uh... there’s a guy who already does that. You might want to talk to him about it.” Naturally, the we were happy to coordinate a joint project because it would allow us to give away even more ice cream. LeSportSac had just launched a new line of bags with two designs by Stella McCartney, so we decided to wrap two carts with the McCartney designs and give away a few thousand fruit pops at various parties and showcases throughout the week. Keep an eye out for more Ice Cream Man/LeSportsac projects in 2008, at home and abroad.



**WHITE STRIPES/WARNER BROS:** During South by Southwest 2007, we loaded up about a dozen people in Bessie and went to Threadgill’s for some fine home cooking. Over dinner, Chloe, the White Stripes’ publicist, brought up the possibility of working together to help promote their new album, *Icky Thump*. This conversation led to Ice Cream Man debuting exclusive *Icky Thump* tracks from a high-end stereo system mounted atop Bessie while giving away red and white ice cream treats in custom White Stripes boxes designed by the band’s personal artist, Rob Jones. This campaign started at Coachella 2007 and lasted through Bonnaroo 2007 in Tennessee.



**TOYOTA/YARIS:** We’ve worked with Toyota a few times to promote their Yaris subcompact vehicle. First, we outfitted a liftback model with vinyl stickers and a custom cooler in the trunk that could hold 500 ice creams. As part of the YarisWorks Tour of 2006, Starr and Val drove our two Bessitas on six-week tours through the east and west coast. The YarisWorks project focused on bringing people together in a dozen cities to participate in Do It Yourself projects like Button Making, Silk Screening T-shirts, and other workshops. Most people participating in the workshops started off their days visiting Bessita for free ice cream!





**PAST SPONSORS**



**LEVI'S:** While in Austin for South by Southwest 2007, we gave away a ton of ice cream at the Levi's/Fader Fort Party. Sheri, who works with Levi's, took a step outside, saw all of the happy people with ice cream and said, "We should talk when you get back to LA." Levi's decided to become our Main Sponsor for the rest of 2007. We've given away ice cream at multiple show-rooms, Levi's Stores, and Levi's events, including 501 Day in Santa Monica, CA.



**GUITAR CENTER:** When Kyle at Guitar Center heard that Ice Cream Man was going to be at Coachella 2005, he approached us to ask how Guitar Center could help. Thus began a two year sponsorship that helped up get around the west coast in 2005 and all over the country in 2006. We would cover events like the Drum Off, Spin Off, and King of the Blues for reviews on icecreamman.com then give away ice cream afterwards. We also made artist discount cards available while backstage at music festivals and featured the Guitar Center logo on Bessie and on every page of icecreamman.com.



**JULIE'S ORGANIC ICE CREAM:** While in Ashland, Oregon in 2004, Matt was the first ice cream man to ever carry Julie's Organic Ice Cream Bars. Since then, Julie's Organic has donated over 10,000 free ice creams to our cause, which have been given away at Coachella, Sasquatch, and numerous other events and festivals.



**MOCHI ICE CREAM:** In July of 2005 Ice Cream Man contacted Warner Bros. about giving away ice cream at the Hollywood premier of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Their one stipulation was a demand that Mochi Ice Cream jump onboard. We contacted Joel, who runs things at Mikawaya, and he donated a freezer full of the Japanese rice confection stuffed with ice cream. We've given away thousands of Mochi Ice Cream Balls ever since, and people are always asking for them.



**AMY'S ICE CREAM:** We can't think of a better ice cream company in the United States then Amy's Ice Cream in Austin, Texas. We featured them in our first issue of Off the Wookie, and when we returned to Texas for Austin City Limits Festival in 2006, Amy's Ice Cream donated a dozen tubs of ice cream for us to scoop backstage. When we returned to ACL in 2007, we continued to work with Amy's and were able to put a spotlight on their delicious contributions during an interview with 101X, one of Austin's largest radio stations.



**LIBERTY GARAGE:** Matt Peterson, who co-owns Liberty Garage with his wife Barrie, came through in the nick of time to create our logo. It's hard to imagine Ice Cream Man without it. He's retooled it a couple times, and at Liberty Garage you can find some of the coolest kids' clothes and gift items in styles similar to the one he created for the Ice Cream Man logo.





## PARTNERS AND FRIENDS



**SPIN MAGAZINE:** Ice Cream Man has been featured in SPIN Magazine, and while in New York City in the summer of 2007, we picked up SPIN folks and drove to a couple of advertising agencies to hand out free ice cream and copies of the magazine. We also make copies of SPIN available at the truck when working music festivals.



**LOCALS GUIDE OF ASHLAND, OREGON:** Every year, Matt and Bessie return to Ashland, Oregon for a big ice cream social. There, Ice Cream Man partners with the friendly staff of Locals Guide, who set everything up and help us bring on sponsors to cover the cost of the ice cream. Locals Guide is a community based newspaper; they run local advertisements and interviews leading up to the social as well as a good deal of content after the event, which has become an Ashland institution.



**PIKCARD:** While on the open seas with Jam Cruise 2008, crew member CraSH met the owner of Pikcard, who mentioned he'd be willing to help us out by printing custom Ice Cream Man guitar pick cards. They look like credit cards and hold four pics. We recieved our stash of cards at South By Southwest 2008 and handed them out to musicians all over Austin. Hopefully we'll be able to generate some business for Pikcard by helping to spread the word about them. Visit [pikcard.com](http://pikcard.com) and click on "Ice Cream Man Special Offer" to get a great deal on your own custom designed pikcard!



**PURE BUTTONS:** Jakprints is our biggest supporter, and they work with Pure Buttons for all their button needs. When Dameon at Jakprints put us in contact with Jeff at Pure Buttons, Matt jokingly said, "Hey, we need some buttons for South by Southwest," which was only a few weeks away. Jeff replied, "If you need buttons before SXSW we can do it. It's what we do. We're able to produce 4,500 buttons an hour." We took him up on his offer and split the space on the buttons' backing cards to to promote Pure Buttons. Visit [purebuttons.com](http://purebuttons.com) and use Promo Code "IceCreamMan" to save 15% on all orders!

## IN THE NAME OF BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER:

- \* We gave away ice cream at a Kaboom! inner city playground build in Los Angeles.
- \* Once or twice a year we give ice cream to kids at Wooten Center in support of their after school program in Los Angeles.
- \* Working with Borough President Marty Markowitz, we gave away ice cream to kids in Brooklyn who were going to summer camp for the first time.
- \* We have organized an ice cream social and fundraiser for St. Jude Children's Hospital and and in 2008 we will visit over a dozen other children's hospitals throughout the country, including St. Jude, as part of our new ice cream outreach initiative.
- \* We've worked with Warner Bros. and Disney to give away ice cream at multiple movie premiers in Los Angeles.
- \* We partnered up with Global Inheritance to give away green Mochi Ice Cream on Earth Day at The Lab in Costa Mesa, CA.
- \* We've given away thousands of ice creams at art shows all over the US.
- \* We arranged to have a guitar signed by artists at Vegoose 2005 and auctioned it off to raise over \$5000 for New Orleans musicians via the Tipitinas Foundation.



*Rolling Stone*

Los Angeles Times

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NASHVILLE  
SCENE

union  
17 September 2007  
Volume 61 Issue 3 • weekly

THE AUSTIN  
CHRONICLE





# WHY I HAND OUT FREE ICE CREAM

# MATT ALLEN'S HAPPY JOURNEY ACROSS AMERICA, NOW INCLUDING LINDSAY LOHAN & ELVIS COSTELLO

A CITY HALL INSIDER OUT

DJ SCOTTY COATS ON DISCO, TACOS

ONE BAND AT COACHELLA



**M**ATT ALLEN IS HIS NAME, BUT YOU DON'T need to know it—about 135,000 people know him as Ice Cream Man, and that's the important thing, he says. ("People ask, 'Are you Ice Cream Man?' And I point to the logo on the truck.") They remember him as the clean-shaven guy with the collared shirt (uniform prerequisite Allen is careful to maintain) with sweaters in all their technical positions—"UFO"—that's unidentified FROZEN object! And they know he's going to give out free ice cream from his 1969 Chevy step-truck at almost every music festival on the continent—and anywhere he feels like stopping on the way—in bars and artists and service personnel and security and anyone who ever asks, as long as there's something left in the freezer.

Like kids at children's hospitals and Lindsay Lohan (he's been lately) and Eric Costello and those thousands more have all walked away happy from Ice Cream Man's truck, and tonight he's at the Midtown record release show at the Prospecter, where a girl has just dropped her Dramatic on the sidewalk, and which Allen replaces immediately. That one's free, too: "You can't go wrong with a Dramatic!" he says.

He hopes to give away half-a-million free ice creams, and to enjoy the way he gets there, and you can watch the numbers grow as you read his interviews, from about 15,000 in 2005 to that 135,000 just last week as Allen and his crew get ready to start their summer touring schedule with this low-key stop at Prospecter (and Allen's the night before) and this weekend's trip to Coachella. Since 2004, when Allen bought his first ice cream truck and found that he did much better—and felt much better—giving away treats for free, the Ice Cream Man organization has expanded to include a substantial Long Beach base (of personnel including key Ice Cream Associates like Post Doctor's Mike Garcia, David Thornton, Dave Gough, *Elle's* writer Alex Herman and Steve Sisk and of solid ice cream delivery units, too) and a national network of supporters, none so active that they might eclipse Allen as the face of Ice Cream Man in their own home territory. Which he doesn't seem to mind much—in fact, he's just bought another ice cream truck, the next 135,000 will go out for free as fast, which—if the math holds—will make him twice as happy.

"The crew helps out so much that I'm just the mascot" he says, "and that's all I want: be someone else can run it as I drive around the country. The way I get joy is always from the smaller moments—something completely random. I don't know—at Austin City Limits, an older couple had walked into the backstage area and I said, 'Hey, free ice cream,' and the way they looked over—it was such a pure moment. Their first pure get-together—well nothing artificial or make-up—is just blind I'm exaggerating, but it's like—'Two hours waiting for this guy whole life!'"

**BEFORE ALLEN WAS ICE CREAM MAN, HE WAS JUST A** man, and before that he was a boy born and raised in Long Beach and growing up at Broadway and Belmont—"The ice cream truck came by sometimes, but not all the time," he says, "but I remember being extremely happy when it did!" He went to Fremont, Jefferson and Wilson, he says, and the first thing he might call a job was sorting Garbage Pall Kid cards at the now-shuttered Vanguard Sports cards. That was age 10, and by 14 he was working in his parents' Ballhawk on Second Street—"I just kind of grew up around—I don't think 'entrepreneur' exist; I think that's a Stanford business college word. They were just small-business people. My grandfather was a successful business man in Long Beach. He was part of

company that sold heavy equipment—he built it up, sold it off, cashed out and traveled the world with his wife."

In college in Colorado, Allen was a business major (and financial specialization and succeeding minor) who did purchase and push an ice cream cart (that looked nicer with a sign saying ICE CREAM MAN than MATT'S ICE CREAM, he found) around Durango but was planning to open a record store sometime in the near future. That changed in the kind of revolutionary instant Allen says he now considers a constant in his life.

"It's a classic Ice Cream Man quote about why I started," he says, "but when I liked the Appalachian Trail in 1988, it was a total spur-of-the-moment thing. My friend Aaron had asked me to go, and I realized I didn't want to open a record store—"No way, I don't want to be in this industry! Good moments in life are starker in that—people think there are gonna be major visible turning points in your life, and they're gonna put all this thought into those decisions, and the reality is that every decision comes down to a split-second, no matter how much you think of it."

"I live my life as a project built," he adds—hiking the trail, where he fell in love (and had his heart broken, he says) and earned the trail name Cabezon, and a cross-country roller-coaster trip, and a cross-country bike ride from Long Beach to Maine raising money for cancer research; and when he needed to rest his legs, he worked at a Thrift store (where he says he was fired for spending too much off-time shopping at the store); and worked production at an organic chocolate factory in Ashland, Oregon; and at a bar in Austin, Texas.

"I'm glad of the adventures I got in to," he says, "but I figured if I thought enough, what I was supposed to do would come to me. And for six-seven-eight years it never did. So after a lot of adventures and getting fired from two jobs, you know what? I said, I can't figure it out—I'm buying a truck!"

That would be the now-famous "Humble," a 1969 Chevy Step Van bought from an Oregon ice cream man leaving the business behind, christened with inspiration from a girl he was dating who liked to stretch cows. ("Ice cream and milk and cows—perfect!") He paid \$1,200 (and put about \$10,000 into care and repair, he thinks) and moved it home in Long Beach, and he secured a website to match the name on his Durango pubcart. ("You're Ice Cream Man!" a friend had declared then—like a superhero, I said? "Exactly," grins Allen.) And the logo came from Long Beach artist Matt Pelousos, who had to make a few little tweaks before Allen had what he wanted: "The first one did not have the hair on the side, but I said, 'Look, I need the afro profile!' Allen says. "So I put the hat on, took a picture of myself in the mirror and sent it to him—there we go, that's Ice Cream Man!"

**THAT WAS 2004, WHEN THE TRADITIONAL ICE CREAM** business model—buy cold, sell cheap—came and went in probably a matter of hours: always Allen found he had a line winding down the street when he started giving away handouts just to clear out the truck before the merchandise melted, and business-savvy Allen wondered if he could make a living by giving something away: Long Beach's second All Tomorrow's Parties festival—with Lou Reed, the Grays and Allen's much-loved Flaming Lips at the Queen Mary—was one of the very first Ice Cream Man appearances, when Allen and a tiny crew of

PHOTO BY JENNIE WARREN



THE AUSTIN

# CHRONICLE

## ICE CREAM MAN

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**'YLA NO. 11':**  
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**CINEMATEXAS:**  
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for Battle

**WHAT MADE  
MILWAUKEE FAMOUS?**  
Never Trying to Catch Up!

What's So Funny 'Bout Peace, Love, and

# FREE ICE CREAM!?

Ice Cream Man  
**MATT ALLEN**  
Cools Down ACL

by Austin Powell p.70



## music

# WHAT'S SO FUNNY ABOUT PEACE, LOVE, AND ICE CREAM?

Matt Allen's free flavors are guaranteed to satisfy **BY AUSTIN POWELL**

The "Miracle Man," Elvis Costello, prefers a vanilla ice cream bar dipped in rich, dark chocolate with almonds. Ben Gibbard of Death Cab for Cutie has a sweet tooth for Bomb Pops, while Wilco songsmith Jeff Tweedy goes for shark-shaped Great White Lemon Ice Popsicles. Jim James's craving for fudge bars links back to My Morning Jacket's Chocolate and Ice EP. Kanye West, Arcade Fire, Sufjan Stevens, and the Deers all favor organic flavors of Julie's renowned ice cream bars.

Matt Allen has served them all. Since 2004, he has trekked more than 15,000 miles from his Southern California headquarters in a 1969 Chevy Stepvan, christened "Bessie," to hand out free ice cream at the country's largest music festivals. In other words, Matt Allen is not just an ice cream man. He's the Ice Cream Man.

"The term has over 50 years of goodwill attached to it, yet there's no face; there's no image, no brand, no company, no logo, there's nothing," cries Allen. "My idea was that I could make myself Ice Cream Man so that when people think of ice cream, they'll think of me, my logo, my company."

This week he adds the Austin City Limits Music Festival to his roster.

Allen was aboard the Queen Mary when a then-unknown Wolf Parade was unceremoniously kicked off the ship for reckless behavior (hence the name of the band's Sub Pop debut, *Apologies to the Queen Mary*). He distributed ice cream outside the Beastie Boys surprise gig at Stubbs's during SXSW in March. He was backstage at Bonnaroo when Stevie Nicks joined Tom Petty for "Stop Draggin' My Heart Around." At Wilkerson, he was an enchanted alien extra on stage, dancing to the Flaming Lips' "Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots Part Two." Most recently, he was the reason Jack White of the Raconteurs told 40,000 fans at Lollapalooza that there was free ice cream at the festival.



Matt Allen (l) and Sufjan Stevens

"People grow up and think they have to give up the things that made them happy when they were younger," says Allen, who has, to date, given away more than 50,000 frozen treats. "That makes absolutely no sense to me."

## Fresh Cream

Allen, who won't disclose his age but must hover around 30, is the quintessential Toys "R" Us kid. He finds happiness in life's small wonders. He plays kickball; he does the happy dance. With free-flowing floppy hair and thrift-store threads, he resembles an elementary student allowed to pick his own outfit for the

day. His venture, meanwhile, has grown from a one-man operation into a roving national network of like-minded individuals and companies who support Allen's desire to change the world one smile at a time.

In many ways, he's the last great explorer; a wanderer who gets by on kindness and karma. He has hiked the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine and the Pacific Coast Trail from Mexico to Canada. He went on a cross-country roller coaster trip, conquering almost 100 in 30 days. When his mother was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2001, he biked from his hometown in Long Beach, Calif., all the way to Maine to raise money for cancer research. Some people send postcards from the places they visit; Allen creates hubs, spreading the vision of Ice Cream Men to all he encounters.

The enterprise began as a summer job while attending college in Durango, Colo., and consisted of a three-wheel bike, a cooler, and a boom box. After graduation, Allen pursued his Willy Wonka dream of working at a chocolate factory in Ashland, Ore., before buying Bessie for \$1,200 and becoming "a classic ice cream man," more Jonathan Richman than Tom Waits or Van Halen, "trying to make a buck in your typical Americana town."

After a difficult first full season of serving, he threw an ice cream social to clear out inventory, but the overwhelming response triggered an epiphany.

"There was a line the length of a football field, all ages, waiting for free ice cream, and everyone was just so happy," Allen recounts. "If I'm not going to make any money selling ice cream, why not find a way to give it away?"

Ice Cream Man returned home and began seeking sponsorships, on a project-by-project basis, to cover the cost of slinging cream at local events like Coachella and ArthurFest. The equa-

tion itself hasn't varied since: more sponsors, more free ice cream. Consequently, Allen name-drops sponsors the way musicians do release dates — Guitar Center, Fruitiki, GameFly, Capitol Publishing, Jakprints, Rhapsody, Julie's Organic Ice Cream, Mochi Ice Cream — while Bessie doubles as billboard. The business is based on an attempt to break even, but that's no picnic.

"I'm living in my mom's house right now," Allen wails. "I sold my 1969 Chrysler Newport. I've sold nearly everything I've owned to make this happen, and it's still going."

"The purpose is to show people that nontraditional business ideas can succeed; there are ways to do it. You can achieve your dreams. You can love your job. You can make a difference. I want to live by example, to inspire and motivate people to do things."

Since 2004, Allen's trekked more than 15,000 miles in a 1969 Chevy Stepvan christened "Bessie" to hand out free ice cream at the country's largest music festivals.

## Local Licks

Before heeding the call of the Ice Cream Man, Allen, spurred by late-night ventures to Sam's BBQ on a visit to Austin, moved here to help reopen the Hole in the Wall in 2003. As general manager, he, along with Paul Minor, booked a batch of shows, including a double bill of Scott H. Biram and Daniel Johnston, to celebrate the club's 30th anniversary. Shortly thereafter, the relationship melted, and he left both the Drag-bound live music venue and bar, as well as Central Texas.

He's kept his foot in Austin's door ever since. For SXSW 06, Allen utilized both the Hole and Cream Vintage to throw one huge, scrumptious ice cream social that featured intimate performances from Islands, Two Gallants, Mazarin, and Envelopes, to name a few.

"I never just want to go to something," Allen says. "I want to contribute; I want to be a part of what makes it special."

Ice Cream Man's hub here in town remains one of his strongest. A crew of roughly one dozen volunteers has helped with everything from local show reviews for IceCreamMan.com, to tossing ice cream from the main stage at the Sasquatch! Music Festival in Washington's Gorge. "It feels like a collective kind of deal, like we're all part of something much bigger than just music or ice cream," says Aaron Zachs, a graduate student at UT and frequent Ice Cream Man contributor. "I support Matt in whatever the hell he chooses to do."

continued on p. 72



Allen with Spoon





While Allen's trying to work out deals with some of his routine sponsors for this weekend's ACL Fest, like Julie's Organic Ice Cream and Fruitikó, he's craving Austin's famed Amy's Ice Creams in his van's freezer. "I've always given away single-serve treats, but I've never scooped ice cream from Bessie before," he admits. "If we had Amy's on board, I'd eat a boatload of it."

**The Scoop Backstage**

Most nights, Allen strews an inflatable mattress over the freezers in his ice cream truck and falls asleep. "You find ways to make it happen," he shrugs. "You sleep on the side of the road, sleep at Wal-Mart, sleep at rest stops, get kicked out of parking lots at 3am 'cause you're not supposed to be there. It's life."

"How could you not have great things to say about a guy who gives away good, free ice cream," Attal ponders. "I'm still wondering what the catch is."



Ted Leo (I)

It's a miracle Allen even makes it to each festival. Bessie has neither air conditioning nor cruise control, and in the last year the vehicle has needed a new ignition system, carburetor, engine, brakes, radiator, and tires. For each city he travels to, Allen must track down enough ice cream to dish out and garner the necessary permits to do so.

At Bonnaroo, the nation's largest music festival, Bessie was feeding the frenzy from the backstage bonanza, Lewis Black knocking 'em down at the open bar, Thurston Moore and Stephen Malkmus dining together in the catering tent, Steel Train practicing their swings in the batting cage. Security guards lined the gates armed with Bomb Pops, Disco Biscuits, Magic Numbers, Devendra Banhart, and Clap Your Hands Say Yeah all hovered around the truck, a clear kinship felt between the Ice Cream Man's grassroots approach and their own DIY principles. Allen was like a kid at recess, enthusiastically greeting each passerby. His smile never faded as the words "free ice cream" stopped most everyone dead in their tracks.

"We show up and give away thousands of free ice creams at no cost to the promoters," Allen explains. "We give it away to everyone who makes the festival possible: security, staff, artists, everyone. All we ask is to be taken care of with passes for our crew, writers, and photographers."

The system never fails. Over the course of three days, Ice Cream Man gave out more than 2,500 treats while his crew — three photographers, three staffers, and a pair of writers — took more than 7,000 digital photos and penned reviews of nearly every performance for the Ice Cream Man Web site ([www.icecreamman.com](http://www.icecreamman.com)). For his loyal volunteer staff, the experience pays for itself, and very well.

"It's a once in a lifetime opportunity to be there and to shoot Tom Petty," says Jeremiah Garcia, a professional photographer whose work for Ice Cream Man has been picked up by *Vice Magazine* and *Artforum Magazine*. "There's room to do anything you want or can do, and when he can repay you, he will. It won't be monetary, but you'll be paid back tenfold. This past year has been the best year of my life."

**The Rocky Road to ACL**

If smiles are contagious, it's no wonder people like Lollapalooza and ACL promoter Charles Attal are eager for another visit from Ice Cream Man. "How could you not have great things to say about a guy who gives away good, free ice cream?" ponders Austin's Attal. "I'm still wondering what the catch is."

**Ice Cream Handicapping: ACL '06**



Sam Beam

**IRON & WINE (SAM BEAM)**

"He's got a couple kids, and if the family is around they'll usually stop by for some goodies."

**MATISYAHU**

"Even though we carry kosher and have camped next to him, I still don't think he's taken us up on the free ice cream yet. His drummer Jonah David likes most of the treats though."

**CALEXICO**

"Joey [Burns] and John [Converline] both dipped into the secret Reese's stash at Lollapalooza."

**RAY LAMONTAGNE**

"I think I gave him ice cream at an in-store at Fingerprints in Long Beach."

**SECRET MACHINES**

"I hooked up the band through the back door before they headed over to the stage they were playing on at Lollapalooza."

**TED LEO + PHARMACISTS**

"At the Pitchfork Festival he said he didn't eat many cold things because it affected his throat. He then proceeded to pull a bottle of hot sauce out of his pocket and take a chug. Soon after that, he gave in and had a Great White Lemon Ice Popsicle."

**THE DEARS**

"At Sasquatch! 2005 they ate more ice cream than any other band. Don't think I've seen them since then, so hopefully they'll stop by the truck."

**NADA SURF**

"Daniel [Lorca] mentioned something about being picky about combining foods and wanted to make sure his ice cream had his undivided attention."

**STARS**

"I gave Terquil [Campbell] some cream at Lollapalooza and then told him his shirt, which stated, 'I miss Grant McClernan' was pretty damn cool."

**THE SHINS**

"The bass player, Dave [Hernandez], used to be an ice cream man in Albuquerque, N.M."

**EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY**

"The band was at All Tomorrow's Parties in Long Beach, the first festival we slaug at."

**BEN HARPER**

"We gave Ben, Laura Dem, and their son some ice cream at Sasquatch! Festival." - A.P.

**Ice Cream Man on the Web**

[www.icecreamman.com](http://www.icecreamman.com)

The premier site for thousands of concert photos, reviews, and updates.

[www.drkife.com/icecreammanmovie](http://www.drkife.com/icecreammanmovie)

A minimovie capturing a day in the life of Allen as a neighborhood ice cream man in Ashland, Ore.

[www.rideforcancer.com](http://www.rideforcancer.com)

Documentation of Allen's cross-country bike ride in 2001, which raised more than \$15,000 for charity.

[www.bessita.com](http://www.bessita.com); [www.yarisworks.com](http://www.yarisworks.com)

Ice Cream Man's custom Toyota Yaris "Bessita."

[www.affthetwookie.com](http://www.affthetwookie.com)

Ice Cream Man's how-to guide for SXSW.



Quenching the Flaming Lips [austinchronicle.com/webextra](http://austinchronicle.com/webextra)



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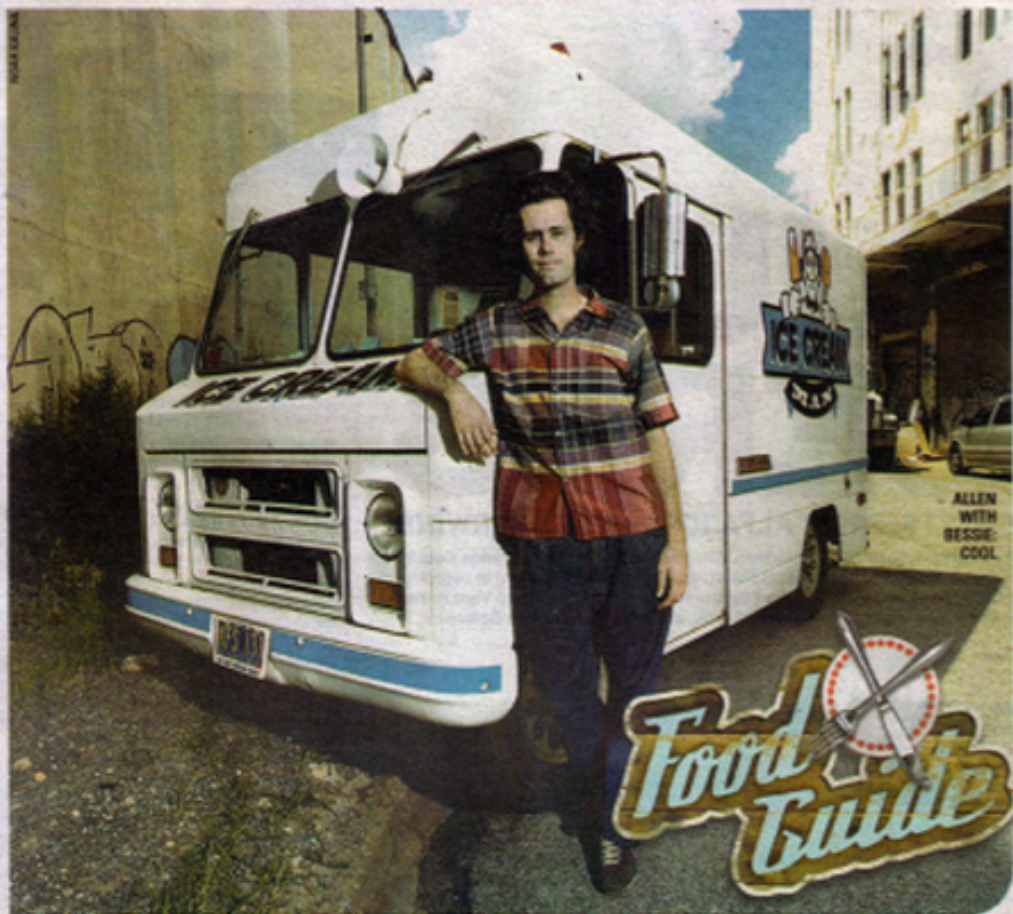
From Appalachia to L.A.,  
**Matt Allen**  
—aka the **Ice Cream Man**—  
slings free cream  
and lives the dream.

by Lucinda Michele Knapp  
photos by Aaron Farley









## WE ALL SCREAM FOR ICE CREAM

MATT ALLEN WILL FIX YOU WITH A DRUMSTICK BY GREG STACY

*See me coming, you ain't got no change  
Don't worry baby, it can be arranged  
Show me you can smile, baby just for me  
Fix you with a Drumstick, I'll do it for free*  
—Tom Waits, *Ice Cream Man*

**IT SOUNDS LIKE THE ULTIMATE SUMMERTIME** daydream: buy yourself an ice cream truck and drive around America giving away free ice cream, getting by mostly on good karma and stopping off at concerts to hang out backstage with rock stars. But that daydream is all in a day's work for Matt Allen, the Ice Cream Man.

Show Allen a smile, and he'll fix you with a Drumstick, or a Good Hamor Bar, or a Choco Taco, and he'll always do it for free. Since 2004, Allen says he's handed out 35,000 ice cream treats at concerts, festivals and other events across the USA. He hopes to give away a million before he's through.

On a muggy Sunday in early June, Allen peeled over on his way to Kansas and spoke to me by phone. He was beginning a three-month tour. He already sounded exhausted, and while we chatted, an angry wasp was pestering him inside his truck. Allen has spent this summer driving through the desert in a 1969 Chevy truck without air-conditioning or cruise control, sleeping on a thin mattress spread atop the freezer in the back, and waking with the sunrise. Ice cream trucks are notoriously unreliable, and Allen takes it as a given that his—which he has christened Bessie—will break down at some point.

"Yeah, Bessie hasn't been too friendly lately," Allen says. "Just about

everything in her is brand-new. I've had to replace it all. They're not made for trips like this, so you have to do endless preventative maintenance for all the things that could go wrong. It's been unbelievably horrible."

Allen has just about the most fun job ever, but having this much fun is damn hard work. He's put in 100-hour weeks as the Ice Cream Man, sometimes traveling 15 hours per day.

The Ice Cream Man arrives at a concert, hands out free treats to the crowd and the crew backstage, then he's at leisure to enjoy the show as the sun goes down. At [icecreamman.com](http://icecreamman.com), Allen and a small team of volunteers write concert reviews and post photos of folks happily scarfing down their complimentary treats. Allen relies on corporate sponsorship to underwrite his tasty brand of philanthropy, and he's worked out deals with sponsors ranging from Mochi Ice Cream to WESC clothing.

"I've always kinda had a hatred for advertising," Allen says. "But if we do it right, this is a win-win for everybody. I always say, they can run a quarter-page ad someplace, or for the same money, they can use us. For them it's a cool way to integrate their product into the event, and we need their money to keep Bessie running and to keep the freezers full."

The operation is headquartered in Long Beach, Allen's hometown, but it reaches all over the nation and Allen plans to take it international soon. He's working on a sponsorship deal with

Toyota that would see a fleet of Yaris cars transformed into roving mini-Bessies, or "Besitas," as Allen calls them. But until then, he'll continue to saddle up Bessie and together they'll travel the nation doing God's work.

Allen has always been a free spirit, planning his life around the kind of wild ideas that come to you when you're staring out your office window during a joyless lunch hour. He and a buddy once made a roller coaster trip across America, riding 100 coasters in a month. Another time, Allen rode a bicycle from Long Beach to Maine, raising \$17,000 for breast cancer research. He's hiked the Appalachian Trail. Most of us give up our lunch-hour fantasies, finish our coffee, and go back to pecking around on eBay and pretending we're working. But Allen just isn't a life-of-quiet-desperation kinda guy.

"It's the doing it that gets it done," Allen says, "not the planning."

Allen started selling ice cream in college. He bought a three-wheeled bike, attached a cooler, and rode around Denver with a boom box playing instrumental jazz. After he bought Bessie for \$1,200, he had an epiphany: Why not roam the Earth, giving ice cream away? He makes it sound like the most natural thing in the world.

Allen says he'll give this operation five to seven years, and if it doesn't work out, he'll be ready to give it up.

"I'll disappear," he says, "then appear someplace new. I'll start over. With a new adventure."



no. 21 forward



Aaron Aufrand: Text  
Courtesy of The Ice Cream Man: Images

# ICE CREAM MAN

ICE CREAM MAN MATT ALLEN CREATED [WWW.ICECREAMMAN.COM](http://WWW.ICECREAMMAN.COM) TO DOCUMENT HIS ADVENTURES IN HIS ICE CREAM TRUCK, BESSIE. HE SAT DOWN WITH *ANTHEM* TO DISCUSS THE BIG PLANS THAT BEGAN WITH A SIMPLE SUMMER JOB.

## ON BEGINNINGS

I was living in Ashland, Oregon where this whole incarnation of [Ice Cream Man] started. I was up there trying to get a truck, and I was going against a guy who had been doing the ice cream there for fifteen or twenty years. I went back six or eight months later and found out that the guy wasn't even really running his truck anymore, so he helped me find another truck. I bought that truck, then I contacted the guy who had [icecreamman.com](http://icecreamman.com) and he wasn't using it. [He was a] nice guy, ended up selling it to me for less than he paid for it. So the whole plan was just to drive around Ashland and sell ice cream.

## At the end of the [summer] season

I figured the best way was to end it with a bang instead of tapering out with just a few products, so we—I use I and we interchangeably, because I can't say "I" because I get so much help from people—had a big ice cream social. It was a huge success, hundreds of people showed up, news crews and everything, and I gave everything away. Just an end of the summer blowout, thanks for the good times. From that moment it was like "OK, I gotta figure out a way to give this all away for free."

## ON THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

We launched the website, [icecreamman.com](http://icecreamman.com) with the Coachella review. When you have a festival like Coachella with 100 bands, you open up the paper the next day and you have four or five pictures and two or three paragraphs. We had 1000 pictures and forty or fifty reviews. It's something that I don't think

has really been done before. Nobody's done something to that scale.

I go to so many shows, and every time I see a photographer I flag them down and ask them who they're shooting for. It's kind of interesting how many people say "You know, I'm just shooting for myself." Photographers view [the website] as an outlet, somewhere for them to show their photos where they're going to get seen. If you have [bobsmith.com](http://bobsmith.com) and you're a photographer, how much traffic are you going to get there? But when you have [icecreamman.com](http://icecreamman.com) where everyday there's something new, it's a good opportunity and it's worked really well so far.

We allow anyone that has basic skills and lot of ambition to be a part of this project. The whole project is basically run by a lot of people around the world helping out. There's just not much money giving away ice cream. I have people in England, France, you know, people to help the website, people to do whatever they can. There's a guy in Germany that helps with scripting issues.

## ON THE FUTURE

The basic idea is to get world famous, have the audience, and get sponsors to cover the costs of driving around and giving away ice cream. I just want to try as much as possible because you don't know what's going to work, what's going to be that big break. Imagine if or when I get on Letterman. Instantly you have an audience of 3 or 5 million people and that's the one thing [that launches you]. Or MTV or whatever it is.

It's a five to seven year project. This is year number three, which always seems to be a blossoming point for small businesses. It seems like this time in business is when things start taking off. You've done all the footwork, you've got your base, you have all your contacts, so when something happens you know who to turn to to get something done.

You can't really make a living selling ice cream these days. You're buying something for a quarter and selling it for fifty or seventy-five cents, and you are paying for gas and insurance. I would love to have one of these companies that make ice cream sponsor me. Do you know how much a new product roll-out is? \$8 million. I'd love to tell them "Just give me 1% of your marketing budget." \$80,000 dollars is nothing to them, but it would be huge for us. And with that \$80,000, I could probably get them more good press than they can with the \$8 million.

I had a realization that I don't care enough about money to make millions of dollars and then give millions of dollars away. So I do something like this, where hopefully I can find a way—say, in Africa—driving around giving away thousands of ice creams to kids who may never see an ice cream truck again or even know what an ice cream truck is. Yeah, they need food, water, but I can't do that. I can't make a million dollars to give them all that, but that one moment where they get that free ice cream is a moment that they might not ever forget, and to be that person responsible for that moment,

the potential of that idea was too big to pass up. Something as simple as an ice cream can make someone so happy.

## ON HIS REASONS

My goal is to be the happiest person in the world. I've walked from Mexico to Canada. I rode my bike from Long Beach to Maine, raised a bunch of money for breast cancer. After doing some of these other ventures, I realized "Whoa, I can do anything." Ten years ago if you had said "You're going to walk from Mexico to Canada," it just wouldn't have crossed my mind. It wasn't a childhood dream or anything. But when you finish it, you think, "I just walked 3,000 miles, and it was fun." People think all of these things are a big deal, but really it's just a bunch of little steps. Once you are willing to take that risk, to lose everything in a sense, you set yourself free and you can focus on just being happy. I can't think of a better job in the world than traveling around giving away free ice cream. Nobody is going to give you that job. The only way you are going to have it is if you make it happen. So why not find a way to make it happen.

I tell kids, "Having an ice cream truck probably isn't your dream, but I will guarantee you that no one is going to walk up and give you an ice cream truck." You've got to find a way to make it happen. Everyone has a different situation, but that still doesn't change the fact that you have to make it happen. ■

[www.icecreamman.com](http://www.icecreamman.com)





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# ROCK & ROLL DAILY

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## Until Next Year, Bonnaroo: Farewell to the Fans

6/19/07, 6:54 pm EST



We salute you, citizens of the 'Roo. To wrap-up our Bonnaroo 2007 coverage, we offer this Rock Daily montage of fan antics, featuring special appearances by the Ice Cream Man, [Regina Spektor](#), hippie hula-hoopers, and assorted other good-natured freaky people.

Rolling Stone

### Comments

**Lt. Dan** | 6/22/2007, 6:42 pm EST

Regina Rocks and thank God for the Ice Cream man! I think I saw him at Vegoose as well...

**Jeff** | 6/20/2007, 9:41 pm EST

Yay Regina Spektor! Give that lady some free ice cream, won't ya? 😊

**Dan Howard** | 6/20/2007, 4:27 pm EST

Ice Cream Man and everyone else love to see The Hold Steady. Regina Spektor is awesome as well.





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## Rock Festival Question of the Summer: Who Is the Ice Cream Man?

8/16/06, 7:17 pm EST



A mysterious figure has been seen in the backstage areas at Bonnaroo, Coachella and Lollapalooza this summer. He looks like he's in a Saddle Creek Records band, but he's called the **Ice Cream Man**. He has no stated purpose: He just pulls his ice cream truck up gives away free popsicles to roadies, hangers-on and people like Mike Skinner and Jack White.

But who is this Ice Cream Man? What's his angle? Why is he only giving his treats only to rock stars, and not paying show-goers? And why is he insisting that we try that cardboard-like organic ice cream bar, and not that Kraft Drumstick that we really want? We decided to crack this thing wide open, so we got him on the phone.

The Ice Cream Man's name is Matt Allen and he's from Long Beach, California. Before he found his calling, he did things like walk from Mexico to Canada and worked in record stores. He owns his ice cream truck, and asks various dessert companies to donate treats, then travels around from event to event, passing out ice cream and, if he's lucky, breaking even. Eventually he wants to take his project worldwide and give out ice cream in the streets of small towns the world over, but in the meantime he'll stick with this whole rock thing. "The rock and roll side of what I do was never part of the plan," he says. "It just kind of happened because of access — it was like, 'Hey, All Tomorrow's Parties is in my home town, and I can get as many backstage passes as I want, I can get all my friends in and if we work it right, we can get it all for free.'" You go, Ice Cream Man.

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8/7/06, 9:43 am EST

## VIDEO BLOG, Lollapalooza Day 3 - Free Ice Cream!



When it comes to the backstage scene, here's the most beloved act of the festival: the ice cream man and his two cute, blond assistants, who have been passing out thousands of free ice cream bars to rock stars and their friends. (Ah yes, the perks of fame.) It only took a little bit of coaxing to get him to reveal which bars go with which rockers.

-- Elizabeth Goodman

### TOPICS

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- American Idol (3)
- Best & Worst Lists (22)
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# Weekend

## The beat in the streets

Music festivals are the new  
block parties. And they're  
even coming to downtown  
'neighborhood.' Page 28

THE  
BRAD  
PITT OF  
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AN ICE  
CREAM  
MAN'S  
SCOOP

FILMS  
FROM A  
KID'S-EYE  
VIEW





THE ALTERNATIVES



RICHARD BARTOZ *Los Angeles Times*

**DREAM JOB:** Matt Allen points out his offerings to Jade Porter, 6, at the Al Wooten Jr. Heritage Center in South Los Angeles.

# Not fat-free, just free

**Ice Cream Man gets corporate backing to hand out thousands of frosty treats.**

By **JEFF MILLER**  
*Special to The Times*

**M**ATT ALLEN is in the back courtyard at the Al Wooten Jr. Heritage Center, an after-school center for kids in South L.A., and, somehow, it's become career day. The kids are asking the Long Beach native about his job, and as he tells them about it, they drool in pink and blue, awestruck by his answer.

"I'm the most famous ice cream man in the world," he tells an 8-year-old girl, beaming as she sucks down a Bomb Pop. "Not that I really know what that means."

He may not know what it really means, but it's true: When you mention Ice Cream Man to anyone who's met Allen in the last three years, immediately they'll conjure up his image in their head: floppy hair, lanky body, perpetual smile. And everyone smiles back. Because this Ice Cream Man comes with a topping: He never sells anything. It's all free. No catch.

And who doesn't like free ice cream?

That question could be the impetus for Ice Cream Man's mini-empire, one that's found him hobnobbing with rock royalty (he's been backstage at just about every major festival of the year; his next stop is at the Detour Fest in downtown Los Angeles on Saturday) on his way to his professed goal of distributing 500,000 free ice creams.

He's logged more than 20,000 miles to distribute 60,000 treats so far — giving out ice cream wherever someone's itching for a Drumstick. Sometimes it's kids in South L.A. Sometimes it's pa-

trons walking across the parking lot at Coachella. And often, it's someone on the street who spots the truck and gets a bit curious.

He started out by selling product in a small town in Colorado. But Allen — who gives his age as "the mysterious place between childhood and too old to fulfill my dreams" but seems to be in his late 20s or early 30s — is, of course, a self-confessed dreamer. "It's much more fun to think as big as you can think," he says, "and then scale down if necessary." After he purchased a 1969 ice cream truck, he threw an ice cream social in Ashland, Ore., giving away the extra product he had at the end of the summer. News crews showed up. And the idea for Ice Cream Man was formed.

Now Allen has legions of Ice Cream Man helpers across the country. They volunteer when he's in town in exchange for concert tickets, backstage passes and other perks, and companies look at Allen's unusual business model as a possible boon for

## Street treats

The LA Weekly Detour Festival brings rock music to downtown Los Angeles. **Page 28**

them too. That model is this sponsorship.

After slinging cream at the 2004 All Tomorrow's Parties rock festival in Long Beach, he had an idea. What if he went from music festival to music festival, both backstage and in the audience, and spread some corporate goodwill along with his flavorful treats?

**I**T sounds crazy, but the idea of companies covering his living expenses and supplying him with product worked. Ice cream firms signed on immediately. And other companies — such as Guitar Center — saw Allen's plan as a perfect opportunity to get in touch with their client base. Re-

cently he partnered with Toyota, who extended his fleet from just his ailing, looney ice cream truck with two brand-new Yaris-es, painted with his grinning Ice Cream Man logo.

"It's so noninvasive for someone. Everyone loves ice cream," says Kyle Rogers, Guitar Center's marketing manager. It's also the kind of direct marketing that companies dream of. When Allen serves up an Otter Pop to someone who's sweaty coming off the stage, he also hands them a discount card for Guitar Center — a useful piece of swag for a musician, and a dream for a company reliant on word-of-mouth for their sales.

"It doesn't feel like there's any hidden agenda behind it other than free ice cream," Rogers says of Allen's plan. "It's important to us because of the authenticity. There's no smoke and mirrors with Matt."

Dacene Guess, marketing director and vice president of Jakprints, a custom sticker-and-apparel company, agrees. He was tentative when he originally partnered with Allen, making him pay for half of a \$2,000 run of stickers

to promote the Ice Cream Man website (full of photos and anecdotes from the events Allen attends). But a funny thing happened when the stickers ran out: Guess went online and saw that Ice Cream Man referrals had led to \$12,000 worth of business. "I love what he does," he says, "and I'll continue to support him as long as I can — he's art in the making."

Rogers calls Allen the Andy Warhol of Ice Cream, and if it were just his sponsors saying that, it could seem a little suspect. But the artists who he's met are equally impressed. Wayne Coyne, the singer for the psychedelic rock band the Flaming Lips — who recently invited Allen to their tour bus at the Austin City Limits festival for a personal delivery — describes Allen lovingly as "a Dr. Seuss character," adding, "He's finding his own format — which is what all artists do, in a sense. They find their own way to be unique. I think he's doing that."

But for Allen, who once rode a bicycle cross-country and worked in a chocolate factory, it's not necessarily art at all. When people ask him why he does it, his answer is simple: "If you could travel the world and give away ice cream, would you?"

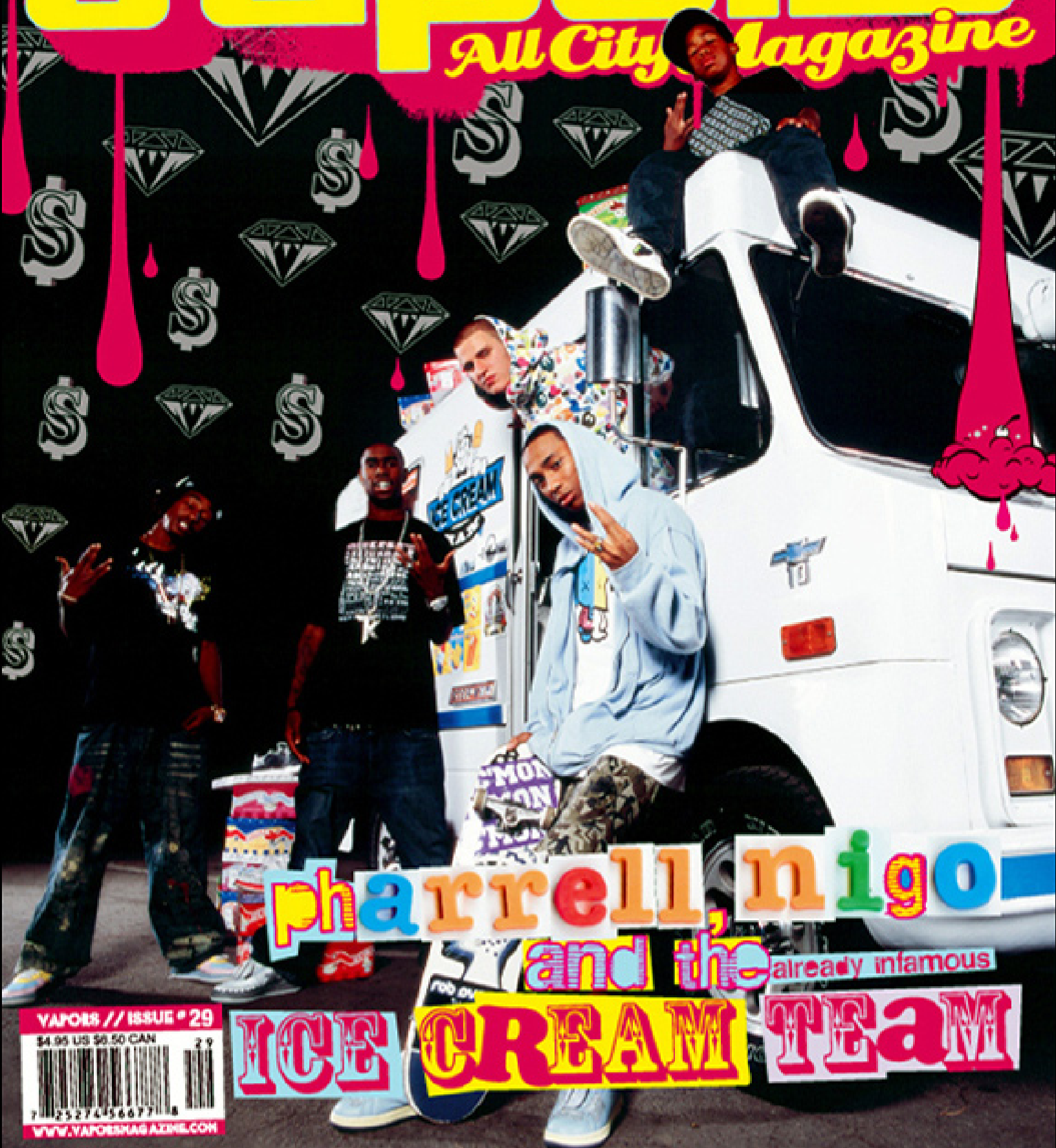
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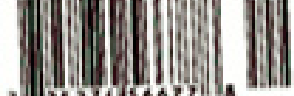


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# Our Town

[snip] **Can Reaganauts fight terrorism?** Indiana University law professor Gerard Magliocca thinks not: "Not only is the conservative era nearing the end of its natural lifespan, but the events of September 11 have undermined the message that brought President Reagan and his heirs to office. In his

First Inaugural, Reagan famously explained that "in this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problems. Government is the problem." Responding to the crisis of terrorism, however, is a quintessential government function." —Harold Henderson | [henderson@chicagoreader.com](mailto:henderson@chicagoreader.com)

## Lifestyles

### Giving It Away and Making It Pay

*How Matt Allen gets Levi's and the White Stripes to buy you ice cream.*

By Austin Powell

Elvis Costello likes vanilla ice cream bars dipped in dark chocolate with almonds. Ben Gibbard of Death Cab for Cutie has a taste for Bomb Pops. Kanye West, Sufjan Stevens, the Arcade Fire, and the Dears all favor Julie's Organic ice cream. And Matt Allen has served them all.

Over the last three years, Allen has trekked more than 35,000 miles in a 1969 Chevy Step Van to hand out free ice cream at the country's largest music festivals. He estimates that he's given away nearly 100,000 frozen treats to date. It's not enough for people to think of him as an ice cream man; Allen wants everyone to know him as *the* ice cream man.

"The term has over 50 years of goodwill attached to it, yet there's no face, no image, no brand, no company, no logo. There's nothing," he says. "My idea was that I could make myself the Ice Cream Man



Matt Allen

Last summer Allen hit three of Chicago's biggest outdoor festivals: Pitchfork, Intonation, and Lollapalooza, where he got a plug from Jack White in front of 40,000 people during the Raconteurs' set. This weekend he's returning to Pitchfork, where he'll be dishing out sweets all three days.

Allen, who won't reveal his age, grew up in Long Beach, California, and attended Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, where he studied accounting and finance. It was there, during his last summer break, that he launched his first ice cream operation: a three-wheel bike, a cooler, and a boom box. An avid adventurer who'd once spent a month traveling cross-country to ride roller coasters—100 in all—Allen graduated in 1998 and spent

from Georgia to Maine and the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada. In 2001 he biked to Maine from his home in Long Beach to raise money for cancer research. On every trip he hit every chocolate and candy factory he could find.

"People grow up and think they have to give up the things that made them happy when they were younger," Allen says. "That makes absolutely no sense to me."

In 2002 Allen took a job at a chocolate factory in Ashland, Oregon. He says Willy Wonka has always been an influence, and working at the factory was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream. But he left six months later when a new general manager was brought in, then spent the next few months in Austin, where he helped reopen the

Less than a year later, after returning from a backpacking trip to Hawaii, Allen heard from a man in Ashland who was looking for someone to take over the ice cream route he'd worked for nearly 20 years. Allen made his way back to Oregon, bought an ice cream truck for \$1,200, christened it Bessie, and took over the route under the name Ice Cream Man. He struggled to turn a profit, and at the end of his first full season he decided to throw an ice cream social at a city park, giving away the rest of his inventory. "There was a line the length of a football field, all ages, waiting for free ice cream, and everyone was just so happy," he says. The event was an epiphany. "If I'm not going to make any money selling ice cream," Allen says he realized, "why not find a way to give it away?"

He stumbled on the solution while working as a vendor at the 2004 All Tomorrow's Parties festival in Long Beach. "I drove back home the second I heard the Flaming Lips and Lou Reed were going to be there," he says. "I just had to be a part of it." That was the last time Allen charged a customer for ice cream. "That night

Web site, [icecreamman.com](http://icecreamman.com), where he and a crew of volunteers would post reviews and photos of shows Allen had worked. Sponsors started signing on. Today Ice Cream Man has steady relationships with Levi's and Guitar Center, online services like GameFly and Rhapsody, and ice cream brands like Julie's Organic and Mochi. Toyota gave him a Yaris hatchback tricked out as a "Bessita" and Warner Brothers recently used him to promote the new White Stripes album, *icky Thump*. The record blared from Bessie's speakers while Allen handed out desserts in boxes custom designed by Rob Jones, a graphic artist who's worked with the White Stripes for years.

Allen says he's never wanted more than to break even, but even that's no picnic. "These sponsorships barely cover my costs, and it's for a very short period of time. I'm living in my mom's house right now. I sold my 1969 Chrysler Newport. I've sold nearly everything I've owned." During the winter he supplements his income with odd jobs in Long Beach, like putting up and taking down Christmas lights.

CHICAGO READER

**THE SCREEN SCENE**

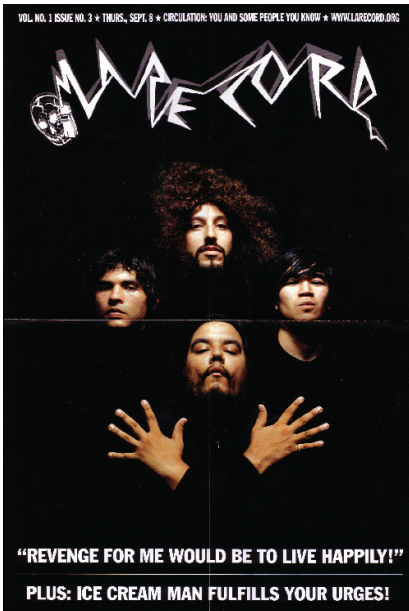
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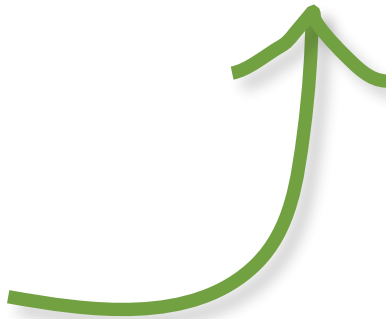
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**PLUS: ICE CREAM MAN  
FULFILLS YOUR URGES!**



**ICE CREAM MAN: HAPPIEST PERSON IN WORLD**

*Ice Cream Man has a real name but prefers to be known only as Ice Cream Man, the living incarnation of the smiling mascot painted on the side of his ice cream truck Bessie. He travels the nation giving away free ice cream to everyone who wants it. He was backstage at Arthur Fest this weekend dispensing organic ice cream bars to people in Earth and Sunn O))).*

**Was anyone an ice cream hog at Arthur Fest?**  
Oh, man, Olivia Tremor Control loves ice cream. The drummer had four ice creams within an hour.

**Is that medically advisable?**  
I used to not have limits for what I gave to people, and then one kid had about eight in an hour, and from that day on, I knew what limits are for. But with something like Arthur Fest, where you don't know what they might have in their body--I don't wanna be the guy that doesn't fulfill an urge that could make them feel especially happy.

**Do you yourself still eat ice cream or have you grown to dislike it?**  
Oh yeah, I'm addicted--to sugar, to caffeine, to ice cream. Yesterday I had four ice cream treats: a frozen banana, a Pink Panther, a creamsicle for breakfast, and a Julie's Organic Chocolate with Chocolate bar.

**Was that the healthiest thing you ate that day?**  
No--thank god for late-night taco stands.

**Does everything you eat come off a truck?**  
Kind of--it's a kind of vagabond lifestyle. I gotta support the people working on the trucks!  
**Did you have any other plans before becoming an ice cream man?**

My main plan is just to be happy--it may sound basic but I don't think that many people are as happy as they could be. I wanna be the happiest person in the world, and I think I might be! I think I'm getting there, and then I'm driving around giving people free ice cream and making them happy. When I



was in college, I had a vision that I wanted to be an ice cream man. I got fired from a thrift store for shopping too much off the clock: 'Look, you're just around here too much!' So then it hit me: I wanna be an ice cream man!  
**Do you find it difficult to be a good person in a**

**world that's so base and corrupt?**  
The one thing I learned is that people either get it or they don't--it's amazing how much you can learn about someone in two or three seconds. If they frown, you know there's no point in going into the spiel--you can't convince someone to be happy. Maybe you can help them a little with free ice cream.  
**You are a very philosophical and inspiring ice cream man.**

I wanna be inspiring! I wanna tell kids they can do anything they want--imagine if every person truly believed they could do anything they wanted, the world would be so much different. People would just like be walking around happy. I once walked from Mexico to Canada, and that was kind of an inspiring thing--I realized everything I've wanted to do in my life, I've been able to do. How-why-what-when-how-I'm-able-to-afford-it I don't know. But I've been able to do it. And now it's a time in my life that I got enough experience and knowledge and connections to do something huge. And ice cream was the biggest thing I could think of--give away a million ice creams!

**ICE CREAM MAN IS WORKING ON RAISING FUNDS FOR A TRIP TO THE HOUSTON ASTRODOME TO GIVE FREE ICE CREAM TO THE KATRINA SURVIVORS. FOR DETAILS ON HOW TO HELP, CONTACT HIM THROUGH HIS WEBSITE: WWW.ICECREAMMAN.COM. ICE CREAM MAN PHOTOS AND REVIEWS OF ARTHUR FEST ARE UP ON HIS SITE NOW.**





MUSIC FEATURE

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

# La Dolce Vita

Matt Allen brings free sweet treats to Bonnaroo

By Austin Powell

**T**he off-white ice cream truck parked in the center of the backstage area at the Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival appears to be a mirage, some sort of chemical or heat-induced hallucination that dances with thoughts of fruit bars and Popsicles. Multicolored Christmas lights are strung across its hood, while a Cookie Monster piñata hangs from the passenger side mirror. The license plate cover reads, "Make every day an ice cream day!"

Such is the motto of Matt Allen, who practically bounces as he helps a handful of the world's finest musicians achieve a similar sugar high. Elvis Costello and Alec Oansworth of Clap Your Hands Say Yeah both reach for vanilla ice cream bars with a crisp layer of chocolate and almonds. The Streets' Mike Skinner gets an ice cream sandwich, while Stephen Malkmus, Jim James and Thurston Moore request various flavors of Julie's organic bars.

Better known as the Ice Cream Man, Allen has spent the past three years touring America in his 1969 Chevy P10 Step Van, "Bessie," dishing out free frozen treats at various music festivals.

"This isn't about rock 'n' roll," says Allen, who has given away nearly 90,000 desserts to date. "This is about getting people to think about things a bit differently, proving that you can do anything with your life. I want to give away free ice cream. It's that simple. Great minds understand conceptually what we're trying to do. Why not bring all of these like-minded people together to do great things?"

The operation started with only a three-wheel bike, a cooler and a boom box, which Allen used to blare a taped version of his radio show "Jazz Band Classics," while attending college in Colorado. Following graduation, he spent some time in a chocolate factory in Ashland, Ore., before purchasing Bessie for \$1,200. After struggling to earn a decent living as a real ice cream man making the rounds in



The Ice (Cream) Man Cometh Matt Allen with Elvis Costello

town, Allen decided he might as well figure out a way to give the ice cream away for free.

Sponsorships from companies like Guitar Center, Levi's, Rhapsody, Jakprints and Mochi Ice Cream enable Allen to travel the country, sharing his chocolate-coated vision with everyone he encounters. He's also assembled a nationwide crew of writers, photographers and like-minded individuals to help sling cream at the festivals and run the website, icecreamman.com, which posts reviews and photos from each excursion. Last year at Bonnaroo, along with handing out 2,500 treats, his crew—three photographers, two writers and three helpers—took over 7,000 digital shots and

reviewed nearly every performance.

"He masterminds situations that benefit everyone," says Pat Kauchick, a 51-year-old photographer who flew in from Arizona last summer to help shoot the festival.

Now, instead of jazz band classics, Allen is spinning The White Stripes, who perform Sunday night on the Which Stage, from "Bessie," the Yaris hatchback that Toyota custom-built for his operation last year. (He still uses Bessie much of the time, since Bessie only holds about 400 ice creams.) The Ice Cream Man recently collaborated with Warner Bros. to help promote the duo's new record *Idly Thrump* by previewing songs as he handed out treats designed by the Stripes' graphic artist Rob Thomas at the Coachella Music Festival in Indio, Calif.

"We think of every way we can to integrate our sponsors to make it worth their while because there's so many different things that they can be a part of," Allen says en route to Kansas for the Wakarusa Festival. "We really have to offer something that's going to be directed to a target audience that's unique."

This year alone, Allen has logged more than 3,000 miles, spanning from Austin, site of the SXSW Music and Media Conference, to Vancouver, British Columbia, his first international venture, for the Virgin Festival. "The more I do, the more I have faith in the process," Allen says. "You just have to relax and hope that everything works out. It's starting to become second nature."

That doesn't mean that things are becoming easier, though. Allen still spends most nights lying atop his freezers in Wal-Mart parking lots without air conditioning, while

nearly every part of Bessie has been replaced or rebuilt in the last year. "There's a huge personal sacrifice involved, but that's part of the reason why it hasn't been done before," Allen says. "We're not making any money off of this. I live with my parents. I've sold nearly everything I own to keep this thing going. I wake up in the morning, though, and all I want to do is work, because I know this is what I should be doing. I'm constantly reminded of how something as simple as free ice cream can make people so happy."

On Tuesday, Bessie arrived at St. Jude Children's Hospital in Memphis, where Allen hosted an ice cream social, giving away over 500 sweets donated by Ice Cream Man, an unaffiliated Memphis company with over 20 years in the community. "It's about bringing a smile to the kids' faces," Allen says, "but it's also similar to the way we do festivals because we want to reward everybody involved behind the scenes that is helping make a difference."

Following his weekend at Bonnaroo, where he hopes to catch sets by Manu Chao, Wilco, the Flaming Lips (whom he once joined on stage as a dancing alien extra) and, of course, the White Stripes, Allen will head north for the Icecream Convention in Pennsylvania. Then he's off to Chicago for the Pitchfork Music Festival and Lollapalooza, but there's no telling where the road will ultimately lead.

"You can only plan so much," Allen says. "Life takes living, doing, making things work. Outside of a few festivals, I have no idea what's going to happen. That's what keeps it exciting. As long as I have a full freezer, I'll be satisfied." ■



Sundae Morning Allen with Jim James of My Morning Jacket





# The Brooklyn Paper

Brooklyn's Real Newspaper

July 14, 2007: Vol. 30, No. 27

## The ice cream man cometh: Brooklynites welcome a free treat

BY JULIANA BUNIM

for The Brooklyn Paper

The famed "Ice Cream Man" finally did Brooklyn last week — and everyone from our famously dieting Borough President to steamed kids to coiffed hipsters loved him.

Matt Allen, along with his 1969 Chevrolet ice cream truck "Bessie," was spotted dishing out Pink Panthers, Good Humor Bars and Drumsticks to passers-by all over the borough. He snapped photos with Marty Markowitz at the Beep's "Camp Brooklyn" camper send-off on July 2, doled Neapolitans to sweaty concertgoers at McCarren Park pool and set up shop in front of the Superhero Supply Company in Park Slope.

Allen claims to have a pretty mean sweat tooth. Not a bad thing for a thirtysomething guy who spent the last three years driving around the country giving away ice cream. His goal is to hand out a total of 500,000 frozen treats. Currently, Allen claims to be hovering somewhere around 90,000.

"The bigger picture is to inspire and motivate young people to get out and do stuff," Allen told The Brooklyn Paper, while slinging ice cream at Fifth Avenue and Fifth Street last week in Park Slope. "I'm leading by example. I'm showing that you can do things that are non-traditional and fulfill your dreams."

Allen is able to pull off his venture through major sponsorship. A big Levi's sticker is prominently displayed on the side of his truck and The White Stripes created a cardboard ice cream holder with a picture of their latest album.

With such backing in place, Allen set out to put a face to the term "Ice Cream Man."

"He never had a face attached to him," Allen said. "I decided to make myself that guy. If we can do that then hopefully through branding, merchandising and marketing, we can make a buck."

Not surprisingly, Brooklynies were skeptical of the freebie. "The first thing everyone asks is, 'OK, why is it free?'" said Allen. "It's like, 'What's the catch?'"



Juliana Bunim

Matt Allen has been traveling the country in his ice cream truck and giving out free treats.

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### Lollapalooza Music Festival Opens in Chicago

Last Edited: Friday, 03 Aug 2007, 10:23 PM CDT  
Created: Friday, 03 Aug 2007, 10:02 PM CDT



Music Lovers Flock to Lollapalooza

Chicago -- For the third year, Lollapalooza has descended on Chicago. If you're into the music, you're in for a treat. If not, you just might have to deal with some extra crowds and traffic. AJ Sterling reports from Grant Park where the party has already started.

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JUNE 28, 2007

## Matt Allen, The Ice Cream Man

Who doesn't love the ice cream man? Not many people. Which is why Matt Allen is pretty popular, since he is, after all, THE Ice Cream Man. Allen drives around the country handing out free frozen treats - so far his travels have taken him (and his '69 Chevy ice cream truck affectionately named Bessie) from St. Jude Children's Hospital to Bonnaroo to McCarren Park Pool (where he'll be this Sunday). Recently, we asked him what life on the good ship ice cream truck is like...

*Photo by Noah Kalina.*

### You've slung a lot of ice cream around New York, any good stories for us?

Last summer I had planned on spending a week or two in NYC and ended up spending a month. Actually, the best day of my life was in New York last year. It was the day of the first Pool Party at McCarren Pool. We set a record for most free ice creams we've given away on one day (over 2000) and rocked out to Les Savy Fav, Beans, Holy Fuck, Dragons of Zynth, and Proton Proton. We couldn't have asked for a better day and as we were wrapping things up the guys in Holy Fuck told me they were planning on hitting a Broken Social Scene/Metric show in Manhattan and asked if I wanted to come along.

I had been keeping tabs on shows going on around town and hadn't heard anything about this one. It turns out it was a private party for an international contest for Miller Brewing. There were less than a hundred people there and they were flown in from all over the world for the show. Broken Social Scene started off with a ten minute funk jam and midset I hollered out a request for "It's All Gonna Break," my favorite BSS song. Kevin Drew, the front man, thought about it for a sec then said, "well, we're not really following a setlist" then they rocked an extended version of it. After the show a representative for Miller walked around the audience and informed us "you should head upstairs, DJ Premier is spinning" WOW... I couldn't believe it. Once up there I found I was the only one on the dance floor for a few songs. Eventually some friends and I ran downstairs and convinced a lot of the folks there to head up for a dance party. We danced til three or four in the morning. It was a bit weird the next day looking back on everything and realizing that was the best day of my life.

### Is there a favorite frozen treat amongst your patrons?

That's a tough call. I'd say the most popular is usually the standard Vanilla Ice Cream Sandwich. Sometimes certain items just take off. Yesterday we were at William Morris in Manhattan and five of the first six treats I dished out were Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. I had 48 sandwiches on board but only 12 turtles so I was a bit nervous. It all worked out in the end though and I even stashed a Strawberry Fruit bar for myself, which ended up being my lunch.

We've given away over 90,000 free ice creams on our way to half a million. The more ice cream I eat the more I like the simple ones and the fruit bars. Some people don't think they like the "fruit" bars much but once they have a cantaloupe, pistachio, watermelon or some of the other exotic flavors we've been known to carry (cucumber w/ lime, tamarindo w/ chile) they get hooked and then those flavors start flying off the truck.

### How much ice cream do you consume a day?

I try to only consume ice cream on days that I'm giving it away. I'd say on average it's a piece or two when we're slinging. When we have a good selection of fruit bars on board, like Fruitiki ones, I'll eat a few more. I think I set a new personal best while driving Bessie through Yellowstone National Park a few weeks ago. I was filming some bits for an upcoming motion graphics piece we're doing and ended up eating 7 or 8 different treats over the course of a few hours. I topped it all off with a Pink Panther... yum.

### What sort of events will you be at while you're in town?

I know we're going to be at two or three of the Pool Parties while we're around. They're some of my favorite events we do all summer so I've been looking forward to them for a while. Especially since a lot of bands I really like are playing; Superchunk, Illinois, Man Man, and Octopus Project to name a few.





"It is about entertainment."

MATT ALLEN | ice cream man

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Submitted photo



## He is the Ice Cream Man

Purveyor of chilly sweets caps the season with ice cream party

By **Emily Morris**  
Tidings Correspondent

When Matt Allen drives through town, screaming young girls follow.

He is the Ice Cream Man, but his ambitions extend far beyond his truck. An Ashland resident, Allen is in the beginning stages of a business plan to create an entertainment business of sorts.

Customers may notice the sign on the side of the truck informing customers that they are being recorded. Allen drives around town to a familiar tune filming himself and the day's comical business transactions. Nothing is being done yet, but the plan is to create daily half-hour streaming videos for viewers to watch on the Internet.

Allen is confident he will be able to create a loyal following that will regularly tune in for amusement; eventually he hopes to have a live and interactive setup that will allow viewers to request house calls.

The possibilities are endless, Allen said. Once it takes off, he likes the idea of viewers voting on where the ice cream man should go next. Allen is thinking Australia might be fun.

"I don't want to focus on selling ice cream, it is about entertainment," he said.

Kids do have inherent entertainment quality — for example, Bill Cosby's show, Kids Say the Darndest Things.

"So many people as they get older just love the beauty of being a kid," Allen said.

Allen figures the being the Ice Cream Man is another way to preserve that quality in himself. He has already fulfilled his dream of visiting all the major chocolate factories in America, walking the Pacific Crest and Appalachian trails, and along the way

he estimates he threw the world's highest altitude dance party.

"We have all these crazy ideas that we think we can't do because we are older, but in fact that is the best time to do it because you can make it happen," Allen said. "There is a bumper sticker I really like, Be the Reason You Moved Here — that sums it up for me."

People nationwide will have to associate the phrase Ice Cream Man with Allen before he can trademark the name; in the meantime his logo is all that exists on the site, [icecreamman.com](http://icecreamman.com).

Like most kids, his season ends with summer, and he will do some traveling and other work before his truck emerges with warmer weather; which leaves some frozen stock and candy he has not sold.

As a thank you to customers and the community he is throwing a party Saturday in Garfield Park from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Everyone is invited to come have free ice cream, take a swing at the piñata and remember the fun of chasing the ice cream truck.



A2 | Daily Tidings

# Valley & State

## Free ice cream awaits Ashlanders

Passport 2 teams with local businesses to bring ice cream to Garfield Park

By **Mark A. Curci**  
Tidings Correspondent

Passport 2 is teaming up with local businesses to bring citizens of Ashland free ice cream and opportunities for what they refer to as "creative networking." Joining Passport2 from 3 to 5 p.m. in Garfield Park will be growing celebrity Matt "Ice Cream Man" Allen.

Allen was working as an ice cream truck driver in Ashland three years ago and one day decided that he would have more fun with his life giving ice cream away than charging for it. Since his epiphany, Allen has been driving across the country finding businesses to sponsor his altruistic whims.

Now returning from the East Coast and Lollapalooza and being interviewed by Rolling Stone magazine, Allen predicts having given away over 40,000 ice creams. Passport2 updates their internet site with video clips of Allen's progress.

Passport2 is a growing local business with wide spreading plans. Co-owner Shields Bialasik explains Passport2 as, "a travel



**Orville Hector** | Daily Tidings

**MATT "ICE CREAM MAN" ALLEN DELIVERS** his frozen treats to eager fans at a Garfield Park ice cream social.

guide to our own town. We focus on what a community is and what makes it work."

In its interim, Passport2, with its website and widely mailed monthly publication, focused mainly on businesses and real estate with a mindset towards tourism. Nowadays, however, Passport2 is expanding its scope to become representative of the Ashland community at large.

"We aim to demonstrate a creative form of community out-

reach," says Bialasik. This Saturday marks the third annual free ice cream social. Last year, Bialasik estimates over four hundred attendees with roughly six hundred ice creams distributed. This year, Bialasik expects twice as many to partake in the complimentary dairy goodness. "We have 1,200 ice creams and multiple trucks waiting," says Bialasik.

Passport2, a privately owned company whose website attracts 65,000 hits a month, is only the

beginning. "It's a really neat way of meeting and connecting with people," says Bialasik. "We hope to keep building the Passport2 program here and then spreading to other towns."

Bialasik, who helped solicit ice cream donations from local community businesses, says, "This event is a great way for people to have fun and basically network while building relationships. Come out and experience a bit of Ashland and some ice cream."





November 6, 2007

People & Places

## This Ice Cream Man's Treats Are Free

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Matt Allen poses with his truck, Bessie.

*Day to Day*, July 20, 2007 · Matt Allen, also known as the Ice Cream Man, has spent the last three years touring the country in a 1969 ice cream truck he calls Bessie.

Allen stops at nearly all the nation's large music festivals, where he has given away thousands of ice creams to the people backstage. He can do this thanks to sponsors such as Levi's and the music group the White Stripes, who pay him to display their logos and play their music.





TUESDAY, October 30, 2007  
Volume 35: Issue 38

# WASHINGTON SQUARE NEWS

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER | WWW.NYUNEW.COM

## Free ice cream from a free spirit

**Hyein Lee**  
WASHINGTON SQUARE NEWS

His wavy hair defied gravity as it flew windswept in the air. Clad in loose cigarette pants and a white button-down shirt, Matt Allen, the self-proclaimed Ice Cream Man, leaned suavely against his Toyota Yaris, which was plastered with Ice Cream Man stickers.

"Sorry, we're all out of ice cream," he said.

Allen is a man who travels across the country giving away free ice cream, a desirable full-time job to say the least. You may have been one of the lucky people to have snagged a treat in front of the Kimmel Center two weeks ago.

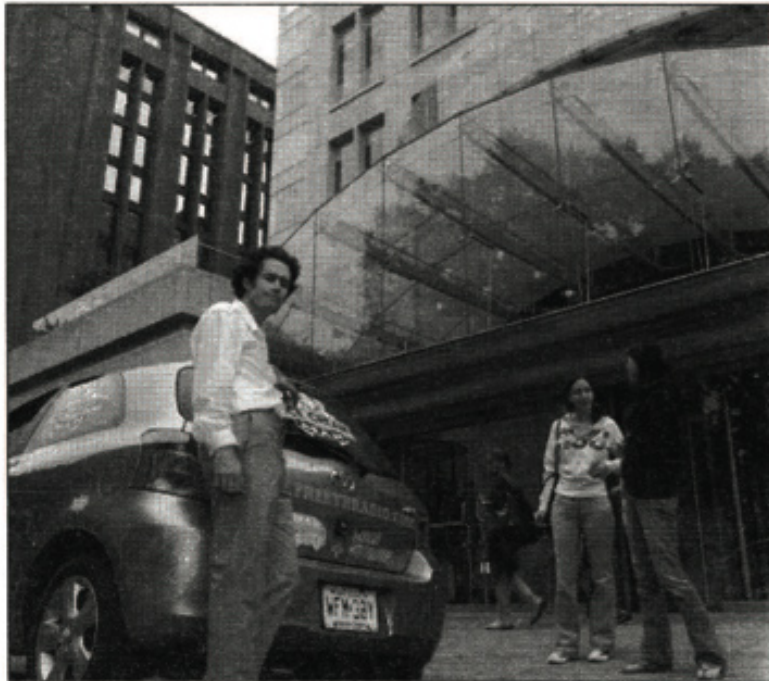
"Madhouse, the most beautiful madhouse ever," Allen said, describing the scene. "The traffic of young college kids created a snowball effect."

With a customized cooler in his trunk that boasts a temperature of negative 60 degrees Fahrenheit, Allen guarantees the "coldest ice cream you have ever had." Now that's a bold statement from a guy who serves ice cream out of the back of his car.

What started out as a cooler on the back of a bicycle 10 years ago has developed into a full-fledged project that aims to give away half a million pop-sicles within seven years.

"The number is still arbitrary," Allen said. "We're just trying to give away as much as possible."

In college, Allen wanted to buy an ice cream truck, but be-



COURTESY OF BEN SHAPIRO

CHILLIN' LIKE ICE CREAM FILLIN' | Ice Cream Man Matt Allen hands out free treats.

ing financially challenged like many students, instead started his business on a bike in 1997. The name Ice Cream Man started to stick as he continued with this hobby.

Soon, the hobby became a job.

"Four years ago, I got fired from two jobs and that's when I decided not to work for anyone anymore," Allen said.

After making this vow, the Ice Cream Man started selling ice cream in Ashland, Ore., from an ice cream truck. He found the man who owned Icecreamman.com and convinced him to sell the site to him. Before leaving Ashland, Allen threw a free ice cream social that attracted news coverage.

Since gaining media publicity, Allen brainstormed and worked with people to get sponsors. With an official Ice Cream Man logo, the idea began to draw the attention of companies such as Toyota and Urban Outfitters, who incorporated the event with their year-long project for supporting noncommercial radio stations.

"Music festivals are our main niches currently," Allen said. "We're usually backstage in the artist hospitality area handing out ice cream."

Allen's recent stop in New York City was part of a 15,000-mile tour he started in Long





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**ARTS & CULTURE**

Larry Craig isn't the only one in the toilet. 59

**SCOOP** GOSPIP SHOULD HAVE NO FRIENDS

SCOOP, LITERALLY when your vinyl cards are parched from strolling racks to your favorite musicfest? acts (see page 44 for a full schedule), make sure to keep your eye out for the Ice Cream Man, whose traveling tour of goodie and free ice cream should satisfy your sweet tooth. On a mission to give away half a million treats all over the world at different music festivals (100,000 so far in the U.S.), Matt the Ice Cream Man has been spreading the paties of sweet-loving showgoers with scoops, cones and pops since 2004. He'll be surprising Portland with the lovely trinket of his truck, making special appearances at MFW venues. Sweet. Check out [myradio.com/icecreamman](http://myradio.com/icecreamman) for updates.

**I JUST CALLED TO SAY... TWO ORDERS, PLEASE** Who would have guessed that when Snake Warden was singing "Sugar Sugar," he was actually creating seductively about tasty treats and delectable desserts? Turns out the Boston legend has been chomping down on non-service goodies like chocolate-chip cookies and mimosas during his stay in a suite at the Hotel Massasoit. And really, can you blame Matt? (Oh, sugar, sugar... an addiction—y like the other white crack! Can I get a witness?)

**FUNERAL SONGS** How do Portlanders react when a beloved local dies? They come out in droves. As reported on week-end last week, Friday night marked Music Millennium Northwest's gold-out-of-business party, and the store was swamped. "Let's hear for local music!" called owner Barry Carter, as local space-punk Stars of Track and Field took the same stage where countless local and big-name bands have played first. All signs show since they've opened 30 years ago. For a few hours, Music Millennium stood in the center of a crowd of thousands of people strolling down to shoulder in a sticky, humid room. Steve Langer, lead singer of Storm and the Balls and copresident on Rockstar Supernova, cried the words out loud. Music Millennium Northwest's stage was

**My Bonnaroo Day: Adam Schlesinger**

Photo of Adam Schlesinger at Bonnaroo

**BONNAROO BEACON, JUNE 17, 2007**

Photo of Adam Schlesinger

**music**

**Meet the Man of Your Dreamsicles**

...there and getting people to see and hear about this, attempt to change the world." Matt Allen, also known as Ice Cream Man, understands how his statement sounds. "Some people think that what they do doesn't matter or that they can't change either side of things in the extreme opposite of that."

...at the end of March, and myself against the walls of phrenic nature of the Ice Cream Man project files. As much as Matt would like to avoid any sort of fame-chasing, the Ice Cream Man needs the attention. "In the business model we've created, I have to become famous." Listening to Matt name his credits, it's clear he gets plenty of attention. "We've been on MTV, we've been on Rolling Stone's website numerous times. We've been in SPIN magazine, been on the cover of Austin Chronicle, been on the cover of L.A. Alternative and a fuckload of other magazines and probably hundreds of blogs. Oh yeah, and a full page in the LA Times. I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that a million people have heard of us." This level of press, one can imagine, verges on masochism. "It's much easier to tell yourself that you can't do something than to find a way to do it." Be it Matt's was fit in his back to a of a lo... of great who felt that he minim...

...factory. And while it's true that Guitar Center and Toyota have both contributed to the Ice Cream Man in different ways, Matt stresses that he works "with, not for" these companies. Remember: no free lunches. And I think we can all agree that in today's advertising-ruled world, Bessie is lucky she's not drowning in corporate logos. "It's easier to put somebody down than give...

...two employees will be doing what stock shares will be sold. The goal is and always will be to make the joy of giving someone a root beer float bar and asking nothing in return a feasible plan. It will certainly live on, but so will Matt. And he's not the only one. Matt once...

**STYLE.COM, AUG. 2006**

**STYLE.COM**

**STREET STYLE: LOLLAPALOOZA**

Matt Allen, a.k.a. The Ice Cream Man, hails from Long Beach, California. "Three years ago, I decided that I wanted to travel around the country, far, we've got out?" "I hear mites this (Editor's note: sneakers).

Photo of Matt Allen with Ice Cream Man truck

**CSU LONG BEACH, UNION WEEKLY**

Check out [www.thecobrasmake.com](http://www.thecobrasmake.com) for more photos.

**MUSIC**

**Snakebites** BY MARK THE COBRASNAKE

more it on love it

Photo of Snakebites band

**NIGHTRANGER** BY UNILLEGARD

welcome to the jungle

Photo of Nightranger band

**LOS ANGELES WEEKLY**

**scene+heard**

**"ICE CREAM MAN" ROLE MODEL: WILLY WONKA LATE BEEF: VEGETABLE**

"Michael Franti is a huge ice cream fan," confirms Allen from the Flaming Lips, who a Spongobob Popcorn Parties, after doing a soundcheck to a Spongobob. Allen grew up in Long Beach, CA, before embarking on a music career. "At the end of the summer, we had a big ice cream social in town and gave away the remaining stock to all the kids and parents in town," he recalls. "I realized then that I didn't want to sell ice cream anymore—I wanted to find a way to give it away."

With sponsors and a website ([www.icecreamman.com](http://www.icecreamman.com)), Allen plans to travel and other events, eventually giving away free ice cream to as many people as they tell them it's someone by their first reaction

**RELIX MAGAZINE, FEB/MAR 2006**

**LAWEEKLY** MUSIC

NEWS • CALENDAR • FILM • TV • MUSIC • EAT • DRINK • STAGE • SLIDESHOW

**VEGOOSE FESTIVAL DAY 1**  
Mastodon, Blonde Redhead, Gogol Bordello and more

Photo of Ice Cream Man truck at festival

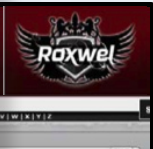
21 of 34 images Photo by Timothy Norris

**ROXWEL ONLINE, 2007**

**101X** 101.5 FM

**CKY NO JEANS**

Photo of CKY performing on stage







## Ice Cream Man, **Matt Allen**

*Founder*

Matt started his first adventure right out of high school, when he decided to drive around the country riding as many roller coasters as possible. Many journeys have passed since then, and as Ice Cream Man, Matt is still making adventure a way of life. By now, Matt has seen over 1,000 live music performances, given away over 100,000 free ice creams, and made an innumerable number of friends along the way...and there's nowhere to go but up.



## Dave Gooch, **Operations Director**

*Jukebox Hero*

Dave has been helping out Ice Cream Man for quite a while, making silly drawings that somehow found their way onto t-shirts and such. Now he helps full time filtering some of the scatterbrainedness of Ice Cream Man and sorting it into his own brand of scatterbrainedness. That's a word, look it up. In addition, Gooch serves as the managing content editor of IceCreamMan.com.



## James Boo, **Outreach Director**

*Oooh, floor pie!*

James joined the Ice Cream Crew in early 2007, weeks after he had returned from studies in the Russian Federation (ask him to tell you about the wonder of factory-produced Russian ice cream cones). He now directs Ice Cream Man's outreach efforts and manages our intern staff. When he's not juggling dry ice, James works as a tutor and writer in Orange County, California.  
[www.theeatenpath.com](http://www.theeatenpath.com)



## Jeremiah Garcia, **Artistic Director**

*Festival King*

Born and raised in the desert and, as most kids in Tucson, Jeremiah found salvation in a cold quick fix. Ice cream was the rule of the land and this soon landed me at my first job in the local ice cream parlor. The pursuit of higher education lead me to Pepperdine in Malibu, CA. What does one do with such a thirst for cold treats and live music? You turn to the one man that can get you that fix. Thus, I turned to The Ice Cream Man.

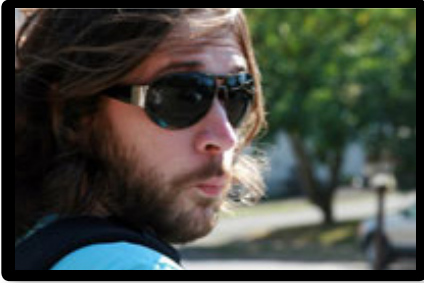


## CraSH, **Concert Staff Director**

*Make sure your "Triple-Dog-Dare" him!*

No matter how many times he mutters to himself about miserable red and yellow gels in dimly lit hole-in-the-wall clubs, he continually subjects himself to F2.8 and ISO 3200 to capture fleeting moments of up-and-coming bands. In addition to shooting a never ending list of performances, Craig now coordinates our imaging projects and works with our concert staff at large, making sure that Ice Cream Man's music coverage is the best in the world.





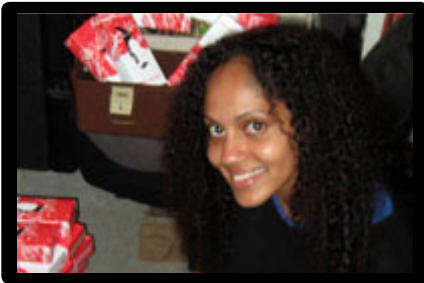
Dr. Knife, **Patron Saint**  
*PhD in Awesomology*

Although not actually a doctor, Dr. Knife is pursuing a PhD in Mathematics at Oregon State University. Dan drove Matt to Oregon to pick up the truck that would become Bessie in 2004, and has remained involved with the Ice Cream Crew as a photographer, writer, web editor and deep thinker. [www.drknife.com](http://www.drknife.com)



Steph Sanchez, **Marketing Intern**  
*Lovely Assistant*

When it comes to classic Motown and rock and roll Steph knows her stuff. Born in San Antonio (the Heavy Metal Capital of the World if you let her tell it), Steph moved to Los Angeles from Austin, Texas in 2006. Her love for road trips and ice cream led her to join the Ice Cream Man Crew in early 2007.



Rachel Ballard, **Arts Intern**  
*Lovely Assistant*

Rachel has been maintaining relationships with bands and connecting Ice Cream Man to the entertainment scene wherever we go. An aspiring actress and rock star aficionado, she's no stranger to the world of entertainment and is always down to tell us a thing or two about the joy of song.



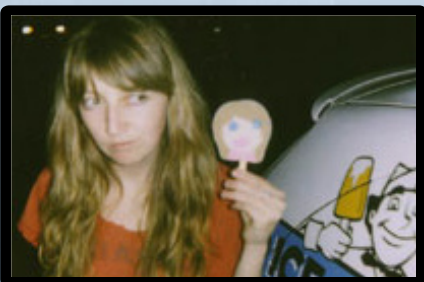
Matthias Ingimarsson, **Photographer/Videographer**  
*Iceland's Best*

A recent addition to the immigrant flourish of Ventura County, Matthias moved to California from his home country of Iceland to study at the Brooks Institute of Photography. Matthias has been shooting concerts and music events ever since he picked up his first film camera six years ago. [www.matthiasarni.com](http://www.matthiasarni.com)



Kate Schruth, **Writer**  
*NYC Representer*

Kate writes show reviews for the Ice Cream Man in New York City. She loves music in most all of its glorious forms, but knows its best form is always live. Among her many accolades, Kate was an "Honorary Participant" for the annual Todd's Point Sandcastle Contest '97, and was once a highly decorated Brownie.



Starr Sink, **Ambassador of Joy**  
*Country Girl*

Starr once told me this little story and the unintentional punchline only solidified her southern roots. Something like...It's like when your at a family function and they keep trying to hook you up with your cousin...HA





**TO HAVE ICE CREAM MAN WORK AT YOUR CONCERT, FESTIVAL,  
OR OTHER LARGE ENTERTAINMENT EVENT:**

Operations Director Dave Gooch, [Gooch@icecreamman.com](mailto:Gooch@icecreamman.com)

**TO START A BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP WITH ICE CREAM MAN:**

Operations Director Dave Gooch, [Gooch@icecreamman.com](mailto:Gooch@icecreamman.com)

**TO ORGANIZE A CHARITY EVENT WITH ICE CREAM MAN:**

Outreach Director James Boo, [James@icecreamman.com](mailto:James@icecreamman.com)

**TO ORGANIZE AN ICE CREAM SOCIAL WITH ICE CREAM MAN:**

Outreach Director James Boo, [James@icecreamman.com](mailto:James@icecreamman.com)

**TO BECOME AN EVENT PHOTOGRAPHER OR REVIEW WRITER FOR ICE CREAM MAN:**

Concert Staff Director Craig Hattori, [Crash@icecreamman.com](mailto:Crash@icecreamman.com)

**TO TALK TO ICE CREAM MAN HIMSELF:**

Matt Allen, [Matt@icecreamman.com](mailto:Matt@icecreamman.com)

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(562) 728.3081

**ICE CREAM MAN ON THE WEB:**

[www.IceCreamMan.com](http://www.IceCreamMan.com)  
[www.MySpace.com/IceCreamMan](http://www.MySpace.com/IceCreamMan)  
**Facebook:** [www.Profile.to/IceCreamMan](http://www.Profile.to/IceCreamMan)





**"WE LIVE IN THE BEST PLACE IN THE WORLD, AT THE BEST TIME IN HISTORY.  
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?"**

**—MATT ALLEN, ICE CREAM MAN  
(PHOTOGRAPH BY JENNIE WARREN)**